

I. SCHOOL DESIGN

1. Mission Statement

A. The core philosophy or underlying purpose for the school

The Seven Generations Charter School (SGCS) is an academically rich educational community creating generations of stewards who respect our world and each other. All members of the Seven Generations Charter School community are committed to creating a public education alternative that promotes sustainability and citizenship with an interdisciplinary, individualized, project-based curriculum.

B. Our overarching vision of the school

Seven Generations will provide its students with: An integrated learning experience that emphasizes sustainable living practices; an experiential approach to education that encourages hands-on learning in the community as well as in the classroom; a culturally rich atmosphere that celebrates the expansive world around us; an environment of academic excellence that taps into the creativity and uniqueness of each child and that fosters mutual respect. Focused on the theme of environmental sustainability, the foundation of SGCS' rigorous academic program will be the research-based "using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning" (EIC) curriculum framework, which research has proven to increase student performance on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, social studies and science; reduce discipline and classroom management problems; show development of problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills, increase engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and, demonstration of greater pride and ownership in student schoolwork.

As we build our students' knowledge of self and community so too will we build our students' sense of appreciation for the environment and those who contribute to it. This sense of appreciation will, we believe, drive our students to become more involved in both their local community and, hopefully, the world at large. The result of this will, we believe, instill in our students a better understanding of those factors affecting the community and environment. We believe that this understanding will cause them to become more active as caretakers of the environment as well as more active citizens in the greater community.

We believe that our curriculum, supported by enthusiastic teachers, will inspire our students to become excited about learning. They will quickly come to see the school as a dynamic and challenging place where learning and citizenship are celebrated. Their involvement in the student centered educational process will, we believe, keep them engaged in the quest for knowledge and of the stewardship of their environment throughout their life.

2. Measurable Goals and Objectives

A. The school's measurable academic goals and objectives developed to promote student learning

Goal #1: Seven Generations Charter School (SGCS) will prepare students for entry into their next level of education.

Objective:

- 1) 90% of SGCS students will enter their next level of education performing at or above grade level or have made progress towards achieving their IEP goals.

Goal #2: Demonstrate student achievement and school success by meeting current PDE school measures in the first year of operation as well as in subsequent years.

Objective:

- 1) At least 80% of the staff will be certified teachers. 100% of the staff will be “highly qualified” teachers as defined by NCLB legislation; 100% of non-certified teachers will be highly educated experts in their fields.
- 2) Students will make a minimum of one year growth in math and reading as demonstrated by PVAAS or other current PDE state assessment tool.

Goal #3: Align curriculum to PA state academic standards and implement a comprehensive school-wide EIC model curriculum.

Objective:

- 1) New staff will complete intensive SEER-facilitated EIC-orientation workshop to map local resources and align SGCS curriculum with PA standards and SEER will conduct annual technical support visits to support curriculum writing and implementation
- 2) Maintain a school-wide database of committed community partnerships, including local academic institutions
- 3) Complete required reports to PA Department of Education and SEER to review curriculum alignment with PA standards and to monitor curriculum progress and development

Goal #4: Develop a sustainable, student-directed system to select and integrate environmental remediation projects and community partnerships into curriculum.

Objective:

- 1) 100% of SGCS students will participate annually in at least one service learning event inspired by PA standards and derived from EIC curriculum
- 2) 100% of SGCS students will participate annually in at least one *environmentally-focused* event inspired by PA standards and derived from EIC curriculum

Goal #5: Achieve EIC–model-school certification by Year Three of operation.

Objective:

- 1) Successfully complete EIC training institute to align PA standards with SGCS curriculum and SEER rubric, per SEER’s EIC certification protocol.
- 2) Appoint external resource to gather required academic data, per SEER’s EIC certification protocol.
- 3) Participate in SEER staff assessment process and submit revised unit plans for approval, per SEER’s EIC certification protocol.
- 4) Submit progress report/data evaluation information in January 2011, per SEER’s EIC certification protocol.
- 5) Achieve EIC Model School status in 2012.

Goal #6: SGCS students will be highly satisfied with the school’s educational program and learning environment.

Objective:

- 1) On average, there will be at least an 80% student retention rate for each year (i.e., students who stay at the school after their enrollment).
- 2) 75% of students will give an average of “highly satisfied” marks for educational program and learning environment in Student Annual Survey.

B. The school’s measurable non-academic goals and objectives developed to promote student learning

Goal #1: SGCS staff will be highly satisfied with the school’s operation and design.

Objective:

- 1) On average, at least 80% of the staff will return to the school each year;
- 2) On average, there will be at least a 90% daily attendance rate for staff each year;
- 3) 80% of staff will give “highly satisfied” marks for operation and design in the Staff Annual Survey.

Goal #2: SGCS families will be highly committed to the school and will be actively involved in school activities.

Objective:

- 1) At least 80% of parents who participate in the survey will report attendance at three or more community events as indicated by the Parent Annual Survey;
- 2) 80% of parents will give “highly satisfied” marks for all key areas of the Parent Annual Survey.

Goal #3: SGCS will have a positive impact on the surrounding community.

Objectives:

- 1) Aspire to recruit a variety of community members to serve as Board members during each year of the school’s operation;
- 2) SGCS students will organize and operate at least one major fundraising or service activity to benefit a community entity each year.

3. Educational Program

A. Description of our educational program, which provides an overview of the curriculum and the content in all areas.

Overview

Seven Generations Charter School (SGCS) will offer a unique and innovative educational alternative to traditional public education. SGCS will strive for excellence in all academic subject areas and the fine arts, while at the same time focusing on sustainable living principles, including environmental stewardship and respect for all living things. The curriculum will be based on Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC), a curricular framework developed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER). EIC is a research-based model for an interdisciplinary, hands-on, and engaging learning experience that employs a school’s particular environment and community as the context for all learning. *See Appendix A for the evidence-based research and documentation from SEER – “Closing the Achievement Gap. Appendix A-1 also will include the Seven Generations Charter School EIC model curriculum for all existing grades.*

Using the EIC model, SGCS will transcend the barriers between disciplines that exist in the traditional public school as all teaching and learning will be centered on common environmental projects. Lessons across disciplines will be intertwined, and classes at a grade level will be coordinated with one another as they do their part in bringing a project together. Interdisciplinary learning fosters students’ ability to see the connections between subject matter that is traditionally compartmentalized, while also allowing for an approach to problem solving that draws on knowledge from across subject matter—a

practice essential in the real world. This approach to education will allow teachers to transform traditional pedagogy and embrace a collaborative teaching style.

SGCS's project-based academic program will also set it apart from traditional public schooling. Students at SGCS will be engaged in real-world investigations that will frequently take them out of the classroom, into nature and the larger community. This approach will foster critical thinking, create an atmosphere of collaboration, and engage and empower students and teachers alike. Because projects will grow out of student-driven questioning, students will have an investment and sense of ownership regarding their learning.

In addition, project-based learning will foster community relationships as students work side-by-side with members of the community on projects. These community members might be parents, farmers, environmental scientists, town officials, local artists, heads of businesses and non-profits, senior citizens, etc. Numerous local community organizations whose missions are in keeping with that of SGCS have expressed a willingness to form partnerships with us. This collaboration will enable the students to become key players in improving life at their school and in their community.

SGCS will also function as a community resource. We will conduct educational workshops, host open houses in which community members can learn about the school, and provide family-friendly activities. SGCS will work hard to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship between itself and the surrounding community.

Another distinctive feature of SGCS will be its approach to community-building within the school community itself. Towards this goal, we will establish an effective system of school-wide governance that promotes the mission of SGCS and establishes behavioral expectations for all interactions, from students to teachers and parents to administration and Board of Trustees.

Our goal will be to create an environment that fosters responsibility, resourcefulness, and respect amongst all shareholders. The SGCS school day will begin with classroom meetings in order to reinforce student- and teacher-generated classroom expectations and to bolster the feeling of community within the classroom as well as discuss conflict in a setting of mutual respect.

In addition, regular school-wide meetings will celebrate the connectedness of our community as well as on fostering respect and understanding in the larger school community. Parents and community members are welcomed participants in our school-wide meetings. Additionally, parents of SGCS students are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, contribute talents and skills to environmental and community projects, and to serve on the board and school committees.

Finally, as an extension of our environmental mission, we intend to create a facility that reflects our commitment to sustainability. We plan to initiate an “Edible Schoolyard” program based on the [Growing Classroom](#). This organic garden will be a school-wide and ongoing project that will provide a bounty of educational, community, and environmental opportunities. This, and all practices that set SGCS apart, reflect our mission of achieving academic excellence while teaching the sustainable living principles of environmental stewardship and respect for all living things.

As mentioned earlier, our educational program will be built upon, the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning” (known as “EIC”) curriculum developed through research conducted by the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER) which includes the PA Dept. of Ed. EIC designates pedagogy that employs natural and socio-cultural environments as the context for learning while taking into account the “best practices” of successful educators. Evidence gathered from the SEER study of 30 schools nationwide -- including four Pennsylvania public schools -- indicated that students learn more effectively within an environment-based context than within a traditional educational framework. EIC significantly improves student performance in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, and enriches the overall school experience.

SGCS will endeavor to demonstrate the positive outcomes of the EIC-based curriculum through use of the standards-based, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and PVAAS. It is our expectation, based on the research outcomes of the schools studied that our students will meet or exceed the standards’ expectations in growth and / or achievement.

The evidence supporting the educational benefits of EIC-based learning from the SEER study is rather conclusive. For instance, in the 17 comparative studies done regarding Language Arts achievement, the data found that standardized measures affirm the academic benefits of EIC-based learning for reading, writing, and general language skills. As students become involved in the first-hand study of the natural and socio-cultural systems that make up their world, they grow more enthusiastic and proficient in developing and applying Language Arts skills.

The environment’s widespread appeal to students creates diverse opportunities to nurture their language arts skills. They like reading about nature and their community; they enjoy writing about issues affecting society; and the chance to express their ideas at public meetings and in presentations. The increased opportunities to practice their language arts skills facilitates the development of strong skills in reading, writing, and oral expression, including expanded vocabularies and greater abilities to create persuasive and constructive arguments.

All five comparative studies of achievement data from programs where math was integrated into EIC, found that the results affirm the academic benefits of environment-based learning. Students learning in the context of the environment begin to

look at math a little differently. Instead of thinking that math is only abstract concepts, students learn that math skills are tools that they can use to quantify and analyze connections among natural and socio-cultural systems. This fosters deeper understanding of math. They see how math connects to other disciplines that help them interpret what they discover when studying economics, geography, science, and other subject areas. In the area of science, EIC students scored higher on three of four comparative studies of standardized science achievement data than those from traditional programs. In the 4th comparative study, the students scored equally. EIC students more effectively master scientific knowledge and skills, and achieve a deeper understanding of scientific concepts and processes.

Consequently, they are more capable of transferring their scientific knowledge to interdisciplinary tasks. Overall, the hands-on, minds-on approaches typical of an EIC-based educational program enable students of all ability levels to improve their performance and gain a better understanding and appreciation of science. Involvement in real-world, project-based activities seem to help students refine their abilities in scientific observation, data collection, analysis, and formulating conclusions. It appears that students better understand the complex interrelationships and connections among individuals, communities, and society when they have the chance to apply their social studies knowledge in real-world settings. They develop a deeper, contextual understanding of history, geography, and political systems. This gives them a greater comprehension of social studies content, advanced skills in applying civic processes to real-life situations, and an increase in enthusiasm for social studies.

According to the data from SEER's research, studying society in the context of the local environment helps students see the connections between economic, political, legal, and cultural systems. They begin to make the connections between geography, history, and natural resources in their region and to recognize the relevance of their decisions to their community and their environment. As a result, EIC helps to produce active, involved citizens who develop a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities as members of a democratic society.

SEER's comprehensive research is so strong and compelling that there can be little if any doubt as to the effectiveness of EIC to increase student achievement, and preparing generations of stewards for future learning and community participation. Overall, the research supporting the significant effectiveness of EIC in exhibiting student growth and / or achievement clearly demonstrates how the SGCS will meet PA State Standards for student achievement. SGCS will monitor student achievement through PA State standard evaluation tools such as the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) which will provide us with vital information regarding students who may be identified as being in need of additional educational support and would also provide our school with information regarding areas of instruction needing improvement.

“[We] imagine a classroom that turns outward, both figuratively and literally. The grounds would become a classroom, buildings would look outward, and gardens would cover the campus. The works of naturalists would be the vehicle by which we would teach reading and writing. Math and science would be taught as a way to understand the intricacies of nature, the potential to meet human needs, and how they are interlaced. A well-rounded education would mean learning the basics, to become part of a society that cherished nature while at the same time contributing to the well-being of mankind. Progress does not have to be patented to be worthwhile. Progress can be measured with interactions with nature and its preservation. Can we teach children to look at a flower and see all it represents: beauty, the health of an ecosystem, and the potential for healing?”

Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv

Seven Generations is committed to an experiential, project-based curriculum that promotes hands-on learning in nature and the community, as well as the classroom. What makes Seven Generations unique and stand out from other charter schools is our use of the EIC ("using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning") curriculum model. The EIC provides a framework for integrating academic content areas and PA academic standards. Using the environment as the focal point for our curriculum allows Seven Generations students to become immersed in experiential investigations providing them with ample opportunities to apply their learning in a real world context. Although subject areas are separated for discussion purposes in this document, in practice they are connected.

CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

Using the Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC) Model provides the curricular framework at SGCS. This project-based curriculum uses the natural and social systems in the local community to apply the core academic areas. Through the EIC Model, PA Academic standards drive curriculum unit development and assessment. EIC permeates all aspects of the classroom and outdoor learning.

SEER (State Education and Environment Roundtable) was founded in 1995 and the EIC Model was developed as a result of extensive research into the effects of environment-based education on student achievement and behavior in K-12 schools. The academic and behavioral benefits of environment-based education are reported in *Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning* (2002). The EIC Model is an approach which improves academic performance and acquisition of the state standards.

In July 2009, SGCS' teaching team and administration spent four full days participating in the SEER EIC Model Implementation Institute where we learned how to design and implement the EIC Model. Since then, SGCS has worked closely with SEER in training, refining, editing, and revising our EIC Model curricular framework. Each year SGCS

holds professional development to educate new faculty and further develop EIC curriculum alignment with the PA State Standards.

Seven Generations uses the complex system of the EIC Model's interconnected and interrelated pedagogies. This educational framework allows SGCS to use the natural and social systems in the local community as a context within which students can construct their own learning, guided by their teachers and other members of a collaborative instructional team. The EIC Model encompasses integrated- interdisciplinary instruction as a means of addressing educational standards while also allowing opportunities for students to develop basic life skills, citizenship, problem solving skills, and understanding of natural and social systems.

