



CHARTER RENEWAL

**Submitted to
Capistrano Unified School District**

**RENEWAL SUBMITTED: DECEMBER 20, 2013
FOR PUBLIC HEARING JANUARY 22, 2014**

**Charter originally approved on
JUNE 14, 2004
AND AMENDED ON
JULY 26, 2005
JULY 11, 2006
JULY 16, 2007
JUNE 16, 2008
AND RENEWED ON MAY 11, 2009**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Capistrano Connections Academy (CapoCA—which which may be referred to as California Connections Academy) is setting a new standard for virtual education excellence in California. CapoCA students benefit from a top-quality curriculum that combines the best in print and technology to meet all California Content Standards and Common Core State Standards. Each student has a Personalized Learning Plan and one or more highly qualified California-certified teachers working with expert curriculum specialists to tailor the curriculum to meet that student's individual learning needs. More than an online school, CapoCA is a virtual learning community that connects students, teachers, and families through unique technology tools as well as face-to-face interaction. CapoCA students and their families can count on sophisticated support for their curriculum, technology, special education and digital learning platform needs, including a learning management system, student information system, and content management system, so that their focus on achievement need never waver. CapoCA serves students in grades K-12 throughout Orange County and adjacent counties.

CapoCA is tailor-made for a diverse array of students who would benefit from a quality alternative to the traditional brick-and-mortar classroom. These include students whose families seek direct involvement in their education students who are homebound due to illness or disability; exceptional students who are far ahead of or far behind their peers in school; young people pursuing artistic or athletic careers that require a flexible school schedule; students in group homes or institutions; and students at risk of academic failure who may particularly benefit from intensive, personalized instruction.

CapoCA has met the threshold for charter renewal under Education Code 47607. The school meets the specific renewal criteria under both EC 47607 (b) (2) as well as EC 47607 (b) (3), since the school has exceeded the minimum statewide rankings and the similar school rankings both last year, as well as in the previous years (see Figure 7).

In recognition of its effective and innovative educational approach, CapoCA has been accredited for grades K-12 by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Over the ten school years since the charter opened, the school has grown dramatically, and served approximately 1,843 students in grades K-12 during the 2012-2013 school year. CapoCA has consistently exceeded the API scores of a demographically similar school as shown by its high Similar Schools Rankings. The school's API score has increased 37 points since its last renewal with a growth score of 791 in 2012-2013. In addition, 95% of CapoCA families report that their child/children are satisfied with the program and 97% report that the quality of the curriculum is good or excellent.

CapoCA partners with an education management company, Connections Academy of California, LLC, a subsidiary of Connections Education, LLC, a leading virtual school provider for curriculum, technology, and school support services. Connections Education was an independent company formed in October 2001 to serve schools and students in the emerging K-12 virtual school market. In November 2011, the company was acquired by Pearson Education, Inc., a subsidiary of the public company Pearson PLC. Connections Academy of California, LLC provides

educational services, including accredited curriculum; curriculum support personnel, Connexus™, a comprehensive Educational Management System (EMS); professional development; student, parent, and teacher technical assistance; and additional consulting and support for three schools in California. As of the 2013-2014 school year, 26 Connections Academy virtual public schools and seven Nexus Academy blended public schools will be operating in 23 states and are expected to serve more than 50,000 students.

There are currently three Connections Academy–supported schools in California: Capistrano Connections Academy, Central California Connections Academy (sponsored by Alpaugh Unified School District in 2006 and serving more than 250 students in the lower Central Valley), and California Connections Academy @Ripon (sponsored by Ripon Unified School District in 2012 and serving approximately 300 students in its inaugural year in upper Central Valley region including Sacramento and East Bay). All of the schools use the Connections Academy curriculum and instructional program that has proven successful in other states and communities and is the first program of its kind to be nationally certified by AdvancED. The developmentally appropriate curriculum increases its integration of technology as students advance through the grades. Each Connections course includes active learning elements (including online and/or offline interaction) that address diverse learning styles and preferences, including textual, visual, auditory, and/or hands-on. Connections’ courses include 1,800 Teachlet® proprietary instructional movies and more than 1,000 primary source and instructional videos. Integrated “i-text” electronic textbooks are licensed from a variety of leading publishers including Prentice Hall®, McGraw Hill®, Pearson®, and others, while non-proprietary technology-based content is licensed from “best of breed” providers such as BrainPop® videos, Grolier Online™ multi-media encyclopedias, SkillsTutor™, Compass®, and United Streaming®. The instructional design includes interactive LiveLesson sessions and threaded discussions. The curriculum is updated regularly, with approval of the school’s Governing Board, based on a rigorous analysis of student performance on state standards as measured by state testing results and internal assessments. Connexus facilitates the effective delivery of the curriculum via an optimal combination of technology and print media. Community Coordinators, typically parent volunteers throughout the area served, facilitate enriching in-person community activities to round out the comprehensive learning experience.

The ultimate focus of this “high-tech, high-interaction” instructional model is student achievement. Students master the core subjects of reading/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies through a challenging curriculum that meets California Content Standards (and Common Core State Standards) and are prepared to excel on the state assessments. CapoCA is a high achieving school due to a variety of factors such as its curriculum, its use of Connexus, and its partnership with a management organization that has over 12 years of experience in virtual charter school education. However, one of the most important factors is its highly trained and experienced teachers. Highly qualified, California-certified teachers are a key part of the program. Teachers are in regular contact with students via WebMail (Connections Education’s proprietary, closed-system email program), telephone, LiveLesson® sessions, discussion boards, message boards, and other channels. Teachers motivate, provide instruction, monitor and evaluate student progress, personalize the

curriculum, intervene as needed to ensure student success, lead field trips, and clarify the curriculum for the students. Ongoing and comprehensive professional development in online learning pedagogy and curriculum with a focus on common core instructional shifts, data-driven instructional decisions, and Connections' own *Core Competencies for Facilitating Student Learning* is an integral part of teacher success with students. Additional California-focused professional development is offered throughout the year.

Another critical factor for success is the Learning Coach. The Learning Coach, usually a parent or guardian, works with the student to implement the program by providing motivation, collaboration, scheduling, and record keeping.

The Connections Academy program integrates school, community, and home via online and face-to-face activities. School staff members or Community Coordinators facilitate enriching in-person community activities and field trips to round out the comprehensive learning experience. Students have access to more than 22 Connections Academy clubs and activities that encourage students to explore interests beyond the classroom, develop leadership skills, and make friends within their school and with students from other Connections Academy-supported schools.

CapoCA represents an outstanding educational choice for families in Orange County and contiguous counties and builds awareness of Capistrano Unified School District's (CUSD) innovative approach to learning. One of the most significant benefits the school brings to CUSD is being able to serve students that are underserved or not being served within the district and larger community. Many students seek out Capistrano Connections Academy because they are athletes, medically homebound, bullied, homeschooled, have special needs, or simply because they need a flexible schedule and can benefit from instruction that is individualized, personalized, and flexible.

HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Capistrano Connections Academy was first chartered in June of 2004 by the Governing Board of CUSD and was renewed in 2009. This renewal will be the second renewal for the school.¹

CapoCA was originally chartered for students in grades K-8. However, during the first year of the school's operation, it became apparent that there was a need for a high-quality virtual program that could serve high school students as well. CapoCA subsequently requested and received charter amendments to add additional grades. CapoCA now serves students in grades K-12 as a non-classroom-based, independent charter school.

In recognition of its effective and innovative educational approach, CapoCA has been accredited for grades K-12 by WASC, while CapoCA's partner, Connections Academy, is accredited by AdvancED.

ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the past several years since the charter opened, the school has grown dramatically. During its first school year, the school served approximately 100 students in grades K-8. As of October 2012, CapoCA served 1,843 students in grades K-12. Since opening, the school has drawn students from throughout the Southern California area in the contiguous counties around Orange County. Students who reside within CUSD do attend CapoCA, but the number of district resident students compared to the total enrollment of the charter school has remained small, at approximately 125 in-district students during the 2012-2013 school year.

CapoCA has experienced a steady increase in enrollment from year to year. School enrollment has increased by approximately 250 to 300 new students per year. Figure 1 demonstrates the growth trends since the last renewal:

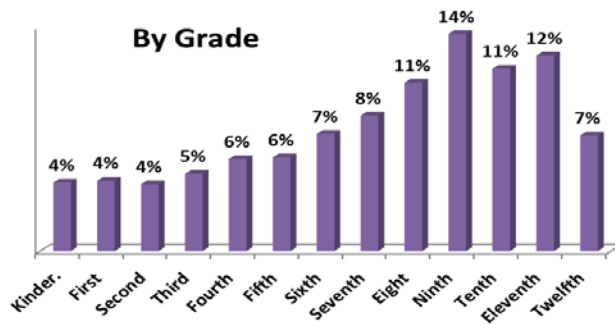
Figure 1. Enrollment Growth

School Year	October CBEDS count
2008-2009	764
2009-2010	1,020
2010-2011	1,267
2011-2012	1,593
2012-2013	1,843

Figure 2 illustrates the grade distribution as of October 2012, with 8th-11th grade representing the largest number of students.

¹ In this document, use of the term "Board" or "Governing Board" refers to the CapoCA Governing Board (the school's Board), unless otherwise specifically indicated as the CUSD Board (the district's Board).

Figure 2. Grade Distribution as of October 2012



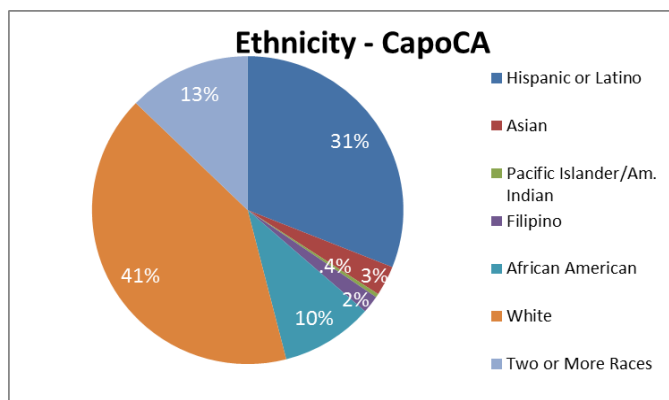
In addition, approximately 38% to 40% of the students served are socioeconomically disadvantaged, measured by family income eligibility meeting federal guidelines for free or reduced lunch, as illustrated in Figure 3 as of October 2012.

Figure 3. Percentage of Enrolled Students Meeting Free and Reduced Lunch Criteria as of October 2012



CapoCA also serves a diverse student population with 31% of students identified as Hispanic/Latino, 13% of students identified as Two or More Races, and 10% of students identified as African American, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Ethnicity Breakdown of CapoCA



ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

CapoCA has met the threshold for charter renewal under Education Code 47607. The school meets the specific renewal criteria under both EC 47607 (b) (2) as well as EC 47607 (b) (3), since the school has exceeded the minimum statewide rankings and the similar school rankings both last year, as well as in the previous years (see Figure 7). The information below highlights how CapoCA has demonstrated increases in pupil academic achievement, which is considered the most important factor in renewal under EC 57607 (a) (3) (A).

CapoCA has consistently exceeded the API scores of a demographically similar school with high Similar Schools Rankings over the past five years. In three of the past five years CapoCA had a Similar Schools Ranking of 10. CapoCA's API score has increased 37 points since its last renewal with a score of 791 in 2012-2013. It is important to note that even though scores fluctuate from year to year, there is a steady increase in the total API score and in the subgroups. In 2013, CapoCA met its API targets school wide and in all numerically significant subgroups, with only one exception (See Figure 7). It is also important to note that student mobility and growth rate play significant factors in student academic performance. A more detailed analysis is provided in Section III.B.

The California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) also prepares an annual report that focuses on charter accountability and renewal. The CCSA Accountability Framework measures three elements of a school's performance: academic status (API score), growth over time (cumulative API growth over the past three years), and comparison to similar student populations (Similar Students Measure, or SSM). Schools must meet at least one of the criteria to be recommended for renewal by CCSA. For CapoCA, the school meets two. Growth and mobility are important factors that dramatically impact the growth over time result, but as noted in Figure 5, the criteria for API and similar student populations are met.

Figure 5. CapoCA CCSA Minimum Criteria for Renewal

CCSA Minimum Criteria for Renewal	
Category	School Result
2012 API (Growth) (as of 8/2012)	778
3-Year Cumulative API Growth	2
SSM Performance Band	Above Most Years
Above or Below Minimum Criteria?	ABOVE
My school is 8 years old. Minimum criteria only apply to schools 4 and older.	
Definition of CCSA Minimum Criteria for Renewal: Schools four years and older must meet at least one of the following in order to qualify for CCSA support at renewal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • API score at or above 700 • 3-year cumulative API growth greater than or equal to 50 points (2009-10 growth + 2010-11 growth + 2011-12 growth) • Similar Students Measure (SSM) band higher than "Below" at least two out of the last three years 	

As a component of the report, CCSA also prepares a more detailed analysis of the Similar Students Measure which compares a school's API to an Annual School Performance Prediction (ASPP), a predicted API based upon the student profile. It is akin to the state's Similar Schools Criteria; however, it focuses more on student level data than school wide data. Based upon the SSM, CapoCA met the Within the Predicted or Above Predicted categories over the last three years, as indicated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. CapoCA SSM Performance Band

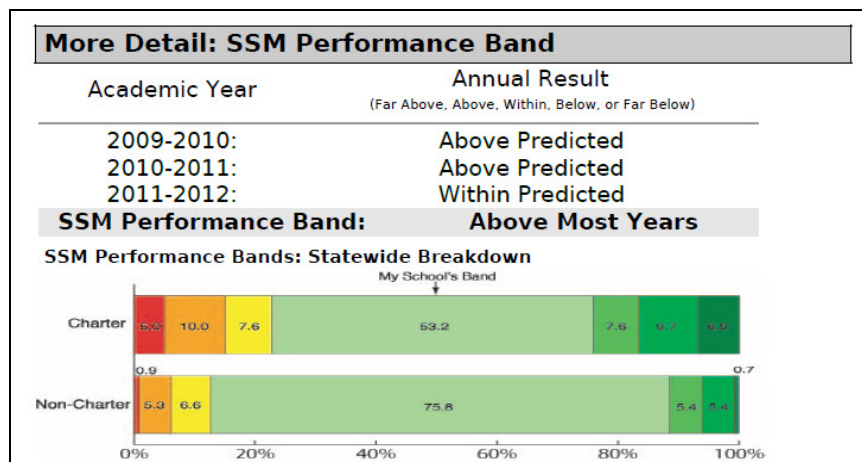


Figure 7 provides the historical academic performance for CapoCA.

Figure 7. Historical API Performance for CapoCA

CapoCA	API	API Growth		Statewide Decile Rank	Similar Schools Rank
		Target	ACTUAL		
2012-2013	791	5	5	7	7
Hispanic/Latino	746	5	-8		
White	821	N/A	7		
Socioeconomic	741	5	9		
Two or More Races	801	5	22		
2011-2012	777	5	-5	7	9
Hispanic/Latino	743	5	2		
White	806	1	7		
Socioeconomic	742	5	-21		
2010-2011	779	5	-15	5	10
Hispanic/Latino	740	5	-28		
White	796	A	-13		
Socioeconomic	742	5	1		
2009-2010	793	5	21	5	10
Hispanic/Latino	769	5	35		
White	807	5	13		
Socioeconomic	740	5	30		

CapoCA	API	API Growth		Statewide Decile Rank	Similar Schools Rank
		Target	ACTUAL		
2008-2009	773	5	23	5	10
Hispanic/Latino	N/A	N/A	N/A		
White	794	5	40		
Socioeconomic	712	5	37		
2007-2008	754	5	30	4	10
Hispanic/Latino	N/A	N/A	N/A		
White	758	5	-3		
Socioeconomic	679	5	9		

It is important to note that even though scores fluctuate from year to year, there is a steady increase in the total API score and in the subgroups. From the 2007-2008 to 2012-2013 school years, the API score increased 37 points. Student mobility and growth rate are important factors in analyzing academic performance. Due to the unique virtual school program offered, which uses an independent study model, CapoCA experiences a lot of student turnover both during the year, as well as from year to year. Many students and families chose a virtual school program to serve a unique need for a particular period of time, i.e. medical reasons, sports, family move, bullying, etc. Their intent is to solve a family issue and enroll in a virtual school for a limited time.

The trend in grade level enrollment over the past five years has also affected API scores. As a K-12 charter school, the school's API reflects a compilation of the performance of students in grades 2 through 11. The enrollment in these various grade levels has gradually shifted to a higher percentage of secondary students. As an illustration, during the 2010-2011 school year, the CDE listed CapoCA as an "elementary school" at the beginning of the school year, but by the time the API growth scores for that year were released, CapoCA was listed as a "high school" for API reporting purposes. The category is determined by the CDE based on the number of students in each grade. As more students enroll in secondary grades, the overall API will be affected, and analysis of API results should take into account how many students were in the various grade levels each year.

Another factor to consider is how the school is performing relative to other schools that serve similar populations of students. There are not many schools which serve students in all grades K-12 (and therefore which would have student scores from grades 2 through 11 included in the API calculation). There are two different readily available methods to try to analyze how the school is doing relative to other schools. One is the state's Similar Schools Ranking. CapoCA has consistently been rated very high—one year of the past four the school ranked 9, and three of the past four years the school ranked at the highest possible, a 10. This shows that the school is doing well educationally with the students it is serving. A second method of evaluating how CapoCA is doing is the Similar Students Measure (SSM) developed by the California Charter School Association (CCSA). The CCSA annually publishes a report of how charter schools are performing relative to the student populations served and comparing that to other charters and

to traditional district schools. Using this measure, CapoCA has been ranked with performance bands “above predicted” two of the past three years, and “within predicted” for one of the last three years. (See Figure 6) CapoCA also meets two out of three of the CCSA renewal criteria (an API score greater than 700 and a performance band above “below” for at least two of three years).

Student academic achievement is the highest priority for CapoCA. Over the past several years, the school has put in place several significant interventions to ensure that student performance exceeds the growth targets especially among the subgroup populations. These include:

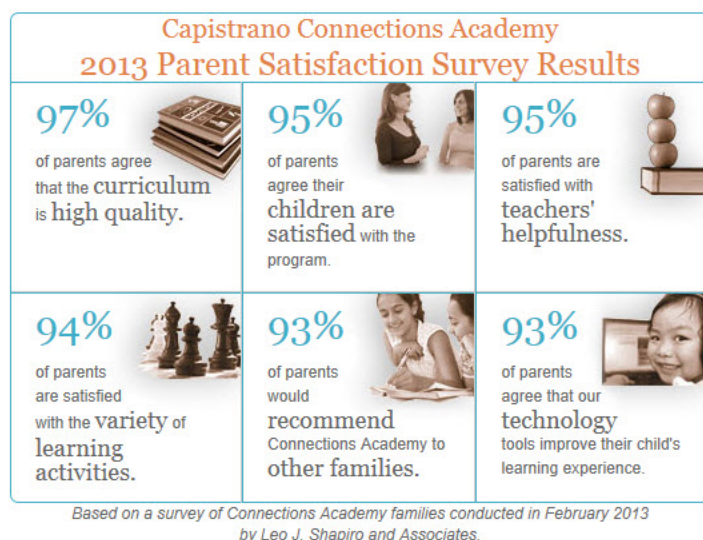
- Ongoing in-depth assessment data on individual students, which is now even more readily available to teachers and school leadership at the click of a button
- Targeted intervention courses for students who are underperforming
- Addition of specialized staff dedicated to providing intervention type instruction
- Expansion of the existing intervention programs
- Development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the faculty
- Additional targeted professional development for teachers aimed at areas of greatest student need
- Additions of academic resources and supplemental materials for students who are struggling, especially in Math

The regular evaluation of the academic performance of students, the use of student performance data to drive changes and improvements to the school program, the increasing use of PLC’s, and the development of annual goals and plans to increase student academic achievement all demonstrate that CapoCA is dedicated and focused on student performance.

PARENT SATISFACTION

CapoCA has consistently received high ratings on annual parent surveys. Parents are surveyed annually and the results are compiled by an independent third party research firm, and then presented to the school staff and the school’s Governing Board. Parent surveys provide quantifiable data by which the school leadership can work towards improving various aspects of the school. To highlight some of results from the 2012-2013 survey, 95% of parents report that their child/children are satisfied with the program; 97% of parents report that the quality of the curriculum is good or excellent; 95% of parents report they are satisfied with the helpfulness of their child’s/children’s teachers; and 93% of parents responded that they would recommend CapoCA to other parents whose children are not enrolled. Figure 8 is a snapshot of the 2013 Annual Parent Satisfaction results.

Figure 8. CapoCA 2013 Parent Satisfaction Survey Results



Over 44% of parents enrolled responded to the survey and reflect the overall experience of the families with students enrolled in CapoCA. More detailed results from parent surveys are included in a comprehensive report presented annually to the school's Governing Board including CUSD's liaison to the charter.

The following testimonials from students and families enrolled in CapoCA during the 2012-2013 school year were unsolicited and represent a sample of the kudos that the teachers and school receive on an ongoing basis.

June 14, 2013

Stephanie Jaeger's (CapoCA) Enthusiasm Shines

Thank you for providing high quality curriculum and such great teachers. The enthusiasm of Stephanie Jaeger was shining throughout the entire year. She provided a variety of activities in her LiveLesson sessions where the students could participate and interact. Her instructions are always very clear and helpful. She sent out a weekly letter every Monday so that her students knew what to expect. She is so well-prepared! She also provided meditation LiveLesson sessions to help students who are stressed out. I'm sure she has touched many hearts just like she did with my son. Thank you again!

June 7, 2013

Pamela Zakhar Makes CapoCA a Great School

We have loved having you as a teacher! The number one reason we stay with Connections Academy is the teachers. The kindness and professionalism is so wonderful. You make this school so great! We are so happy to have found the school that is a perfect fit for our family. Thank you for all you do!

May 17, 2013

Rebecca Gearing (CapoCA) is a Wealth of Knowledge

I just want to let someone know what a valuable counselor and student advocate Rebecca Gearing is. She helped my daughter achieve her goal to graduate and be accepted to a four year university. Rebecca was a wealth of knowledge and a great listener. She is very knowledgeable about the curriculum, the teachers, and the college system. I really appreciated the way she would return phone calls and Webmail messages in a timely fashion. Rebecca is a very good ambassador for the Connections Education program.

April 12, 2013

Karen Waheed's (CapoCA) Commitment Stops People in their Tracks

Karen Waheed is an amazing, dedicated math teacher. When I mention the type of help and instruction we've received from Mrs. Waheed, it stops everyone in their tracks. My daughter was having trouble with a particular concept, so we sent Mrs. Waheed a WebMail message. She called us immediately to talk with me and to help my daughter. When I told a friend of mine what Mrs. Waheed does for my daughter, her mouth dropped. She said her son has never received support like that from his bricks-and-mortar school. I feel so lucky to have a teacher that is so committed to her students. I hope we get her again next year. She has made such a difference!

April 5, 2013

Daniel Fisher's (CapoCA) Passion for Teaching Inspires Students

When someone is passionate about what they do, it is almost impossible not to respond, get motivated, and learn from that person. Mr. Fisher brings his enthusiasm to the LiveLesson sessions and to his students. It is infectious and fun. When we hear some of the LiveLesson sessions that my daughter is listening to, I am appreciative of how he brings such a human element to it. It isn't just learning the facts and figures; it is putting a face to them, making the history come alive, and imagining the impact and hardships of real people. Thank you, Mr. Fisher!

