

Thank you for your careful consideration of our application to create Eisenhower Charter School; we appreciate the opportunity to clarify areas of concern in advance of the public hearing.

## Questions for the CSOI regarding the Eisenhower Charter School Application

### School Day

- **How much instructional time is actually included once items like lunch, travel and class changes are eliminated from the calculation?**

Not including lunch, travel, class changes or homeroom, there are 389 instructional minutes per day for middle school students and 376 minutes of instructional time per day for high school students.

To clarify how the school will operate, we have revised the instructional charter on page 8 of the charter application and the school calendar and hours of operation contained in Appendix 5 of the application. The chart now includes a break out of the middle school and high school instructional time. Appendix 5 – proposed ECS daily schedule reflects a change from 45 minutes lunch period to 30 minutes.

Area	Current (District)	Eisenhower Charter School	Change
<b>Middle School</b>			
Longer Instructional Day	364 minutes of instruction time	389 minutes of instruction time	Add 25 minutes
Longer School Year	180 days	190 days	Add 10 days
More Instructional Hours	1080 Hours / Year	1232 Hours / Year	Add 152 Hours / Year
<b>High School</b>			
Longer Instructional Day	338 minutes of instruction time	376 minutes of instruction time	Add 38 minutes
Longer School Year	180 days	190 days	Add 10 days
More Instructional Hours	1000 Hours / Year	1191 Hours / Year	Add 191 Hours / Year

**Students who attend ECS beginning in 6<sup>th</sup> grade will receive an additional 1.1 years of instruction by the time they graduate.**



5 - School Calendar  
and Hours of Operati

## **Curriculum**

- **How is the need for the update to the Common Core Standards being addressed by the founders since they are planning to prepare students for the PSSA?**

The target date set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for full implementation of the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards is July 2013. Therefore, during the 2012-2013 school year, ECS—along with WCSD and the rest of the Commonwealth—will transition to the new standards. The CEO/principal of the school will be primarily responsible for the update with significant assistance from Department Heads (teachers).

- **How will the instrumental lessons be scheduled at the middle school to avoid removing students from classes?**

Students will have the opportunity to have individual instruction time once per week.. Instruction will be given on a staggered schedule to prevent removal from any one class on a regular basis. Electives may be used for group band and chorale instruction.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

- **Does the ECS have an alternative plan for the first year or two for programs like football and other sports which they intend to have sanctioned by the PIAA since that process can require waiting through a two year cycle for league games to be assigned?**

We do plan to become members of the PIAA for sports and also we plan to join the Tournament of Bands so we may offer as many choices as possible to our students.

According to the PIAA by-laws schools that request membership before July 1, will be able to compete in the proceeding school year and there is nothing in the bylaws requiring a 2 year waiting period.

However, should such a waiting period be imposed, charter school law provides: "...no school district of residence shall prohibit a student of a charter school from participating in any extracurricular activity of that school district of residence: Provided, that the student is able to fulfill all of the requirements of participation in such activity and the charter school does not provide the same extracurricular activity." 24 P.S. § 17-1719-A(14). Representatives of District 10 have indicated that the district will meet the needs of athletes at the charter school when it becomes apparent what those need will be.

- **What does this statement mean? “Guidelines for accreditation will be established in defining how participation in extracurricular activities may apply to students’ overall programs – particularly band, chorus, performing arts and Future Farmers of America as part of the students’ curricula.” What accreditation will the school be applying for in relation to extracurricular activities?**

The statement should read: “Guidelines for the provision of academic credit accreditation will be established in to define how participation in extracurricular activities may apply to students’ overall programs – particularly band, chorus, performing arts and Future Farmers of America as part of the students’ curricula.”

- **What accreditation will the school be applying for in relation to extracurricular activities?**

Not applicable. The paragraph has been clarified; see above.

### **Experiential Learning**

- **Who will supervise student internships?**

All internships will be pre-qualified and policies and procedures will be put in place to ensure the safety and supervision of our students. This will be set up much like universities and job shadowing programs.

- **Will these be paid or unpaid experiences?**

It is expected that these internships will be unpaid.

- **What are the procedures/policies if students are not successful? What are the procedures/policies in place to ensure that students are free of workplace harassment or other dangers?**

Internships will be arranged which are relevant to the student's academic/career goals and current achievement. Like all of the student's academic work, progress should/will be monitored by the student's mentor and faculty supervisors. If the internship is not a good choice for the student, the student will be assisted in analyzing/evaluating the experience as a learning experience and helped to succeed or take another academic direction. Such counseling and evaluation will help the student understand the real world of success/failure cycles and make appropriate adaptations.