The principal components of EIC include: integrated- interdisciplinary instruction, community based investigations, service learning, collaborative instruction, learner centered, constructivist approaches, cooperative and independent learning and local and natural community surroundings as a context for learning. Using these innovative approaches, teachers address state content standards and adopt instructional materials to insure that SGCS students have authentic and engaging learning opportunities. The comprehensive nature of our EIC Model curriculum has emphasis placed on addressing multiple intelligences, differentiating instruction, and hands-on, experiential learning. Seven Generations' students interact with a variety of instructional partners- local experts, business owners and resource agencies. Students are exposed to diverse cultural, economic and political perspectives that make up their community. SGCS students not only gain a better understanding of how these social systems work, but they are also provided opportunities to explore issues of personal interest. The EIC Model empowers SGCS students to take responsibility for building a deeper understanding of the world around them.

LITERACY

Seven Generations Charter School identifies academic excellence as a core value. To facilitate excellence in literacy, the Seven Generations literacy program incorporates three core elements: PA State Standards, research proven best practices, and the mission and vision of the school. These three elements anchor a coherent program of study articulated throughout the grades. To facilitate high achievement in literacy, Seven Generations provides all students the opportunity to engage in challenging tasks that balance conceptual knowledge, procedural fluency, and problem solving skills.

Opportunity to Learn

Seven Generations' literacy program is structured to allow all students to experience literacy in a way that is compatible with their learner profiles. Equal opportunity includes both high expectations for all and the supports students need to meet them. Whole group instruction along with flexible grouping enables teachers and students to construct meaning collaboratively and enable students with similar needs to be instructed together.

All students are given opportunities to interact with grade level standards in engaging ways. Students may move between groups as their needs change.

Coherent Programming

Reading instruction at Seven Generations incorporates instructional strategies aligned with research on effective differentiation to meet individual needs. Frequent formative assessments assist teachers in scaffolding instruction and choosing tasks to build upon students' prior knowledge. A school-wide assessment process involves benchmark testing a minimum of two times per year. These formative assessments and school-wide benchmarking allow teachers to identify students most likely to benefit from extra support, including explicit instruction, clear models, extensive practice, and abundant feedback. This also allows students to accelerate at their own pace.

Current research supports self-discovery with scaffolding and repeated practice emphasizing student proficiency across reading, spelling, writing and comprehension. Students are instructed in small groups using a guided reading framework, reciprocal teaching, literature circles, and explicit skills instruction along with modeled writing, guided writing and independent writing supported with conferencing. Through these frameworks students develop fluency and automaticity in decoding, encoding and comprehension.

To support coherent programming the literacy instruction at Seven Generations Charter School involves the use of leveled texts, magazines, trade books, and authentic texts. Literacy instruction is not driven by any specific publisher but all prepared materials are chosen considering the best practices in literacy instruction and used in alignment with Pennsylvania Standards. Students need to read with understanding a variety of text for a variety of purposes. Students also need to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences. They need to understand and know how to use language structure, features, conventions and vocabulary. The writing curriculum is aligned with the PA writing rubric and provides students and teachers a common language for talking about the characteristics of writing and establishes a clear vision of what good writing looks like. Teachers and students use this across the curriculum, allowing students to apply strategies in real situations. The SGCS literacy goal is to produce students who are critical readers and able to document ideas through the written word resulting in productive habits of the mind.

The elementary program emphasizes explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and prosody, guided reading and independent reading, vocabulary instruction and comprehension using multiple modalities. As students move into the intermediate grades, higher reading comprehension, referred to as "the essence of reading" (Durkin 1993) becomes paramount not only for academic learning but also for lifelong learning. The instructional emphasis moves along Bloom's Revised Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. At Seven Generations teachers are expected to monitor instructional levels in order to assess when and where

literacy scaffolding is needed in decoding, comprehending and responding to literature. Open-ended activities across all content areas are used to present students with opportunities to interpret, problem solve and apply individual thinking through the written word.

Summary

The Seven Generations Literacy Program supports students as they become independent processors of the written word. At the core of the program are state standards, research proven methodologies and the vision of the school. Literacy instruction at Seven Generations is structured to meet the needs of all individual learners as they progress through the grades. The instructional focus is one of viewing the skills and strategies of successful literacy engagement while supporting the end result of understanding and constructing new meaning, leading to student excellence in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

Seven Generations Charter School identifies academic excellence as a core value. To facilitate excellence in mathematics, the Seven Generations math program incorporates three core elements: PA state standards, research proven best practices, and the mission and vision of the school. These three elements anchor a coherent program of study articulated throughout the grades. To facilitate high achievement in mathematics, Seven Generations provides all students the opportunity to engage in challenging tasks that balance conceptual knowledge, procedural fluency, and problem solving skills.

Opportunity to Learn

Seven Generations' math program is structured to allow all students to experience mathematics in a way that is compatible with their learner profiles. Equal opportunity includes both high expectations for all and the supports students require to meet them. Students are grouped for math, within and between grade levels, to enable students with similar needs to be instructed together. All math groups are given opportunities to interact with grade level standards in engaging ways. Students may move between groups as their needs change.

Math programming at Seven Generations incorporates instructional strategies aligned with research on effective differentiation to meet individual needs. Frequent formative assessments assist teachers in scaffolding instruction and choosing tasks to build upon students' prior knowledge. A school-wide assessment process involves benchmark testing at a minimum of two times per year. This benchmarking allows teachers to identify students most likely to benefit from extra support, including explicit instruction, clear models, extensive practice, and abundant feedback. Mathematically gifted students are allowed to progress through the program at an accelerated pace.

Coherent Programming

Seven Generations balances the needs of individual learners with a curriculum aligned with the Pennsylvania state standards, following a focused and coherent progression

articulated throughout the grades. Seven Generations' math program is comprehensive, connecting all of the curriculum focal points identified by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. When planning individual lessons, teachers strive to organize mathematics in a way that enables fundamental ideas to connect and form an integrated whole. The SGCS math programs are designed to enable the majority of students to be prepared to enter an Algebra 1 course.

To support a coherent instructional program, Seven Generations teachers may use textbooks, work texts, or workbooks; however, the Seven Generations' curriculum is not driven by any specific publisher. All prepared materials are chosen considering best practices in mathematics education and used in alignment with Pennsylvania standards. Current research supports materials that emphasize thoroughly developing students' proficiency in a limited number of key areas at each grade level.

Balanced Instruction

Seven Generations' math instruction enables children to understand key concepts, develop automaticity and fluency in computation, and use competencies to solve problems. Although addressed separately for the purposes of explanation, these three components are mutually supportive; learning each is dependent upon the others. Student curiosity and creativity is developed using both real-world experiences and contexts that are purely mathematical.

Mathematics instruction at Seven Generations focuses on helping students construct conceptual understanding. Conceptual development facilitates learning with understanding and helps students develop into autonomous learners. Various hands-on models are used to help students develop core concepts, such as place value, equivalence, proportionality, function, and rates of change. Teachers make clear connections between mathematical topics and they stress logical reasoning and flexible thinking throughout their lessons. Students have ample opportunities to explain and represent mathematical ideas, using mathematics to model and predict real-world phenomena.

To develop mathematical proficiency, Seven Generations' students are provided ample practice in automatic recall of basic facts and fluency with standard algorithms. Arithmetic and computation do not dominate the math program, but are recognized as necessary skills that enable students to work with higher level concepts. Seven Generations' teachers understand that overuse of calculators can impede the development of automaticity and fluency in computation, but that technology can be a valuable support for problem solving, afford access to powerful visual models, and facilitate higher level thinking.

Seven Generations values problem based learning while recognizing the importance, strengths, and limitations of various types problem solving. Three types of problem solving are incorporated into math instruction:

- Problem solving exercises, designed to help students recognize patterns and solutions of a specific type or to stimulate cognitive dissonance leading to development of a new concept. Exercises usually have one correct answer and are abundant in packaged math programs.
- Open-ended problems, which allow students to apply their skills and creativity in mathematical situations with more than one correct answer.
- Real world contexts, which allow students to experience math as a meaningful human activity. Problem solving in the real world is integrated into the EIC units at each grade level, but can also involve many other meaningful applications of mathematics.

Research shows that problem solving activities are most successful when specific strategies and supports are used. At Seven Generations' teachers are expected to carefully plan problem solving activities, to ensure students possess the skills necessary to address the problem. Teachers must also monitor lesson execution to keep students focused on mathematical goals and find ways to support students without reducing the complexity of the activity or reducing the demands of the task. Students are provided ample time to discuss problems with each other and learn from their peers by questioning, clarifying, and justifying. Open-ended activities conclude with teachers providing students with clarity, connections, and closure to make the mathematics apparent and meaningful.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Seven Generations provides a social studies program aligned with its mission to promote citizenship in a culturally rich atmosphere that celebrates the expansive world around us. The social studies program uses research proven best practices to support the Pennsylvania standards in History, Geography, Civics, and Economics. Seven Generations' social studies program is designed to help students acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them become thoughtful participants in their communities, involved citizens of a diverse nation, and stewards of an interdependent world. To this end, the social studies curriculum is coordinated between grade levels, and integrated with other subject areas using Big Ideas and Essential Questions in units that are often connected by local environmental contexts using the EIC model.

Meaningful Instruction

Seven Generations makes social studies meaningful for students by structuring units around enduring understandings, essential questions, and important ideas. Challenging social studies instruction includes disciplined inquiry and in-depth investigation of a few targeted topics at each grade, with deep processing and detailed study of each topic. Key social studies concepts and themes are developed in depth as students acquire skills in information gathering, communication, and data analysis.

Students must understand both content and concepts if they are to develop sophisticated ideas. Content skills and factual knowledge are embedded throughout meaningful social studies investigations, rather than taught in isolation. Teachers use discussions, debates,

authentic documents, community investigations, simulations, research, and written reports to help students construct understandings in the social studies program.

Hands On, Minds On Investigations

Students work individually and collaboratively in hand-on, minds-on activities. Rather than just learn about the actions and conclusions of others, students at Seven Generations also make decisions, solve problems, and reach their own understandings. Lessons may include explanation and modeling from the teacher, but students are additionally given opportunities to ask and answer questions, discuss or debate implications, and participate in compelling projects that call for critical thinking. A core component of the integrated units is creating solutions to community problems through service learning, providing a venue for students to make a difference in their world.

Integrated and Interconnected Learning

The Seven Generations social studies curriculum is comprehensive and integrated. Students investigate human experiences from all over the world, understanding the past, linking to the present, and looking ahead to the future. Students at Seven Generations are taught to consider issues from a global perspective, exploring the interconnectedness of the human and natural environments. At Seven Generations, integrated investigations provide opportunities for students to conduct inquiry, develop and display data, synthesize findings, and make judgments. Social studies is connected to other disciplines, including the arts, sciences, and humanities. Integrated investigations also provide a context for students to effectively use technology, read to learn, and use written communication skills.

Values

Throughout the Seven Generations social studies program, students are taught to think critically and make reasoned decisions about a variety of issues, assessing the merits of competing arguments and attentive to the interrelated nature of problems and ideas. Students engage in experiences that develop fair-mindedness by exposing students to opposing points of view. Through debate and analysis, students learn to construct and identify well-supported positions. Sensitivity to cultural similarities and differences is fostered and teachers seek to develop a sense of individual and social responsibility. Students explore the values embodied in our democratic form of government, including justice, equality, freedom, and the common good.

SCIENCE

Through its science programming, Seven Generations Charter School furthers its mission to help students become stewards who embrace the world, using hands on learning in both the community and the classroom. Most importantly, Seven Generations science programming reflects current educational research and is based on the state Science and Technology, Environment and Ecology standards. Using the EIC model, science is integrated with other subject areas using Big Ideas and Essential Questions in units that are connected by local environmental contexts, whenever possible. The science

curriculum is coordinated between grade levels, covering the major science disciplines and the addressing the broad conceptual themes common to them all.

Scientific Inquiry

At Seven Generations, science instruction helps students develop the ability to think and reason as scientists. Teachers build upon students' conceptual frameworks and accommodate individual differences as students construct an understanding of the natural world, the history of science, and well-established laws and theories. The scientific contributions of prominent individuals from various backgrounds and ethnicities are recognized and valued. Through an understanding of science as a discipline, students discover that creativity is a vital ingredient in producing the ever-changing body of scientific knowledge. Students also learn to appreciate the importance of skepticism when evaluating their own work and the work of others, seeking empirically based answers that are logically consistent.

Inquiry is a most important component of Seven Generations' science. Students act as explorers, interacting with their peers as they do first-hand investigations and problem solving. They learn to reason as scientists by developing and investigating the types of questions that can be answered scientifically. While designing and conducting experiments, students collect evidence from a variety of sources and use appropriate equipment, technology, and tools to collect and analyze data. At Seven Generations, mathematics and communication skills are integrated with science instruction as students develop explanations from data, then communicate and defend their conclusions. The scientific learning cycle is ongoing as students question, explore, and raise new questions.

Community Involvement

The wider community, including parents and community partners, is an integral part of Seven Generations science program. Field trips, speakers, and local partnerships enrich the learning experience. Students are given the opportunity to develop an awareness of science careers and their roles, through meaningful interactions with science professionals in the community. As students consider the broader implications of human actions on the living systems around them, they begin to understand how they can affect the world for good or ill. A main feature of each integrated unit is students creating solutions to community problems through service learning, with the school's core principles of sustainable living, environmental stewardship, and respect for all living things as guides.

Assessment

Evaluation in science takes into account best practices including the use of both formative and summative assessments. Teachers use multiple valid and reliable assessments, which are closely aligned to both standards and the Big Ideas in each unit. Students are assessed on content, process knowledge, and skills, including their ability to design experiments, collect data, and analyze results using mathematics. Important

components of science assessment involve determining students' ability to connect scientific knowledge to the real world and to communicate their findings effectively, orally and in writing.

WORLD LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

We have seen a steady growth and anticipate a continued increase in the need of ELL services for our students. We also recognize the importance of world cultures as it relates to the expansive world around us. In keeping with the Seven Generations Charter School core value of celebrating cultural richness, students will make connections to other content areas while **discovering comparisons** among cultures. The exploration of world cultures, when relevant, will be integrated within the EIC curriculum framework.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION and HEALTH

Seven Generations' Physical Education program is based on the Pennsylvania standards for Health, Safety, and Physical Education. Incorporated into instruction and assessment are:

- Concepts of Health
- Healthful Living
- Safety and Injury Prevention
- Physical Activity
- Concepts, Principles, and Strategies of Movement

The health and nutrition program plays an integral role in the EIC curriculum. Instruction centers on the beneficial effects of healthful practices and good nutrition on learning and behavior. Students learn about human growth and development and the factors affecting development, such as genetics/family health history, cultural values, lifestyle choices. Students develop decision-making and refusal skills to cope with peer pressure. The school organic gardens are used as a teaching aid and outdoor laboratory. By connecting students to the source of their food in everyday situations, teaching them how it is grown, harvested and prepared, they discover the health and ecological benefits of sustainability, care for self, the community and the wider world.