March 22, 2013

Thanks to Reading Eggs and Marissa Maurer (CapoCA) for Her Continued Effort

Thank you so much for Reading Eggs. My granddaughter absolutely loves it! She wanted to do all the lessons at once. I just wanted to thank you for your continued efforts in helping her.

March 8, 2013

Thanks to CapoCA and Teachers Heather Sherwood and Erica Cox for a Wonderful Field Trip

Thank you, CapoCA, for organizing the field trips this week to see the Fashion Institute of Design and Marketing in Los Angeles and also to see Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School in Pasadena. My daughter and I appreciated these wonderful opportunities to see the schools up close and in person. Thank you, also, to Mrs. Sherwood and Mrs. Cox.

February 15, 2013

Cindy Carbajal (CapoCA) Makes Time for Her Students

Mrs. Carbajal is the greatest teacher I know. She always makes time for her students. She has organized dates and times to make phone calls for all of her students for the next three months! Whoever knows her is very lucky!

Saul Villela (CapoCA) Goes Above and Beyond

I wanted to say how much we appreciate Mr. Villela and his willingness to go above and beyond to help his students. Our son has struggled with algebra, and Mr. Villela has really helped him to understand the concepts. He goes beyond the lessons and is willing to spend time going over things individually if needed. He has gone out of his way to break things down so that they are manageable and to support his students.

December 14, 2012

Lisa Shafer (CapoCA) is a Bright Highlight

Mrs. Lisa Shafer is one of the brightest highlights in my CapoCA experience. She is extraordinarily helpful, easily reached, and is an overall amazing teacher. She takes the time to leave constructive feedback and goes out of her way to ensure that students have resources to help them. She has the ability to make me feel like I am her only student. She is so involved and accessible. She has helped me to grow more confident in my talents for writing and analysis. I know that, with her influence, I will be equipped with the necessary tools to succeed in my future.

Rebecca Gearing (CapoCA) is Tremendously Helpful

Rebecca Gearing has been tremendously helpful to me and my son during the college application process. Mrs. Gearing has guided us every step of the way. She has been knowledgeable and insightful. She is easy to contact and has responded to every one of our needs. I would highly recommend her and I am thankful that she is on our educational team.

CapoCA Staff Provides a Year to Remember

Thank you all for a year that I will never forget, and for being teachers that should all get a medal!

ACCOMPLISHMENT SUMMARY

CapoCA is proud of its accomplishments over the past five years since the last renewal.

Academic and Educational Achievements

- CapoCA is a University of California (UC) approved provider and has 11 courses fully approved, with 36 additional courses well along in the new UC approval process (as of the time of submission of the charter renewal.)
- The California chapter of the National Honor Society for CapoCA grew from five students in the 2010-2011 school year to 35 members for the incoming 2013-2014 school year. In addition, a chapter for the NJHS was added for the 2012-2013 school year with 18 members being inducted into that chapter.
- The school is accredited by WASC for a six year term, the maximum awarded by WASC. CapoCA partners with Connections Education LLC, which is accredited by AdvanceED.
- Eighty-nine courses from the school meet National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) approval.
- The CapoCA 2013 graduating class included five valedictorians with GPAs of 4.0 or higher, as well as 27 students graduating with academic distinction (GPA 3.5 or higher).
- The CapoCA graduating class grew from 50 graduates in June 2010 to 136 graduates in June 2013.
- Despite fluctuations in student population, API scores have risen over the past five years and the school compares favorably to other similar schools in the state. CapoCA also has one of the highest API scores when compared to other California online or virtual schools.
- Tenth grade passage rates for the California High School Exit Exam for the 2012-13 school year were 93% for English-Language Arts, and 84% for Math. CapoCA met or exceeded the statewide passage rates, which were 83% for ELA and 84% for Math during that same year.
- CapoCA met participation rate for state testing every year despite the logistical challenges of administering these tests to students who live in a large geographical area and do not attend school at a traditional school site.
- CapoCA launched and implemented new program enhancements such as three Specialty Academies for middle and high school students who excel and compete in the arts, sports and science, and technology. The academies provide activities to enrich student learning and gain networking opportunities to nurture their talents.

- The school's support partner, Connections Education, embarked on a new collaboration with the renowned Julliard School with a new eLearning program in music. Julliard's renowned scholars, composers, musicians and instructors have worked closely with us to develop inspiring music courses. Lessons give students a strong foundation in music theory and composition. Students also receive a solid introduction to Western classical music while exploring music from cultures around the world.
- Students from CapoCA were awarded over \$1,545,852 in academic and athletic scholarships in the 2013 school year.
- Hiring, retaining, and promoting an excellent staff, with all teachers Highly Qualified under No Child Left Behind requirements.
- CapoCA joined the Tulare SELPA in 2011 and has been successfully managing its Special Education program through its own Local Education Agency (LEA) membership in that Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA).
- The school expanded and enhanced the Gifted and Talented program.
- CapoCA students' ability to balance academic successes with their extraordinary dedication to extracurricular pursuits reflects recent college acceptances. Several student athletes received athletic scholarships for soccer, gymnastics, and tennis to Queens University of Charlotte, University of California Berkeley, Auburn University, and California State Bakersfield for 2013.
- One senior student was accepted into 17 universities and was awarded 17 academic scholarships for all of the universities.
- One student was appointed, tuition-free, to the U.S. Air Force Academy, having been given nominations from U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman John Campbell.
- CapoCA students have the flexibility to pursue their passions alongside their academic studies, and those efforts are showcased by their successes. For example, three students are champion figure skaters and were given platinum level recognition from the President of the U.S. Figure Skating Association. The school also boasts nationally ranked tennis players, gymnasts, hockey players, soccer players and more. Current students and recent graduates include professional recording artists and numerous actors featured on major shows produced by Disney, Nickelodeon, ABC and more.
- Students received many college acceptances at prestigious institutions (see Figure 9)

Figure 9. List of College Acceptances for CapoCA Graduates

College Acceptances for CapoCA Graduates			
Colleges/Universities in California			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Azusa Pacific University • Biola University • California Lutheran University • California State Polytechnic University: Pomona • California State University: Bakersfield • California State University: Chico • California State University: Dominguez Hills • California State University: Fresno • California State University: Fullerton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California State University: Long Beach • California State University: Los Angeles • California State University: Northridge • California State University: San Bernardino • California State University: San Marcos • California State University: Stanislaus • Concordia University • Humboldt State University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyola Marymount University • Mills College • Mount St. Mary's College • Notre Dame de Namur University • Pepperdine University • San Diego Christian College • San Diego State University • San Francisco State University • Scripps College • Sonoma State University • University of California: Berkeley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of California: Irvine • University of California: Los Angeles • University of California: Riverside • University of California: San Diego • University of California: Santa Barbara • University of La Verne • University of Redlands • University of San Diego • University of the Pacific • Westmont College • Whittier College
Colleges/Universities throughout the United States and Internationally			
Alabama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auburn University at Montgomery 	Arizona <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arizona State University • Grand Canyon University • Northern Arizona University 	Colorado <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Air Force Academy • University of Colorado at Boulder • University of Denver 	Connecticut <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Hartford
District of Columbia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American University • Howard University 	Georgia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaGrange College • Savannah College of Art and Design 	Hawaii <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaminade University of Honolulu 	Illinois <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Indiana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiana University Bloomington • Taylor University • University of Indianapolis • University of Notre Dame 	Kansas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kansas State University 	Louisiana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xavier University of Louisiana 	Massachusetts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston University • Emerson College • Williams College
Maryland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount St. Mary's University 	Michigan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Michigan 	Minnesota <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Minnesota: Twin Cities 	Missouri <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockhurst University • Webster University
North Carolina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queens University of Charlotte 	New Jersey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairleigh Dickinson University: Metropolitan Campus 	New York <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CUNY: John Jay College of Criminal Justice • Hofstra University • Marymount Manhattan College • New York University • St. John's University • Syracuse University • Vassar College 	Oklahoma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Oklahoma
Pennsylvania <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chatham University • Drexel University • Mercyhurst College • Point Park University 	Tennessee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisk University • University of Tennessee: Knoxville 	Texas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baylor University • Southern Methodist University 	Virginia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College of William and Mary • Old Dominion University
Vermont <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Vermont 	Washington <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington • Western Washington University 	Wisconsin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marquette University 	International <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carleton University • Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning • Memorial University of Newfoundland • Quest University Canada

Schools highlighted in blue font are ranked as 'Most Competitive' or 'Highly Competitive +' in Barron's Rankings.

Other Achievements

- There is a high level of parent, staff and student satisfaction as evidenced by annual surveys.
- The school has developed a strong school community through face-to-face and virtual interactions.
- Many community partnerships have been developed with organizations such as the local Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) and local Chambers of Commerce.
- School staff members routinely speak at conferences, on both online learning, as well as other charter school topics. Several teachers and students presented at the E-Learning Symposium in December.
- The school has socioeconomically, racially, ethnically and geographically diverse student populations.
- CapoCA has successfully moved to Aliso Viejo and expanded the school facility as well as increasing the number of staff who are able to work off site.
- CapoCA participates in and/or sponsors community events such as the Orange County Jamboree Spelling Bee, book drives, and other charitable events, and so forth.
 - Since 2010, CapoCA has participated in an annual holiday food drive organized by the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County.
 - National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society students and teachers donated, participated and/or supported raising over \$500 during the 2012 Relay for Life event.
 - National Junior Honor Society students volunteered at the Headlands Nature Interpretive Center in Dana Point, California at a nature restoration and planting volunteer event. Students were able to work hands-on with botanical and horticultural specialists in an effort to bring back native plants and vegetation to the coastal areas in Dana Point.
- There has been an increase in the number, location and type of field trips offered to families each year. Recent trips include visits to:
 - The Getty Museum, Orange County Register, Los Alamitos Fire Station, Castle Rock Trail in Big Bear, USS Iowa Battleship Tour, Le Cordon Bleu, Planes of Fame Museum in Chino Hills, Anaheim Ducks First Flight Field Trip at the Honda Center and so many more!
 - Trips boasted attendance of 419 students, 449 adult family members and 74 staff members in 2012.

- CapoCA students enjoy traditional school events such as proms and graduation ceremonies:
 - 80 students attended CapoCA Junior and Senior Prom held at the Disneyland Hotel in June 2012
 - Disneyland Senior Grad Night 2013 was attended by jubilant graduating seniors
 - CapoCA hosted graduation ceremonies for its 8th grade and 12th grade graduating students in Laguna Hills Community Center
- The school is fiscally stable as evidenced by balanced budgets, adequate cash flow, and adequate reserves, despite statewide fiscal challenges over the past five years.
- The school's audit reports have had no audit findings in any year.
- Through the Funding Determination process, the California Department of Education (CDE) has allocated 100% of funding to the school each year so far and for four future years as well.
- CapoCA has implemented and annually improved on the attendance accounting procedures to allow thorough and accurate recording of student attendance in a non-classroom based school.
- The school is in compliance with the requirements of state and federal law as applicable to charter schools.
- The school is in compliance with the terms of the charter, including but not limited to such areas as Governing Board composition and policy, health and safety, human resources, financial reporting, insurance, audits, student composition, educational offerings, academic outcomes, etc.

I. FOUNDING GROUP

Describe the founding group for the proposed charter school, providing evidence that the applicant(s) possess(es) the necessary background in the following areas critical to the charter school's success and/or that the founders have a plan to secure the services of individuals who have the necessary background in these areas:

- *Curriculum, instruction and assessment;*
- *Finance, facilities, and business management; and*
- *Organization, governance, and administration*

I.A. GOVERNING BOARD

The CapoCA Board at the time of charter renewal consists of:

- **Mr. Brad Davis, ED.d (ABD), President:** Mr. Davis is a seasoned public school teacher in Capistrano Unified School District. He also formerly served as an adjunct professor at Concordia University. Mr. Davis is completing doctoral work with Concordia University Chicago, having received his Masters of Arts in Education from Grand Canyon University, and his California Teaching Credentials from Point Loma Nazarene University.
- **Michael Henjum, Board Member:** Mr. Henjum currently serves as the high school principal at Saddleback Valley Christian Schools in San Juan Capistrano, CA. Prior to joining Saddleback, Mr. Henjum served as Group Benefit Consultant/Life Agent at Benefits Resource and a Junior High Teacher at Capistrano Valley Christian Schools. He has a Masters in Educational Leadership from Grand Canyon University and a B.S. in Science/Mathematics from Southern California College.
- **Dan Sutherland, Board Member:** Mr. Sutherland currently serves as a Science/Woodshop Teacher at Joplin High School, part of the Orange County Department of Education's alternative school system. He has also served in Community Day Schools in San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, and Placentia. Mr. Sutherland received a Bachelor of Arts from California State University, his teaching credential from Concordia University, and attended the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- **Elaine Pavlich, Secretary:** Ms. Pavlich is a Parent Member of the Board. She serves as Learning Coach for her daughter, Wynnter, who is student at CapoCA and who has been in the program for eight years. She currently provides bookkeeping services for her extended family property and serves as a part-time caregiver for her father-in-law. Her prior work experience includes over ten years in the retail industry as a manager. She has also held leadership roles in her daughter's former schools, on both the PTA and school site council.
- **CUSD** has selected **Mr. Marcus Walton** as a non-voting liaison to the CapoCA Governing Board.

I.B. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The Governing Board has recently chosen a new principal to guide the school. In addition to the new Principal, CapoCA currently has a new Director of Special Education, a new Manager of Counseling Services, and three new Assistant Principals. These new positions were filled between the spring of 2012 through the summer of 2013.

Throughout this transition, the CapoCA Governing Board, the remaining school leadership team, and Connections worked collaboratively to carefully manage and address the challenges associated with changes in staff and administration. The Governing Board and school administration have used this time as an opportunity to hire outstanding leaders with the passion and drive to take the school to the next level of success. The new leadership team will raise expectations for student-achievement-oriented collaboration among all stakeholders. The following staff members represent the new school leadership team at CapoCA.

- **Dr. Richard Savage, Principal:** Dr. Savage is Principal of CapoCA. Prior to joining the school, he served as a Principal for three years at Calistoga Junior-Senior High School (CJSHS), a small rural school located at the northern end of the Napa Valley for students in 7th through 12th grades. At CJSHS, Dr. Savage coordinated a Distinguished School Award, a successful six-year Accreditation from WASC, and school wide Project-based Learning implementation with an 80% Free and Reduced Lunch and 50% limited English proficient (LEP) student population. Dr. Savage taught high school Spanish and coached soccer and volleyball for five years. He served as a Vice Principal at an urban socio-economically challenged high school in Southern California for six years. Dr. Savage received his B.A. in Spanish Secondary Education with a minor in PE and Coaching at Brigham Young University. He received an M.A. in Education Administration at California State University Bakersfield and received a Doctorate Degree in Organizational Leadership at the University of Laverne. He believes that all children can learn, technology is an integral part of the educational process, and that the teacher-student relationship is an essential component of a student's education.
- **Yolanda Flores, High School Assistant Principal:** Ms. Flores joined CapoCA with 11 years of experience in education. After teaching high school English and coaching cheerleading for five years, she became an Assistant Principal at a high school for at-risk and socio-economically disadvantaged youth in the Central San Joaquin Valley. She became the Principal the following year. During these five years, Sequoia High School (SHS) increased its attendance rates by more than 15% and doubled its graduation rates. In addition, SHS earned a successful six-year accreditation from WASC and implemented Explicit Direct Instruction school-wide, earning her an award in Instructional Leadership from DataWorks. Ms. Flores most recently worked with Monterey County Office of Education, where she helped transition the charter school to Common Core State Standards and received a second six-year WASC accreditation.

- **Heather Tamayo, Middle School Assistant Principal:** Ms. Tamayo is the Middle School Assistant Principal at CapoCA. Prior to joining CapoCA, Ms. Tamayo spent the previous seven years working at the middle school level with Palm Springs Unified School District. In that time, she worked largely with English Language Learners of every stage in language acquisition. She found herself in many different roles, her most treasured one being in the classroom with the students, forming relationships with them and watching them become fluent English speakers. Her education includes a B.A. in History, an M.A. in Educational Administration, and an M.A in Cross-Cultural Education.
- **Marcus White, Elementary Assistant Principal:** Mr. White was principal of Burton Elementary School in California's Central Valley for three years where he worked to improve student test scores on the CA state tests by 20%. He also led his staff to develop a systematic benchmark testing process and provided software training in data analysis to his staff. Mr. White also served as a Vice Principal for two years and an elementary classroom teacher for three years. In addition, he coached youth sports for six years. Mr. White received his B.A. in Social Science from Chapman University before earning a teaching credential. He earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Chapman to more effectively drive student achievement.
- **Shana Hollman, Director of Special Education:** Ms. Hollman serves as the Director of Special Education for CapoCA. Prior to this, she served as the Assistant Director of Special Education at Commonwealth Connections Academy (an online school in Pennsylvania supported by Connections Academy) which at the time served approximately 5,000 students. Shana initially started off as a Special Education teacher in Oregon, after earning her Master's Degree in Special Education from Portland State University. She earned her Special Education administrative certificate at the University of Pittsburgh and became a part of the leadership team. Shana has resided in California for one year now and she is already continuing her education by earning her Principal certificate for California.
- **Mia Hardy, Manager of Counseling Services:** When Ms. Hardy joined CapoCA, she brought extensive school counseling experience at every level – elementary, middle, high school, and post-secondary education. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Educational Counseling and Guidance and in support of her degree she holds a P.P.S., credential. Ms. Hardy takes proactive therapeutic approaches in order to promote academic, social and behavior development among all students. She is enthusiastic, dedicated and a creative professional, skilled in working with students of diverse backgrounds including underrepresented student populations such as African American students, Native American students, and Hispanic/Latino students from elementary school through undergraduate levels of education. She specializes in program planning and implementation, college readiness, and group counseling.

- **Dr. Frances Sassin, School Business Manager:** Before joining Connections, Dr. Sassin performed financial consulting work for over ten years for four charter schools, including CapoCA. Dr. Sassin began her professional career as a veterinarian. After becoming a parent, however, she began directing her energy into the field of education and has been working with charter schools for over 14 years. Dr. Sassin was one of the founders of the first start-up charter school in Orange County, and was subsequently employed as the school's Business and Operations Manager for two and a half years. She also served several terms on the Board of Directors of that charter, including terms as President and Treasurer. Dr. Sassin received her BA degree in Biology from U.C. San Diego and a DVM degree from U.C. Davis, and continues to provide veterinary services to her community through volunteer activities.

I.C. CONNECTIONS ACADEMY LEADERSHIP

The Governing Board partners with Connections Education to deliver the virtual school program and other services. Connections Education provides services and products that promote academic and emotional success for students in non-traditional settings. Connections Education started as an independent company formed in October 2001 to serve schools and students in K-12 virtual schools. In November 2011, the company was acquired by Pearson Education, Inc., a subsidiary of the public company Pearson PLC. Being a part of Pearson not only brings Connections an incredible source of curriculum and instruction products and services, but it also provides it with the financial resources to support its growth, the schools, and students.

Connections Education includes a Connections Academy division, which focuses on supporting charter and other public schools, and a Connections Learning division that provides online/blended curriculum and technology services to education agencies and to consumers. In the upcoming 2013-2014 school year, 26 Connections Academy virtual public schools and seven Nexus Academy blended public schools will be operating in 23 states and are expected to serve more than 50,000 students from across the U.S.

The team from Connections includes:

- **Barbara Dreyer, President and CEO:** Mrs. Dreyer is the president, CEO and co-founder of Connections Education which she has led since January of 2002. She also serves as the President of its Connections Academy division. Previously, she founded two other technology companies and she was also a special partner and CFO for New Enterprise Associates, one of the world's premiere venture capital firms. For 12 years, Mrs. Dreyer was a member of the Board of Visitors for the University of Maryland University College, the largest public international provider of distance learning degrees, and served for six years on the Board of Visitors of Towson University, known for its teacher education programs, where she remains an emeritus member. In 2010, she was honored for "Outstanding Leadership by an Individual in the field of Distance Learning" by the United States Distance Learning Association. In 2011, she received AdvancED's Corporation and Distance Learning "Excellence in Education Award" and now chairs this international accrediting body's Corporations and Distance Education Council. Mrs. Dreyer is a

member of the Digital Learning Now Advisory Council, an initiative being led by former U.S. Governors and education reformers, Jeb Bush and Bob Wise. She has served on 15 corporate boards, including three publicly traded companies. Her professional certifications include CPA (Certified Public Accountant) and CPIM (Certified in Production and Inventory Management). She holds a business and economics degree from Towson University and an MBA from Loyola College.

- **Dr. Patricia Hoge, Executive Vice President of Curriculum and Instruction and Chief Academic Officer:** Prior to joining Connections Education in 2006, Dr. Hoge served as Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Catapult Learning, overseeing the development of their K–12 instructional and teacher training programs. Additionally, she was Executive Director of Education for eSylvan, where she directed the development of the curricula for synchronous online delivery. Dr. Hoge spent over 15 years in public schools as a speech-language pathologist, curriculum developer, and supervisor of reading/language arts. As a certified speech-language pathologist, she provided services to PreK–12 students. Dr. Hoge has served as a clinical supervisor and adjunct faculty member at Loyola College and adjunct faculty member at Towson University, and serves on several K–12 and higher education school boards and advisory councils including the Towson University Board of Visitors. She has co-authored numerous resource materials for teachers and speech-language pathologists. Her academic credentials include a B.A. in Speech Pathology and Audiology, an M.S. in Speech Pathology, and a Ph.D. in K–12 Educational Leadership.
- **Dr. Donna Hutchison, VP State Relations:** Dr. Hutchison has over 20 years of experience in online education and educational technology. In her current position, she focuses on online learning policy, board relations, legislative activities, and partnership with districts, state departments of education, and other entities in the Western states. Prior to joining Connections in 2010, Dr. Hutchison served as the Chief Executive Officer from 2002–2010 of the Idaho Digital Learning Academy, the state virtual school. She also worked from 1993 to 2002 at Boise State University’s Department of Educational Technology in the College of Education. She received her Doctorate in Education from the University of Idaho, her Master’s degree in Educational Technology from Boise State University, and her Bachelors in Marketing and Management Information Systems from the University of Virginia. She is a certified teacher in Business, Social Studies, Professional Technical Education, and Mathematics.
- **Brian Rosta, Director of Schools:** As the West Coast Director of Schools, Mr. Rosta supports the Connections virtual schools in California, Oregon, and Arizona. He recently served as Principal of Arizona Connections Academy. He has over 20 years of experience in education fulfilling several key roles including teacher, dean, assistant principal, principal, and director. He is a certified teacher in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. In 1997, Mr. Rosta was named the Best Teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. He previously served as the Initial Director of the International Baccalaureate program for the Chicago Public School System and was the first Principal for the Gilbert Classical

Academy (Gilbert, AZ), the model 1:1 Computing School for the State of Arizona. He is also an Adjunct Professor for Grand Canyon University School of Education. Mr. Rosta earned a B.A. in Secondary Education and B.S. in Biological Sciences from DePaul University and a M.A. in School Administration and Leadership from Northwestern University. He anticipates earning his Ph.D. in K-12 School Leadership in December of 2013 from the University of Florida.