The faculty member in charge of the internship will visit the workplace and will carefully interview the student's supervisor to assure a safe environment and appropriate policies; the student intern and parents will be provided with an orientation prior to starting the internship to explain policies (this will be similar, though on a smaller scale, to procedures used by universities with student teachers.)

- **Will the ECS carry liability insurance for students who are at an internship if the experience is unpaid and the student is not covered by workman’s compensation insurance carried by the business?**

Yes.

### **Staff**

- **Is a psychologist on staff at Eisenhower Charter School?**

As noted on page 70 of the application, staff plans do not include a psychologist. We intend to contract this service as needed and has been budgeted accordingly.

- **Will all teachers be highly qualified and meet certification requirements?**

As permitted by charter school law, §17-1724-A, at least 75% of professional employees must hold appropriate certification. While ECS anticipates that the vast majority of teachers will be certified, it reserves the right to employ individuals with extraordinary qualifications who are not certified teachers. All teachers providing special education services will hold appropriate certifications. All teachers of core content areas will be highly qualified.

- **What would the schedule for the middle level core teachers look like?**

See attached staffing model.



Staffing Model.xlsx

- **Is it really possible to offer 12 sections of one hour core courses in social studies to students in grades 6-8 with only one social studies teacher on staff?**

Staff positions have been designated as middle school or high school, based on the primary core course responsibility of the position. However, as demonstrated on the attached staffing model, a number of “high school” teachers (with 7-12 certification) will also teach one or more middle school class.

- **Will the core teachers in ELA and mathematics be responsible for 6 sections of one hour core courses for students in grades 6-8?**

As noted in the school schedule revised (Appendix 5), there are only four one-hour core course periods in the middle school. We have revised the staffing model to reflect the redistribution of those 2 hours across the staffing positions. See staffing model.

- **Will teaching assistants have responsibilities for actual classes without the supervision of a teacher?**

No. Teaching assistants will supplement instruction in classrooms, under the supervision of a teacher as described in ECS's application on page 28.

- **Will one physical education teacher be sufficient to service the needs of 525 students in both high school and middle level when the curriculum includes both physical education and health?**

Yes, please see staffing model.

## **Special Education**

- **Will the number of special education staff be sufficient to service students that would require a life skills program or full time emotional support or autism program while also providing support for students with specific learning disabilities?**

The proposed staffing model is just that—a model. It will be adjusted, as necessary, to meet the needs of our enrolled population, including special education students. As noted in the application (page 27), the school recognizes the need to contract for some services that may be required. The school will ensure implementation of student IEPs in accordance with Chapter 711. The school's special education student population and needs will drive staffing and contracting positions.

- **Does Eisenhower Charter School only plan to offer an inclusion model of instruction for students with special needs in the areas of core academics?**

ECS plans to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities by providing the educational supports and resources directed by the student's IEP, in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the student as dictated by the student's IEP in accordance with IDEA and Chapter 711. To the extent that students requires a more restrictive environment, the IEP tem will recommend appropriate programming and placement.

- **What specialized instruction with research based curriculum will be offered to students identified with significant needs?**

As stated previously, ECS plans to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities by providing the educational supports and resources directed by the student's IEP. Without knowing what "significant needs" are to be addressed, we can't be specific about the programs to be used, and cannot generalize about individualized instruction. However, ECS has established goals that include raising the academic achievement of all student subgroups (including students with disabilities); the school intends to use effective programs (such as the Wilson Reading System, Orton-Gillingham, Read 180, or SRA Math) and proven evidence based strategies to help all students reach their maximum potential. Students requiring research-based programs in order to address their disabilities will be provided with appropriate research-based instruction. Where necessary, ECS will obtain additional information and suggestions from the Intermediate Unit and the Department of Education.

## **Employee Benefits**

- **Do you have a contract or agreement in place to provide the employees with appropriate medical benefits?**

Section 1724-A(d) of the Charter School Law states that a charter school shall be provided the same health care benefits as the employee would be provided if he or she

were an employee of the local district. ECS will meet this requirement and has letters of intent from an insurance provider to this effect included in the application.

- **How much do you anticipate the benefit package will cost the school and the employee?**

See appendix 15 for anticipated school costs. Contribution rates for employees change yearly and have not been determined at this time. We understand the need to be competitive to attract and retain the quality educators we are seeking.

- **How will you determine the correct placement of staff on the teacher's salary schedule?**

Section 1724-A of the Charter School Law states that “the board of trustees shall determine the level of compensation and all terms and conditions of employment of the staff”; ECS expects to set salaries based on a variety of factors including—but not limited to—education level, certification, and experience.