In grades K-3 students develop general understanding of the workings of their bodies and how to keep their bodies healthy. Students study basic human anatomy: major muscles, bones, body systems and their functions. They examine the roles of these body systems in exercise and apply the principles of fitness. Students learn about nutrition, food groups, and how to make healthful food choices. In grades 4 and beyond, students have regular health education coursework involving learning about human body systems and ways to keep the body healthy. Students explore healthy choices starting with their immediate environment to discovering global health issues. Students analyze their family's' health history, fitness, and food choices and extend their understanding to what causes chronic disease, as well as how to take preventative measures in preserving health over time. After grade 5 and beyond, students will have sex education and drug prevention education provided by the physical education teacher in cooperation with the school

nurse, and school counselor. Other health based agencies will be utilized to support our sex education and drug prevention education programs.

The Physical Education curriculum teaches our students to enjoy and increase their self-confidence in movement so that they can become healthy, fit, and embrace physical fitness throughout life. Regular physical exercise is essential to optimal brain functioning and academic performance; therefore we incorporate physical education into the daily life of students at the school. The program is designed to promote responsible social behavior, as well as improve mental health and self-esteem, and guide students to value physical activity for the benefits of health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction. The goal of the physical education class is to involve children in maximum amount of physical activity while achieving skill attainment, learning, and social benefits.

We utilize a mindfulness-based approach to physical education, in alignment with the PA SAS, in which students come into greater awareness of their proximate world in three basic arenas: movement exercises; activity in nature; and play and games, including traditional sports. Through traditional sports and fitness activities, children develop both gross motor skills and manipulative skills. Students participate in a diverse skills practice using independent practice, small group interaction, and whole class involvement. Children learn to analyze the skills involved in sports, as well as to practice injury prevention and safety techniques such as warm-ups, cool-downs, responsible use of equipment, communication with other players, first aid, and considering environmental hazards.

MUSIC

The music program at Seven Generations Charter School provides a variety of musical experiences for all students. The outcomes on which the music curriculum is based are those in the PA SAS.

Planning for, and instruction in, vocal music employs the “Three P” process of preparing, presenting and practicing knowledge and skills in various strands of curriculum, including melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and expression. Subjects learned outside of music are integrated into the music classroom. While learning all songs, students develop an understanding of the context and history of each song and how it fits into our culture. Each musical element to be taught is prepared over the course of a number of lessons by having the students learn songs that contain that element in various configurations. When the students demonstrate readiness to learn the element, by performing it accurately within the context of the preparation songs, it is presented (made conscious) as one segment of a lesson, during which the students gain the ability to identify, name, describe, read, and write it. Over a number of subsequent lessons, the element is practiced by having the students use/apply it in various contexts and configurations, eventually gaining mastery by being able to use it to compose and improvise music.

The “Three P” lesson happens simultaneously in class, with different elements of music. Students have a balance of singing, dancing, composing, improvising, and playing instruments in each class.

VISUAL ARTS

Visual Arts are included in all grade levels. In addition to Art history, Art criticism, and presentation, this content area integrates math, literacy/writing, and science/EIC based on the PA Visual Arts Standards and classroom Core Curriculum Standards.

The instructional methods which have proven to be effective and so will continue to be used in the art room include a mix of direct instruction, teacher lecture, differentiated instruction, modeling, guided practice, cooperative learning, and independent practice that raises student engagement and reduces behavioral issues. Underlying and utilized throughout each art project will be other core skills such as scaffolding, creative expression, and critical thinking (problem-solving, analyzing, and applying knowledge). The Seven Generations Charter School Visual Arts Program supports the development of self-esteem, confidence, discipline and determination, and teamwork through student-centered projects.

B. Describe how your school will meet the educational needs of students with disabilities in accordance with Chapter 711. Describe your projections for special education instructional programs that will be operated directly by the charter school or operated by others under contract with your charter school. List any support staff and related service providers that might be employed directly by the charter school or provided under contract, who will provide required support for students with disabilities receiving special education.

Seven Generations Charter School has designed and will implement the policies and procedures as explained below to address the needs of students identified as students with disabilities as well as students not yet identified.

It is the goal of Seven Generations Charter School to create an environment and a process that allows students with disabilities to be successful in the school’s core curriculum and academic pathways while completing all state-mandated requirements for grade promotion, in the Least Restrictive Environment.

The school, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), will implement the following policies and procedures to ensure that all students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The school will serve students in grades K-12. In all cases, the school, as Local Education Agency, will provide, or make arrangements for the provision of, all needed services (as determined by the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team at the IEP meeting) to students

determined to be eligible for special education in accordance with relevant state and federal legislation.

Comprehensive Support Process for Student Identification & Evaluation

In addition to students identified as disabled upon enrollment (self-identified or identified by incoming student records), SGCS has developed an Evaluation/Re-evaluation Protocol and Support Process. The protocol identifies students based on the following:

1. Teacher referral based on student performance, student participation, communication (or lack of), observations, student responsiveness, and ability to follow directions.
2. Parental request for additional support services.
3. Student request for additional support services.
4. Review of academic progress and achievement (progress reports, grade point average, teacher input, etc.)
5. Monitoring of attendance
6. Direct monitoring of discipline/behavior issues.
7. Any noticeable and/or obvious change in a student's behavior, demeanor, character, or personality.

Students are then referred to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) team. The MTSS team consists of a group of professional personnel who meet to discuss concerns relative to a student's school functioning. Concerns can be academic, behavioral, emotional, and/or social. The team includes the LEA, special education teacher, an administrator, the general education teachers, and the parents. The speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, nurse, and/or school psychologist may be called upon to serve on the MTSS if deemed necessary. Other individuals may be called upon to serve on the MTSS team dependent upon the needs of the student. The student performance is then reviewed using a range of data, culminating with student specific interventions and/or accommodations which are shared with the classroom teachers and parent. These are then implemented within the appropriate settings for which they are designed. The interventions / accommodations are tracked for efficacy and effectiveness. If the student is not making progress then the student will be recommended for a Multidisciplinary Evaluation by a licensed practitioner. All evaluations are documented and the documentation is used to create an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) or a 504 agreement. These plans are used to provide students with disabilities the means to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and equitable access to curriculum, materials and instructional strategies. Seven Generations Charter School will advise parents of, and follow all, Procedural Safeguards as required by Federal law.

IEP Meetings

IEP meetings will be held for all students determined to be eligible for special education services according to guidelines established by relevant state and federal regulations.

IEPs will be updated at least annually or when it becomes necessary during the course of the year. All meetings will be attended by designated members of the school staff including, but not limited to: a special education teacher, a regular education teacher, the local education agency representative, and the parent(s)/guardian(s). Other participants will include, as appropriate, the student, a school psychologist, an ELL teacher, an interagency representative, a vocational technical representative, and/or a Community Agency representative.

Student Records

Confidential student records will be obtained and secured based on the Seven Generations Charter School Policy and Procedure for Records Management, Acquisition, and Confidentiality.

Instructional Strategies, Modification, and Accommodations

The Special Education Department of Seven Generations Charter School will use a range of instructional strategies to provide all necessary support to students with disabilities. Academic support, accommodations, and modifications will be provided based on individual need and include, but are not limited to: modified curriculum delivered in the classroom with the support of a certified special education teacher; team teaching with a special education teacher; computer-based remediation and resource intervention; learning support curriculum materials supervised by certified special education teachers. All special education students follow a roster of curriculum and course offerings that is the same as the regular education student body. The curriculum will be adapted and adjusted based upon the student's IEP. The Special Education staff will monitor progress.

Guiding Principles for Program Modifications

The following 10 principles have been established and should be used to inform all decisions regarding modifications of an individual student's academic program:

1. use a student's strengths to overcome a weakness
2. instruction should take place at the appropriate instructional level
3. instruction should be skill- and strategy-based
4. provide instruction and assignments in manageable chunks
5. use a multiple exposure in multiple context approach
6. teach skills and strategies in meaningful context using concrete materials
7. allow student to use adaptive strategies or aids to perform tasks
8. modify assessments to allow students to demonstrate understanding of material but require students best efforts at all times
9. give immediate feedback to student
10. communicate consistently with members of Special Education Department, the general school faculty and administration, and the parents

Instructional Strategies

Decisions regarding effective instructional strategies can be based on, but not restricted to the following strategies:

- In all content areas, we will determine if the need is related to student difficulties with reading assigned text, student difficulties in completion of written assignments, student difficulties in math calculation or word problems, or behavior modification.

In each academic area, specific strategies are developed in the following categories:

- adapting delivery of instruction, adapting materials/environment, adapting requirements and responses, and assessment.

The IEP team will make final decisions on how an individual student's program should be modified.

Related Services

Students requiring related services as part of their special education program will be provided these services, in terms of frequency and duration, in accordance with the decisions made by the IEP team at the IEP meeting. Seven Generations Charter School will contract with certified, licensed private providers and the Intermediate Unit for these services. Preliminary contacts will be made to several of these entities in order to determine general costs for budgeting purposes. Related services, provided as needed, include, but are not limited to: adaptive physical education, assistive technology/devices, behavior management program/plan, counseling services, hearing therapy, interpreter services, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility, parent counseling/training, physical therapy, psychological services, rehabilitation counseling, school health services, services provided by a mental health agency, social work services, speech/language therapy, transportation, and other services as appropriate.

Evaluation/Re-evaluation Protocol

Seven Generations Charter School, a K-12 charter school, ensures that all students with disabilities who enroll in the school, have the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This includes children with disabilities who are advancing from grade to grade. Free appropriate public education shall also be provided to children who have been suspended or expelled from school in accordance with Title 34 of Federal Regulations (34 CFR), 300.300 (a) and 300.121 (e).

The following policy applies to discipline regarding students with disabilities:

Disciplinary Exclusions of Special Education Students Policy – See Appendix B

English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

Seven Generations is committed to providing a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English Proficiency and the academic standards. State regulation, 22 PA Code 4.26 We provide planned instruction by a qualified ESL or Bilingual teacher and adaptations or modifications in the delivery of content instruction by all teachers based on the student's language proficiency level, the Pennsylvania Language Proficiency standards for ELLs, and the state standards. English Language Instruction is considered part of the basic curriculum.

Program Goals and Objectives:

Goal #1: To use English to communicate in social settings.

Objective:

- 1) By the end of the school year, ELLs will improve and increase their ability to use English to participate in social interactions. This will be evidenced by observation of ESL students in cooperative learning activities, playground interactions and personal conversation.
- 2) By the end of the school year, ELLs will improve and increase their ability to interact, through and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment. This will be evidenced by personal writing journals and book choice with reading log.

Goal #2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas.

Objective:

- 1) By the end of the school year, ELLs will improve and increase their ability to use English to interact in the classroom, evidenced by conversations with ESL teachers, observations of student in cooperative group settings, and observations of students in social interactions, report cards and test results
- 2) By the end of the school year, ELLs will improve and increase their ability to use English to obtain, construct and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form. This will be evidenced by an increase in standardized testing content area scores, a portfolio of student work, and ESL teachers' observations of the ELLs' ability to pose questions and have discussions in content area classes.

Goal #3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

Objective

- 1) By the end of the school year, ELLs will improve and increase their ability to

use the appropriate language variety, register, and genre according to the audience, purpose and setting. This will be evidenced by ELL academic presentations, observations of ELLs social conversations with peers, and conversations with ESL teachers.

- 2) By the end of the school year, ELLs will improve and increase their ability to use nonverbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose and setting. This will be evidenced by observations of ELLs by ESL teachers.

The success of the ESL program is measured by: ELLs increasing scores within their level of the program, ELLs testing to the next level of the program, and ELLs testing out of the program as evidenced by yearly English proficiency testing. Success is also measured by an increase in academic scores on a content area standardized test. 22 Pa. Code § 403; No Child Left Behind Act, 20 U.S.C.A. § 6841. The ESL teacher also looks at student portfolios and narratives to demonstrate progress of each ESL student.

Identification of ELLs

Identification of students for placement in an ELL instructional program begins with the Home Language Survey (HLS), which must be given to each child enrolled at Seven Generations. The HLS is given one time and remains in the student's permanent record file. If the HLS identifies the student as a person whose home language is other than English, additional questions that relate to language proficiency may be asked. If it is determined that a child is a person whose home language is other than English, further screening is warranted.

Students with a home language other than English who are newly enrolled without educational records are given the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) by the ESL Instructor to assess them for placement in language instructional program for ELLs. Students with educational records (from any state), who meet two of the following criteria, are exempted from the formal W-APT.

- Final grades of B or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies).
- Scores on district-wide assessments that are comparable to Basic performance on the PSSA.
- Scores of Basic in Reading, Writing, and Math on the PSSA or equivalent assessment from another state.

Placement of ELLs

The W-APT results are only one of the indicators for placement in the Seven Generations ESL Program, and must be used in combination with the above multiple criteria, if available, to determine placement in the appropriate level of the ESL program. Educators must use the English Language Proficiency levels described in the Pennsylvania standards to place students in the ESL Program. All ELL instructional placements must

be age and grade appropriate. Additionally, ELLs must be given equal access to all educational programs, opportunities, and extra-curricular activities in the same manner as for all students. The level of support offered to each student is aligned with the state guidelines.

Instructional Models and Programming Accommodations for ELLs in General Education Classrooms

Seven Generations' ESL Program is focused on developing literacy in English and offers both ESL Push-in and ESL Pull-out support from an ESL certified support teacher. The language of instruction is English. The language of content instruction is English adapted to the student's proficiency level and supplemented by gestures and visual aids. The ESL teacher may also provide clarification and translation as needed. Language arts instruction is often focused on grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills. In a pull-out setting, students with similar language skills may be grouped together. If a student is pulled out of the classroom for ESL instruction, this should not be scheduled in such a way that the student is pulled from instruction in other core content areas, such as math or social studies. ESL instruction, especially for students at the lower proficiency levels, can replace Language Arts classes for ELLs. In this case, an ESL certified teacher provides direct English language instruction, using the PA Academic Standards (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) and the English Language Proficiency Standards to ELLs. Seven Generations' ESL teacher will offer staff development related to ESL as part of the Professional Development Act 48 Plan. Regular education teachers must provide appropriate accommodations to instruction and assessment.

Criteria for Program Exit

ACCESS for ELLs stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to State for English Language Learners. This large-scale test addresses the academic English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards at the core of the WIDA Consortium's approach to instructing and evaluating the progress of English language learners.

This annual state ELP assessment of ELLs in grades K-12 is required by Federal Law. Seven Generations will administer this test annually to measure progress and/or attainment of the student's English language proficiency for each language domain. Students with identified disabilities may have state-approved accommodations as outlined in their IEPs, as long as they do not invalidate the assessment. ACCESS score results are to be maintained in the student's permanent record folder.