- **Shawn Soltz, Director of Charter School Financial Services.** Mr. Soltz is a Certified Public Accountant who joined Connections Education in 2009. He brought experience in both the private and public accounting serving customers within multiple industries. Having worked for both local and national accounting firms, he has provided tax, consulting and audit services to large not-for-profit organizations including prestigious charitable organizations, schools, and government assistance programs. Mr. Soltz also has extensive experience working with federal program audits conducted in accordance with governmental auditing standards and federal circular requirements. Mr. Soltz currently leads a financial services department comprised of 15 professionals (including CPA's and CFE's) providing financial services to public charter schools in 15 states.

I.D OTHER SUPPORT

Assisting the CapoCA Board and the Connections Academy team in their work is the legal team at Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves and Savitch, a law firm with extensive experience in charter school law:

- **Greg Moser**, attorney, Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves and Savitch, LLP. Mr. Moser and the other attorneys at Procopio have many years of experience in public agency law as well as non-profit corporation law. In addition Mr. Moser is one of the foremost charter school attorneys in the state. He has been a legal advisor to the California Charter Schools Association since its inception.

II. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

II.A MISSION

*Provide a clear and concise mission statement that defines the purposes and nature of the charter school. Describe here, as well as within other applicable elements of the application, how the charter will improve learning for the targeted population and increase learning opportunities for its students. **This statement should be written for understanding by the charter authorizer and the general public.** [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(1)(B)]*

The mission of CapoCA is to leverage 21st century education resources on behalf of students who need a more personalized approach to learning to maximize these students' potential and meet the highest performance standards for a period of time. This mission is accomplished through a uniquely individualized learning program that combines the best in virtual education with real connections among students, family, teachers, and the community to promote academic and emotional success for every learner. Every CapoCA student has a Personalized Learning Plan and an entire team of experts committed to the student's successful fulfillment of that plan. CapoCA is a high-quality, high-tech, high-interaction virtual "school without walls" that brings out the best in every student through Personalized Performance Learning.

II.B EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Describe the educational program of the proposed charter school:

- *Identify those whom the school is attempting to educate;*
- *Describe what it means to be an "educated person" in the 21st century; and*
- *Provide the applicant's view of how learning best occurs.*

The goals identified in the educational program must include the objective of enabling students to become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners. [Ref. California Education Code §47605 (b)(5)(A)(i)]

Definition of Terms: The description of the CapoCA educational philosophy and program that follows includes some unique terminology.

- **Assessment Objective Performance Reports (AOPR):** These reports provide real-time student performance data on essential skills and standards based upon individual math and language arts assessment items. They identify the objectives students should master by the end of that grade level based upon California Content Standards (and Common Core State Standards) and display students' performance against the objectives. Data can be sorted to identify students who have mastered or not mastered specific objectives.
- **Curriculum Based Assessments:** The program uses curriculum -based assessments or CBAs as a quick and effective way to gather, through telephone conversation, additional information on students' understanding of concepts. Diagnostic curriculum-based assessment (DCBA) pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts and verification curriculum based assessment (VCBA) gauge authentic student learning of concepts previously graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher.

- **Connexus® Education Management System (EMS):** Connexus is the platform for organizing and managing the school's entire educational environment. This proprietary, web-based software delivers every assignment and tracks every activity (whether conducted online or offline) while monitoring the completion of individual lessons as well as mastery of discrete skills and knowledge. Connexus operates within a secure and robust technology infrastructure protecting data from loss and intrusion while maintaining a safe environment. Parents and students access Connexus to organize, document, and interact, ensuring an unprecedented level of time-on-task documentation. All new releases and updates of Connexus are automatically provided to the school.
- **Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress (LEAP):** This assessment tool is currently used for students in grades K-8. It is a technology-facilitated pre-, mid-, and post-test. The LEAP provides essential diagnostic information for developing and planning instruction. It provides an early read on a student's performance on state-mandated tests, and reports key accountability data on student progress throughout the academic year.
- **Learning Coach:** A parent, extended family member, or similarly qualified adult designated by the parent/guardian, works in person as a Learning Coach with the student under the guidance of the certified teacher. The Learning Coach and student interact with the teacher via telephone, WebMail message, LiveLesson sessions, and in-person meetings. The school provides ongoing training to help the Learning Coach carry out this important role while making optimum use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support.
- **LiveLesson® Session:** A real-time web conferencing tool, LiveLesson sessions allow teachers to work synchronously with individual or groups of students using voice over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing based on Adobe® Connect™.
- **Multi-tiered Intervention:** The school employs a multi-tiered intervention model so that every student has access to the resources they need to be successful: Tier 1 – Core Instructional Program; Tier 2 – Supplemental Programs and Supports; Tier 3 – Alternative Support Programs. Student Support and IEP Teams meet regularly to develop an intervention plan and strategies for improvement for students who are struggling.
- **Personalized Performance Learning™ (PPL):** This instructional process creates a unique learning experience for each student. During enrollment, placement specialists review students' past records and performance to properly place them in the program. A Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) is developed collaboratively by the teacher, Learning Coach, and student to maximize achievement and to tailor curriculum and instruction. Throughout the year, teachers monitor students' progress and adjust their learning programs to focus on areas where students need to improve and to build on students' strengths.

- **SSTAIR™:** This instructional model deeply links curriculum, standards, assessments and interventions that have a direct impact on student mastery and resulting standardized test performance. The SSTAIR program targets Essential Skills/Standards by subject/grade level, uses specified assessments within the curriculum to measure student mastery of these skills and standards, provides tiered interventions for non-mastered skills and standards, and then tracks students' response to the implemented interventions by skill/standard. SSTAIR is an acronym for Skills, Standards, Assessment, Intervention, and Response.
- **StarTrack™:** This integrated rating system allows every student, Learning Coach, and teacher to rate each lesson in which they engage from a low of one star to a high of five stars. Ratings are used by the curriculum staff to ensure continuous feedback and identify areas of needed improvement as well as curriculum approaches that work especially well. Learning Coaches are able to rate their overall school experience using a similar system.
- **Student Status/Escalation Process:** The school tracks and reports ongoing student progress based on the objective numeric data generated by Connexus. Staff members analyze attendance, participation, performance, assessment submissions, and teacher contact. The status is displayed on the home page for instant identification of potential problem areas. The Escalation Process goes into effect when students are in statuses other than 'On -Track' in order to ensure students continue to gain the full benefits of this educational option and are being educated appropriately through this unique school choice.
- **Teacher:** The school employs highly specialized, California–certified teachers specially trained in online delivery and individualized instruction. The majority of the teachers are physically located in the teaching/learning center in Aliso Viejo, delivering instruction to an online classroom of students and working one-on-one with students through highly interactive, technology-facilitated communication tools.
- **Teachlet® Tutorials:** Teachlet tutorials (proprietary, interactive, asynchronous graphic/video/audio tutorials) are incorporated into most lessons and provide students a dynamic, fun, and engaging way to learn the concepts they need to complete the lesson. Teachlet tutorials are created in Flash® to provide maximum media impact for minimum bandwidth and also can be converted to HTML5 to support iPad and tablet functionality.
- **WebMail:** This proprietary email system is securely located within Connexus. Students, Learning Coaches, and teachers may only use it to communicate with each other, protecting them from spam, contact from strangers, and other mainstream email issues.

What is an “educated person” in the 21st century?

Children in the 21st century must become literate and articulate, mathematically competent, scientifically and technologically adept and have the opportunity to develop their creative and physical abilities. CapCA recognizes its responsibility to generate enthusiasm and excitement

for the lifelong process of learning by providing a curriculum that is relevant, integrated and age-appropriate at the same time that it is aligned to California Content Standards (and Common Core State Standards).

Students, including many who have not thrived in the traditional classroom, engage in a challenging learning program that is tailored to their individual needs and focused on equipping them for success in the 21st century. The curriculum and instructional programs fulfill all of the recommendations recently put forth by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills², which include:

- **Emphasize core subjects:** Students will master the timeless fundamentals such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- **Emphasize learning skills:** Students develop the essential skills required for lifelong, continuous learning, such as communication, information, problem-solving, and self-directional skills.
- **Use 21st century tools to develop learning skills:** As the Partnership recommends, students develop proficiency in an array of digital information and communication tools.
- **Teach and learn in a 21st century context:** Learning takes place beyond the “four walls of the classroom” and integrates the community, parents, and fellow learners connected by technology, as the Partnership recommends.
- **Teach and learn 21st century content:** The Partnership stresses global awareness, economic literacy, and civic literacy among other topics, which the CapoCA curriculum integrates throughout the grades through both technology-based and print-based learning activities.
- **Use 21st century assessments that measure 21st century skills:** As the Partnership recommends, CapoCA uses both standardized testing and ongoing, curriculum-based assessments – including portfolios of student work and online assessment activities – which integrate with teacher data analysis tools to allow for sophisticated instructional decision-making by parents, students, and school staff.

The individualized and supported educational program facilitates the development of self-direction and personal responsibility among its students. In these ways, CapoCA will meet the objective of producing students who are self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners.

How does learning best occur?

Children learn best in a safe, positive environment in which they are respected, accepted, valued and nurtured as unique individuals and are challenged to achieve their full potential.

From this, it follows that students learn best when the instruction is tailored to their unique needs and when they are supported by adults who are committed to their success.

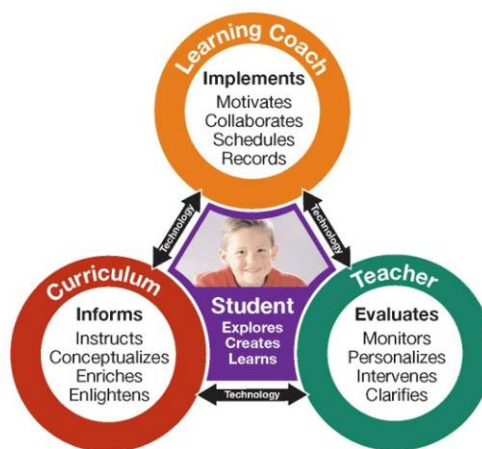
² The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, “Learning for the 21st Century,” June 2003, <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>.

The centerpiece of instruction at CapoCA is the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), which provides for individualized instruction tailored to the learning needs of each student. The PLP is an extensive document developed at the beginning of the school year by the California-certified program teacher in consultation with the student and the student's Learning Coach (usually the parents/guardians). The PLP is built from a combination of baseline assessments of both academic skills/knowledge and learning modalities, information gathered from the Learning Coach, and input directly from the student. Learning needs that go beyond the purely academic (such as study habits and interpersonal skills) are addressed in the PLP as well. The PLP then guides the student's course through the California Content Standards-based Connections Academy curriculum. All daily lessons are provided to students and families online, and in print for grades K-5, directing them step-by-step through use of the comprehensive set of textbooks, trade books, manipulatives, and consumables that are shipped to them or provided online. Our program provides the highest degree of program customization available in any virtual school operating today (see Exhibit A for examples of a PLP).

The key facets of the Connections Academy instructional model are as follows:

- *The Learning Triad:* Instruction surrounds each student with the resources needed for success. Each student is part of a "learning triad" as illustrated in Figure 10. (Details on the curriculum portion of the triad are discussed in Section II.E, Curriculum and Instructional Design.)
- *A complete learning team:* Student learning benefits from committed educators and involved parents who provide total support. Members of each student's learning team include a face-to-face Learning Coach; one or more California-certified teachers; and trained Connections Academy curriculum specialists and education resource center staff. In effect, each student has a staff of experts working together to leverage the school's myriad resources – technological, instructional, and interpersonal – for success.
 - *The Learning Coach:* Each student has a Learning Coach- a parent, extended family member, or similarly qualified adult designated by the parent/guardian who works in person with each student under the guidance of the licensed professional teacher. At the high school level, the Learning Coach is less involved with daily instruction but serves an important supervisory role for the student.
 - *Certificated, Highly Qualified Teachers:* Each student has one or more certificated California teachers specially trained in the Connections Academy curriculum and instructional method. In each of the core subjects, secondary students are taught by a highly qualified and certified teacher with expertise in a

Figure 10. Learning Triad



particular content area. Teachers work closely with each student on a one-on-one basis using innovative technology tools. The teacher is responsible for evaluating assignments and work products, providing instructional assistance, assigning and scoring assessment activities, and providing feedback on the student's performance. Based on a student's demonstrated mastery of the material, teachers add, expand or replace assignments; they also grade students in each subject for the regular report cards and make promotion or retention decisions. Depending on the need of the learner, teacher contact –via telephone, LiveLesson session, and WebMail – with the student and Learning Coach may be as frequent as several times a day, and at minimum once every two weeks depending on student age. Teachers do not wait to be contacted; they are proactive participants in their students' learning plans. In addition, families are always welcome to visit the school office/teaching center during business hours to meet with their teachers in person.

- *Homeroom Teacher or Advisory Teacher:* Each student is assigned a homeroom teacher or advisory teacher who, in collaboration with the Learning Coach, develops a personalized learning plan for each student and closely tracks their overall academic progress. Teachers work with students via the phone, WebMail, and LiveLesson sessions. Student academic progress is tracked on a daily basis via online discussions, quizzes, tests, science labs, and portfolio items to ascertain mastery of the material. Homeroom/advisory teachers also track other parameters of student success, such as attendance and participation.
- Supporting the program teachers in their work are Connections Academy curriculum and instruction specialists, who are highly trained in distance education methodologies and the curriculum. One or more specialists are also credentialed in special education and serve as resources for program teachers as they develop/adjust IEPs for special education students in the program. Curriculum specialists are available by telephone, Webmail, and instant messaging to the teachers during regular school hours for assistance in addressing particular curriculum topics or in customizing curriculum for particular student needs.

II.C HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

If the proposed school will serve high school students (any of grades nine through twelve), the petition must describe how the school will inform parents about the transferability of courses to other public high schools and the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements.[Ref. California Education Code, §47605(b)(5)(A)(iii)]

CapoCA will notify parents annually of the transferability of courses to other high schools as well as the eligibility of courses to meet college entrance requirements. Since CapoCA is WASC-accredited, all its high school courses are considered transferable to other California high schools.

CapoCA was approved as a virtual program provider following the extensive process for online and independent study programs put in place by the University of California Office of the President in 2007. Following approval of CapoCA as an “a-g” virtual program provider, the school submitted and obtained approval for the majority of its core academic courses in the “a-g” series. The school is currently working through the new process that the University of California recently put into place specifically for online courses.

The school notifies students and parents of the current status of the curriculum that has been designated as college preparatory through the “a-g” process. The actual method by which CapoCA notifies its high school parents of course transferability is determined annually by the school. Notifications are typically done via the School Handbook (see Exhibit B). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CUSD (see Exhibit C) includes the current notification method.

Most courses are also approved through the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) through a rigorous approval process to meet requirements for initial-eligibility for college athletes.³ Eighty-nine courses from CapoCA meet NCAA approval.

II.D. STUDENTS TO BE SERVED

Identify the proposed charter school’s target student population, including, at a minimum, grade levels, approximate numbers of students, and specific educational interests, backgrounds, or challenges. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(1)(A)]

CapoCA serves students in grades K through 12 throughout Capistrano Unified School District, Orange County, and adjacent (contiguous) counties. Enrollment for 2013-2014 is targeted at 2,200 students, and the school plans to continue to grow steadily but responsibly in subsequent years. Enrollment targets notwithstanding, CapoCA will make every effort to serve as many students as apply.

CapoCA addresses a growing need for students to be educated outside of traditional brick-and-mortar schools. This need is substantiated by the dramatic growth of charter schools and other alternative educational programs. The school’s partner, Connections Academy LLC, is supporting more than 50,000 students enrolled in 26 schools in 23 states during the 2013-2014 school year. There are many reasons why students seek education outside of traditional brick-and-mortar schools: they may be gifted and need very challenging curriculum and faster pacing; be struggling academically; be homebound; be grappling with social, discipline, and/or other issues; or they may be elite athletes or performers needing flexible scheduling for education.

Since its model has broad appeal among mainstream Southern California families – and yet offers a very different learning experience for those already exploring the virtual charter option – CapoCA’s demographics mirror both the region and state’s school-age population. In addition, the experience of schools supported by Connections Academy throughout the nation, as well as

³ http://www.connectionsacademy.com/Libraries/PDFs/NCAA_Approved_Course_List.pdf

CapoCA itself, indicates that CapoCA's families will continue to include many of modest means (with approximately 40% meeting the federal income guidelines for free or reduced-price lunch) as well as significant numbers of single parent/dual working parent households who find effective and creative ways to participate in this program. From one-third to one-half of the students who attend schools supported by Connections Academy were previously home-schooling or attending private school and half or more of the students were previously in traditional public schools but in need of a more personalized alternative. Furthermore, CapoCA students are fairly evenly distributed among the grade levels and by gender. (See also Figures 2, 3 and 4)

For more information about tracking demographic data, see Section VI.B.

II.E CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Include a framework for instructional design that is aligned with the needs of the pupils that the charter school has identified as its target student population. Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., site-based matriculation, independent study, technology-based education). Discuss how the chosen instructional approach will enable the school's students to achieve the objectives specified in the charter and master the academic content standards in core curriculum areas as adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to Education Code Section 60605. The discussion of instructional design should include, but not be limited to, curriculum, teaching methods, materials, and technology. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(1)(C-E)]

CapoCA's instructional design is known as the Personalized Performance Learning (PPL) Model. The three primary components are:

1. Parent involvement
2. Individualized instruction
3. High-quality teaching

Personalized Performance Learning at CapoCA utilizes an independent study format, providing a learning environment that is well supported by both the "learning triad" (see Section II.B) and by a sophisticated technology component. This basic foundation is further enhanced by a proven curriculum, by a focus on high quality teaching, and by ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities.

Supporting research for the Personalized Performance Learning Model:

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

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

course through traditional face-to-face instruction.”⁴ Virtual education will improve learning opportunities for students by increased access to high-quality teachers, mass customization and optimization, increased flexibility, improved flexibility for teachers, improved productivity and efficiency, and innovation.⁵

High-quality teaching: Each teacher is equipped with the skills and technology they need to bring out the best in every student. In his landmark study correlating test data with teacher quality, Harold Wenglinsky⁶ of the Educational Testing Service showed a direct link between good teaching and higher test scores. While past research on the impact of good teaching occurred before virtual schools were available as study sites, more recent research focusing specifically on virtual learning echoes the critical importance of teacher quality.

In April 2009, John Watson and Butch Gemin on behalf of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) published the *Management and Operations of Online Programs* as part of the series *Promising Practices in Online Learning*. The authors noted, “Most programs agree that new online teachers must 1) put their role as a facilitator of student learning above other aspects of teaching, 2) have the ability to adapt and manage change, 3) have a high level of content mastery, and 4) be ready to make the shift to online instruction.”⁷

Another example of the importance of quality teaching is seen in the 2005 study, *A Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning*⁸, which shows that the unique ability of an online teacher to communicate one-on-one with students and offer personalized feedback – as teachers do at CapoCA – is key to student success in virtual learning environments.

Individualized instruction: Students clearly benefit from instruction that is individualized in terms of pace, content, sequence, and style.

According to Michael Abell’s article *Individualizing Learning Using Intelligent Technology and Universally Designed Curriculum* published in the Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment, “A learning environment such as this should emulate the unique learning style of the individual student.”⁹

⁴ Barbara Means, Yukie Toyama, Robert Murphy, Marianne Bakia, and Karla Jones, “Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practice in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies,” U.S. Department of Education, May 2009, at= <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf> (November 16, 2009).

⁵ Lips, D. “How Online Learning is Revolutionizing K-12 Education and Benefiting Students.” Backgrounder, The Heritage Foundation, January 12, 2010.

⁶ Wenglinsky, Harold, How Teaching Matters: Bringing the Classroom Back Into Discussions of Teacher Quality, Educational Testing Service, 2000.

⁷ Watson, J. and Gemin, B., (April 2009) Promising Practices in Online Learning: Management and Operations of Online Programs: Ensuring Quality and Accountability. Evergreen Consulting Associates, iNACOL http://www.inacol.org/research/promisingpractices/iNACOL_PP_MgmtOp_042309.pdf

⁸ NCREL Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning, 2005, North Central Regional Education Laboratory/Learning Point Associates. www.ncrel.org/tech/synthesis

⁹ Abell, M. (2006). Individualizing learning using intelligent technology and universally designed curriculum. *Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment*, 5(3). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.itla.org>

In their 2010 article, *Learning Styles in the Age of Differentiated Instruction*, authors Timothy Landrum and Kimberly McDuffie note, “Matching the skills and strengths children bring to bear with their life, vocational, and independent living goals provides a framework for planning an instructional program... To summarize, instruction is individualized when (a) it is planned in a way that builds on what individual students currently know and can do and targets meaningful goals regarding what they need to learn next; and (b) accommodations and modifications to teaching and testing routines are made in order to provide students with full and meaningful access to the content they need to learn.”¹⁰

Doraine Fenner, Sueha Kayyal Mansour, and Natalie Sydor noted in their 2010 Action Research Project submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education at Saint Xavier University in Chicago that, “Applying differentiation to leveled learners allowed students to grow academically... Using modified activities according to their own learning style allowed students to progress. Differentiation provided students with different options, which allowed students to improve. Students enjoyed the amount of control they were given pertaining to the assignment... Differentiated assignments allowed students to grow academically according to their ability level.”¹¹

A goal of personalization via computer assisted instruction is for the student to demonstrate increased content knowledge and critical thinking. At CapoCA, instruction is individualized for every student, every day.

Parent involvement: Decades of research show that parent participation in education is very closely related to student achievement.¹² In an article published in 2010, *Parent Involvement and Student Academic Performance: A Multiple Mediation Analysis*, *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, authors David R. Topor, Susan P. Keane, Terri L. Shelton, and Susan D. Calkins noted that, “Parent involvement in a child’s education is consistently found to be positively associated with a child’s academic performance. Results indicated a statistically significant association between parent involvement and a child’s academic performance, over and above the impact of the child’s intelligence.”¹³

Carrie A. Semke and Susan M. Sheridan researched the effects of parental involvement on student academic achievement in their working paper published in 2011, *Family-School Connections in Rural Educational Settings: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature*, and found, “Parental participation and cooperation in their child’s educational affairs is related to

¹⁰ Timothy J. Landrum & Kimberly A. McDuffie (2010): Learning Styles in the Age of Differentiated Instruction, *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, 18:1, 6-17 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09362830903462441>

¹¹ Fenner, D., Mansour, S., and Sydor, N. (2010). The Effects of Differentiation and Motivation on Students Performance. School of Education at Saint Xavier University, Chicago IL

¹² Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13, 1, 1-22.

¹³ Topor, David R., Keane, Susan P., Shelton, Terri L., & Calkins, Susan D. (2010). Parent Involvement and Student Academic Performance: A Multiple Mediation Analysis, *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 38:3, 183-197 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2010.486297>

several outcomes deemed important in educational arenas: increased student achievement and academic performance, stronger self-regulatory skills, fewer discipline problems, better study habits, more positive attitudes toward school, improved homework habits and work orientation, and higher educational aspirations.¹⁴

There are multiple ways for parents to be involved in education. A Stanford study points out one avenue of parent involvement and its impact. The study found that using parents as tutors brought significant and immediate changes in student's I.Q. scores.¹⁵ Another study showed that parental involvement increased students' motivation to learn including school engagement, goal achievement, and even motivation to read.¹⁶

At CapoCA, parents are closely involved in their child's education.

Curriculum and Instructional Design Principles

CapoCA uses the Connections Academy research based curriculum¹⁷ developed in keeping with these key principles:

- Curriculum fosters breadth and depth of understanding in subject area
- Content is aligned to California Content Standards (and Common Core State Standards)
- Curriculum is supported by quality, reputable, recently published textbooks and/or proven instructional resources and materials
- Content and assessments are accurate and unbiased
- Content is current, relevant and provides real-world applications
- Content is appropriate for the learner (age, ability, background, reading level, learning style)
- Instructional design is adaptable and flexible to meet individual needs of Learning Coaches and students
- Instructional design provides students opportunities to improve learning skills using technological tools (virtual labs and instruments, Teachlet tutorials, business software, online calculator).
- Navigation is intuitive and age-appropriate

¹⁴ Semke C. A., & Sheridan, S. M. (2011). *Family-School Connections in Rural Educational Settings: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature* (R2Ed Working Paper No. 2011-1). Retrieved from the National Center for Research on Rural Education website: <http://r2ed.unl.edu>

¹⁵ Peterson, David (1989). Parent Involvement in the Educational Process. ERIC Digest Series Number EA 43

¹⁶ Gonzalez-DeHass, A. R., Willems, P. P., & Doan Holbein, M. F. (2005). Examining the relationship between parental involvement and student motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17, 2, 99-123.

¹⁷ American Psychological Association's Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform and Redesign <http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf>

- Scope of course is appropriate with regard to amount of content, length of course and lessons, and course requirements
- Lesson introduction is effective and presents lesson objectives, accesses prior knowledge, sets expectations and motivates
- Background information effectively prepares students to access new content, skills and strategies
- Curriculum includes opportunities for developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills and real-world applications, collaboration and independent study, and to develop oral and written communication skills
- Curriculum incorporates ongoing formative assessment and provides timely and appropriate feedback to students and teachers - criterion-referenced measures of objectives, skills, strategies or standards are collected for each course
- Curriculum promotes active learning: Each curriculum course includes active learning elements (including online and/or offline interaction) that address diverse learning styles and preferences, including textual, visual, auditory, and/or hands-on

Connections Academy utilizes *ADDIE*, a five-phase instructional design model consisting of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. Each step has an outcome that feeds into the next step in the sequence.

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

These key principles are reflected in a consistent instructional design for all courses allowing for ease of use by students and Learning Coaches.

CapoCA's curriculum and instructional design is in close keeping with leading research and national standards on effective online instruction. The research underscores the importance of integration of tools for student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction and the central role of highly qualified, specially trained professional teachers.¹⁸ In addition, the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching focus on teacher use of assessments, data, and ongoing communication to bring out the best in each unique online learner.¹⁹ CapoCA curriculum and instructional design accommodate the range of learning styles and are designed for individualized pacing, balanced with optimum interaction. The rigorous program includes both fundamental skills and higher-order thinking, which together prepare students for further education as well as lifelong, independent learning.

In the fall of 2007, CapoCA launched the StarTrack rating system along with the other schools supported by Connections Academy. On virtually every lesson in the CapoCA curriculum, and on the home page for each Learning Coach, is a StarTrack box inviting ratings on a five-star scale and an opportunity to provide text feedback. Data gathered from this feedback is examined carefully and acted upon by school staff and by Connections Academy. Since the StarTrack tool was launched, parents and students in schools supported by Connections Academy have provided more than one million lesson ratings. In the 2012-2013 school year, 786,769 ratings were submitted for courses with an average rating of 4.15 out of five stars.

Overview of Curriculum, Technology and Materials: CapoCA combines proven and rigorous educational content and materials with the best in technology-enhanced learning such that a significant portion of the curriculum is delivered through the Internet and other electronic means. The CapoCA curriculum aligns with all California Content Standards (and Common Core State Standards in K-12 Math and English Language Arts). In addition to initial development of state standards alignment by the Connections Academy curriculum specialists, the teaching staff at CapoCA collaborates on an ongoing basis to review the state standards for each core course and provide additional material or lessons for any gaps still identified or any areas that need additional support based on previous school performance. For the most recent complete curriculum Program Guide, please visit the following URL:

<http://bluetoad.com/publication/?m=1702&l=1>

The curriculum is updated regularly, with approval by the school Governing Board, based on a rigorous analysis of student performance on state standards as measured by state testing results and internal assessments. The curriculum as described here represents that which will be implemented for the 2013-2014 school year.

¹⁸ Smith, Rosina, Clark, Tom, and Blomeyer, Robert, *A Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning*, Learning Point Associates/North Central Regional Educational Laboratory; Naperville, IL; 2005.

¹⁹ The National Standards for Quality Online Teaching, International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), <http://www.inacol.org/>, 2011.

Elementary and Middle School: The program of instruction for students in grades K-8 has the ability to be individualized, personalized, and delivered in a non-traditional environment to give students the best pathways to success. The high quality proprietary curriculum developed by the Connections Academy Curriculum Department integrates textbooks, instructional activities, and other content from a variety of leading publishers including Pearson, Perfection Learning, and Zaner-Bloser. In addition to high-quality virtual and print textbook resources, the curriculum features technology-based content from providers such as Grolier Online, BrainPOP, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and Discovery Education. The proprietary and highly effective online animated Teachlet tutorials, which introduce challenging topics and provide interactive practice, are also included, along with proprietary interactive online tools and simulations. LiveLesson sessions, which provide for real-time web conferencing with individual and small groups of students using voice over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing, allow teachers and students to interact with one another in real time in a virtual classroom. The curriculum is updated regularly, based on a rigorous analysis of student performance on state testing and internal assessments.

Foreign language instruction is available including Spanish, Chinese, and Sign Language. In addition, advanced middle school students also have the option to take French, German, Japanese, and Latin. Language courses integrate proven-effective online materials with a unique audio feature that allows teachers to hear and grade actual student speech. Courses may also include discussions and LiveLesson session instruction for maximum student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction.

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

The technology literacy courses, Educational Technology and Online Learning, provide not only a comprehensive set of technology skills ranging from basic productivity tools to Web page development, but also reinforce national and state academic standards, online study skills, and Internet safety.

Connections Academy and the Julliard School of Music recently launched a new partnership. Julliard eLearning is the world-famous conservatory's first-ever group of online courses, presenting an exciting new option for teaching music and related courses, for students in elementary, middle and high school. The curriculum is constructed around and aligned to national standards. In subsequent years, courses such as music theory, music history, drama history, or dance history, may expand the course offerings. Synchronous virtual music instruction courses and virtual "master classes" may also be included.

CapoCA also offers a selection of gifted and talented courses in math, science, and language arts. With individualized lessons, special courses for gifted and talented students, and specialized teachers, an environment is created where talents are nurtured and potential is realized. The gifted and talented experts also create programs for "twice-exceptional" students, those who are gifted but also have special education needs.

An interactive CapoCA course called Web Quest provides students an opportunity to monitor frog and toad populations across the state and around the nation. FrogWatch USA, a program managed by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, provides the student the opportunity to help scientists monitor populations across the country. Scientists use the information gathered by program participants to develop ways to protect amphibians, which are extremely sensitive to ecological changes.

CapoCA also provides online state assessment preparation, currently offered for Grades 2-11 through a program called Study Island. This state-specific assessment preparation and standards-based learning program has been shown to produce a typical test performance increase of over ten percent. Each Study Island topic is built from one California Academic Standard and contains a lesson and assessment question. Students can choose either traditional tests or interactive games in order to go through the material. Teachers then have access to real-time progress reports that analyze deficiencies and help target intervention.

High School: The school provides a balanced, challenging high school experience focused on students pursuing paths that lead to success, whether via college or immediate career choice. Their personalized path is monitored along the way by the student, parents, teachers, and their school counselor. CapoCA provides a comprehensive high school program with four levels offered for academic coursework: Foundations, Standard, Honors, or Advanced Placement. While all four levels are designed to meet state standards and provide students a rigorous curriculum, the four levels enable differentiation based on student needs and college and career goals. Students work with their school counselor to determine appropriate course level placement. The program is designed for each individual student, so students may take courses in different levels for different subject areas, and may move between levels as they either accelerate their learning, or if they need to work further in a particular area.

The high school curriculum currently consists of approximately 250 courses, including a wide variety of electives and intensive foreign language instruction such as Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. The high school program involves more online experience than the program for younger students, as appropriate for secondary school learners. The high school program includes substantial teacher-directed instruction through synchronous and asynchronous e-learning tools. The California State Standards and Common Core-aligned high school curriculum integrates digital and/or print versions of textbooks from major publishers enhanced by multimedia, interactive material, discussions, and communication/conferencing tools. In addition, students have offline assignments, projects, novels, and practice work.

With 17 Advanced Placement courses at their fingertips, students are prepared for college. Graduates of CapoCA have been accepted at the University of California (multiple campuses), the Pepperdine University, Scripps College, University of New Mexico, the University of Utah, United States Air Force Academy, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and at Denver, Arizona State University, and other colleges. (See Figure 9)

Across the country students enrolled in Connections Education-supported schools have exceeded the national average on performance on Advanced Placement, ACT, and SAT exams. Students now also have the option to take Career Technical Education (CTE) courses such as Introduction to Criminal Justice, Introduction to Finance, Electronics: Electronic Devices, Introduction to Medical Assisting, Introduction to Early Childhood Education, and Introduction to Law.

High school courses include extensive use of Teachlet tutorials, the highly interactive, asynchronous tutorials that incorporate graphics, video, and audio to illustrate to students the concepts and ideas they will need to master lesson objectives. Along with the use of LiveLesson sessions, Teachlet tutorials dramatically increase the effectiveness of the secondary school instructional model. In addition, the high school courses incorporate graded asynchronous online discussions which are required for all students. The discussions create important opportunities for collaboration and interaction among students, increase writing skills, and provide opportunities for a “real-world” audience.

This quality virtual high school program also includes a host of services and procedures to address credits, transcripts, and guidance counseling. It is important for students to start early on planning for graduation and post-secondary education or the world of work. Without early planning, students run the risk of missing crucial courses that might thwart their plans or aspirations. The following important aspects of the CapoCA high school program were developed with input from a national group of principals, guidance counselors, superintendents, teachers and parents.

- *Course Selection and Credit Transfer:* Connections Academy’s curriculum is AdvancED-accredited which helps to ensure that credits will transfer to other high schools as well as to any college or university both within and outside of California; the school also holds WASC accreditation. For students transferring into CapoCA, guidance counselors carefully analyze student transcripts to provide the maximum allowable “transfer credit” into the program. Upon graduation or withdrawal, students will receive an official CapoCA transcript detailing both the credits earned at CapoCA as well as any transfer credits. The curriculum uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction (this is equivalent to a full-year course in a traditional high school and is sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units). CapoCA parents receive a detailed Course Selection Guide with specific school information during the enrollment process. Parents and students then have an opportunity to select the courses based on their student’s academic level, previously completed high school level courses, and plans for higher education and/or career. These selections are analyzed

along with the student's prior academic record by the Connections Academy Placement Team who will then either accept these selections or recommend some modifications.

- *Instructional Delivery and Scheduling:* CapoCA students who enroll in the K-8 program and elect to continue into high school will notice that the high school introduces increased structure and a pacing system that encourages all the students in a single class to move forward at a similar speed. The high school program includes a significant amount of computer-facilitated learning. While hard copy textbooks are provided in some courses (generally along with an enhanced online version of the text as well), students may also take several courses that are completely online. Unlike the K-8 program which is largely asynchronous/user scheduled (parents set the schedule and lessons can be done in any sequence and pace), in high school the pacing for core courses may follow an asynchronous/fixed schedule (the schedule is fixed and students all move at a similar pace). This does not take away the ability of CapoCA teachers to personalize the curriculum for students; however it does add accountability, structure, and significant peer interaction that is necessary for a quality high school program.
- *Area and Subject Requirements:* Each CapoCA student must successfully complete a minimum of 22 Carnegie units to graduate. Units completed must meet or exceed the California graduation requirements. The subject area graduation requirements are reviewed annually and approved by the school's Governing Board, and then incorporated into the School Handbook.
- *Promotion, Graduation and Grade Point Average (GPA):* Students in grades 9–12 must be enrolled in a minimum of 4.5 credits over the course of the school year, as the CapoCA program is a full-time public school program. To stay on track for graduation in four years, prior to the 10th grade, students must have earned (or transferred) a minimum of 5 credits, prior to the 11th grade student must have earned (or transferred) a minimum of 10 total credits and prior to the 12th grade students must have earned (or transferred) a minimum of 16 total credits. Students will only receive credit for classes passed with a D- grade or better. To graduate and receive a diploma from CapoCA, a student must have been enrolled for at least one whole semester prior to graduation and passed the CAHSEE test. Each student must successfully complete a minimum of 22 Carnegie units to graduate. These promotion policies and any future changes will be incorporated into the School Handbook and approved by the school's Governing Board.

Technology and Socialization: In addition to working with the curriculum materials, CapoCA students have the opportunity to participate regularly in both face-to-face and virtual community activities. Face-to-face activities include field trips and community outings facilitated by both CapoCA faculty and Club Orange members. Club Orange brings together parents of students attending schools supported by Connections across the country who reach out to their local communities. CapoCA's technology-based activities include online bulletin boards/forums (such as "Math Problem of the Week"); book chats; teacher-led small-group discussions using real-time "groupware" technology that integrates electronic whiteboard and

voice over IP; learning-focused WebMail; and student communication through WebMail regarding virtual group projects. All of the collaborative online activities and communications tools are restricted for use only by members of the CapoCA community; parents can feel comfortable that their children are experiencing this technology safely within the “walled garden” of CapoCA.

Given the balance of modes and media for learning, actual time online for students will vary according to each student’s developmental level, learning needs, and learning styles. Students in grades K and 1 may spend up to 15% of their time online; students in grades 2 -5 may have a range of 15 - 25%; students in grades 6 - 12 may range from 25-75+% of time online.

To encourage socialization and interaction amongst students, the school also provides students with dozens of technology-facilitated clubs and activities, including:

- **Art Club:** The Art Club sparks students’ creativity by exploring art, photography, and graphic design. Students explore to the nuances of each medium and have the opportunity to create and share their own creative designs. Optional LiveLesson sessions let students interact with art experts.
- **Book Club:** Participants read selected books and share their observations with each other. The teacher guides and encourages interactive and engaging group discussion.
- **Broadcast Club:** Students learn about the history and new trends of broadcast media and have an opportunity to share their work with peers. Throughout the year, students explore the growth of print (from newspapers to blogs), audio (from radio shows to podcasts), and video (from television to Internet videos).
- **Chess Club:** Club members learn, socialize, and play in an atmosphere of friendly competition. After completing an online tutorial for either beginner or advanced players, students are matched with competitors of the same skill level, and the games begin. Students can even play in a national tournament on an exclusive Connections site.
- **Debate Club:** Students learn the art of debate and critical thinking. While discussing and debating current events, students develop valuable skills in brainstorming, topic research, presentation strategies, verbal and nonverbal cues, and role-playing. Teachers help students develop position statements, supporting arguments, and analytical thinking.
- **Environmental Club:** Students work together to learn about and discuss environmental issues at the local, national, and global level. Each week features a project students can work on at home to help the environment. Special guest speakers participate in the club as well, adding breadth to the club.

- **History Club:** History Club is a gathering place for history buffs. Members meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss historical happenings and learn how history does, in fact, affect our present lives. Additionally, the club facilitator guides interested students through the process of creating, editing, and submitting a unique project for the National History Day competition.
- **Pen Pals:** It's a new twist on a classic way to build friendships. Students develop their skills in letter writing, written expression, and penmanship, while making friends with students in other Connections Education-supported schools.
- **Poetry Corner:** Poetry Corner challenges middle and high school students with various advanced poetic forms. Students in the club study language and literary devices as they learn how to convey ideas, situations, and feelings in inventive and original ways. Lessons teach students how to communicate using metaphor, simile, and imagery and members are encouraged to share their poetry during readings in LiveLesson sessions and on the Poetry Corner message board.
- **Quiz Bowl:** Students test their knowledge of fun facts in this weekly academic competition, with winners named in each state at the end of the year.
- **Robotics Club:** The Robotics Club guides students through the exciting world of robots. Students will define what a robot is (and what it isn't), study the myths that surround robots, examine how robots are used in movies and stories, and consider how robots assist humans. Experts in the field of robotics help students learn more about artificial intelligence and what the future holds for humans and machines.
- **Student Leadership and Service Club:** Students take on roles in both leadership and service. The group meets twice a month to discuss service projects and hear from guest speakers who are active in different aspects of professional leading.
- **Student Literary Magazine:** The monthly *Pens and Lens* magazine recognizes and publishes original student works. Students are encouraged to inspire one another in both writing and photography.
- **Student Newspaper:** *The Monitor* is the student-managed, student-staffed monthly newspaper. As they work together, students learn about group dynamics, organization strategies, and teambuilding exercises while researching and writing stories on current events, sports, entertainment, and fashion.

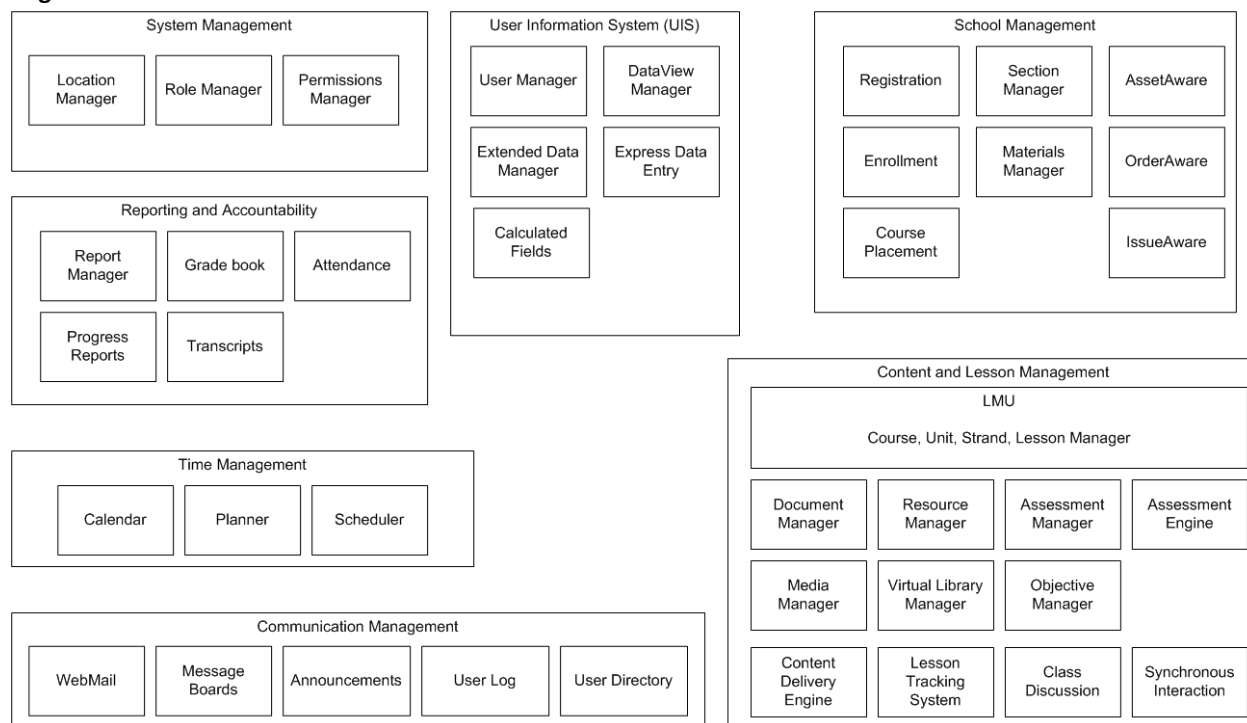
Additional clubs and activities have been developed to support college and career readiness such as Career Club, First Generation Club, and the College Planning Club.

Connexus, the Education Management System: The platform for organizing and managing the entire CapoCA educational environment is Connexus, an online Education Management System developed by Connections Academy specifically for virtual school use (Overview Schematic provided in Figure 11). This proprietary, web-based software allows CapoCA to deliver every assignment and track every activity, monitoring the completion of individual lessons as well as mastery of discrete skills and knowledge.

Connexus operates within Connections Academy's secure and robust technology infrastructure which protects all data from loss and intrusion while maintaining a safe environment in which students, parents, and teachers can interact with each other. Connexus is proprietary software developed by Connections Academy and copyrighted. The software is based on Microsoft's .Net Framework and is written in C#. Connections Academy provides Connexus on an ASP basis – hosting the software, automatically installing all updates, and ensuring continuously updated support. Connexus is fine-tuned on a regular basis throughout the school year, with a comprehensive update each year prior to the beginning of school.

Connexus has been engineered for growth, flexibility, and scalability. The system has readily accommodated growth both nationally and internationally in student enrollment from its launch in 2002. Additional hardware and software extensions are added as required so that the system does not have any restrictions on its ability to serve added users. Connexus is available 24 x 7 (except for normal off-hour scheduled maintenance periods) to CapoCA students and their families and to other authorized users according to their permissions. With this system, CapoCA is able to provide an unprecedented level of time-on-task detail while benefiting from robust communication, collaboration, and course delivery tools.

Figure 11. Connexus Overview Schematic



California-certified teachers: Each student is assigned at least one California-certified program teacher specially trained in the CapoCA curriculum and instructional method. In the secondary grades, each student is assigned to more than one highly qualified subject teacher depending on the courses taken. These teachers are responsible for evaluating assignments and work products, providing instructional assistance, assigning and scoring assessment activities in the program, and providing feedback on the child's performance. Based on a student's

demonstrated mastery of the material, teachers can add, expand or replace assignments; they also grade students in each subject for the regular student report cards and make promotion or retention decisions.

Depending on the needs of the learner, teacher contact with the student and Learning Coach – most often via telephone, email, or instant messaging – may be as frequent as several times a day, and at minimum once every two weeks. Teachers do not wait to be contacted; they are proactive participants in their student’s learning plans. In addition, CapoCA requires at least one face-to-face meeting between each student and a teacher during the course of the school year, though families are always welcome to visit the offices during business hours to meet with their teachers in-person. CapoCA also has California-credentialed special education teachers on staff to assist in the implementation of the school’s special education program (see Section II.I).

Supporting the program teachers in their work are Connections Academy curriculum specialists, who are highly trained in distance education methodologies and the curriculum. One or more specialists are also credentialed in special education and can serve as resources for program teachers as they develop/adjust IEPs for special education students in the CapoCA program. Curriculum specialists are available by telephone, email, and instant messaging to the CapoCA teachers during regular school hours for assistance in addressing particular curriculum topics or in customizing curriculum for particular student needs.

School Day, School Calendar and Instructional Minutes: CapoCA follows a traditional school year calendar that includes 180 days during which instruction is provided by school staff (surpassing the current minimum charter school requirement of 175 days). The school calendar may be extended to allow families more flexibility in completing the year’s work, or to provide extra learning time for students who are at risk. The curriculum is notably rigorous, and the time commitment it requires of students is comparable to that of a traditional school day. Since CapoCA learners do not face the distractions and interruptions of a typical school setting – from lining up in the hallway to waiting out the teacher’s handling of disruptive peers – they often use their learning time much more efficiently. The in-depth application of concepts that is often relegated to homework in a conventional school setting is an integrated part of the learning day at CapoCA; discrete skills and extended projects, remedial and enrichment activities are all part of the daily routine for students and their Learning Coaches. The program provides for and offers more than the legally mandated minimum instructional minutes for every grade.