Seven Generations uses the exit criteria provided by the state for ELLs, using valid and reliable evidence of a student's English language proficiency to exit from an English language instructional program.

Monitoring Process After Exiting From ESL Program

Monitoring is required for two years after a student is exited from the ESL Program. Appropriate records of student progress must be maintained including all or some of the

following: periodic review of grades; local assessments; PSSA scores and teacher observations.

Teachers may offer support to monitored students, as they would for any student seeking assistance with classroom work, instruction, or assessment. Monitoring is not considered an extension of the ESL Program; therefore, exited students being monitored are not to be reported to the state or federal government as ELLs for the purposes of acquiring funding. Seven Generations will use the monitoring guidance and forms found on the PDE website.

Program Evaluation

Seven Generations will review the effectiveness of the ESL Program annually to make sure that all components are aligned and working effectively to facilitate the acquisition of English language and academic achievement defined by the PA academic standards. PSSA and ACCESS test scores will be used for program review and to evaluate improvement.

Procedures for Gifted Students

Seven Generations Charter School strives to provide appropriate programming that addresses the gifted learner's need for accelerations and/or enrichment. While as a charter school, Seven Generations is not required to comply with Chapter 16 of Pennsylvania Code 22 for Special Education for Gifted Students, as our mission stipulates, we offer an individualized instruction program that enriches all learners, including gifted.

C. What teaching methods will be used? How will this pedagogy enhance student learning?

SGCS teaching methods will be those that best support a curriculum based on student-driven inquiry, interdisciplinary learning, and real-world projects. To this end, teachers will be called upon to be creative, flexible, and dynamic collaborators, employing a variety of teaching methods. These methods will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

Learner-Driven, Inquiry-Based Instruction

Teachers will provide rich opportunities for student inquiry, such as frequent exposure to the natural world and to real-world materials and artifacts. Students will be given the freedom to explore their surroundings, to make discoveries, and to ask questions. Teachers will serve as guides who, rather than providing immediate answers, will instead empower students to draw on their own knowledge and skills to learn how to find answers to their own questions. This will lead to a high degree of student engagement, as children are natural explorers and questioners. And because students' own curiosity about

the world will guide instruction, they will be deeply invested in, and will derive true meaning from, their learning experiences.

Project-Based Instruction

Inquiry-based instruction will often lead to project-based instruction, as some student-generated questions will be complex enough to warrant intensive investigations. Interest will be high as students set out to explore the causes of, and find solutions for, problems in their own environment. The knowledge that students will gain and apply throughout the project process will be meaningfully acquired and therefore deeply understood. Students will also benefit from the collaborative nature of project based learning, as they must become cooperative, flexible, perspective-taking partners in the project, working not only with their peers, but with community collaborators as well. Through their participation in real-world projects, students will gain a vital sense of self-efficacy as they experience their capacity to both initiate and accomplish something of true importance.

Interdisciplinary [Integrated] Instruction

As discussed in detail previously in this document, all disciplines will be integrated around common themes. Rather than teach individual subjects in isolation, teachers will weave the strands of all subjects into single lessons—an approach that mirrors real-life. In the later grades, this will mean that teachers of different subjects will engage in intensive collaboration. Students' acquired knowledge will be continually reinforced as they encounter it again and again from a variety of perspectives. In addition, students will become creative thinkers as they are called upon to synthesize seemingly disparate subject matter, to see broad connections, and to find multi-faceted solutions to problems.

D. School calendar and hours of school operation as per section 1715-A(9)

SGCS calendar will provide 180 days of mandated instruction and meet all hours required by PDE. The school day at Seven Generations Charter School will begin at 8:40 a.m., and end at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Students will be dismissed at 1:45 p.m. on Wednesdays.

The early student dismissal time on Wednesdays will provide our teachers with two hours of uninterrupted collaboration and planning time per week. We believe that this collaboration time is essential to our mission.

4. School Accountability:

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

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of our educational program in meeting PDE targets, students at SGCS will take required PSSA tests. PSSA participation rates will be examined, both overall as well as for all measurable subgroups. We will strive for a 100% participation rate for all student subgroups on the PSSA. Students who are absent during the PSSA will be able to make up those sections during the “Make Up Testing Window.”

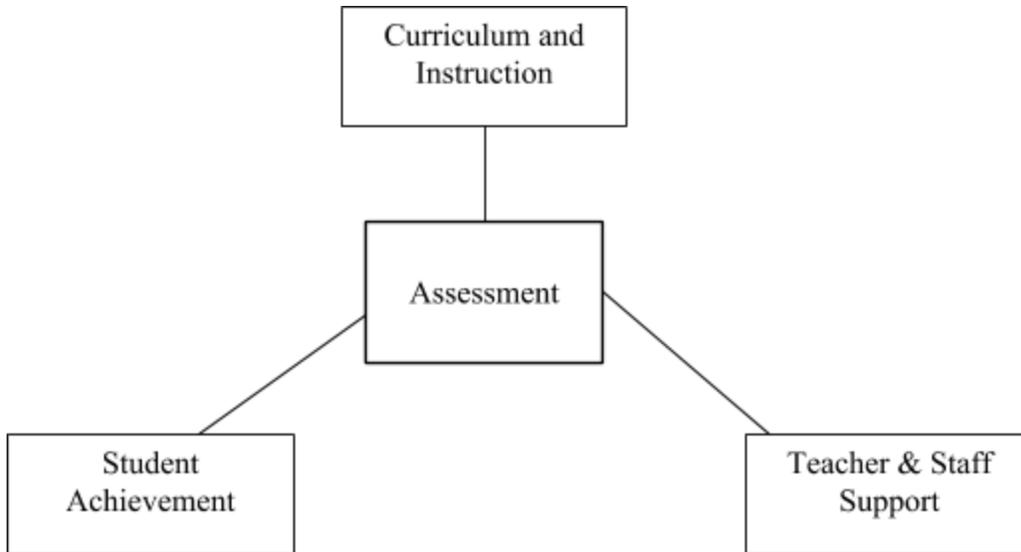
In regards to PSSA performance, a qualified team of teachers, administrators and board members will carefully review test data in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This data will also help to drive our curriculum, as it is enhanced and expanded each year.

We will develop a Comprehensive Plan Committee that will set forth goals for the upcoming years. The SGCS Board of Trustees will approve this plan which will include the actions necessary to be implemented, the resources needed and the professional development required to ensure that our instructional staff is a critical part of the improvement activities. It will also include a timeline for updates of the plan to see where it is being effectively implemented and where there might be a need for modifications.

We will use a variety of assessment tools to measure student achievement. In addition to PSSA testing, we will develop, utilize, and maintain authentic assessments that align with our curriculum and mission. We believe the use of authentic assessments, such as portfolios, projects, exhibitions, and presentations will strongly support our mission as we ask students to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate significant application of knowledge. These assessments will be evaluated based on well-prepared rubrics. These will be aligned to PA SAS.

Our aim is to foster and maintain a strong school community. Therefore, it is imperative to give a voice to each group. Periodic surveys will be administered to students, teachers, and parents. This feedback will be assembled and reviewed, along with the other forms of assessment we use to determine the effectiveness of our educational program. Our Comprehensive Planning Committee will be responsible for this level of monitoring, assessment and reporting to the Board of Trustees, the staff and the community at large.

Seven Generations Charter School will employ a centralized and proactive approach towards the continual assessment of the school, its programs and the staff it employs. This approach will help us design and implement any necessary reforms both quickly and effectively. Our assessment program will be the responsibility of the Principal / CEO. The assessment program will involve input and participation from every aspect of the school community and will include the three areas of curriculum and instruction, teachers/staff development, and student achievement. Assessment design for each area will include specific standards and goals, instruments, and timetables.



School Assessment Program

The effectiveness of Seven Generations Charter School will be determined by a number of variables including student achievement data, school comparison to district and state measures, and the extent to which staff, students, parents, and the community are satisfied with our school. These variables will be measured by a variety of instruments including standardized tests, classroom performance measures, and satisfaction surveys. Connecting information gained from these assessments across the school will be the responsibility of the Strategic Planning Committee(SPC).

The SPC will be overseen by an Administrator, at least one Reading or Mathematics Specialist, up to three teachers, up to three parents, and at least two members of the Board. The SPC will meet at least once per month throughout the year. The SPC will:

- Identify and promote those measures and assessments that are appropriate to district, state, and national standards.
- Evaluate and recommend those additional measures and assessments that may be appropriate to the school. These will not include those specific assessments used by classroom teachers to assess student performance on course related materials.
- Establish an assessment timetable that includes the time necessary for preparation, actual dates of assessment administration, and the dates by which results will be available to the school.
- Recommend language for policies to the Board on teacher and staff roles in the administration of the assessments.
- Establish a specific timetable for the consideration and evaluation of assessment results.
- Conduct a timely community-wide discussion of assessment results and solicit input on their possible ramifications in the Annual Accountability Report.

- Develop a set of proposed recommendations that may include reforms and/or revisions.

The SPC will also be responsible for administering the annual survey. The survey will be self-designed. Surveys will assess stakeholders' views on the following key elements related to the mission and vision of the school: school leadership

- instructional staff
- educational program
- school safety and climate.

Qualitative and quantitative data from these surveys will be published in the school's annual accountability report.

An additional school assessment process SGCS will use is the formalized program evaluation structure offered through the SEER organization for schools seeking "EIC Model School" certification. This assessment framework includes a series of instruments and techniques that will allow SGCS staff to conduct both formative and summative evaluations of students' progress and the effectiveness of the EIC Model curriculum at meeting the AYP targets. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), which was developed by SEER, will be used by SGCS as a methodology of consistently and continuously monitoring how its educational staff is providing instruction in the areas of:

- integrated-interdisciplinary programming
- community-based investigations and service-learning activities
- collaborative instruction
- learner-centered and constructivism teaching/learning strategies
- cooperative and independent learning
- using local natural and community surroundings as the context for learning

The CBAM tools include a Stages of Concern (SoC) questionnaire, several different Self-Evaluation Rubrics, and an Innovation Configuration diagnostic instrument.

As SGCS does its ongoing self-evaluation via the CBAM tools, it will also be reviewing and analyzing the data received through the PSSA tests. This combination of PSSA participation and performance, SGCS data analysis of student standardized and authentic assessments, and the SEER EIC Model program evaluation shall provide a significantly strong framework from which to effectively evaluate our school and our educational program and to determine our progress toward meeting AYP targets.

By April 1 of each year, East Penn School District (EPSD), SGCS's chartering district, will notify SGCS if they would like to conduct a curriculum review. This review, if requested, will be completed by the end of the school year. The Curriculum Specialist

will meet with the Curriculum contact from EPSD to review all of the curriculum documents.

SGCS will have an outside review, including a curriculum audit and gathering data to use for school improvement, at each five year mark, beginning in the 2014-15 academic year.

B. How teachers and administrators will be evaluated and the description of our standards for teacher and staff performance.

Seven Generations Charter School's instructional staff will be well-credentialed and experienced professionals who will be committed to the school's mission and vision and to its students. They will be actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the educational program and school operation and will be accountable to all stakeholders for students' academic and social growth. Instructional staff will do their professional and personal best to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of the charter.

Seven Generations Charter School will not discriminate against any staff member on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, or age.

All instructional staff members will be expected to do the following:

- Be committed to the development and delivery of an integrated learning experience that emphasizes an environmental curriculum.
- Be committed to the school's mission/vision and the principles that underlie it.
- Demonstrate expertise in the area(s) for which they are hired.
- Participate broadly and deeply in all aspects of the school.
- Engage with all stakeholders in ways that are respectful and consistent with the school's code of conduct.
- Be punctual and thorough in meeting professional responsibilities.
- Demonstrate success in helping students meet individual and school-wide performance goals.
- Participate in professional development opportunities, incorporating new knowledge and skills in their work.
- Engage with students in student project and work.
- Demonstrate effective classroom management.
- Maintain certifications and other state legal documents

An instructional staff evaluation plan will be developed to ensure the success of continuing professional growth of the staff. The plan will reflect that a consistent flow of information and consistent feedback regarding one's progress is an important step for improvement.

The plan will include, but is not limited to the following:

- Teacher self-assessment and goal setting at the beginning of the school year.

- Ongoing self-assessment and revision of yearly goals.
- A schedule of peer coaching, mentoring, and modeling of effective practices and peer reflection.
- Ongoing formal evaluation by the Principal or designee.
- Meetings with the Principal for feedback based on observations and self-assessments.
- Written evaluations provided up to three times a year.
- Feedback from student satisfaction surveys.
- Mid-year input from the Principal regarding contract renewal.
- Retention or non-retention decisions made by the Principal, subject to Board approval.
- SEER evaluations related to EIC Model School certification [reference previous details regarding SEER's CBAM tools include Stages of Concern (SoC) questionnaire, different Self-Evaluation Rubrics, and Innovation Configuration diagnostic instruments].

Administrative staff will also be held to very high standards based on the Standards for School Leaders created by The Council of Chief State School Officers. The Principal will be evaluated through a similar process conducted by the President of the Board of Trustees or his designees. Evaluation of other administrative staff will be directed by the Principal and designated members of the Board.

Teacher and Staff Development

At Seven Generations Charter School we believe that the professional development of our teachers does not just occur at workshops and seminars but in fact should be a daily part of the life of our school. As such our professional development program for our teachers will include the following:

- Weekly meetings – At least once per school week, teachers in like disciplines will have the opportunity to share information and research on new and updated topics in their specialty area. While the exchange of the information can be informal, a brief written summary of the information will be forwarded to the Principal and Vice Principal for inclusion in a monthly electronic newsletter on teacher development that will be sent to teachers, staff, Board members, and appropriate members of the school community.
- Participation in professional organizations – Teachers are encouraged to participate in the activities of any local charter of their professional organization. Participation in activities such as conferences will be subject to availability of school funding. All teachers will be encouraged to develop, submit and present papers or presentations at local or national conferences. Recognition of these activities will also be shared via electronic newsletters.

Teachers will be provided with a variety of in-service, professional development, and Act 48 opportunities, including but not limited to the following:

- In-service days (3) prior to the first day of school for students
- two hours of curriculum work and/or professional development on Wednesday afternoons
- EIC Training
- Consultation with professional and academic experts and advisors in the community.

C. How we plan to hold our school accountable to the parents of the children attending your school

Seven Generations Charter School sees the support and guidance given to our students by families as one of the most critical components of our students' success. In many ways we view our role with families as a partnership. While we provide the resources necessary for student intellectual development, it is those around the student at home and out of the school that will make the difference about whether or not students truly take advantage of these resources.

With regard to progress reports, parents will receive the following:

- Progress reports, with written teacher comments, to indicate each student's achievement (at least 3 times a year)
- Standardized test scores when appropriate.