Independent Study: CapoCA adheres to all applicable California Independent Study Regulations, in accordance with CCR Title 5, Sections 11700-11705. This includes the creation and execution of master agreements (see Exhibit D for a sample Master Agreement), creation and adoption of Board policies regarding independent study, appropriate maintenance of work products, staffing that complies with the required pupil to teacher ratios, and the geographic limitations on the place of residence of the pupils. In addition, CapoCA complies with California Education Code § 51747.3 and does not provide any “thing of value” to pupils that a school district could not legally provide to its pupils.

II.F PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY LOW-ACHIEVING

Indicate how the charter school will identify and respond to the needs of students who are not achieving at or above expected levels. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(1)(F)]

CapoCA is well equipped to respond to the needs of students who are lagging academically. The school's experience has shown that appropriate placement is critical for student success in an online environment so that academic gaps can be addressed immediately. Therefore the first, step is the placement process, where these students are provided with the curriculum materials and teaching resources appropriate to their achievement level as a starting point for learning, with the goal of attaining at least one year's academic progress within the school year. For example, CapoCA implements the PACE (Program for All Children to Excel) methodology, which focuses on gaining proficiency in reading and math skills.

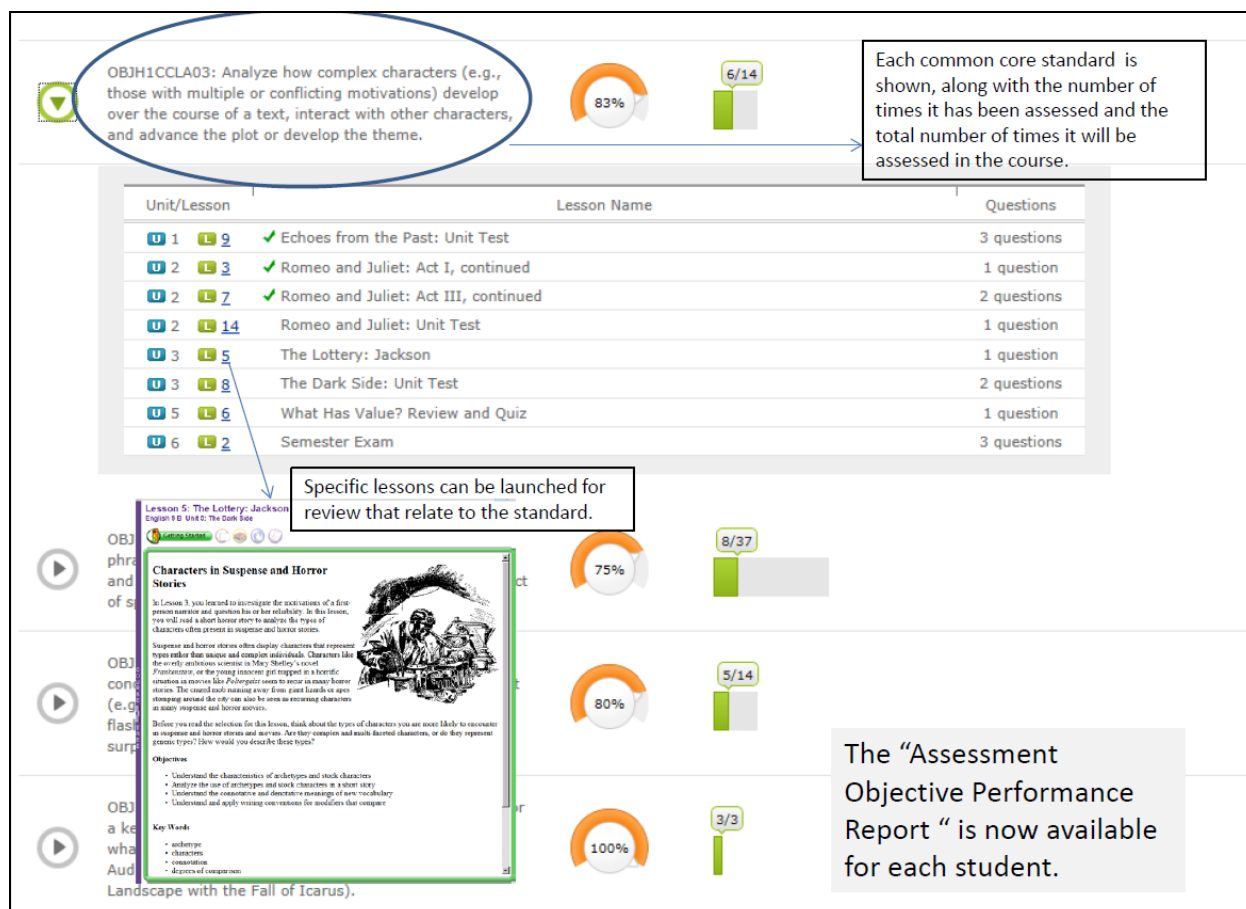
Instruction and assessment efforts begin with a thorough student placement process and progress review, including online and offline placements tests, which help to customize the student's academic program and formulate the PLP. We use the SSTAIR method, which relies on student assessment data for continuous monitoring of student progress. SSTAIR is an acronym for Skills, Standards, Assessment, Intervention, and Response. Beginning with California State Standards and Common Core State Standards, teachers easily see what students should be able to do by the end of a specific grade in each of the core area subjects. The PLP tool places at each teacher's fingertips all of the assessment data available for students, e.g. state test scores, LEAP pre- and post-test assessment data, participation and performance metrics, and any IEP information.

Intervention Indicators are displayed in Connexus to facilitate a teacher's identification of students who may be in need of instruction in math, reading, or both. In addition, at both the section and individual student levels, the Assessment Objective Performance Reports (AOPR) can be generated displaying not only the essential skills and standards for a course, but also exactly where in the curriculum each of these is assessed. The Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR), shown in Figure 12, provides real-time student performance on each of the essential skills and standards based upon individual assessment items. It measures standards based objectives students should master by the end of that grade level. Data can be sorted to identify students who have mastered or not mastered specific objectives. Teachers can run this report as frequently as they like to see exactly how students are progressing with regard to each of the skills and standards for that subject and grade. This method:

- Enhances the multi-tiered instruction model
- Identifies essential skills and standards by subject/grade level
- Identifies how and where these essential skills and standards are assessed within the program
- Provides a Response to Intervention model
- Provides access to and analysis of real time data to determine mastery/proficiency

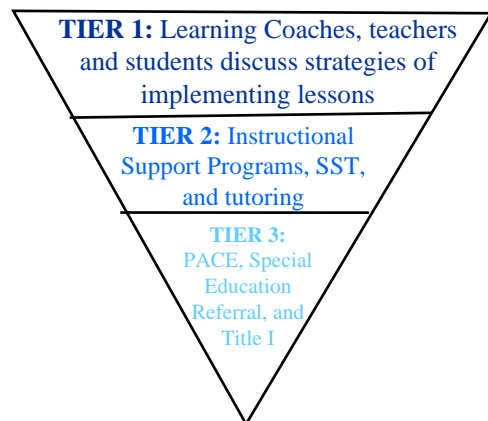
- Incorporates data-driven decisions throughout instruction
- Maximizes use of the instructional support programs, resources, and data
- Identifies tiered interventions for non-mastered/proficient skills and standards
- Identifies students' response to the implemented interventions

Figure 12. Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR) Screen Shot



We utilize a multi-tiered intervention approach to curriculum and instruction, which ensures that individual students receive the support they need. Students who may not be successful in the standard program, Tier 1, receive additional support via the supplemental and alternative programs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 (Figure 13). Students' responses to interventions are monitored and adjustments to the type and intensity of support are made as needed. The CapoCA staff has formed a Student Support Team (SST) to focus collaboratively on the needs of students who are struggling, and facilitates tutoring and other supports using this multi-tiered approach.

Figure 13. Tiered Approach



In a virtual environment, students working below grade level are shielded from the negative social attention that struggling students often face in a brick-and-mortar environment and are thus able to concentrate on intensive learning. With its track record in experience in remediation for mastery of essential skills, Connections Academy assures that CapoCA has access to all needed expertise in addressing the needs of low-achieving students.

II.G PLAN FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ACADEMICALLY HIGH-ACHIEVING

Indicate how the charter school will identify and respond to the needs of students who are academically high achieving. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(1)(G)]

Just as the Personalized Learning approach benefits struggling students, high achievers also thrive at CapoCA. The placement process assures that such learners are provided with the most appropriate curriculum, pacing, and teaching approach from day one. Teachers work closely with curriculum specialists and Learning Coaches to assure a steady flow of enrichment activities for students working above grade level. In a virtual environment, students are able to work significantly above grade level without fear of ostracism or other negative social repercussions that gifted students sometimes face in a more traditional school setting.

CapoCA offers an even more focused gifted program for students in grades 3-8. The approach covers the same educational standards as the standard offering, but with more challenging assignments covered at an accelerated pace along with additional required activities that extend the lesson topic and promote higher-level thinking and understanding. The students are grouped together with other gifted learners and opportunities for group interaction, particularly through Live Lesson sessions, are provided. Further, the teachers assigned to work with the gifted groups receive additional training in gifted instruction.

Gifted students may be identified either during the enrollment process or once enrolled, following teacher or parent recommendation. Identified students may be placed in the gifted curriculum at or above their grade level. Performance in the gifted program determines ongoing access to the gifted courses. Students in grades 3-8 may be enrolled in “gifted” Language Arts, Science, or Mathematics courses. Transcripts of students in grades 3-8 will

reflect students' participation in and completion of gifted courses. For students not already identified as gifted, CapoCA will continue to implement its process that allows parents and teachers to nominate a student for identification as gifted. Under the direction of the gifted education teacher for the school, a team meets to review the student's Connections Academy gifted questionnaire, LEAP performance, work samples, and state test results. This compilation of evidence may lead to a formal identification as a gifted student. If additional information is needed, the team may conduct an ability test such as the OLSAT. The ability test measures thinking skills, reasoning abilities, and abstract thinking. After gifted identification is made, the student works together with the Learning Coach and teacher to create a differentiated educational plan. Courses for gifted students in grades 3-8 are so designated in the Program Guide (See <http://bluetoad.com/publication/?m=1702&l=1>) with a "G".

The high school program offers a rigorous college preparatory curriculum that provides an opportunity for students to enroll in Honors and AP courses. Honors courses provide students with opportunities to participate in extension projects, investigations, and activities that require integrated skills application and higher-level thinking and understanding. The Honors courses are indicated with an "H" in the Program Guide. School counselors carefully review each student's transcripts to determine when an Honors course is appropriate. Course selection will be made in close consultation with students and their parents.

CapoCA provides an extensive course list including core, elective, and AP courses. Full descriptions of courses are provided online:

- <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/curriculum/free-online-learning.aspx>
- <http://bluetoad.com/publication/?m=1702&l=1>

II.H PLAN FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Indicate how the charter school will identify and respond to the needs of English learners. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(1)(G)]

CapoCA utilizes required criteria and procedures to identify English Language Learner (ELL) students. All incoming students are required to fill out the California Home Language Survey. Based on the information in this form, students may be referred for further language testing to identify their specific level of English proficiency. The testing and placement occurs using tests required by California (such as the California English Language Development Test) and using trained test administrators.

In a virtual school, students with special learning needs, including English Language Learners, enjoy individualized instruction without being isolated from the mainstream curriculum or their peers. CapoCA anticipates that a portion of its ELL students can be very effectively served by the general education program. The individualized pace of the program allows students to move more quickly through subjects where language is not a factor and spend more time on reading and writing activities. A Connections Academy ELL specialist with ESL/LEP/ELL training is available to work with CapoCA teachers, Learning Coaches and students to adapt the core material for ELL students using an instructional framework such as the Sheltered Instruction

Observation Protocol (SIOP), and provide appropriate supplemental resources, including various technologies that can facilitate language acquisition.

The Connections Academy curriculum provides quality instructional, social and academic language instruction based on scientific research for English acquisition, in addition to quality academic instruction in reading and math. Children who are becoming fluent in English, as well as long-term English Language Learners, are also learning academic content in such areas as reading and math, so that they are not left behind. Based on their identified level of proficiency and needs, students receive a planned program of English as a second language instruction (ESL) to facilitate the acquisition of English language skills and provide an instructional program appropriate to the student's developmental and instructional level.

To meet the needs of ELL students with less English speaking proficiency, CapoCA deploys a comprehensive instructional approach, including adapted materials for students and parents and special training for teachers certified to teach ESL. LiveLesson sessions are used in this effort as well. The program addresses the language acquisition needs of students in a virtual learning environment through the integration of technology and the support of certified teachers. Instructional support helps students attain proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Services include language software, teacher consultation with Learning Coaches to guide instructional practice, teacher modification of content lessons and/or assessments, and direct instruction via LiveLesson.

CapoCA conducts the required ongoing assessments of progress and improvements in English proficiency for its ELL students. All mandated state tests for ELL students are administered as required by law.

Support for families of ELL students includes personnel available to speak to the family in their home language when needed or upon request, primarily for the most common home languages. In addition, per state guidelines, if the school enrolls students in excess of 15% of the student body, who speak any one primary home language, the school will examine what additional supports need to be in place for those families, such as translation of materials.

II.I PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Indicate how the charter school will identify and respond to the needs of students with disabilities. Fully describe the charter school's special education plan, including, but not limited to, the following:

- *The means by which the charter school will comply with the provisions of Education Code Section 47641;*
- *The process to be used to identify students who qualify for special education programs and services;*
- *How the school will provide or access special education programs and services;*
- *The school's understanding of its legal responsibilities for special education students; and*
- *How the school intends to meet those obligations.*

CapoCA is committed to serving students with disabilities whether such students are currently or newly identified as disabled. Through a combination of appropriate certifications among our core California-based teaching staff and our centralized Education Resource Center staff,

CapoCA is able to effectively coordinate with its Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) resources to meet the needs of special learners. CapoCA will not deny admission to students on the basis of disability. CapoCA adheres to Education Code 51745 (c) which states that an individual with exceptional needs will not participate in independent study unless the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates that independent study is an appropriate educational setting.

As a charter school, CapoCA has the option under California Education Code § 47641 to be deemed a Local Educational Agency (LEA) for Special Education purposes. Alternatively, the charter school would be considered a public school within the sponsoring district's LEA. In 2011, CapoCA joined the Tulare County/District SELPA as an LEA member, and has provided verifiable assurances of its ability to fulfill all obligations in this capacity, as well as assurances that it is participating in a SELPA approved by the State Board of Education. CapoCA reserves the right to request membership in another SELPA if it deems that a different SELPA would better serve the needs of the students and the school.

Since CapoCA is a program focused on individualization, flexibility and personalization it is often a good fit for students with special needs. In addition to the regular placement test, CapoCA's Special Education placement specialist reviews each IEP, analyzing the level of functioning, educational needs, and suggested accommodations/modifications to determine how CapoCA can meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment. Thus, CapoCA can be an appropriate setting for students with special needs by providing:

- 1:1 individualized instruction
- A team of adults focused on student success
- Ongoing consultation with educators, certified teachers, and curriculum specialists to assist with adapting and modifying assignments to meet specific student needs
- Personalized Learning Plans
- A safe and directed environment
- Reduced environmental distractions
- Frequent progress checks, evaluations and reports
- Flexible schedule that allows for students to move at their own pace
- Ability to separate academics from socialization
- Recommendations for/provision of software (e.g., keyboarding or speech recognition software) or other technology to facilitate communication, organization and skill development and to address special needs
- Supplemental, research-based online reading and math programs to address skill deficit areas at the student's instructional level

These factors, along with the presence of a caring and committed adult – the Learning Coach – enable the general education program to address the large majority of special needs students (approximately 70%). This is accomplished through the implementation of specific instructional approaches and learning strategies via a consultative service model. Included in this group would be mild to moderate disabilities in the following categories:

- Vision acuity difficulties
- Auditory deficiencies
- Health concerns
- Developmental articulation
- Developmental expressive language
- Developmental receptive language
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Developmental reading (dyslexia)
- Developmental writing
- Oral expression
- Written language
- Spelling
- Memory
- Handwriting
- Developmental arithmetic
- Reasoning
- Emotional/Behavior
- Social communication
- Attention disorder

More serious and profound cases of these disabilities, as well as specific physical and pervasive developmental disorders (e.g., autism, Asperger's, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder), neurological disorders (e.g., Multiple Sclerosis), and physical disabilities will usually require virtual and/or direct Special Education services. If it is determined that Independent Study is appropriate for these students, CapoCA will secure the additional services required, including, but not limited to designated instructional services (DIS) service providers near the individual students' home, and working with the SELPA and local counties and districts when needed.

To support enrolled students with IEPs, CapoCA:

- Holds Annual Reviews of the IEP including a review of student progress within the existing IEP, creation of new IEP goals; and obtaining parent consent for and approval of new IEP.
- Employs a Director of Special Education, who is a qualified administrator to oversee and participate in IEP meetings and all elements of the Special Education program.
- Conducts Triennial Reviews, in which students may be formally reassessed, or, if no new data is needed, then a review of the records may take place.
- Holds IEP meetings when a student has received an initial assessment; when a student demonstrates a lack of anticipated progress; or when a parent or teacher requests a meeting to develop, review, or revise a student's individualized education program.

- When a special education student transfers into CapoCA, conducts an IEP meeting within thirty days of enrollment.
- Includes appropriate SELPA staff and/or staff from the student's resident district in this process.
- Provides related services per the IEP.

Referring students for Special Education services: If CapoCA suspects that a student requires Special Education services, the following procedures are initiated. If needed, coordination with the Tulare SELPA staff may also occur.

The program teacher consults with the school's Special Education specialist(s) and implements suggested modifications, lesson adaptations, and alternative instructional strategies. The program teacher documents all modifications and the student's level of success with each.

- The student is then referred to the SST to brainstorm and implement additional strategies for student success and to monitor the progress of those interventions. The school's SST meets and discusses what interventions have been tried, what worked, what didn't and what new interventions should be implemented. If deemed appropriate by the team and a disability is suspected, the SST team will invite the Director of Special Education to the meeting to discuss their concerns. If the student is making good progress and responding well to the interventions, the general education program remains in place with further suggested program modifications.
- Parental consent for the student evaluation is requested via an assessment plan. Parents are sent a copy of *Procedural Safeguards*. When the assessment plan is returned, the appropriate evaluations are arranged. The parent is invited to the IEP team meeting to review the assessment results. The team determines if the student has a disability, whether the student requires Special Education services, and which least-restrictive special education services are required.
- The IEP team prepares an offer of Free and Public Education (FAPE), IEP goals are formulated, service time is determined and the IEP is implemented.

Special Education services can be provided in several ways including but not limited to: consultative services by phone or videoconference, direct instruction via LiveLesson session, collaboration utilizing our general education staff and Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teacher(s) together in LiveLesson sessions, and DIS services, which may be provided online or in person depending on what is appropriate and available near the student. All Special Education services are typically provided by CapoCA's Special Education team or by contracted DIS providers as appropriate. The Director of Special Education will oversee all DIS service providers and ensure that student needs are being met and services are being delivered.

As the authorizing chartering agency, CUSD will be given the right to access information directly from the LEA servicing CapoCA students in order to monitor student progress and compliance.

In order to make efficient use of staff resources, IEP meetings may be held at either the CapoCA office, at another site, via teleconferencing or through LiveLesson sessions to allow all parties to participate. Specific arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis and will be in accordance with all applicable law. CapoCA will maintain responsibility for tracking and implementing IEP timelines and requirements as per the appropriate laws and regulations for charter schools and in accordance with SELPA policies.

As a public school CapoCA will, through its policies and procedures, comply with all applicable requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. Seq. (IDEA). CapoCA, in association with the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), will provide FAPE to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, identifying, evaluating, planning educational programs, and implementing placements in accordance with these Acts.

III. ASSESSMENT AND USE OF DATA

III.A MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Describe the measurable student outcomes that will be used by the charter school. "Student outcomes," for the purposes of this part, means the extent to which all students enrolled in the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school's educational program. The pupil outcomes shall align with the state priorities, as described in subdivision (d) of Section 52060, that apply for the grade levels served, or the nature of the program operated, by the charter school." [Ref. California Education Code § 47605 (b)(5)(B) and 47605 (b) (5) (A) (ii)]

A crucial part of CapoCA's plan for overall excellence is the establishment of clear academic and related goals for each student, and for the school, as well as clear ways to measure progress toward those goals. The outcomes and goals described here are intended to be achieved over the five year term of the charter. The school will track progress annually towards these long term goals. Recognizing that the state is undergoing a major change in assessment and accountability, CapoCA will comply with all new regulations and expectations regarding the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). Based on the best information regarding the state guidelines available at the time of submission of this charter renewal, the required components are substantially addressed by CapoCA in this charter and in the school's day to day operations and planning. The LCAP will be developed to be consistent with any state guidelines and requirements for both content and timing, and will be updated annually. The LCAP may therefore be used to provide further detail on annual goals for student achievement, among other things. However, it is currently anticipated that the plan and its annual updates will not require a material amendment to the charter as the required state priorities applicable to CapoCA are integral parts of this charter.

Academic outcomes: CapoCA has established several core academic goals, measurements, and performance criteria. These are in alignment with the state's pupil achievement priorities as well as the mission and purpose of the school.

- **Goal I: School Performance:** CapoCA uses standardized testing to calibrate student performance and improvement on a yearly basis. CapoCA will be fully accountable for its students' achievement in keeping with the 1999 state Academic Performance Index (API) law, as updated in California Education Code § 52052, as well as in applicable federal law and any other applicable statutory achievement requirements for charter schools.

Measurement: CapoCA expects and encourages students to participate in all state-mandated testing. The results of the standardized assessments and other measurements are calculated into the school's API (currently a scale of 200-1000). Participation in standardized testing is addressed in the Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgment (see Exhibit E) and/or the Master Agreement (see sample in Exhibit D).

Performance Criteria: CapoCA will continue to actively work to meet or exceed the API scores of a demographically comparable school, and has ultimately targeted a school API score of 800 or better each year. In addition, CapoCA will actively work to meet its API growth targets school wide, as well as for each numerically significant subgroup, and any other applicable targets established for charter schools.

- **Goal II: Student Progress.** Based on a value-added model of academic growth, each student should demonstrate a year of academic growth for each year in school. While not every student starts or ends the year at the same place on the ladder, all should climb the same number of rungs during the time they are with our school. Students master a set of learning objectives in the core subject areas outlined for each grade level and aligned with California Content Standards (and Common Core State Standards). Students reach this level of achievement with a mastery loop approach—that is, when students do not meet initial performance targets, CapoCA intervenes and provides additional support until an acceptable level of achievement is reached.

Measurement: With the additional support that CapoCA provides students, each student that is enrolled for two consecutive calendar years of State Testing (enrolled by October 1 of the first year and enrolled through testing the second year) will demonstrate improvement of at least one performance band (e.g., from “Below Basic” to “Basic”) on the state’s standardized assessments in the grades for which comparisons are possible. Students in those grades who do not improve at least one performance band but are “Proficient” or “Advanced” in the second year will also be included in the measurement.

Performance Criteria: CapoCA will actively work towards the goal that more than 75% of its students across each demographic subcategory demonstrate a year of academic growth on an annual basis. This performance measure will only apply to subgroups that have sufficient numbers as defined in California Education Code § 52052 (or its successors).

- **Goal III: Graduation and Post-Secondary Plans.** Based on Post-Secondary Plans, students will be prepared to pursue educational/career opportunities after graduation.

Measurement: CapoCA will work to ensure that full academic year 12th grade students (students that who are enrolled in CapoCA by October 1) who are no more than two classes behind in credits are qualified for – and actually apply to – one or more two- and/or four-year colleges or universities, and/or accredited vocational schools, and/or military service branches.

Performance Criteria: The percentage of full academic 12th grade students applying to one or more post-secondary options – will exceed 80%, or the previous year’s percentage by 5% points or more.

Non-academic outcomes: CapoCA has also established important goals for aspects of the school that go beyond core academic learning activities but clearly support student achievement and are in alignment with the state priorities for student achievement.

- **Goal IV: Attendance.** CapoCA students will maintain high attendance.

Measurement: CapoCA integrates multiple methods for tracking attendance, including instructional days completed, time-on-task, teacher contact, lesson completion and completed work products. Attendance is tracked via a parent attendance log in Connexus as well as a teacher attendance log of the final attendance credit awarded to each student each school month. Intervention strategies are implemented if a student's attendance falls below the expected target.

Performance Criteria: CapoCA will target an average school attendance rate of 95% over the school year.

- **Goal V: High-Quality Teaching.** CapoCA provides its students with excellent teaching by teachers dedicated to a specific teaching task and who, for the most part, work together in a professional facility.

Measurement: Teacher recruitment, retention, qualifications and performance on staff evaluations.

Performance Criteria: CapoCA makes every effort to hire only teachers that meet all of the qualification guidelines established by the charter. CapoCA also makes every effort to hire teachers who are "highly qualified" under NCLB and state guidelines, and will continue to target 100% highly qualified teachers. CapoCA sets very high standards in its evaluation of teachers – as an example; using the current system, "Effective" is an excellent rating and only a handful of teachers each year are rated "Highly Effective." CapoCA will actively work to ensure that retention of "Effective" or "Highly Effective" teachers will meet or exceed 90% each year, and that the overall teacher performance ratings on the CapoCA evaluation system in place that year will provide evidence of a strong teaching faculty (at least 80% of returning teachers have "Effective" or "Highly Effective" ratings on the current evaluation system).

(See also Section III.C)

Goal VI: Parent Satisfaction: CapoCA parents and students will continue to be satisfied with their school experience, community, and culture.

Measurement: In order to understand the perception of parents and students and to include their input in making decisions for CapoCA, each year, CapoCA families participate in a parent satisfaction survey administered by an independent, third-party firm, with results reported to all stakeholders.

Performance Criteria: CapoCA will work to ensure that families report an average of 85% or more positive responses across the 21 Parent Satisfaction Survey questions that are most directly affected by school staff. These 21 questions are included each year as part of an annual, independent parent satisfaction survey.

III. B. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX

Where applicable, include a plan for attaining the school's Academic Performance Index growth target. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, § 11967.5.1(f)(2)(B)].

CapoCA will comply with all applicable state laws regarding API. CapoCA's API scores and growth targets are developed by the California Department of Education (CDE). CapoCA participates in all assessments and reports all data needed to generate an API score.

Part of each year's evaluation of the school program by the CapoCA Governing Board, in coordination with school leadership, includes information on whether CapoCA attained its stated API growth targets. The staff of teachers, education specialists and administrators annually evaluate whether the CapoCA program needs to make any adjustments in order to meet its API targets.

Each year, a report is presented to the school's Governing Board regarding student performance on state standardized testing. Based on the results, the school leadership team creates school goals for the upcoming year and presents those goals to the Governing Board as part of the School Improvement cycle. Following approval or modification, this plan is then implemented for the upcoming school year. In future years, the report and plan will be designed to meet the legal requirements included in California Education Code § 47606.5 and associated regulations.

III.C METHOD(S) OF ASSESSMENT

Describe the proposed method(s) by which student progress in meeting the desired student outcomes will be measured. To the extent practicable, the method for measuring pupil outcomes for state priorities shall be consistent with the way information is reported on a school accountability report card [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(C)] The school's plan should describe a variety of assessment tools that are appropriate to the grade level, subject matter, skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes being assessed, including, at a minimum, tools that employ objective means of assessment that are frequent and sufficiently detailed enough to determine whether students are making satisfactory progress. Assessments should include annual results from the Statewide Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and any other statewide standards or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools, including, but not limited to, the California High School Exit Examination, the California English Language Development Test, and the physical performance test. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(2)(A), §11967.5.1(f)(3)(A-B) and California Education Code §47605(c)(1)].

Student Assessment Strategies

CapoCA will adhere to the same accountability measures, administer the same state assessments and follow the same proficiency measures as all public charter schools in California, in addition to using its own internal assessment tools. CapoCA's various assessments combine with top quality curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement and maintain a high level of accountability.

CapoCA's assessment efforts begin with a thorough placement test and progress assessment, offered online and offline, which help to customize the student's academic program and formulate the Personalized Learning Plan. CapoCA will also utilize ongoing online and offline

assessments to measure student progress on the curriculum, and a technology-based assessment tool to measure student gains over the school year. The school also provides continuous embedded assessments. Performance-based assessments provide constructed and process-oriented activities for reading, language arts, mathematics and science. Student self-evaluation reports and checklists will be provided where applicable.

- *Placement and Enrollment:* Prior to the beginning of the academic year (and/or during enrollment) each new student will take part in a placement process that includes review of previous school records and state assessment results, review with parents, and use of placement tests as needed. Placement specialists then determine a grade-level and course placement in review with parents/guardians.
- *Yearly progress:* Students in K-8 take the LEAP, a technology-facilitated pre- and post-test administered within the first month or so of school, mid-year, and at the end of the school year. High school students in grades 9-11 take the Scantron assessment for English Language Arts and Math. The LEAP program consists of two parts, Reading and Mathematics. LEAP and Scantron results provide essential diagnostic information for developing the PLP and planning instruction. It provides an early read on a student's ultimate performance on state-mandated tests, and reports key accountability data on student progress over the academic year. (Note: The school may replace the LEAP test with a comparable pre- and post-assessment of student progress if a superior assessment tool is found.) By administering and tracking the pre-, mid-, and post-test results, the school can more accurately determine if the students in the school that year have made progress over the course of the school year based on where they actually started, rather than based only on the state's grade level standards. This assessment method is particularly valuable for students who are either significantly behind or ahead of their grade level peers.
- *Ongoing informal assessments:* During each phase of their curriculum mastery, students will engage in several assessments that tap into all levels of student thinking. Such assessment activities include: scored daily assignments, daily checks for understanding requiring students to apply and integrate new skills in a thoughtful manner, and regular online quizzes to measure understanding of newly presented material. Other more subjective assessment activities include written journal responses and group discussions. The Learning Coach will generally monitor student performance on these assessments with program teachers providing input as needed.
- *Unit assessments, offline, online and portfolios:* Each subject in the curriculum is broken into logical units of study. Throughout each unit, students complete a series of offline and online assessments. Offline assessments may include written compositions, science lab reports, short answers and essays, book responses, and a variety of work samples, which will make up a student's portfolio. These assessments require direct teacher evaluation. Online assessments include several quizzes and a unit test. While the quizzes are brief and frequent (occurring after every third or fourth lesson), the unit tests are more comprehensive and occur at the end of an entire unit. Online assessments provide families with immediate objective feedback, while offline

assessments provide valuable reflection and expertise from CapoCA's certified program teachers. Student report cards and grades include a balanced combination of quizzes, tests, work samples (portfolio items) and teacher feedback.

- *Curriculum-Based Assessments:* CapoCA uses curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) as a quick and effective way to gather, through telephone conversation, additional information on students' understanding of concepts. Diagnostic curriculum-based assessments (DCBA) pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts. Verification Curriculum Based Assessments (VCBA) gauge authentic student learning of concepts previously graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher.
- *Baseline achievement data:* When possible, state standardized test results are integrated into an incoming student's basic information in Connexus. Likewise, results for state standardized tests, which are proctored face-to-face at a physical location, that students take while enrolled are included in Connexus, along with internal pre-, mid-, and post-test data. This data will be used to monitor student progress from year to year and within the year, and to inform course placement and instructional needs of students.
- *State-mandated assessments:* CapoCA is dedicated to meeting and exceeding all of California's goals and grade level requirements. At in-person, proctored locations, CapoCA students participate in proficiency tests and all other assessments required by California. Results of these annual assessments will be reported through the CDE as well as communicated directly to parents when required. Participation in the State testing program allows for comparisons between schools statewide. Students who are attending the school are assessed with the state tests, and historically, the school has tested more than 95% of the students who are attending.
- *District required assessments:* If CUSD implements policy regarding administration of any particular type of assessment to charter school students, CapoCA will address the issue in its MOU with CUSD, (see Exhibit C) which is reviewed annually.
- *School assessment policies:* Responsibility for monitoring, evaluating, adjusting and adhering to the school's assessment policies and practices follows a traditional model. Teachers have primary responsibility for administering assessments and providing feedback to administrators. The school principal oversees the assessment program and works with education specialists in evaluating and making recommendations for changes. Connections Academy also oversees the assessment component in the schools it supports, and makes recommendations to the Board. The Board will have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the school is fulfilling the expectations and obligations under charter school law, the charter, and Board approved school policy.

Assessment security: CapoCA's assessment program begins with solid baseline security and then integrates a variety of forms of assessments – offline as well as online, qualitative as well as quantitative, direct and indirect, informal and formal. The school has multiple opportunities to ensure that students are doing their own work and are not being inappropriately helped by a parent or other family member.

Basic security is provided by the Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgement (see Exhibit E), which requires signed assurances of academic integrity, and also through a unique user name and password provided to each student, distinctive from that of parents and Learning Coaches, which assures proper access to online assessments. Students are reminded of and acknowledge their agreement to submit original work at the start of each online assessment.

The school uses plagiarism-prevention tools like Turnitin (<http://turnitin.com/>) to help teachers and students identify and correct inappropriate re-use of content. Following school established guidelines, students are required to run their essays and other authentic assessment documents through Turnitin before submitting these assignments to the teacher, and attaching the Turnitin report URL to their submissions. This gives students the opportunity to correct any unintentional plagiarism and allows teachers to see at a glance where academic integrity issues may exist.

The variety of assessment forms also promotes assessment security. A student's work at CapoCA begins with a placement process, providing the teacher with a solid baseline against which to compare online assessments to follow. Many of CapoCA's ongoing assessments take the form of student portfolio work products (including work in the student's handwriting) sent in by physical mail or submitted electronically directly to the teacher for in-depth review by the teacher. These are combined with frequent online quizzes, periodic online and offline unit tests, and the standardized pre- and post-test, which will be compared against the student's portfolio samples to detect any mismatches. Teachers are specially trained in telephone and email questioning techniques to evaluate student mastery of concepts. New functionality within the Connexus platform allows for additional academic integrity supports including randomization of assessment items and the timing of assessments.

Students and parents suspected of inappropriate assessment behavior will be confronted immediately and subjected to standard disciplinary action as described in Section VI.

School-wide Assessment Strategies

In addition to assessment of students, CapoCA uses a variety of measures for determining the success of the overall school program.

School self-assessment/evaluation: CapoCA has very specific and measurable objectives for success, based upon the academic progress of its students and the school's performance on several non-academic measures. The school administration will use Connexus to watch each of these variables very closely to monitor the school's overall success. The school principal, in collaboration with the staff and with the Connections Academy administrative support team, develops a list of measurable annual school goals that are designed to ensure continuous school improvement. The Governing Board approves these school goals and the performance of the principal and staff members are evaluated in part by using the school goals.

Teacher and administrator evaluation: The purpose of the performance evaluation system is to create a high performance school by encouraging staff to put forth their best effort, focusing

everyone on the school's main goals (as determined the school management in collaboration with the Governing Board and CUSD), rewarding and retaining staff based on outcomes/results, and providing continuous feedback for professional development.

Teachers and administrators receive a formal mid-year review in December or January, and a formal end-of-year review in May or June. They also receive periodic feedback both formally and informally from their manager throughout the school year.

Teachers and administrators are evaluated based on a combination of competencies and goals. The competencies are professional competencies aligning with the core standards for teaching, and may vary by type of teaching position (e.g. Special Education), or administrative position (e.g. Principal). The goals are based on student and school achievement. Competencies and goals are reviewed with staff at the beginning of the school year, and are available for viewing and comment throughout the school year.

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

- Ensure high quality instruction
- Personalize students' programs
- Monitor student performance and provide timely feedback and intervention
- Monitor student participation
- Communicate frequently
- Conduct and document all required contacts
- Collaborate and develop professionally

Competencies are evaluated in the context of the school's goals, which evaluate student growth and achievement metrics, and observations of a teacher's or administrator's proficiency within each competency are evaluated using various methods, including parent and student feedback, observations of lessons and interactions, and review of relevant documentation and data. Competencies are currently evaluated using the following scale, and include comments from the supervisor:

- Highly Effective
- Effective
- Needs Improvement
- Ineffective

The goals are aligned with student achievement metrics and may include any of the following:

- Self-evaluation
- Student input
- Parent feedback

- Supervisor observations
- Statewide assessment results
- School assessment results
- Student participation/completion

Goals are currently evaluated using the following scale:

- Exceeded goal
- Met goal
- Partially met goal
- Did not meet goal

Teachers and administrators receive an Overall Individual Rating on the end-of-year review based on evaluation of the competencies and goals. The rating levels are currently Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement, or Ineffective.

All compensation after an initial salary offer is based on performance. Teachers and administrators may receive an annual merit increase and may be eligible for an annual bonus incentive, both based on evaluation of competencies and goals, and the Overall Individual Rating.

The outcome of an individual's evaluation will affect future decisions regarding staff retention, promotional opportunities, or disciplinary action and termination decisions. A teacher or administrator with at least one area needing improvement will be placed on an individualized Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) and given opportunities for professional development, specifically in the areas requiring improvement.

III.D. USE AND REPORTING OF DATA

Outline the plan for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on student achievement to school staff, parents, and guardians. Also describe the plan for utilizing the data continuously to monitor and improve the charter school's educational program.

Connexus captures all needed data about students, their attendance and their performance. This data is accessible for viewing by school staff, teachers, and parents/guardians on a moment-by-moment, day-by-day basis. In addition, this data is used for formal reporting to various stakeholders on the students' – and the school's – instructional progress.

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

In addition to formal graded assignments, teachers continuously monitor student work via Connexus, noting performance on computer-graded quizzes and checks for understanding and reaching out to students via synchronous telephone or LiveLesson based CBAs to verify student work and/or diagnose difficulties in mastering discrete skills and concepts. Connexus tracks teacher response time and teacher-student/teacher-parent communications, providing the school Principal with rich, actionable data on this key aspect of teacher performance.

The teacher's homepage (Figure 14) allows teachers to track if students are on target or if they have overdue lessons, or are falling behind (Figure 15). Figure 16 shows a demonstration example of a specific student's Grade Book.

Figure 14. Teacher's Homepage

ID	Name	Tools	Days Enr.	Grade	Attendance	Overall Score	Alerts	Intervention
265992	Demo, Amanda		22	5	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
216090	Demo, Anderson		22	10	Exempt	29%	0 out of 2	n/a
146122	Demo, Chelsea		22	7	Exempt	20%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-9
228507	Demo, Claire		22	1	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	n/a
128788	Demo, Dee		22	4	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-9
128787	Demo, Frankie		22	12	Exempt	85%	0 out of 2	n/a
960103	Demo, Isela		22	0	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	n/a
216091	Demo, Jackson		22	6	Exempt	69%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
376209	Demo, Judy		22	6	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
274367	Demo, Marlee		22	6	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-2
167915	Demo, Meaghan		22	5	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-2
495693	Demo, Muffy		22	2	Exempt	n/a	0 out of 2	n/a
107067	Demo, Norma		22	11	Exempt	77%	0 out of 2	n/a
216092	Demo, Olivia		22	9	Exempt	26%	0 out of 2	n/a
100661	Demo, Stella		22	8	Exempt	65%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
375460	Demo, Tyler		22	3	Exempt	67%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-

Figure 15. Students with Overdue Lessons

ID	Name	Tools	Days Enr.	Lessons*	Grade	Attendance	Overall Score	State Prof.	Local Prof.
216090	Demo, Anderson		134	1 overdue	9	On Track	94%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
146122	Demo, Chelsea		134	78 overdue	6	Alarm	91%	0 out of 2	TNT
128788	Demo, Dee		134	64 overdue	3	Approaching Alarm	95%	0 out of 2	TNT
162886	Demo, Emmy		134	28 overdue	12	Approaching Alarm	94%	0 out of 2	n/a
128787	Demo, Frankie		134	22 overdue	11	Approaching Alarm	87%	0 out of 2	n/a
216091	Demo, Jackson		134	94 overdue	5	Approaching Alarm	92%	0 out of 2	TNT
167915	Demo, Meaghan		134	9 overdue	4	On Track	94%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
495693	Demo, Muffy		134	8 overdue	1	On Track	98%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-
107067	Demo, Norma		134	69 overdue	10	Alarm	68%	0 out of 2	n/a
216092	Demo, Olivia		134	5 overdue	8	Approaching Alarm	81%	0 out of 2	TNT
100661	Demo, Stella		134	25 overdue	7	Approaching Alarm	89%	0 out of 2	M:-/R:-

Figure 16. Specific Student Grade Book

Full Transcript • User Overview

User Grade Book for Jackson Demo (ID 216091)

Show me sections ?

Grade Book Details

Section Summary: Click a section name to view details.

Section	Score	Grade	Lesson Completion	Teacher	Objectives	Tools
Art 5	100%	Pass	9/29 (31%)	Teacher, Jen		
Educational Technology and Online Learning 5	90%	Pass	20/50 (40%)	Teacher, Jen		
Language Arts 5 A	86%	B	38/69 (55%)	Teacher, Jen	50 objectives	
Math 5 A	89%	B+	42/81 (52%)	Teacher, Jen	22 objectives	
Physical Education 5	100%	Pass	13/30 (43%)	Teacher, Jen		
Science 5 A	85%	B	29/64 (45%)	Teacher, Jen		
Social Studies 5 A	93%	A	33/54 (61%)	Teacher, Jen		
Overall	92%		184/377 (49%)			

Progress Reports

- [August 13 2012](#)
- [September 11 2012](#)
- [October 25 2012](#)

Annual progress reports: Annually, in accordance with the legal and regulatory requirements for charter schools, the school will account for its progress against its performance measures to its stakeholders through a report submitted to the charter school Governing Board and to CUSD. In addition, the Governing Board may contract with an outside evaluator (such as a university) to assess the school's overall performance against its mission on a longer-term basis. (See also Sections III.A and VIII.A)

All required reports: Connexus is fully customizable to meet district, county, and state reporting needs in the form best suited for integration with existing information systems. By using Connexus, school leaders gather, monitor, analyze and report more granular data about the virtual school's effectiveness than most traditional, brick and mortar schools find necessary. Connexus was designed specifically for a full-time virtual school and is intended to provide 360-degree accountability through comprehensive data collection, analysis and reporting to all stakeholders.

For example, a School Accountability Report Card (SARC) is developed annually by CapoCA staff and is available to the Governing Board, parents, district staff, and members of the public through a posting on the school's public website.

In addition, the school reports student data to CALPADS (California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System) as required.

The school maintains student records in accordance with state, local, and federal requirements. All student record information is the sole property of the school and is subject to applicable law. Connexus is a thoroughly integrated content and student information system linking all aspects of the student learning process.

CapoCA complies fully with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that gives parents/legal guardians and students certain rights regarding the student's education records. Included is the right to the protection of a student's education records and "personally identifiable information" from unauthorized disclosure. In addition to the requirements of FERPA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides additional privacy protections for students who are receiving special education and related services. Part B of the IDEA incorporates and cross-references FERPA. CapoCA is aware of the cooperation between FERPA and IDEA and adheres to the requirements of both. We also comply with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 ("COPPA").

IV. GOVERNANCE

Describe the planned governance structure of the school, including the process to be followed by the school to ensure the involvement of parents and guardians on behalf of the school's students. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(D)] and Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(4)] Specifically illustrate how the school will be organized – and how that structure is designed to support student success. Describe respective roles of the board and administration, the domains for which each will be responsible, and how their relationship will be managed. In addition, provide details of how the charter school's board will be developed, in terms of supplementing necessary skills and providing training in effective board practices.

Describe how the design of the governance structure reflects a seriousness of purpose necessary to ensure that: (1) the charter school will become and remain a viable enterprise; (2) there will be active and effective representation of interested parties, including, but not limited to parents and/or guardians; and (3) the educational program will be successful. Evidence of the organization's incorporation should be provided as an Attachment, as necessary. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(4)]

IV.A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Corporate status: CapoCA is incorporated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. Articles of Incorporation are attached as Exhibit F. The CapoCA bylaws (included as Exhibit G) provide a full description of the organization of the school. CapoCA was granted tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) on March 21, 2008 (see Exhibit H).

Roles and responsibilities: The Governing Board²⁰ governs the charter school. The Board sets policy and hires contractors, including those providing the management, curriculum, technology and instructional services. Additionally, the Board is responsible for assuring that all aspects of the financial and programmatic accountability systems fulfill CapoCA's contract with CUSD as well as its obligations to the CDE. The Board adopts all policies as required for the independent study program of CapoCA.

The roles and responsibilities of the Governing Board include, but are not limited to:

- Protect the legal interests of the charter school
- Determine the vision/mission of the school
- Set Board policy
- Govern the operations of the school
- Exercise sound legal and ethical practices and policies
- Manage liabilities wisely
- Advocate good external relations with the community, school districts, media, neighbors, parents, and students

²⁰ In this document, use of the term "Board" or "Governing Board" refers to the CapoCA Governing Board (the school's Board) unless otherwise specifically indicated as the CUSD Board (the district's Board).

- Hire and evaluate the Principal
- Oversee hiring of the staff (as delegated to the Principal)
- Hire contractors, negotiate service agreements, and hold contractors accountable for performance under such agreements
- Comply with state and federal reporting requirements
- Practice strategic planning
- Ensure adequate resources and manage them effectively
- Assess the organization's performance

The Board has engaged Connections Academy, LLC to manage the school under the terms of the professional services agreement (also known as a management contract). This agreement is included as Exhibit I. The Board is responsible for ensuring the performance of Connections Academy or its successor in accordance with its obligations under the professional services agreement. For further information about the professional services agreement, see the discussions in Sections IV.C and VII.I.

The Board currently holds ten monthly meetings per school year. The Board meetings are typically held at the local CapoCA office, which is also the corporation's primary address. To support the Ralph M. Brown Act (Open Meeting Laws), the agenda for regular meetings is posted at the location of the meeting and on the school's website at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The public may directly address the Board at meetings, and members of the public, including parents, are also able to attend Board meetings via teleconference upon request.