Parent conferences will be held at least two times a year in order to provide feedback. As needed, parents will be called to the school for in-person meetings with instructional staff and administration to address problems or concerns that arise regarding student progress. Continued feedback will be available to parents online to constantly inform them of the educational needs of our students.

As will be explained in more detail in Section II 1.E, parents, students and community members will receive a School Accountability Report (SAR) annually. The intention of the SAR is to provide our stakeholders with the means of monitoring our progress towards meeting our goals. In addition to student achievement information, the report will include standardized test scores, student achievement data, school climate and safety reports, teacher qualifications, average class size, and attendance.

Parents and interested stakeholders will receive hardcopies of the SAR and a link to it also will be accessible from the school's website. We will also schedule parent forums to provide feedback. We will post all scheduled meetings and minutes on our web site. We will also provide for all of our parents annually the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) notice. This too shall be posted on our web site. All regular Board meetings will be held in accordance with the Sunshine Act.

Seven Generations Charter School will provide parents with a number of opportunities to express their feelings and provide input into the operation of the school including staff performance and progress towards goals. In addition to Board meetings and teacher conferences, parents and stakeholders will be able to provide input through school organizations including a Parent Teacher Organization.

Parent/Teacher/Community Organization (PTO)

At Seven Generations Charter School (SGCS) it is our intention to provide our parents with every opportunity possible to participate in school activities, events, and to have input on matters of importance to them and their children. One of the vehicles for this involvement will be through the formation of a PTO. Any SGCS parent, teacher, or community member will have the opportunity to be a member of this board. The PTO will be responsible for the following:

- making recommendations to the administration on subjects of importance to students and parents
- supporting the school by organizing school-wide projects, activities, and parent volunteer programs that foster the school's mission.

The PTO will operate by bylaws and rules of operation. The PTO will interface with the school through the Principal or his/her designee.

Elections for the PTO offices will be held according to the group's bylaws. General meetings for the board will be held on a schedule determined by the elected representatives and are open meetings to the public. Notices of meetings will be posted at the school at least two weeks in advance. SGCS will follow rules regarding background clearance checks for activities carried out by parent volunteers.

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

Seven Generations Charter School plans to contract with an external management company for assistance with financial management and other management functions of the school. The external management company, working closely with the school's Principal, will furnish the following financial documents and statements to the Board Treasurer on a monthly basis:

- Statements of income and sources and uses of funds (monthly and cumulatively for the fiscal year to date)
- Monthly balance sheets

The Treasurer will present these statements to the Board at the monthly meetings, and the Board will review these monthly statements to determine (taking into consideration recommendations of the external management organization) if any changes need to be made to the then-current Approved Operating Budget.

Seven Generations Charter School will submit to all financial audits and comply with all required audit procedures, including an annual audit by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Comptroller's Office. Specifically, we will submit the following:

- **Annual independent financial audit:** Seven Generations Charter School will be audited annually by an independent certified public accounting firm according to the same guidelines applicable to public school systems in Pennsylvania. The cost of the independent audit shall be borne by Seven Generations Charter School. Copies of the audit will be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education within 180 days of the end of the fiscal year.
- **Annual report/program audit:** At an agreed-upon number of days after the end of each school year, Seven Generations Charter School will submit a report prepared by an independent certified public accountant which attests to: a) the accuracy, validity and reasonableness of academic achievement and programmatic results reported by Seven Generations Charter School to the Pennsylvania Department of Education; and b) Seven Generations Charter School's compliance with the provisions of the charter. This performance information will be used in assessing any renewal option for the charter.

D. Description of our system for maintaining school records and disseminating information as required under the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

Please refer to Policy on Maintaining student records – See Appendix C

Please refer to Access to Educational Records Policy 216 - See Appendix D

E. Description of our system for maintaining accurate student enrollment information as required under section 1730-A, Enrollment and Notification.

Seven Generations Charter School recognizes that charter school funding is based on enrollment; therefore, an accurate child count is necessary.

The school will develop a system for maintaining up-to-date student enrollment data, which will be essential in completing the required Pennsylvania Department of Education and School District child accounting forms (including, but not limited to, the PPS STARS System, PDE-3059CS Instructional Time Summary, PDE-30262C Annual Attendance Membership Report, and PDE-3002CS Summary Report of Aggregate Days Membership).

The school will maintain accurate records, which will include the basic data for each student that is needed to complete child accounting forms and other student data forms to be submitted to the Department of Education. This basic data includes the following:

- Student name
- Names and addresses of parents or legal guardians
- Nonresident status of student
- Date of birth
- Sex
- Ethnic code
- Grade level
- Entry code
- Entry date
- Withdrawal code
- Withdrawal date
- Exceptionality code

Seven Generations Charter School also intends to use a student information software system, such as Administrators Plus or Power School, to track enrollment data to make sure that enrollment figures are consistently up-to-date, reflecting new students and any withdrawals.

Based on this data, Seven Generations Charter School will notify the student's school district of residence within 15 days of enrollment through the use of Notification Form developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Seven Generations Charter School will also mail each affected school district (and any other district that so requests) a copy of the Seven Generations Charter School charter, charter application, and annual reports. Should a dispute arise with the school district of residence over the child's residency, Seven Generations Charter School will work with the school district and PDE to ensure that the resolution process outlined in Section 1730-A is followed.

5. Student Evaluation:

A. Describe plans to evaluate student performance.

We will use a balanced set of assessment tools to measure student achievement. In addition to PSSA testing, we will develop several authentic assessments that align to PA standards. We believe the use of authentic assessments, such as profiles, portfolios, projects, exhibitions, and presentations will strongly support our mission as we ask students to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate significant application of knowledge. These assessments will be evaluated based on well-prepared rubrics. These will be aligned to PA standards.

Students at Seven Generations Charter School will also be evaluated using standardized tests, teacher-made tests, and informal assessments. The standardized tests will be nationally normed, valid, reliable and culturally sensitive. Data obtained from all of our assessments will be used to systematically track progress with regard to our goals and the extent to which we are meeting the educational needs of our students.

Students will be assessed in required academic subject areas. In all areas we will use the following:

- Student record including general demographics, previous standardized test scores, and interest inventories.
- Standardized tests, which may include but not be limited to the following:
 - PSSA – Reading, Writing, Math and Science
 - Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
 - Local Standards Aligned Benchmark
 - Progress Monitoring System
- Authentic assessments, which may include classroom portfolio information, such as recorded voice and video samples, written works, and artwork. This will also include teacher evaluations that consist of rubrics and narrative evaluations of work.
- A formal IEP monitoring of the paperwork of students with exceptionalities.

This information will be accessible to our teachers through a computer software system that will be selected by the school. The system will provide teachers with the ability to input information on student performance that can then be used to make modifications in student learning activities. This information will also be shared across the school with those considering curriculum and instruction adjustments and teacher and staff improvements.

The standardized assessments chosen for our students and the calendar for their administration are as follows:

- PA State Assessment – according to PDE required testing window
- Local Assessments – All students will have a baseline assessment in September, continued benchmark in assessments in each marking period.

Standardized test descriptions:

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

The PSSAs are a set of standardized tests used throughout all public schools in Pennsylvania for evaluating the progress of students in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. As will be described, scores are reported on the percentage of students falling within the ranges from below basic to advanced.

Benchmark and Progress Monitoring

Seven Generations Charter School will utilize a benchmark and progress monitoring system for math and literacy based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment. Benchmark proves assess all students three times per year for universal screening (early identification), general education progress monitoring, and AYP accountability. Special Education students will participate in a progress monitoring schedule which is more frequent and as per their needs. Strategic and Progress Monitoring probes assess at risk students monthly and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional interventions.

WIDA, WAPT

This reflects all aspects necessary for comprehensive, standards-based assessment of English language proficiency. Developed by ESL experts, this research-based test evaluates the listening, reading, comprehension, writing, and speaking skills of K-12 English Language Learners. To encourage effective communication, addresses both the academic and social aspects of language.

B. Description how student evaluations will be used to improve student achievement and attain the stated learning objectives

We utilize a comprehensive data-driven system to track student data and to help guide the efforts made to meet the following goals and maintain a close examination of the school's design to ensure that the best educational program is in place for student achievement and teacher success. Furthermore, we will use a balanced set of assessment tools to measure student achievement. In addition to PSSA testing, we will develop several authentic assessments that align to our curriculum and mission. We believe the use of authentic assessments such as profiles, portfolios, projects, exhibitions and presentations, will strongly support our mission as we ask students to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate significant application of knowledge. These assessments will be evaluated based on well-prepared rubrics that will be aligned to PA standards.

PSSA data for Seven Generations Charter School will be disaggregated by gender, the number of students who are economically disadvantaged, the number of students with IEPs, and the number of ELL students.

Corrective Actions, if AYP is not met

Seven Generations Charter School will create a School Improvement Plan which will address performance needs. The plan will be developed via a committee of administration, teachers, parents and CLIU 21. Annually we will:

- Review our school improvement plan

We will use input from external experts, such as CLIU 21, to modify the plan. This review process will allow us to determine the extent to which we met our goals and what areas are still in need.

- Reestablish benchmarks.
With guidance from an expert, such as CLIU 21, we will use our committee to reconsider and reestablish those benchmarks used throughout the school. We will accomplish this through a number of processes including the monitoring of benchmarks on a trimester basis.
- Adjust improvement plan.
We would use our school improvement committees to make any additional adjustments throughout the year.
- Modify school improvement plan.
This process would now be considered as an ongoing activity that involves the entire school community. We would modify our plan with the help of an outside expert and would make adjustments based on a variety of information including benchmark data from the previous year.
- Establish committees.
These committees will contain both teachers and administrators and will work with the School Improvement Committee. All will support and promote those instructional and test practice opportunities that are beneficial to the success of students taking the PSSAs.

6. School Community

A. Relationship of School with the Surrounding Community

Seven Generations Charter School will draw students from the East Penn School District and neighboring communities and involve them in its special activities and performances. The school will be actively engaged in creating and maintaining community partnerships with other organizations in the municipalities to encourage the very best in education for the benefit of all residents.

Students, teachers and community partners, including nonprofit and arts organizations, universities, local farmers and businesses, will work side by side on lesson blocks, environmental remediation and other beneficial ventures that will form the backbone of the educational curriculum.

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

One of the key elements of our program will be to engage whole families in the education of the student. Parents will have many opportunities to help and tutor in the classroom, assist teachers with administrative duties, collaborate on fundraising activities, and contribute their individual talents and expertise to enrich students' educational experience.

Research clearly demonstrates that there exists a high correlation between student success and parent involvement. To this end, Seven Generations Charter School will emphasize this connection as an on-going priority.

C. Procedures to Review Complaints of Parents Regarding the Operation of the School

Our parents have the right to expect that we will demonstrate complete accountability to our academic and non-academic goals and that we will adhere to our mission and vision as they are outlined in this charter. We recognize that, in any community, a certain number of problems arises out of differences in opinions and learning to work together; and that a minimal number of oversights, which can negatively impact stakeholders, naturally occur as a school grows.

We encourage parents to work with their teacher to resolve student issues.

However, in extreme cases where resolution between a parent and a Seven Generations Charter School staff member is not satisfactory—no matter how many efforts are made — a hearing may be requested of the school administration.

Any stakeholder who does not agree with the decision of the administration may submit a grievance.

The committee will develop a procedure for hearing grievances. The procedure for filing a grievance will be as follows:

1. A grievance summary is completed and submitted to the school administration. The grievance letter should contain identifying information, the complaint, a summary of facts, a request of recourse, and any steps taken to address the problem prior to appealing to the school administration.
2. The school administration will determine whether the grievance merits a hearing and will respond within a week.
3. Complaints or allegations that do not merit a hearing are turned over to the appropriate staff member for resolution.
4. Grievances that merit a hearing will be heard within 30 days.
 - The interested parties and the school administration attend hearings.

- The school administration will render a decision and, if necessary, will review it with the Seven Generations Charter School legal advisor who will approve the recommendations.
- On rare instances, the school administration will pass on its decision and/or recommendations to the Seven Generations Charter School Board of Trustees for final ratification.

7. Extra-Curricular Activities

A. Program of Activities

Research has proven that students involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to become leaders, to willingly complete tasks, and to voice their opinions. Extracurricular activities also allow students to grow socially and emotionally and to explore different interests. All of these gains help to enhance their futures. Seven Generations Charter School will offer a variety of after-school activities that extend and complement in-school time activities. We will provide programs for each student depending on their academic needs. After-school activities will include the arts, as well as academic, enrichment, and recreational programs. Recreational and enrichment programs will be designed for students interested in enhancing skills and knowledge or exploring new activities.

B. Agreements with the Local School District

We have every intention of working with the identified districts regarding the participation of our students in extracurricular activities within the East Penn School District. Also as mentioned later under II.3.B, Seven Generations Charter School is committed to developing a model partnership with the school district, for example, exploring ways in which Seven Generations Charter School extra-curricular opportunities can be shared and coordinated.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Statement of Need:

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

It is the belief of the Founding Members of SGCS that our nation's future relies on a well-educated public to be wise stewards of the very environment that sustains us, our families and communities, and future generations all around the world. We believe that it is environmental-based education which can best help our students make the complex, conceptual connections between economic prosperity, benefits to society, environmental health, and their own well-being. Ultimately, the collective wisdom of our students as

future citizens, gained through their education, will be the most compelling and most successful strategy for environmental management.

Research has shown enormous benefits from environmental-based education. In its simplest form, when integrated into a curriculum, environmental-focused education demonstrably improves student achievement in not only a subject area such as science, but in all subject areas. Such an increase is likely due to the fact that environmental-based education connects classroom learning to the real world. Students, when given a choice, will naturally gravitate towards environmental-based learning projects and activities. The Corporation for National and Community Service reports that more than 50 percent of the service-learning programs they fund for schools and their students are focused on the environment.

When integrated into the core curricula or used as an integrating theme across the curriculum, environmental-based education has a measurably positive impact not only on student achievement in obvious areas like science, but also in reading (sometimes spectacularly), writing, math, and social studies. Studies done repeatedly demonstrate that schools that taught the core academic subjects using the environment as an integrating context also demonstrated:

- Reduced discipline and classroom management problems;
- Increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and,
- Greater student pride and ownership in accomplishments.

Even more importantly for many people outside of the general field of education, environmental-based education employs and enhances critical thinking and basic life skills. The National Science Board of the National Science Foundation confirmed the importance of environmental education to student learning in their 2000 report,

[*Environmental Science and Engineering for the 21st Century*](#):

“The twin goals of learning are to acquire knowledge and gain skills such as problem solving, consensus building, information management, communication, and critical and creative thinking. Environmental issues offer excellent vehicles for developing and exercising many of these skills using a systems approach...changes should be [considered] in the formal educational system to help all students, educators, and educational administrators learn about the environment, the economy, and social equity as they relate to all academic disciplines and their daily lives.”