Board composition: The members and officers of the Governing Board are selected in keeping with the bylaws. The Governing Board, in selecting future Board Members, ensures potential members are committed to the school's mission. In addition, the Board evaluates the potential members' credibility and integrity within the community. CapoCA actively recruits Board Members who have professional skills that complement or add to the existing Board composition. The Board seeks out at least one Board Member who resides within the geographical boundaries of CUSD, in order to provide input from the local community. The bylaws provide for a minimum of one position to be held by a community leader. This position will be filled by someone familiar with the community. The Board also considers members' professional, educational, and practical experience. At least one position is to be held by someone with expertise in education. In order to ensure parental involvement in the governance of the school, the Board will make efforts to recruit a qualified parent of a current or former student to serve as a board member.

As per the bylaws, the Board members vote to fill positions with new or continuing Board Members, with a majority required for acceptance. The sponsoring district may nominate a representative to the Board (reference California Education Code § 47604 (b)) or CUSD may choose to select a Board liaison who would be included in all correspondence to the CapoCA

Board Members, including notifications, meeting agendas and materials, and who may also have time allocated on the agenda to provide CUSD school district updates to the charter school Board.

Any current employee of CapoCA is not eligible to serve on the Governing Board.

Board training: In order to ensure smooth operations and effective board practices, the Governing Board has elected to participate in the extensive Board Academy training program developed by Connections Academy, currently with Greater Capacity Inc. (www.greatercapacity.org). The program currently includes the Effective Board Governance of Public Charter Schools online training module series as well as state-specific training provided both face-to-face and in print. Training topics include charter school basics, non-profit management, conflict of interest, budgeting and financial oversight, effective meetings, policy development and human resources oversight. In addition, Board Members have participated in the California and National Charter School conferences to network with other charter board members and further their development as effective board members.

Compliance with corporate law: The Board adheres to all applicable laws for non-profit public benefit corporations operating a charter school, including but not limited to the laws regarding interested parties and conflict of interest. In addition, since the Governing Board assumes responsibility for a public charter school the Board agrees to conduct its business in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Open Meeting Laws). CapoCA has adopted and regularly updates a Conflict of Interest Code consistent with the Political Reform Act.

Operating structure: The operating structure of the school is similar to a traditional educational environment with a school principal who supervises an administrative staff and teachers. The school principal acts according to the policies and procedures as approved by the Board. The principal also acts in an information and advisory capacity to the Board, and is responsible for implementing Board policies in the day-to-day operation of the school. All personnel decisions concerning the principal and the teachers are ultimately the responsibility of the Board. The day-to-day management of the principal is the responsibility of Connections Academy, or its successor if Connections Academy is terminated, under the terms of the professional services agreement, subject to oversight by the Board.

IV.B PARENTAL AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

One of the goals of CapoCA is a high level of parental involvement. This extends beyond the central role parents play in their own children's day-to-day learning, and allows parents/guardians to also be integrally involved in shaping CapoCA and making certain that it fulfills its overall mission. Parents will continue to play an active role on the Board. Furthermore, parents, staff, and students may serve in ad hoc work groups and committees as needed to advise the Board or the school administration on specific matters of interest and concern. In keeping with the state's new accountability strategies under the Local Control Funding Formula, CapoCA will engage the school community in the development and review of the school's Local

Control Accountability Plan. This process would include soliciting feedback from parents, including the annual Parent Satisfaction Survey. (For more information see Section VIII.A.)

Since the school's goal is to provide all parents with the opportunity to be informed about and participate in school level decision-making, information about the Board meetings, agendas and activities is readily available to all families. For example, all agendas as well as contact information for Board members are posted on the school website. In addition, CapoCA provides for ongoing interaction between parents and Connections Academy via its website and regular parent surveys. The Governing Board typically holds its meetings at the school office in Orange County to ensure that the parent community has the ability to easily attend meetings. Parents and members of the public can also attend Board meetings via teleconference. Regular meetings of the Board will be held according to the schedule adopted by the Board, and the agenda for regular meetings will be posted on the website and at the location of the meeting at least 72 hours in advance.

IV.C SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

CapoCA has contracted with Connections Academy, LLC to provide the virtual educational program outlined in this charter. The professional services agreement details the respective roles of the Governing Board and Connections Academy (see also Sections IV.C and VII.I and Exhibit I). The Board maintains responsibility for ensuring that the charter school program meets all educational, fiscal and programmatic goals laid out in this charter. The Board will regularly review the management company's services to ensure it is meeting the required accountability standards. The Board has the right to terminate its contract with Connections Academy if Connections Academy does not meet its performance obligations in managing the charter school and if it is unable to cure such deficiency after being given reasonable notice. The agreement in Exhibit I describes in detail the relationship between the Governing Board and Connections. The Governing Board is a completely independent entity from Connections Academy, LLC. The IRS conducted a rigorous review of the organization in order to make the decision to award tax exempt status to the charter school corporation (see Exhibit H). By conferring this status to the school, the IRS validated the independence of the school's corporation from the management company.

IV.D GOVERNANCE FOR SUCCESS

The governance structure is designed to ensure success for CapoCA. The Board is the legal entity that holds the charter. This locally based independent board has overall governance authority over the charter school. The Board adds additional members based on the criteria outlined in the bylaws. The Board Members embrace the roles and responsibilities of an effective charter school board. The Governing Board represents a diverse array of experiences and qualifications including parents, educators, business and community leaders who are committed to deliver a high-quality, highly accountable virtual school in Southern California.

The Board ensures that the school receives input in decision making from all stakeholders: the district, parents, staff and other community members. The Board has the authority to partner with Connections Academy. Connections Academy has a proven record of success in supporting public virtual schools. Connections Academy will support the educational program, the technological infrastructure and the day-to-day operations of the school. Connections Academy is dedicated to providing high quality professional educational services to students of all backgrounds. Connections Academy can leverage its significant resources to the benefit of the school. This partnership, along with the oversight and guidance of the school district, creates a charter school that is setting new standards of excellence in the virtual school arena. This, in turn, provides a stable high quality educational choice for families in Southern California.

V. HUMAN RESOURCES AND SAFETY

V.A. QUALIFICATIONS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Describe the standards that will be used in hiring teachers, administrators, and other school staff, including, but not limited to the general qualifications for the various categories of employees the school anticipates hiring and the desired professional backgrounds, depth of experience, and other qualities to be sought in their selection. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(E)] Show how those qualities will help the school implement its vision, and how they will satisfy the requirements for “highly qualified teachers” under the No Child Left Behind Act. The qualifications should be sufficient to ensure the health and safety of the school’s faculty, staff, and students. Identify positions that will be regarded as “key” in each category and specify the additional qualifications expected of individuals assigned to those positions.

Include an assurance that all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law will be met, including, but not limited to credentials. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(5)]

CapoCA strives to offer a work environment that provides opportunities for each employee to maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards. Incorporated in this mission are core values, which include:

- We value creativity in all aspects. We expect and support employees to be creative with their ideas, their work environment, and their approach to their jobs.
- We value the health and comfort of our employees.
- We will recognize and reward exceptional performance.
- We will be available to answer questions or take suggestions from any employee.
- We appreciate employees’ ideas. We firmly believe the person doing a job is in the best position to think of ways of doing it more easily, efficiently, and effectively.
- We value and support education and expect everyone to undertake life-long learning.
- We expect everyone to work very hard, but we value family above all else. We will always work to make sure that we provide the flexibility and support in our work environment so that our employees can attend to family emergencies and school conferences.

Teacher certification: The school retains or employs teaching staff who hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits, or other documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, as required by state law for charter schools. The school also monitors and, when required, adheres to California’s implementation of federal qualification guidelines for teachers under NCLB or its successors. These teachers teach the core academic courses in mathematics, language arts, science, and history/social studies. These teachers are responsible for overseeing the students’ academic progress in the core subjects and for monitoring grading and matriculation decisions as specified in the school’s operational policies.

All credential documents are maintained on file at all times at the school office, and are available upon request for inspection by the district.

In rare circumstances, such as when a student or small group of students select a course that does not warrant a full-time teacher, the school may tap into the resources of the International Connections Academy (iNACA). The school may also employ non-California-certificated instructional support staff in any case where a prospective staff member has an appropriate mix of subject matter expertise, professional experience, and the demonstrated capacity to work successfully in the virtual environment. Instructional staff without California credentials may assign grades and evaluate student progress in non-core or non-college preparatory courses and activities, such as some electives or, if retained as a short term substitute. All non-California-certificated staff will possess experience and expertise appropriate for their position within the school, as outlined in the school's staffing plan and the school's adopted personnel policies.

Staff recruitment: The school recruits staff through a variety of channels, including traditional methods for posting job opportunities, plus networking with area charter schools, and charter school organizations; outreach via enrolled families; and special outreach to teachers and administrators who are seeking a more flexible or alternative environment.

Human resource issues: In accordance with the law and in keeping with its goals of providing exceptional talent in the service of California children and their families, CapoCA will assure adherence to clear guidelines regarding such human resource issues as: equal opportunity employment, harassment, personnel files and other legally required issues. All of these issues will be documented in the Employee Handbook that is available to staff as part of the hiring process, as well as available at any time through Connexus.

Staff qualifications: CapoCA has set the following experience and qualifications standards for key personnel:

- *School Principal*- Prefer an advanced degree and an administrative credential. Should have a minimum three years management or administrative experience. A former principal or teacher is ideal. Must be technology literate and have good communication skills. Must be able to build consensus and inspire teachers to teach, students to learn and parents to engage in their child's learning while following the mission of the school.
- *Teaching Staff* – Teachers hold an active California teaching credential (or other document issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing) as required by state law for charter schools. Requires a Bachelor's degree and prefers teaching experience, ideally three or more years. Must be skilled at teaching a standards-based curriculum and incorporating innovative approaches to instruction. Should demonstrate good communication skills and be technology literate. Special attention will be paid to applicants who have experience in individualized instruction, virtual teams and distance education. Teachers responsible for providing Special Education services will have experience and/or certification in Special Education.

- *Administrative Support Staff* - Responsible for daily administrative tasks such as answering phones and emails, receiving visitors, entering data into the online student information system, scheduling appointments, generating reports, assisting the Principal and teachers with administrative tasks, filing and other duties as assigned. Should have excellent communication and interpersonal skills and work well as part of a team.
- *Community Coordinators* – CapoCA may recruit several parent volunteers situated in different geographic areas to organize and facilitate extra-curricular, social, and other enrichment activities for families who live near one another. These Community Coordinators are recruited based on interest, time availability, and community contacts rather than educational background or professional experience. CapoCA provides specialized training and tools to assist them in their efforts.
- *Education Resource Center (ERC)* - Students, parents and teachers have access to curriculum specialists and other support staff through a Connections Academy's Education Resource Center. The ERC provides a mix of dedicated and shared-use personnel who deliver support to CapoCA. These individuals all receive specialized training in the skill and techniques required for effective virtual education and geographically dispersed teams. The ERC not only provides CapoCA community with unparalleled level of educational expertise and experience, but also enables CapoCA to expand support for students and parents beyond the traditional school day. During the regular school day ERC staff members are available for one-on-one sessions with students and parents based on referrals from a student's teacher. The ERC staff is also available to back-up absent teachers (i.e., substitutes). The array of services include:
 - Curriculum consultation for reading, mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, physical education, the arts and poetry
 - Instructional consultation to address multiple learning styles, effective instructional approaches, behavior management and student motivation
 - Special needs consultation to assist students with disabilities, English Language Learners, or gifted students, or to deploy assistive technology
 - Distance education consultation to support and enhance virtual teaming, virtual projects and communication strategies
 - Assessments services including assistance with the selection of testing instruments, test creation, test preparation strategies and the analysis and use of test data.

Staffing plans: CapoCA has developed staffing plans and recruits and hires sufficient staff so that the school does not exceed any legally required student-to-teacher ratios for California. The projected budget is developed each year based on the required student-to-teacher ratio in place for that year. The school will comply with applicable California regulations regarding the student-teacher ratio. The staffing plans also identify how many administrative and support positions are available at the school each year, and how the shared services work between the other schools in California supported by Connections Academy for that year.

Staff Training: Prior to the opening of school each year, CapoCA provides a complete training program for program teachers, the school principal, and other staff who have direct contact with students. Training topics include the curriculum, technology, and virtual school instructional techniques. Throughout the year, staff has multiple opportunities to participate in professional development activities for the school as well as activities offered by other schools supported by Connections Academy nationally. Teachers have daily access to curriculum specialists for “just in time” training on particular curriculum issues. Since they are working together physically in the CapoCA local offices, the teachers and school principal also provide their own informal ongoing professional development. Additional training in health and safety areas may be included as needed to comply with the school’s health and safety policies.

V.B. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Provide an explanation of how the school will structure employee compensation. Describe the manner by which staff members of the charter school will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employees’ Retirement System, and/or federal social security; or how the school will create a system of its own to accommodate employees’ retirement funding. Include the specific positions to be covered under each system and the staff designated to ensure that appropriate arrangements for that coverage are made. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(K) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(11)]

The Governing Board approves the compensation and compensation plans for teaching staff. A salary range for the various teaching positions is determined based on research of market compensation and financial considerations. Employment offers are based on specific criteria, including years of experience, education, and other relevant skills/qualifications. After the initial hire, compensation increases are based on the factors described herein.

Teaching Positions

Teachers may receive an annual salary increase and compensation incentives contingent upon performance. The Board has the ability to adjust annual increase percentages in the event that the school does not meet financial expectations or that state allocations are reduced.

Teachers can also apply for the following career ladder opportunities. Currently the types of additional responsibilities which may earn additional compensation are as follows:

- Coordinator Teacher – base plus 4%
- Lead Teacher – base plus 9%
- Master Teacher – base plus 15%

Non-Teaching and Administrative Positions

A salary range is determined based upon research of market compensation and financial considerations. Initial employment offers are based on specific criteria, including years of experience, education, and other relevant skills/qualifications. After the initial hire, compensation increases and incentives are based on performance.

Shared Services

The Board has entered into a shared services agreement which allows the school to share teaching and administrative services with its 'sister' California Connections Academy schools, including California Connections Academy @Ripon and Central California Connections Academy. Under this arrangement, staff serving CapoCA students may be located at local school's Aliso Viejo office, in the California Connections Academy office in Ripon, or in the Central California Connections Academy office in Visalia. Administrators who are shared routinely travel between the schools. This staffing plan maximizes quality, increases course offerings, maximizes resources, and assures the financial stability of the school.

Retirement

The Board has elected to participate in the State Teachers' Retirement System (STRS) for credentialed staff, including credentialed teachers, and credentialed administrative positions which support the instructional program (not including any non-credentialed or administrative assistant positions). The Board and administration coordinate such participation, as appropriate, with the social security system or other reciprocal systems. For participation in the STRS systems, CapoCA has made appropriate arrangements with the county office of education to ensure proper reporting, and pays the county office a reasonable fee for the provision of such services. The county office cooperates as necessary to forward any required payroll deductions and related data to the appropriate agencies.

One option for staff at Capo will be participation in the federal Social Security system. This option may be required by law for any staff members who are not eligible to participate in a state retirement system that is a replacement for social security (such as STRS). Staff will also have access to other school-sponsored retirement plans according to policies developed by the board of directors and adopted as the school's employment policies. The Board retains the option to elect participation in the Public Employees Retirement System.

The school also retains the right to create its own retirement system, within the parameters allowed by law, to provide equivalent retirement benefits to its employees.

The Board will ensure that there is a process to identify which staff qualify for which retirement systems, and will ensure that all staff members are fairly covered.

Benefits

CapoCA will provide an extensive benefits package which may include:

- Comprehensive health benefits (medical, dental, vision, prescription drug coverage)
- Health Care Flexible Spending Account and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account
- Employer paid life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, short term disability insurance and long term disability insurance

- Voluntary supplemental programs (life insurance, critical illness, accident insurance, discounted auto insurance, discounted homeowners insurance, discounted renters insurance, pet care discount program)
- Work at home days
- Paid time off
- Employee Assistance Program (resources for seniors, emotional well-being, parenting and child care, and pet care among other resources)
- Retirement Savings Plan
- Tuition Programs (payment for qualifying courses taken at American Public University or reimbursement for qualifying courses taken at another institution up to \$5,250 per calendar year)
- Travel Assistance
- Identity Theft Program
- Health Advocate (a resource for employees to find health specialists, help transfer medical records and explain coverage among other services)

Benefits are detailed in the Employee Benefits Guide, which is updated regularly and is available to employees through Connexus at all times.

V.C. RIGHTS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

Provide, as applicable, a description of the rights of any employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(M) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(13)]

Return rights: If an employee leaves district employment to work at the charter school, the collective bargaining agreements and Board policies of that district will govern the return rights of such employees.

CapoCA may negotiate with districts to “loan” employees who would then retain their status and benefits through the district, but who would work under CapoCA’s employment policies. Neither the district nor the charter school are obligated to agree to such a loan, but may do so if mutually agreeable. If a district employee is working at CapoCA, the school will notify the district prior to March 15 of each year, if any such employee is not going to be re-employed by the school the following year.

Exclusive public employer: CapoCA will be deemed the exclusive and independent public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of Chapter 10.7 - commencing with California Education Code § 3540 - of Division 4 of Title 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

V.D. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Describe the procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of students and staff, including how the school will provide for proper immunization, as well as vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening for students; and the steps the school will take to ensure that criminal background checks collected from all school personnel [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(F) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(6)]

Describe how the school will maintain safety on the school campus, including, but not limited to, disaster preparedness, visitor procedures/security and emergency drills. Also describe how the school will maintain a learning environment free of sexual harassment in accordance with applicable federal requirements. If district facilities will be requested for use by the charter school, include a statement that the school will require that all students and parents comply with school district safety policies on the school campus, and that the school will enforce the policies to the full extent possible. Describe how staff will receive training and how safety-related information will be communicated to parents and students.

CapoCA has adopted and is implementing a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies. These policies are reviewed regularly by the Governing Board to ensure they meet the needs of the school. They address and/or include the following topics:

- A requirement that all enrolling students provide records documenting immunizations to the extent required for enrollment in non-charter public schools.
- Policies and procedures for response at the school office facility to natural disasters and emergencies, including fires and earthquakes.
- Policies relating to preventing contact with blood-borne pathogens and providing training to employees on such prevention.
- Policy regarding staff requirements and training in CPR, first aid and/or emergency response.
- Policies relating to the administration of prescription drugs and other medicines.
- A policy that the school will be housed in facilities that have received state Fire Marshal approval and that have been evaluated by a qualified structural engineer who has determined that the facilities present no substantial seismic safety hazard, and that the school will maintain appropriate facility compliance documents on file.
- A policy establishing that the school functions as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco free workplace.
- A requirement that each employee of the school submits to a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by California Education Code § 44237.
- A policy regarding health screenings for student, such as vision, hearing, etc.
- Policies regarding visitors to the school facility, and other school security issues.
- Policies to ensure the school is in compliance with federal sexual harassment prevention guidelines and is maintaining a learning and work environment that is free from sexual harassment.
- Policies regarding safe student use of the Internet and prevention of Cyber bullying.

These policies are incorporated, as appropriate, into the school's student and staff handbooks and are reviewed on an ongoing basis in the school's staff development efforts and governing board policies. Staff members receive regular training regarding safety issues, including Internet safety and harassment prevention. The current Health and Safety Policies are available at any time from the school upon request.

V.E. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Provide a description of the procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter. Describe how the costs of such a dispute resolution process, if needed, will be funded. [Ref. California Code §47605(b)(5)(N) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(14)]

In the event of a dispute between CapoCA and CUSD regarding the terms of this charter or any other issue regarding the school and district relationship, both parties agree to apprise the other, in writing, of the specific disputed issue(s). In the event the initiating party believes the dispute relates to an issue that could potentially lead to revocation of the charter, this will be specifically noted in the written dispute statement. Within 30 days of sending written correspondence, or longer if both parties agree, the principal of the charter school and the district superintendent, or their designees, will meet and confer in an attempt to resolve the dispute. The designees must be identified and confirmed in writing. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the charter representative and the district representative will meet again within 15 days, or longer if both parties agree, to identify a neutral third party mediator to assist in dispute resolution. The mediation will incorporate informal rules of evidence and procedure unless both parties agree otherwise. Unless jointly agreed, the process involving assistance of a third party mediator will conclude within 45 days from commencement.

All mediation costs and all other costs associated with dispute resolution will be shared equally by the charter school and the district. The school is entitled to receive funds throughout the term of the charter. In the event of a dispute between the school and the district, the district will not be permitted to withhold, as a remedy or otherwise, any funds received on behalf of the charter school.

In the event the third party mediation process does not result in resolution of the dispute, both parties agree to continue good faith negotiations. If the district indicates in writing that the violation constitutes a severe and imminent threat to the health and safety of the school's pupils, the district is not required to be referred to mediation, but reserves the right to take any action it deems appropriate to ensure the safety of students. The school reserves the right to seek legal redress for any such actions under the law.

This dispute resolution process may be clarified as needed. Any and all additional details will be included in the MOU with the district. (See Exhibit C.)

In addition to the processes, the CapoCA Board, in collaboration with Connections Academy, will develop, adopt and maintain updated policies and procedures for resolving internal and external disputes and grievances. These procedures will be included in the School and Employee Handbooks. Under the school's recently adopted Uniform Complaint Procedure, the school's formal complaint procedure is posted on the school website.

The district agrees to refer all complaints regarding the school's operations to the CapoCA staff and/or Governing Board for resolution in accordance with the school's adopted policies.

All disputes or complaints that are not resolved by the school in accordance with its complaint procedures, and which are related to the school's provision of Special Education services, including complaints regarding the initial placement or enrollment of Special Education students in the school, will be referred to the school's SELPA.

VI. STUDENT ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE, AND SUSPENSION / EXPULSION POLICIES

VI.A. STUDENT ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Describe the policies and procedures the school will develop and implement for the admission and enrollment of students, including any proposed timetable or calendar and the extent to which the school will develop a random lottery process, where applicable. Include assurance that the charter school will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition nor discriminate against any student based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(H), §47605(d) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(8)]

Outreach and recruitment: CapoCA will actively recruit families that represent the full cultural, demographic and socioeconomic range of California communities. In order to leverage the additional visibility of other California Connections Academy schools, and to address the mobility of 21st century families, the school may use the name "California Connections Academy" for outreach purposes. In order to best inform parents, the school may also use a geographical reference such as (but not limited to) "Southern California" or "Capistrano" along with the California Connections Academy name. CapoCA will use a variety of means to inform families about its services and provide them an opportunity to enroll, including:

- **Direct mail:** CapoCA conducts direct mail campaigns announcing the charter school to families with children throughout Orange County and Southern California. In a typical mailing, CapoCA will send out a postcard inviting parents to attend an Information Session, visit the website, and/or contact the call center. CapoCA may also use email to supplement its physical mail campaign. Mail will be sent to people who approach CapoCA and request information, as well as other prospects who have school-aged children and an interest in learning at home.
- **Information sessions:** CapoCA conducts multiple Information Sessions for families in different parts of Southern California to assure that families from a variety of communities are able to attend. Some or all of these information sessions may be virtual (families attend the session from home via their computers). CapoCA will use these sessions to provide a complete array of information about its program, including its curriculum, teaching methods, technology resources and testing requirements.
- **Website:** Connections Academy maintains a website (www.connectionsacademy.com) with a special link to CapoCA school information. The direct link to the school website is www.connectionsacademy.com/capoca. The website contains information about the school, its Personalized Performance Learning approach, and its curriculum. The site also contains a regularly updated set of Frequently Asked Questions and their answers. The site also includes enrollment information and procedures, required postings such as the School Accountability Report Card, and many useful tools for prospective students and their families.