Likewise, the [*2005 Report to Congress*](#) submitted by the National Environmental Education Advisory Council on the status of environmental-focused education in the United States found that “environmental education, with its emphasis on critical thinking, interdisciplinary teaching, and learner achievement, is also helping to meet [federally-mandated] educational reform goals.”

Furthermore, business leaders increasingly believe that an environmentally literate workforce is critical to their long term success and profitability, with better environmental practices and improved efficiencies impacting positively on the bottom line while helping to better position and prepare their companies for the future. Charles O. Holliday, Jr., Chairman and CEO of DuPont, spoke for a growing number of his peers

in declaring that: “*an environmentally sustainable business is just good business, given the growing concern for environmental problems across America. A key component of an environmentally sustainable business is a highly educated work force, particularly involving environmental principles.*” As one example on the micro scale, the National Environmental and Training Foundation estimates that environmental-based education about topics such as energy, water and waste management, food production, improved personal health, cleaner working and living conditions, and recycling would save small and medium sized businesses alone at least \$25 billion/year.

Lastly, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation on September 18, 2008, to strengthen environmental education experiences for schoolchildren both inside and outside of the nation’s classrooms. By a bipartisan vote of 293 to 109, the House approved the *No Child Left Inside Act*, H.R. 3036, legislation authored by U.S. Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD). The legislation would improve existing environmental education programs by providing states with resources to train teachers, develop research based programs and create environmental literacy plans to ensure that students understand the role of the environment as a natural resource.

“Environmental education gives our children the tools they need to create a more sustainable, energy-efficient future for this country,” said U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee and author of the original legislation. “By teaching our children about the environment, this legislation will help encourage them to protect it – and prepare them for the green jobs of tomorrow. This is the right thing to do for our students, our economy, and our planet.”

Furthermore, “This initiative will give children opportunities outside the classroom to learn how to become our next environmental leaders,” said U.S. Rep. John Sarbanes, (D-MD). “Through the passage of this legislation, we’ve made real progress in ensuring that environmental education becomes a priority in our schools. I am so grateful to the coalition for all of its hard work.”

Recent studies show that environmental education plays a role in helping boost student achievement. For example, according to the National Wildlife Federation, environmental education can help improve students’ motivation to learn, reduce disciplinary problems in the classroom, build students’ critical thinking and social skills, and bolster students’ performance in other areas of the curriculum, including – but not limited to - math and science. Specifically, H.R. 3036 will enable schools and states to enhance and expand environmental education programs by extending the National Environmental Education Act of 1990, which previously provided funding for teacher training and support programs. H.R. 3036 will also help states develop and implement academic standards for environmental education, and encourage states and schools to use outdoor environmental activities as part of their academic curricula.

The *No Child Left Inside* bill encourages mid-level environmental professionals to become teachers of environmental education which will increase the number of qualified, expert teachers in classrooms. In addition, the legislation will create a competitive grant

program to help non-profits, state and local education agencies, and institutions of higher education create and strengthen state environmental literacy plans.

The *No Child Left Inside Act* is supported by a broad coalition of environmental and education organizations, including the American Recreation Coalition, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, League of Conservation Voters, National Council for Science and the Environment, National Education Association, National Parks Conservation Association, National Science Teachers Association, National Wildlife Federation, North American Association of Environmental Education, Outdoor Industry Association, Wilderness Education Association, Wildlife Conservation Society, and the YMCA of the USA.

As indicated in our mission statement, we are committed to developing a community to create generations of stewards who respect our world and each other. All members of the Seven Generations Charter School community are committed to creating a public education alternative that promotes sustainability and citizenship with an interdisciplinary, individualized, environmental-focused, project-based curriculum that fosters a sense of responsibility to the community and the environment, and promotes equity and acceptance. We believe that the foundation of our rigorous academic program, the research-based “Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Improved Learning” (EIC) curriculum framework, coupled with well-established subject specific programs, can provide Seven Generations Charter School students with this strong foundation while also meeting the future needs of our communities and businesses.

B. Why this model is an appropriate vehicle to address this need

The flexibility of the charter school model is a perfect match for this educational program. The Environment as an Integrating Context (“EIC”) curriculum will address the needs listed above in the following ways:

1. Diversity of teaching methods – This will help to enhance students’ critical thinking, problem solving, cooperative learning, and standard academic learning skills. These diverse teaching methods will include, but may not be limited to:
 - Students learning “in the field” and “off-site” as well as in the classroom
 - Student-directed, learner-centered, inquiry-driven, constructivist projects
 - Experiential, “hands-on” learning
 - Extensive use of outside resources and community partnerships involving local academic institutions, professional organizations, and experts from the business world
 - Significant interdisciplinary approach in all subject areas, including the integration of the Creative Arts into core academic subjects
 - Use of authentic assessments to evaluate students’ proficiencies
 - Adaptation to individual students and their unique skills and abilities

2. Extensive training and ongoing support by the EIC Curriculum Director- SGCS teachers will initially participate in an extensive training utilizing the SEER organization.
3. Collaboration -- SGCS teachers will also be given significant time to work together on instructional plans. A fundamental component of EIC-based learning is collaborative and interdisciplinary instruction and, to that end, SGCS teachers will be allocated adequate time to accomplish their planning needs.
4. Community impact – One of the key components of the SGCS mission statement is its intention to connect its students to their community. With students, faculty and staff coming from communities throughout the Lehigh Valley, the school will have the unique opportunity of carrying its mission to the broadest possible audience.

2. School Demographics:

A. Enrollment Numbers for 2009-2015

The chart below describes the enrollment from opening to June of 2015. We will continue to monitor our enrollment on a yearly basis.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Grade	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
K	47	45	44	45	45	54	54	70
1st	46	45	47	46	44	53	54	66
2nd	36	45	45	44	44	53	52	51
3rd	26	43	45	45	46	45	56	50
4th	25	40	46	44	45	42	43	42
5th	X	43	44	45	45	43	39	26
6th	X	X	43	45	39	44	30	X
7th	X	X	X	37	39	36	36	X
8th	X	X	X	X	32	22	29	X
Totals	180	261	314	351	379	392	393	305

B. The communities where the school will be located

Seven Generations Charter School is located at 154 East Minor Street and 33 East Minor Street Emmaus, PA 18049. Both buildings are within East Penn School District with a

combined population of approximately 30,000. In addition to serving the East Penn School district we currently service 17 school districts within the local area. The metropolitan area that makes up the overall Lehigh Valley region in which the school district resides has a total population of approximately a half million people. The district has one high school, Emmaus High School (for grades nine through 12), two middle schools, Eyer Middle School and Lower Macungie Middle School (for grades six through eight), and six elementary schools (for kindergarten through fifth grade) - Alburdis Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School, Lincoln Elementary School, Macungie Elementary School, Shoemaker Elementary School, and Wescosville Elementary School, and Willow Lane Elementary.

C. Why this location was selected

The Lehigh Valley is diverse in both its socio-economic distributions and its populations. This diversity presents a perfect environment for a school that seeks to unify its students through a curriculum that emphasizes involvement in community and protection of the environment.

The East Penn School District, and Emmaus in particular, was selected as the location of Seven Generations Charter School for a variety of reasons. The original members of the founding group—those who conceived of the idea for the school—are Emmaus residents, active in this vibrant community. They imagined a true community school, located within walking distance to most students' homes and the center of town. This location is also part of an area of the Lehigh Valley rich in natural and community resources—Pool Wildlife Sanctuary, Rodale Institute, South Mountain Preserve, Little Lehigh Creek, the Lenni Lenape Historical Society, farmlands, etc. The close proximity of the school to homes, businesses, and community and natural resources will facilitate the Seven Generations mission of a school committed to environmental stewardship and community involvement.

D. The unique demographic characteristics of the student population

Our student population should mirror that of the local school districts. Based on enrollment data, our student population is comprised of the following demographic characteristics:

American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0%
Asian: 1%
Hispanic: 12%
African American: 9%
Caucasian: 59%
Multi-Racial: 18%

Based on current enrollment data the percentage of pupils who will be eligible for:
Free or Reduced Priced Meals: 35%

English Language Learner Services: 3%
Special Education Services: 15%
Migrant Education Services: 0%

3. District Relations/Evidence of Support

A. Efforts to notify the school district

It has been our intention to work with the East Penn School District throughout the entire process of operating the school, from the initial informing of the community through the daily administration of an active Charter. As such, we ensured that we conducted our early communications with the East Penn communities in a very broad and open way.

Monthly planning meetings held to discuss the school were open to all members of the District and included printed materials that were available to all in attendance. In addition, members of the Founding Group gave brief introductory presentations to each of the local town councils to make them aware of our initiative and good will. This open and inspective way of operating will become a trademark of our relationship with the District.

During the summer of 2008, Seven Generations Charter School officially notified the district superintendent of East Penn of its intent to file a charter application for a school to open in September 2009. A meeting with the superintendent was held to outline our plans, the school design and curriculum, and to clarify our desire to work with EPSD in this process in August. This was followed by an introductory presentation before the entire School Board at the October 27, 2008 East Penn School Board meeting.

B. Efforts to be implemented to maintain a collaborative relationship with the East Penn School District

Seven Generations Charter School (SGCS) will continue to work with the district to be sure that this is a public charter school in the truest sense of the word. The intent of SGCS is to model a partnership approach that will set a new standard and win the trust and support of the communities we serve.

With the potential for our students to come from districts throughout the Lehigh Valley, it will be critical that we establish a plan that would provide us with the most effective means of collaborating with our neighbors.

Seven Generations Charter School has and will continue to maintain relationships with sending districts.

- Annual administrative meetings between SGCS and the East Penn School District.
- Open invitations to curriculum events and informational nights (Gallery Walks)
- Transition planning for students moving onto their next level of education.

- Working in collaboration with sending districts to ensure that student maintenance and acquisition of records.
- Monthly open enrollment nights.
- Monthly public board meetings.

C. Community backing for proposed charter school and its Founding Members group.

One of our goals has been to make the information about Seven Generations Charter School as accessible as possible to all areas of the community. SGCS also hosted community outreach informational tables at local events such as local child care centers, preschools, Lehigh Valley mothers groups. The school has also held monthly enrollment nights, tour and informational sessions, and employment fairs. In addition, SGCS is a member of Pennsylvania Environmental Educators and has presented at their annual conferences. SGCS has partnered with several universities to provide preservice teaching opportunities.

Prior to our original charter we received **674** individually signed Letters of Support from supporters of the SGCS: **266** Letters of Support were individually signed by residents of the East Penn School District and **408** Letters of Support were individually signed by individuals who reside outside of the East Penn School District.

US Representative Charlie Dent submitted a personal Letter of Endorsement in support of SGCS. **State Representative Doug Reichley** submitted a personal Letter of Endorsement in support of SGCS. **State Senator Robert Wonderling** submitted a personal Letter of Endorsement in support of SGCS. **Cindy Feinberg**, Director of Community and Economic Development for Lehigh County, submitted a personal Letter of Endorsement in support of SGCS.

See **Appendix E** for copies of the Letters of Endorsement from the aforementioned elected officials, East Penn residents, and parent and community members demonstrating support of the Seven Generations Charter School.

See **Appendix F** for copies of the individual Partnership Agreement letters written as demonstration of support of the Seven Generations Charter School and as an expressed interest in working with the students, parents, teachers, and staff of the Seven Generations Charter School.

See **Appendix F** for additional information and documentation pertaining to our Community Outreach efforts.

III. FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL

1. How the group came together

The Founding Members Group came together over the course of several months. As the original founders held public informational meetings at various locations, they met many people who understood the value of an integrated environmentally-based curriculum and expressed an interest in helping to make Seven Generations Charter School a reality. The Founding Members group was comprised of people who, first and foremost, were dedicated to the mission, vision, and curriculum of Seven Generations Charter School.

A. Plans to gain community support and recruit community partners

Prior to the school opening in September 2009, the Founding Members group held extensive meetings in the community to gain community support and recruit partners and members of the charter school's Board of Trustees.

B. How community groups have been involved in the planning process

The Founding Members group met with parents and community organizations about the school. The Founding Members group hosted ten community meetings to include parents and community members in the start-up stage of the school planning.

What's more, the Founding Members group held numerous planning meetings that were advertised on the SGCS website, announced at information sessions, and were open to the public. These meetings took place on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 7pm at Unity Church in Emmaus. (The Committee to Create Seven Generations Charter School is not affiliated with Unity or any other religious organization.)

Additionally, members of the Founding Members group and the SGCS Community Outreach committee contacted many East Penn and Lehigh Valley area groups, organizations, universities, and politicians. The following elected officials have written letters expressing their support for Seven Generations Charter School and our educational program:

- State Senator Rob Wonderling
- State Representative Doug Reichley
- US Representative Charlie Dent

The Founding Members group also provided informational presentations to the following local governing boards:

- Upper Milford Board of Supervisors
- Lower Macungie Township Board of Commissioner
- Emmaus Borough Council

The Founding Members group will continue to solicit community ideas for the school during the planning process ahead. Open channels of communications have also been established through our website, through email and via telephone.

2. Governance

A. The requirements of the proposed management organization of the school

As a public school, Seven Generations Charter School will ultimately be responsible to the East Penn School District and the Department of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A Board of Trustees will govern all operations of the school, delegating day-to-day management functions to the school administration and establishing a reporting relationship between the Board and the administration. The board will be responsible for ensuring that the school is run in compliance with the charter application and all applicable laws and for ensuring the school's sustained financial viability. The consensus of a quorum of the members of the Seven Generations Charter School Board of Trustees will be required to take action on the items listed below.

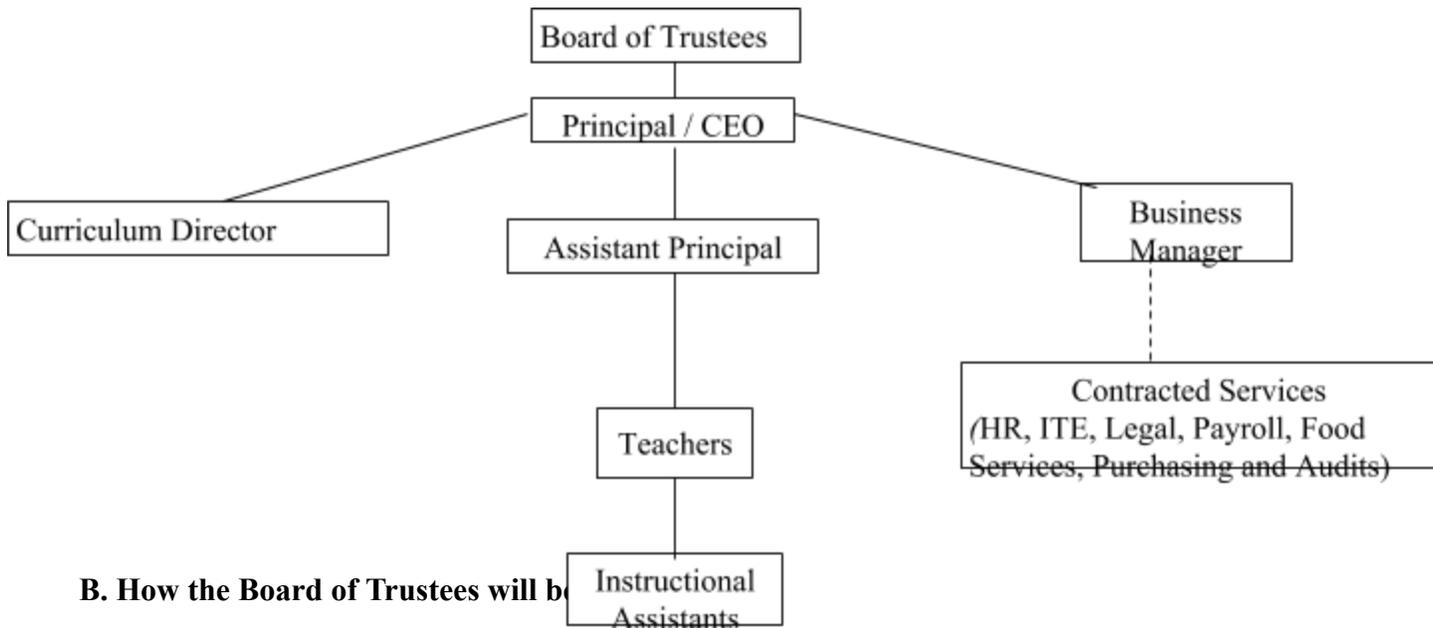
The consent of a quorum of the members of the Board of Trustees of the charter school, duly recorded, shall be used in order to take action on the following subjects:

- School calendar
- Adopting textbooks
- Appointing or dismissing school administrators
- Adopting the annual budget
- Leasing, purchasing or selling of land
- Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones
- Creating or increasing any indebtedness
- Adopting courses of study
- Designating depositories for school funds
- Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount exceeds \$500.00
- Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers, or other employees of the charter school

The organizational chart below demonstrates that the Board will set policy for all operations of the school, having ultimate control and responsibility for maintaining proper relationships between the Trustees and school staff, parents, and members of the community. The Board will retain the right to delegate certain of the operating decisions including day-to-day management to the school administration and his or her designees. The Board of Trustees will be accountable for ensuring that the school is operated in compliance with its charter and all applicable laws and regulations.

Organizational Chart

Seven Generations Charter School



B. How the Board of Trustees will be

In its first year of operation, Seven Generations Charter School's Board of Trustees will be comprised of eleven members chosen by a consensus of the Founding Members group. Some members of the Founding Members group will serve as Trustees. The initial appointments will be for terms of one, two or three years. This will allow for a staggered replacement process of the board in the future. There will be no term limits. The following provisions will govern the selection of the Board of Trustees:

- The Board will consist of five to thirteen members, including at least one parent of a student enrolled in the school. The Principal will be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board.
- The Board of Trustees will elect officers from within its membership.
- All officers of the Board of Trustees will serve three-year terms with re-elections allowable as determined by the founding Board of Trustees.

A copy of the Seven Generations Charter School By-laws is attached to this application as **Appendix G**.

C. The steps to be taken to maintain continuity between the Founding Members group's vision and the Board of Trustees

The founders believe that the key to maintaining long-term continuity between their vision and the Board of Trustees lies in Board development and orientation. Specifically, the board will have designees, whose function will be to manage the Board recruitment process and convey the school's mission and the individual expectations for Board members to all candidates, so that newly recruited Board members enter with a firm understanding of the school's mission, the Members group's vision, and their role within

the Board. An orientation process at the beginning of each new term will also serve to articulate the school's vision to the Board while allowing an opportunity for new and veteran Board members to merge into an effective team.

The Board will develop an annual set of goals and define the Board's course of action. In addition to providing more organization for the Board, the annual goals will allow for greater continuity as Board members leave and new Board members are added.

The topics to be covered through on-going governance training will include but not be limited to the following areas:

1. What Do Boards (and Board Members) Do?
2. The Board/School Administration Relationship
3. Recruiting and retaining the peak-performing board
4. Effective board meetings
5. Accountability and Oversight
6. Long-Range Planning
7. Effective committees
8. What boards should know about fundraising
9. Consensus decision-making

To avoid nepotism and ethical violations, all actions of employment will be done in public session and the Board member will be expected to register a non-vote or abstention on any item by which they have any personal involvement.

D. Description of the Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

Among the broader roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are:

- Maintaining the charter school's mission and vision
- Selecting the charter school administrators
- Supporting the charter school administrators and reviewing their performance
- Ensuring effective organizational planning
- Ensuring adequate resources
- Monitoring the charter school's programs and services
- Enhancing the charter school's public image
- Assessing its own performance

Other specific responsibilities have been outlined by law and are described above and reaffirmed in our by-laws.

E. The steps to be taken in order to facilitate a productive relationship between administrators and teachers

The small size of Seven Generations Charter School will facilitate close working

relationships between administrators and teachers. The school administration will conduct staff meetings to discuss such topics as goals and objectives, professional development, curriculum development, performance appraisal, and other matters of relevance to the school.

F. The Nature of Parental and Community Members Involvement in Decision-making Matters Where Appropriate

The success of Seven Generations Charter School encourages the active participation of all its members in the decision-making process. Therefore, Seven Generations Charter School will provide a variety of avenues for parents, community members, and students to offer input on issues concerning the charter school.

G. By-laws

As mentioned earlier, a draft copy of the by-laws will be found in **Appendix G**.

IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY

1. Financing:

A. Operating Budget

Copies of the Seven Generations Charter School operating budgets and previous audits are attached to this application as **Appendix H**.

B. Purchasing Procedure that Addresses a Competitive Way to Purchase Goods and Services

The purchasing procedures of Seven Generations Charter School will comply with Section 1725-A of Charter School legislation. The goal of the financial procedures will be to provide flexibility while maintaining adequate controls and oversight. The Board of Trustees will approve the financial budget and financial procedures. The School anticipates engaging an independent Business Manager to provide the School with “back-office” and fiscal management services. The Business Manager will oversee the school’s financial system and ensure that budgets are itemized according to the Board’s requirements.

The school administration will be authorized to spend up to \$500 for any single transaction. Expenditures from \$500 to \$5,000 will be permitted when allocated funds are available in the budget category and the school administration and Business Manager will sign off on these expenditures. The Board Treasurer will check to ensure that

competitive bids have been entertained where appropriate. Expenditures over \$5,000 must receive prior Board or Executive Committee approval. The Business Manager or school administration will report on the financial status to the Board of Trustees at each meeting of the Board. The Board will develop additional procedures as the need arises.

C. Fund Raising Efforts to Generate Capital or Supplement Per-Pupil Allocation

The Board of Trustees created a Development Committee, which will coordinate both public and private fundraising efforts. This committee will seek funds through partnerships with local businesses. The school administrators will write proposals for funding from federal, state and foundation funds.

Additionally, the school has obtained its 501(c)3 status which will allow individuals to make contributions to the school on a tax-deductible basis.

D. Description of the Implementation of the Following Required Financial Procedures

The Business Manager or school administrators of Seven Generations Charter School shall deposit the funds belonging to the school in a depository approved by the Board and shall at the end of each month make a report to the Board of Trustees of the amount of funds received and disbursed by him or her during the month. All deposits of school funds by the Business Manager shall be made in the name of the school. The Board of Trustees of the school shall invest school funds consistent with sound business practices.

Authorized types of investments for charter schools shall be:

- United States Treasury bills
- Short-term obligations of the United States Government or its agencies or instrumentalities
- Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits or share account of institutions insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation or the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund to the extent that such accounts are so insured, and for any amounts above the insured maximum, provided that approved collateral as provided by law therefore shall be pledged by the depository
- Obligations of the United States of America or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith of the Commonwealth, or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the political subdivision

- Shares of an investment company registered under the Investment Company of America Act of 1930 (54 Stat. 789, 15 U.S.C. *80a-1 et seq.) as defined by PA 24 PS 4-430.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

Note: All investments shall be subject to the standards set forth in PA 24PS-430.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

The Business Manager shall settle his accounts annually with the Board of Trustees for each year.

An annual audit shall be conducted according to the requirements of Article 24 of the School Code of 1949. Charter School Boards of Trustees are required to follow the requirements set forth for School Boards in this section.

Seven Generations Charter School is planning to implement the policies and procedures defined above. Specifically, the following are examples of the proposed financial procedures that SGCS will follow:

Budgets

No later than 90 days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1), the Business Manager and the school administration will prepare and submit together to the Board of Trustees a proposed budget ("Proposed Operating Budget") for the operation of the school during the ensuing school year. Each Proposed Operating Budget will set forth all of the revenues that the school anticipates receiving, a proposed schedule of fees and charges for services, and all of the expenditures anticipated to be necessary for the operation of the school, both (1) during the ensuing school year and (2) during the succeeding two school years. Each Proposed Operating Budget will further set forth each category of expense, the sources and uses of funds, fund accounting income statement, cash flow, capital expenditures, and any other appropriate items, for the ensuing year and for the succeeding two years. Each Proposed Operating Budget will reflect the school administration and Business Manager's view of the most economical, reasonable methods of operating and maintaining the School during the years to which that Proposed Operating Budget relates.

The Board of Trustees will, after reviewing and analyzing the Proposed Operating Budget, communicate to the Business Manager and the school administration any changes, additions or deletions it believes should be made in such Proposed Operating Budget. After making such changes the Board of Trustees will then approve the Proposed Operating Budget.

It is understood, however, that each operating budget will be an estimate only and that unforeseen circumstances such as, but not limited to, the costs of labor, material, services and supplies, casualty, operation of law, or economic and market conditions may make adherence to the operating budget impracticable, and departures, therefore, may be

required due to causes of the foregoing nature or for other business reasons. Accordingly, if revenues of the school for any year are less than budget or if the school will require any expense category to exceed the corresponding amount in the budget in any year, then the Board of Trustees, school administration, and the Business Manager will meet promptly to determine if an adjustment to the operating budget is necessary.

Financial Statements

The Business Manager will report to the school's Board of Trustees in writing monthly, for the preceding month, with monthly balance sheets, statements of income and sources and uses of funds with respect to the school for such month and cumulatively for the fiscal year to date, as well as any recommended changes to the then-current approved operating budget that the Business Manager or school administration considers necessary or appropriate. The Board of Trustees and the administrators will examine the monthly financial statements to ensure that the school is meeting the annual approved budget for the fiscal year. The financial statements will be used as a tool to assist the Board of Trustees and school administration in making decisions that ensure the school's financial viability while meeting the school's mission.

Audit

The Board Treasurer, or the Finance Committee, in consultation with the Business Manager and school administrators, will engage an accounting firm or other appropriate third party to perform an audit of the books and records maintained for the school in accordance with applicable regulations. This appointment will have to be approved by the Board of Trustees. The audit is to be completed and a report to be furnished within 90 days after the end of the school's fiscal year (June 30). The annual school audit will be conducted according to the requirements of Article 24 of the School Code of 1949, using the requirements set forth for school boards.

Operating Account

The Business Manager will establish, on an agency basis for the school, one or more bank accounts, with mutually acceptable financial institutions (the "Operating Accounts"). The Business Manager will cause all gross revenues to be deposited into the Operating Accounts, and cause all operating expenses (including, without limitation, payments of operating expenses, payroll, and payroll taxes) to be paid out of the Operating Accounts for and on behalf of the school. The Operating Accounts shall be used exclusively in connection with the operation of the school.

Working Capital

The Business Manager's personnel shall provide assistance to the school to seek a line of credit facility with a financial institution to be utilized to fund seasonal or other cash flow deficiencies.

Payroll

The Business Manager will provide "back-office" accounting services for the school, including the following:

- Payroll services, including processing all payroll payments to employees, issuing W-2 statements and maintaining payroll records, payment of all Federal, State, and local payroll taxes, and all employee benefit expenditures
- Accounts payable services (including, but not limited to, the processing thereof)
- Accounts receivable services
- Maintaining accounting system records and reports
- Petty cash management
- Tracking of expenditures for furniture, fixtures and equipment

The school will employ appropriate on-site record keepers as necessary to provide the Business Manager with operational data.

2. Facility: School Campus address

The school campus is located at 154 E. Minor Street and 33 E. Minor Street in Emmaus. The facility has been chosen for the rich curriculum opportunities it has to offer. In a two mile radius we have access to: historical buildings, a thriving business district, local PA forest, the pond, creeks, meadows, as well as borough facilities and other local agencies. All of these areas will serve as essential contexts for learning in our curriculum framework.

A. Site Design

Our site has undergone numerous renovations to make an appropriate learning environment while ensuring that it meets all pertinent code requirements, including school code, ADA compliance, township ordinance requirements for utilities, local building codes, and all other federal, state and local health and safety laws and regulations. See **Appendix I** for site design and schematics of the building prepared by local architects.

B. Facility Maintenance

The school will hire its own custodian/maintenance staff. Our lease agreements outline the responsibilities of each party to maintain the safety, cleanliness, and upkeep.

C. Acquisition of Facility/Land

SGCS will be evaluating the options of owning its own facility as opposed to a long-term lease arrangement. Building renovations will no doubt be required to fulfill the above design requirements. The Board of Trustees for Seven Generations Charter School will launch a special fundraising campaign for the facility itself should we decide not to purchase the facility under consideration.

3. Liability and Insurance

Description of insurance coverage plans

Seven Generations Charter School has all necessary insurance either through a broker or through direct placement with a provider. SGCS utilizes competitive bidding or by allowing the broker to shop rates consistent with the quality of coverage or through joining a consortium of charter schools that have already obtained competitive premiums.

The school has secured general liability insurance (including coverage for after-school and field trip activities), errors and omissions coverage, Directors and Officers Liability, employee liability, property insurance and Worker’s Compensation.

All coverage is provided by an insurance company that has a rating of “A” or better and a financial size category of “VII” or better, according to A.M. Best Co. Copies of appropriate certificates of insurance will be provided to the East Penn School District prior to the opening of the school.

The following chart provides a more detailed view of the types of insurance and limits the charter school will secure:

Type of Insurance	Limit
Business Personal Property	550,000
General Liability	3,000,000 general aggregate
Products – completed operations	Included
Personal Injury	1,000,000 per occurrence
Advertising Injury	1,000,000 per occurrence
Damage to Premises Rented	500,000 per occurrence
Medical Expense	5,000 per occurrence

Sexual Abuse Occurrence Limit	1,000,000
Professional Liability	1,000,000
Employee Benefits Administration	1,000,000 per occurrence
Employee Theft	100,000
Non-Owned and Hired Automobile Liability	1,000,000
Workers Compensation Insurance and Employer's Liability	Per Law
Student Accident	25,000 per person
Accidental Death, Dismemberment, or Loss of Sight	20,000 per person
School Leaders Errors and Omissions	2,000,000
Umbrella-Excess Liability Coverage	1,000,000

The representatives of Seven Generations Charter School understand the requirement to provide medical insurance coverage for employees that are the “same as” those provided to employees in East Penn School District. It also understands the need to protect the Board and employees in the conduct of their work.

Medical insurance coverage will be limited to a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) or an HMO; indemnity coverage will be provided if it can be obtained and if the employee will pay a share of the premiums similar to that paid by school employees in the East Penn School District. Prescription, dental, and vision plans will be as similar to plans offered to the staff in these school districts as providers will offer.

As indicated, liability insurance with umbrella coverage, auto liability (in the event that staff uses their own vehicles on charter school business), professional liability, directors and officers liability, insurance for errors and omissions, fire theft and vandalism on building and contents, workers’ compensation and appropriate riders will be obtained through a broker when a Board is established, assets are acquired, employees hired, etc.

4. Student Accounting

Description of School Enrollment and Attendance Procedures

Enrollment

In accordance with Seven Generations Charter School (SGCS) Code of Conduct, students will be expected to attend school daily. SGCS will implement a system for maintaining student enrollment information as required under 1730-A of the Charter School Law (Act 22 of 1997).

Specifically, Seven Generations Charter School will collect all of the necessary data for each student and will file all forms required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (i.e. PDE-3059CS Instructional Time Summary, PDE-30262C Annual Attendance Membership Report, PDE-3002CS Summary Report of Aggregate Days Membership) and the participating school districts. Additionally, Seven Generations Charter School will use a student information software system to track enrollment data to ensure that the enrollment figures are always current, reflecting new students and any withdrawals.

Attendance

Students will be expected to attend school every day. If a student is absent, the parent is notified of the child's absence. The school will follow the attendance guidelines set forth in the Public School Code regarding unexcused absences.

When absences occur it is the responsibility of the student's parent or guardian to provide a written note regarding the reason for the absence. In the case of frequent absences or absences not accompanied by a note, the counselor or designated staff member will contact the student's parent or guardian to determine the cause of the absence(s) and appropriate action will be taken, if needed. **(See Attendance Policy, Appendix J)**

The student information software system mentioned above will also be used to track attendance quickly and accurately, allowing for seamless communication between the teachers and the administration and the administration and the parents.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Recruitment and Marketing Plan:

The Board of Trustees and administration will work in concert to recruit students. Expected activities will include but not be limited to:

- Posting on our website
- Design and disseminate fact sheets, brochures, working copies of curriculum
- Host open houses and informational meetings for various stakeholder groups
- Host community outreach with local organizations, parent groups, and early child care centers
- Advertise in local newspapers and on local radio stations

- Use public service announcements on local cable channels and on the local municipalities’ websites
 - In addition to these meetings, we will make available printed materials, such as informational flyers, and student and family handbooks readily available and easily accessible.
 - Request school tours.
 - Invitation to our curriculum showcase events.

Seven Generations Charter School is responding to a need of the communities in the East Penn District to provide a new and different kind of school for their students. The special collaboration between the school districts and SGCS will mean that this public charter school will be seen as another viable educational option for the families we service.

2. Admissions Policy

A. Admission Methods and Eligibility Criteria to Select Students

Seven Generations Charter School will adhere to the requirements of charter school law and will be open to all age-appropriate students from all of our sending school districts. The students will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis with the exceptions described below as permitted by Act 22. Parents or guardians must complete a student application and supply the following documentation listed below in order to be eligible for admission. Where necessary, Seven Generations Charter School staff will provide information so parents can obtain student records from their present schools. These include:

- Birth certificate or other official documentation proving birth date
- Student Social Security Number
- Copy of existing I.E.P., NOREP and supporting documentation, if applicable
- Prior school records including academic, standardized test scores, attendance information
- Family “proof of residency” in their local district
- Act 26 Violations

B. Timetable for Admission and the Lottery Process

SGCS will welcome all students and families to apply for admission. Interested families must attend one general information meeting, where they will be introduced to the mission, philosophy, policies, and expectations of the school. The pursuit of excellence, academic rigor, environmental-based education, and parental involvement will all be emphasized. No student will be denied the right to apply even if there does not seem to be a good match. If more students apply to the charter school than the number of attendance slots available in the school, then students must be selected on a random basis from a

pool of qualified applicants meeting the established eligibility requirements and submitting an enrollment application by the deadline established by the charter school, **except that charter school may give preference in enrollment to a child of a parent who has actively participated in the development of the charter school** [*PA Charter School Act 22 of 1997, Section 1723-A: "Enrollment"*] and to the siblings of students presently enrolled in the charter school. First preference shall be given to students who reside in the district.

Please see policy 200 Enrollment and 201 Admissions in Appendix K

3. Human Resource Information:

A. Description of Hiring Standards for Staff

Teachers, administrators, and other school staff must be committed to the goals of Seven Generations Charter School. In most cases we would prefer to hire educators who are certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in their area of expertise.

Seven Generations Charter School will employ professional staff who demonstrate a deep understanding of their academic area, are interested in working in a collaborative team environment, subscribe to the theory of the teacher as coach and facilitator in the delivery of instruction, are at least minimally literate in computer technology, and have a desire to continue their professional growth.

The members of the school administration must possess the appropriate certification in relation to their role within the organization. The school administrator will serve as the educational leader demonstrating capabilities that will inspire staff to reach their potential. The administration must also express a true commitment to the EIC curriculum.

B. Targeted Staff Size and Teacher/Student Ratio

It is the philosophy of Seven Generations Charter School to maintain an in-class student/teacher ratio of no more than 18:1 in grades K-2. Grades K-2 will enroll no more than 18 per class. Grades 3-8 will enroll no more than 23 per class. However, with the additional professional staff available to work with the students, we expect the actual ratio to be smaller. The program of instruction and the rigor of the academically oriented curriculum will require an intensive and intimate educational setting.

C. Professional Development Opportunities Available

Professional development will occur at the classroom level, the school level, and through opportunities provided to teachers and other school staff through outside organizations.

All professional development activities will provide Act 48 credits for the staff. There will be intensive and ongoing training.

Classroom: The school schedule will be developed so that all teachers at a given grade level will have the opportunity for common preparation and planning times. Teachers will be expected to use this time for curriculum development, problem solving, and examination of student progress through assessment materials. Common planning time is essential to the success of the educational program.

School: Teachers in the school will gather at least once per month to discuss and develop plans for working on school-based issues and necessary trainings as required by PDE.

External: Teachers and administrators will have access to resources and programs presented through local colleges and universities, in particular those sponsored by their Departments of Education.

D. Human Resource Policies

The first step in order to facilitate the retention of staff is to hire highly qualified individuals who believe in and actively support the mission and educational program of the school. Beyond that, the team structure described above and the active participation by both faculty and administration in planning professional development activities and other aspects of the instructional program will reinforce and strengthen the atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and collegiality that are found in successful schools and provide a firm basis for staff retention and continuity.

Seven Generations Charter School has developed policies and procedures to be used for establishing salaries, hiring, terminating, and determining benefits for all employees, equal opportunity, without regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, social or economic status, parenthood, marital status or handicap.

Please refer to Human Resource policies 317, 361, 362,363,367 (See Appendix L)

E. How School Will Ensure That All Staff Comply with State Mandated Background Checks Prior to Beginning Work

All new staff will be required to provide the school with a completed Criminal History Record Information (Pennsylvania residents) or the completed, original Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History Record (out-of-state residents) before they can be hired.

All staff also must provide the school with the completed, original Student Abuse History Clearance, which must be current within one year of submission date. These requirements are in accord with Section 111 of the Public School Code and 23 Pa. C.S. Chapter 63 subchapter C.2 from the Department of Public Welfare.

All staff will be required to follow state regulations for obtaining and maintaining their state mandated background checks.

4. Code of Conduct:

A. Rules and Guidelines Governing Student Behavior

Seven Generations Charter School will require all students and parents to sign the Student and Family Handbook. SGCS Code of Conduct is outlined within the Student and Family Handbook as well as our school website. **To reference the policy please see Appendix M.**

The Code of Conduct will be designed with the mission of the school in mind, and, as such, will be based on the belief that all students have the right to be physically safe, emotionally secure, and be taught effectively in a positive, focused learning environment.

The school administration will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct. The Board of Trustees, with feedback from the administrative team, parents, and faculty will continually review the Code of Conduct and make changes as necessary.

B. School's Policies Regarding Student Expulsion and Suspension, Including Students with Disabilities

Seven Generations Charter School will require all students and parents to sign the Student and Family Handbook. SGCS policy on student expulsion and suspension is outlined within the Student and Family Handbook as well as our school website. **To reference the policy please see Appendix N**

5. Transportation

A. Description of the transportation program

Seven Generations Charter School will use the local School District's busing services. Classes will begin classes at 8:40 a.m. The normal school day will end at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, the school day will end at 1:40 p.m. for students.

B. Transportation for Extended School Year (ESY)

The school will use the local School District's busing services for ESY.

C. Transportation of non-residence students

Nonresident students shall be provided transportation under section 1361 of the local Public School Code. The school district of student residence must provide transportation to a charter school up to ten miles from its border.

6. Student Food Service Plan

Seven Generations Charter School is committed to providing its students with fresh, healthy meals and in teaching the students the importance of a good diet. The school will be responsible for monitoring the health of students and when necessary will take steps to ensure that students failing to eat adequately will be provided with all necessary assistance. SGCS will establish guidelines to ensure that no student is without appropriate meals as required by statute.

7. Historic Timeline of SGCS:

Re-submission of application to District	03/26/2009
Interview of Founders by District’s review panel	04/15/2009
Public Hearings (if requested)	05/04/2009
Notification by District that charter has been granted	05/11/2009
Press Event announcing School	05/15/2009
Board of Trustees officially sworn in	06/01/2009
Administrators: Advertise for:	05/01/2009
Interviews Begin:	05/15/2009
Hire by:	06/01/2009
Office Staff:	
Advertise:	05/01/2009
Interview:	05/15/2009
Hire:	06/01/2009
Hire subsequent staff by:	06/30/2009
Public Relations:	05/01/2008
Student Recruitment:	07/01/2008
Advertise:	07/01/2008
Apply:	05/18/2009
Admit Notice:	06/15/2009
Teacher Recruitment:	
Advertise:	05/01/2009
Interview:	05/15/2009
Hire by:	06/15/2009
Roster Classes:	06/15/2009
Licenses & Documents:	03/01/2009
Submit to Authorities:	05/11/2009
Confirm all by:	05/05/2009

Board of Trustees:	05/25/2009
Site Selection and Renovations:	03/01 – 08/30/2009
Opening of K-4 (year 1 SGCS):	09/2009
Letter of intent to renew:	09/02/2011
Approval of renewal of Charter:	06/2012
Letter of intent to renew:	09/26/2016

8. School Safety

SGCS fulfills all of the local, state, and federal health and safety laws and regulations as required. Seven Generations Charter School is committed to providing a safe, orderly learning environment for its students.

SGCS has developed a school safety plan that incorporates the provisions of Act 26 and includes protocols for responding to crisis situations. Below is an outline of the steps that were taken to finalize Seven Generations Charter School’s Safety Plan. The document will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis beginning at the end of the 2016-2017 school year. This review will also include the input from our public safety professionals from Borough of Emmaus.

These steps will be taken to review and modify the safety plan on an annual basis:

1. Form an ad hoc School Safety Committee that includes: Board of Trustees; school administration, representatives of the local police and fire department and parents that have expertise in this field.
2. Review Act 26, “The Safe Schools Act”
3. Review safety plans from other municipalities for content and presentation ideas
4. Revise school safety plan as needed
5. Present revised school safety plan to the Board of Trustees, the school administration and school community for review
6. Implement School Safety Plan

Maintaining School Safety and Reporting Act 26 Violations

School safety will be the primary responsibility of the school administrator and his/her designee. They will oversee the security systems of Seven Generations Charter School as well as the behavior of the students and reporting Act 26 violations. In addition, all staff members will be expected to report to administration any inappropriate behavior in the school environment. It is the primary responsibility of staff to create a climate of respect and educational focus; however, they will also be “the eyes and ears of the building.” Students will also be expected to set a tone of respect, order, and purposefulness. Particular responsibility will fall to staff to model good and safe behavior and to correct or report to the school administration inappropriate or unsafe behavior or events.

9. School Health Services:

A. Plan to provide school health services as required under Article XIV (PL Code)

In total compliance with the State School Code, pursuant to charter school law, including Article XIV requirements, the Board of Trustees of Seven Generations Charter School shall require that students submit to appropriate health and dental examinations to ensure that each student’s health status is at an optimal level and that achievement is not lessened as a result of unresolved or undiagnosed health problems.

Every student attending SGCS will be provided the following services by the school as detailed in the chart below:

(Please note that special education students will be provided as needed)

SERVICE	K and 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Medical Examination	X					X		
Dental Examination	X		X				X	
Growth Screen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vision Screen	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hearing Screen	X	X	X				X	
Scoliosis Screen						X	X	
Tuberculin Test As needed	X							
School Nurse Services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maintenance of Health Record	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Immunization Assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

B. How the services will be provided

For each student admitted to the school, the school administrator or his/her designee (the Nurse) shall request an adequate health record from the transferring school.

The individual student records of health examinations shall be maintained as confidential records subject to statute and the policies of this school.

A student who presents a statement signed by his/her parent or guardian that a medical examination is contrary to his/her religious beliefs shall be examined only when the Secretary of Health determines that the student presents a substantial health menace to the health of other persons.

Where it appears to school health officials or teachers that a student deviates from normal growth and development or where school examinations reveal conditions requiring health or dental care, the parent or guardian of the student shall be so informed and a recommendation shall be made that the parent consult a private physician or dentist or a local community-based health center. The parent shall be required to report to the school the action taken subsequent to such notification.

Parents and guardians of students who are to be examined shall be notified of such examinations. The notice shall include the date and location of the examination and the parent or guardian will be encouraged to attend. Such notice may also include notification that the parent may have the examination conducted privately at the parent's expense and encouragement that the parent does so in the interest of providing continuity in the student's health care; and, notification that the student may be exempted from such examination if it is contrary to the parents' religious beliefs.

The nurse will be ultimately responsible for overseeing the student health services program. These responsibilities will include:

The nurse shall instruct all staff members to observe students continually for conditions that indicate physical defect or disability and to report such conditions promptly to the nursing service.

When the School Administration receives a report of the existence of a communicable disease in a student's family, the nurse must be notified. When the nurse discovers a student in school with a communicable disease, they shall notify the school administrator immediately who will then provide for the reporting of this information as noted above.