- **Telephone/e-mail information service:** CapoCA maintains a toll-free information line (800-382-6010) and an email information service (info@connectionsacademy.com) to answer parents' questions about the charter school.
- **Community and youth services partnerships:** As part of its outreach process, CapoCA provides information about the charter school to community, family, and youth-serving organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs; reaches out to residential facilities; and seeks partnerships with parent groups, health-related organizations; and organizations for young actors, dancers, and athletes.
- **School district referrals and outreach:** CapoCA will take every opportunity to brief school district administrators and guidance personnel on CapoCA as an alternative for students who might benefit from individualized instruction in a non-classroom setting.
- **Media outreach:** CapoCA makes limited use of paid media, primarily advertisements in local newspapers and radio service announcements, but takes full advantage of the local media's interest in promoting community events relevant to Southern California residents in order to inform parents about informational sessions for California Connections Academy schools and to raise awareness of this school.
- **Parent referrals:** As CapoCA has grown, so has the number of families who come to the school based on the positive experiences of their friends and neighbors. More than 93% of CapoCA parents reported that they recommend the program to other parents they know.
- **Online and Social Media Marketing:** CapoCA utilizes search engine marketing such as paid search "pay-per-click" advertising, online display advertising, and search engine optimization. In addition, permission-based e-mail marketing and website development are useful tools. The school takes advantage of social media opportunities such as blogging and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo! Groups, and YouTube.

Nondiscrimination in admissions: CapoCA does not discriminate against pupils on the basis of gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities, including its admissions policies and procedures.

No tuition: As a public school, CapoCA will not charge tuition or any fees that are prohibited. Outreach communications and the School Handbook (See Exhibit B) inform families that the school is tuition-free. The School Handbook contains Board approved policies regarding fees, including statements about any allowable fees, as well as explanations about how the school provides a free public school program.

Non-sectarian: As a public school, the charter will be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.

Place of residence: Admission to the charter school is not determined according to the place of residence of any pupil, or his or her parent or guardian, within California, except for such restrictions or preferences that are required or allowed by law. As an independent study school, geographic restrictions are required and will be followed by the school. Students are only eligible to attend if they provide evidence of residency within the counties served by the school.

Admission methods and eligibility criteria: Through its recruitment/marketing and application guidance activities, CapoCA regularly discloses full details about its program and encourages families to carefully consider its academic and parental involvement demands before applying. CapoCA also provides tools (such as an online self-quiz, contact with other parents, and contact with a Connections Academy education counselor if desired) to help parents decide whether CapoCA is truly the right fit for their children and themselves.

Admissions requirements include the expectation that parents complete all enrollment and placement activities in a timely and complete fashion. This includes signing and upholding all necessary school-family agreements (such as a Master Agreement as shown in Exhibit D and/or the PLCA in Exhibit E). Students are subject to the age and geographic restrictions for California public school admission and funding. Students with an existing IEP are subject to Education Code 51745 (c) which requires that the IEP state that independent study is an appropriate educational setting for the student.

Timetable/lottery: As a non-classroom based school, CapoCA anticipates that it will be able to accommodate all eligible students who may wish to attend. Enrollment for the school year will generally open on or around March 1. The CapoCA enrollment team will assist parents in completing the required enrollment tasks and in meeting State mandated enrollment requirements. On or around July 15 of each year parents will be able to confirm their intent to enroll in the school and the student's enrollment will be completed. However, if demand for enrollment exceeds the school resources, the Board will insure that students are admitted in a fair and transparent manner. In order to accomplish this, the Board may set an enrollment cap and then develop and implement a detailed public lottery procedure in accordance with EC Section 47605 (d)(2)(B). The Board will also address any federal requirements for the lottery process.

In accordance with California Education Code § 47605 (d)(2)(A) and 47605 (d)(2)(C), CapoCA, in partnership with CUSD will make every reasonable attempt to accommodate all the students who wish to attend the charter school. Because the school anticipates that it will be able to accommodate all eligible students who apply, development of a more detailed public lottery process is not necessary at this time. If the Board adopts a lottery process, it will conform to all federal requirements or necessary guidelines regarding how to weight various types of applicants and how to hold the lottery.

Once enrolled, students will be considered “existing pupils of the charter school” for purposes of a lottery. They therefore have admission priority as enrolled students, as long as they submit all updated registration documents in a timely manner and continue to meet the school’s eligibility requirements in subsequent enrollment periods.

Enrollment window: The Board may annually select a date to close enrollment to the charter school. Typically, enrollment for the school year will close shortly after the beginning of the second semester. The public website will list the date that enrollment closes for that school year. The school reserves the right to admit a student to the school after enrollment closes, upon approval of the exception by the principal. For example, students moving from another geographic area who attend a different school supported by Connections Academy may be allowed to transfer after enrollment has closed.

VI.B. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND RACIAL BALANCE

Describe how the charter school will ensure a racial and ethnic balance among its students that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(G) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(7)]

Schools supported by Connections Academy typically reflect the statewide racial and ethnic balance, and CapoCA actively works to do the same. Through extensive community outreach and full disclosure about the school’s program, CapoCA attracts those students and families who are most committed to student success in a virtual school setting. The eligibility requirements for admission do not discriminate and allow any family access to the school.

In addition, CapoCA developed administrative procedures to ensure that the school’s outreach, recruitment, and enrollment procedures do not discriminate against students based on physical, mental, emotional, learning disability or handicap or any other legally protected basis. As part of that process, CapoCA provides parents with a clear and accurate picture of the CapoCA learning experience so they can make the most appropriate choices for their children.

CapoCA utilizes a broad reaching student recruiting effort, thereby ensuring outreach to families with a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, certain subgroups may be targeted for extra recruitment efforts in order to achieve a pool of potential students that reflects a balanced student population. Partnerships and outreach efforts using a variety of community and youth organizations aid in this process.

Connexus allows accurate collection and analysis of the school’s demographic data. The data collected in this way is then used to generate reports to the Board, the district and the state. It may also be used to evaluate and modify the school’s outreach and recruiting strategies when necessary.

VI.C. PUBLIC SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

As applicable, describe the public school attendance alternatives for students in the district who choose not to attend the charter school. At a minimum, specify that the parent or guardian of each student enrolled in the charter school will be informed that the students have no right to admission in a particular school of any local education agency as a consequence of enrollment in the charter school, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(L) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(12)]

District students who choose not to attend the charter school may attend other district schools or may pursue an inter-district transfer in accordance with existing district enrollment and transfer policies. More information about district attendance alternatives is available from the district administrative offices.

No CUSD student will be required to attend CapoCA.

Students enrolled in the charter school have no right to admission in a particular school of any Local Education Agency (LEA) as a consequence of enrollment in the charter school, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the local education agency.

VI.D. SUSPENSION/EXPULSION PROCEDURES

Describe the procedures by which students can be suspended or expelled. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(J)] Include a preliminary list of the offenses for which students in the charter school must (where non-discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively. Identify the procedure by which students can be suspended or expelled and the process by which parents/guardians and students will be informed about the reasons for any such actions and their due process rights. Explain how the charter school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in regard to suspension and expulsion. Outline how policies and procedures regarding suspension and expulsion will be periodically reviewed and, when necessary, modified. Outline the process for notifying the school district in the case of suspension or expulsion of a student. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(10)]

CapoCA has established suspension and expulsion policies. As part of final confirmation during enrollment for both new and returning students, parents/guardians have to check a signature box confirming they have been provided access to, and agree they are bound by the terms of, the handbooks including suspension/expulsion procedures. Handbooks (General and state-specific supplement) are available in Connexus and are updated as needed. The policies may be modified at any time, as necessary, by action of the Board. The school's discipline, suspension and expulsion policies are in accordance with students' rights and with applicable law. As a charter school, the suspension and expulsion requirements contained in California Education Code are not applicable to the school. However, the Board will review those sections of California Education Code and will utilize similar guidelines when they are deemed appropriate to the desired disciplinary environment of the school.

Code of conduct: Appropriate conduct is expected of all students. The student's code of conduct is explained in the School Handbook (see Exhibit B) and includes steps to be followed in the event of misbehavior.

Academic Honesty: The school regards academic honesty as key to its mission, and academic honesty is essential in the virtual environment. It is expected that students adhere to the Honor Code throughout the year, and that all schoolwork submitted in order to meet course or class requirements represents the original work of the student.

All individuals involved with the school will be important contributors to upholding the academic honesty of the school and will be held accountable for violations of the principles of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will cause a student to be subject to disciplinary action. The following principles are critical to maintaining academic honesty:

- Students must not submit work of any kind that is not their own work.
- Students must not plagiarize in any work (written, multimedia, oral, creative, etc.).
- Students must not post assessments, assignments, answers to assessments or assignments, or any other Connections Academy curricular materials on any media that can be seen by other students or other third parties.
- Students must not give or receive unauthorized assistance on assessments.
- Learning Coaches must not give excessive assistance on assessments.
- Students must not present any forged document or signature to the school.
- Learning Coaches must not present any forged document or signature to the school.

Board policies: CapoCA follows formal due process procedures to deal with the discipline of students (see Exhibit B). Students are guaranteed due process of law as required by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The discipline policies are developed to identify the types of conduct subject to discipline, to offer an opportunity for a hearing in which the student may present evidence to defend his/her actions, and to ensure due process for the student. The School Handbook and the discipline policies are approved by the Board and are reviewed regularly. The Board reviews the policies to be sure they are within all current legal guidelines and that they are consistent with the school's mission and educational program.

CapoCA does not discipline pupils protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504), the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq. (IDEA), the American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et. seq. (ADA) unless CapoCA complies with the requirements of those acts. Section 118.31, Stats., which prohibits corporal punishment of pupils, applies to CapoCA. Sections 118.32 and 948.50, Stats., which prohibit a strip search of a pupil, also applies to CapoCA.

Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

Suspension: Under current school policy, the principal, following the due process protocol, may suspend students for up to ten days. A suspension consists of removal or restriction of access to school activities, including access to Connexus. The student is expected to continue their

schoolwork during this time. Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct, whether committed electronically or in person:

- Violation of academic honesty code
- Truancy
- Bullying or harassment
- Abusive or threatening language or conduct
- Vandalism
- Theft and robbery
- Harassment or sexual harassment
- Violation of acceptable use policy
- Repeated violations of any discipline issue

Expulsion: For more serious violations, or for conduct that requires suspension of more than ten days, the expulsion process is used. The principal may suspend the student for up to ten days while the expulsion process continues, especially if a serious offense, such as those listed, occurs. The Principal may request that final expulsions are decided by the Governing Board, or a designated committee of the Board. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional will follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others in the school, including possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, possession of or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia at the school or at any school-sponsored event.

Due process: The School Handbook (Exhibit B) and Board policies lay out the due process for students with disciplinary issues. The discipline process currently has three levels: Warning, Suspension and Expulsion. A warning is issued when a student has demonstrated a breach of conduct, but is not as serious as those listed for suspension or expulsion. A warning ultimately results in written documentation that becomes part of the student's school record. Due process for suspensions and expulsions include informing students and parents of the charges, of their rights, and of the due process protocols, holding hearing(s) with appropriate persons/parties, allowing the student and parents to present his or her version of the occurrence, and written documentation of the results.

Notification: The Board is notified, in closed session or confidential correspondence, of any expulsion decisions. Designated school district personnel are notified in a timely way of any expulsions by a designated member of the CapoCA staff. In addition, the school includes data regarding suspensions and expulsions in reports to the state. Documentation of student discipline is maintained in the student's school records.

VII. FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

VII.A. BUDGETS

Provide a detailed proposed first-year operational budget, including startup costs, that includes:

- *Reasonable estimates of all anticipated revenues and expenditures necessary to operate the school – including special education;*
- *Budget notes that clearly describe assumptions or revenue estimates, including, but not limited to the basis for average daily attendance estimates and staffing levels, including salary and benefit assumptions.*

Also provide cash flow and financial projections for the first three years of operation; and plans for establishment of a reserve equivalent to that required by law. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(g) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(c)(3)(B)]

CapoCA annually develops budgets and cash flow analyses. Annual budgets are submitted each year of operation to CUSD by the deadline established in the MOU. This deadline will be developed mutually between the charter and district to allow adequate time for review, and will in no case be later than June 30 of each year, in accordance with California Education Code § 47604.33. CapoCA will adhere to the charter school requirements of the state's new Local Control Funding Formula statutes, including compliance with Local Control Accountability Plan requirements. (See also Section VIII.A.)

Budget Development

The Principal, working with Connections Academy and the school Business Manager, prepares and submits a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year to the Governing Board at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Board reviews and modifies the budget as needed. Following Board approval, this preliminary budget is submitted to CUSD staff in keeping with timelines outlined in the MOU and any legally required timelines. A copy of the preliminary budget will also be submitted to the County Office of Education following approval by the CapoCA governing board. A revised school budget is developed, adopted and submitted to CUSD following adoption of the state's annual budget.

Fiscal year: The fiscal year for CapoCA is July 1 through June 30, as stated in the bylaws (see Exhibit G).

Budget highlights and assumptions: The attached three year budget which starts with the 2013-2014 school year demonstrates a school with sound financial planning. (See Exhibit J.)

Cash Inflows and Reserves

Revenue has been based on conservative estimates of available ADA funding and conservative attendance estimates. Enrollment figures are based on the projections for school growth in the 2013-2014 school year. School growth has been projected based on the past experience and trends for CapoCA.

Under the new state Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), general purpose revenue as well as most previous categorical revenues are combined. The LCFF revenue amount for the 2013-2014 school year budget uses estimated 2013-2014 school year charter school rates and the school's projected demographics. Estimates of the rates and the methods of calculation of LCFF revenue was obtained from agencies such as the California Charter School Association and School Services of California. Lottery funds are estimated conservatively. CapoCA is eligible for Federal Title funds and has been accessing these programs annually. If other state categorical programs are available, the school may apply for those whenever eligible. A few of these programs are shown in the budget (Exhibit J). The school will also receive local revenue under the Shared Services Agreement (see Section V.B).

A cumulative reserve of approximately \$1.7 million, or 11% of expenditures, has been targeted for the 2013-2014 school year and beyond.

Cash Outflows

Expenditure distributions are designed to ensure that the majority of funds are spent on instruction related costs, and will therefore meet the requirements for full funding.

The program provides for the following:

- **Teaching and administrative staff:** Staff budgets and staffing numbers have been prepared to meet requirements for full funding. This budget provides for a student to teacher ratio of 27.5:1. This ratio aligns with the State Board approved waiver for pupil to teacher ratio in an independent study program. Complete benefit packages have been assumed at 28% of salary.
- **High quality instructional program including materials and technology tools:** Costs for these items are determined through the Professional Services Agreement and the annually adopted fee schedule. The majority of the school's expenses are directly drawn from the fee schedule which is fairly stable from year to year. The budget shows each type of expense and the method for calculating it (for example, per student, per teacher, or percent of revenue). The fee schedule includes fees for all of the instructional materials. In addition to complete lesson plans provided for every subject, additional materials are provided, which may include such items as high-quality textbooks, CD-ROMs, online licensed content, interactive lesson components, synchronous instruction tools, science and art kits, and state of the art technology training, test preparation and assessment tools. Note that due to available funding in California and funding allocation requirements, certain adjustments may have to be made to the regular Connections Academy program. These will be determined annually by agreement between the Governing Board and Connections Academy of California, LLC. Connections Academy provides Connexus, that includes, among other things, a student information system, lesson scheduling tools, accountability tools, webmail, instant messaging, chat, video and audio streaming for selected lessons and a school and local activities message board/forum.

- **Facility:** The school has a local office, currently in Aliso Viejo. The facility provides an opportunity for students to visit their teachers. Upon approval by the principal, some teachers spend some days working in locations other than the office in accordance with the school's work at home policy. This facility also includes offices for the principal and administrative staff. Connections Academy provides computers and Internet access and technical support for staff while they are in the office. The typical office space rental includes all utilities in the monthly rate, so the square footage lease costs are shown in the budget combined with all utilities, except phone and Internet, which are budgeted separately due to the higher cost of these services in a virtual school. As the school grows, more staff may spend more time working outside the office.
- **Special Education:** The CapoCA budget includes expenditure items to provide for special education staff and services to fully meet the needs of the Special Education students. The charter is currently an LEA in Tulare SELPA and works with that SELPA regarding fiscal arrangements and reporting.
- **Administrative costs:** The school contracts with Connections Academy of California, LLC for many administrative services. These services are shown in categories in the budget, and include such general administrative services as enrollment, records management, human resources, payroll services, accounting, facility management, regulatory reporting support, general administration and oversight, marketing services, financing services, student & parent satisfaction assessment, board support and resource services, authorizer liaison services etc. In addition to the high quality "turn-key" educational program, Connections Academy offers administrative support services to assist the school in all aspects of operations. Examples of items covered in the educational administrative services are: education program design, analysis and revision; curriculum planning and selection services; school handbook development; professional development planning; school leader development; and so forth.
- **Other operational costs:** The school has budgeted for many other expenses necessary for school success, such as teacher professional development, copier costs, student testing and assessment, technology support costs, insurance, audit fees, legal fees, banking costs, dues and memberships, STRS reporting fees, board training, district oversight fees, and so forth. Each of these is shown in detail on the budget. The audit fees include the cost of annual tax filing for the 501(c)(3) and other legal fees.
- **Oversight fees:** Expenses related to the sponsoring District include the 1% district oversight fee and any other district administration fees. The details of the fiscal arrangement and the distribution of responsibilities are included in the MOU with CUSD (See Exhibit C), along with any district services that may be agreed upon on a fee-for-service basis.

The budget has been prepared to maximize cost efficiency, to leverage the resources available through CapoCA's relationship with Connections Academy, with the goal of maximizing the amount of funds that are spent on items that directly support student learning. All items in the budget are directly linked to essential elements of the educational program described in this charter, and are components of a successful virtual school model. The majority of the school's resources have been directed to the places where they will have the most impact on students: to the teaching staff and the curriculum.

Overall Cash Flow

Connections Academy provides human resources, administrative, financial, accounting and payroll services for the charter school. The services provided are explained in the professional services agreement between the charter school and Connections Academy of California, LLC. Since this is provided as a 'turnkey' program, the majority of the charter school's expenses are either paid to Connections Academy (such as fees for access to Connexus, curriculum, and so forth) or are reimbursed by the school to Connections Academy (such as payroll expenses, facility costs, and so forth). The charter school is invoiced monthly by Connections Academy of California, LLC for all of the agreed upon costs. The invoices are reviewed by the Governing Board treasurer and the school Business Manager and are then approved by the Governing Board prior to payment to Connections Academy of California, LLC.

Connections Academy has considerable experience managing public virtual schools and has become expert at dealing with the variances in public school funding, including in California. In order to protect the CapoCA charter school from experiencing cash flow problems as a result of delays in state or local funding, arrangements have been made to allow the charter school to pay the invoices *only if the school has sufficient funds available at that time*. The school must pay for services rendered as soon as funds become available, but there is no demand for payment if sufficient funds have not yet been received by the school. Therefore, due to this favorable arrangement between the charter school and its support partner, any additional delays in state payments, such as have been recently imposed by California on all public schools, will have no negative effect on the charter school.

The governing board and leadership of the charter school are well aware of the challenges of the state's current multiple and complex deferrals of payments to public schools, including charter schools. However, for the reasons listed above, rather than needing to develop detailed cash flow analyses and seek outside financing, the charter school can rely on its arrangement with the management organization to provide short term financing during times when cash is not coming in from the public revenue sources. This ability to obtain financing at a reasonable rate is one of many advantages offered to the school by Connections Academy.

Funding determination: As is required of all non-classroom based programs, CapoCA submits a funding determination application to the CDE by the mandated deadlines. CapoCA has been granted a four year funding determination by the Advisory Commission on Charter Schools, which allows for full funding through 2016-17 school year. The budgets are always prepared to meet or exceed all of the tests required for full funding. In the event that full funding is not

granted at any point, the school will work with the Charter School Advisory Committee, the CDE staff and with Connections Academy to modify the budget so that the school can receive full funding. Alternatively, the school may modify its revenue and/or expenditure assumptions to ensure a balanced budget. In the event that full funding is not granted, CapoCA will submit a revised budget to CUSD for approval by June 30 for the following fiscal year. The CapoCA educational program, as outlined in the charter, is of the highest quality. CapoCA is committed to providing this full program to its students and also to ensuring that funds are spent to carry out the mission of the school.

VII.B.FINANCIAL REPORTING

Describe the systems and processes by which the school will keep track of financial data and compile information needed for the annual statement of receipts and expenditures that is due to the school district.

Financial reports: Connections Academy, in consultation with CapoCA's Business Manager, provides regular financial reports to the Board. Following review by the Board, financial data is reported to the district and the county office of education in a manner and timeline detailed in the MOU, and in accordance with existing charter school law and district and state policy. In accordance with current legally mandated timelines, the first interim report, which reports on budget and actuals through October 31, will be submitted annually to the district and county office no later than December 15 each year. The second interim report, which reports on budget and actuals through January 31, will be submitted annually to the district and county office no later than March 15 each year. An annual update of certain school expenditures will be provided prior to July 1 in accordance with California Education Code § 47605.33(a) and 47606.5.

As per California Education Code § 42100, on or before September 15 of each year, the Board approves, in the format prescribed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, an unaudited annual statement of all receipts and expenditures for the preceding fiscal year. This statement is then filed with CUSD by September 15, and is sent to the county office and the state following certification by the district.

Financial data for the charter school will be reported to the state via the district, except in cases where the law requires charter schools to report directly to the state. For example, the year-end unaudited actual financial report is approved by the Board and then submitted by CapoCA to the district by the agreed upon deadlines each year, and then the district submits the report to county office, who in turn submits it to the state. In other situations, such as the annual independent audit, the school submits copies directly to the district, county office of education and the CDE as required by law.

School financial records are accessible to CUSD as the authorizing agency at any time, upon request. The school will respond promptly to such requests.

Fiscal policies: The Board has created and adopted fiscal policies, including adequate internal control policies, and requires that Connections Academy maintain adequate internal control policies and practices. In order to ensure responsible fiscal management, CapoCA consults with its independent auditor and with the district fiscal staff in developing these policies. As part of the Board's responsibilities, oversight over these policies and the internal controls occur in the process.

Attendance accounting: Accurate attendance accounting is crucial to the fiscal well-being of an independent study charter school. In order to minimize risks to the school's revenue, CapoCA utilizes accurate and sophisticated systems for documenting student attendance. CapoCA's attendance accounting procedures comply with California Independent Study requirements, and with the district's requirements for certifying the charter school's ADA. In addition, CapoCA works with the district to transfer all attendance data to a state approved attendance accounting program (e.g. Aeries) in order to generate the required state J18/19 forms. Alternatively, the attendance accounting data may be supplied in a format and level of detail similar to the Aeries program to allow efficient certification of the charter school's ADA.

VII.C.INSURANCE

Agree that the school will acquire and finance general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance, and provide evidence that the cost and availability of such insurance has been researched by the petitioners. [Ref. Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(c)(3)(C)]

Under the terms of the professional services agreement, the school is named as additional insured for the 2103-2014 school year with the following levels of coverage, among others. Note that annually CUSD will also be issued a certificate of insurance as an additional insured, if required through the MOU (see Exhibit K for a copy of the current certificates of insurance):

- Comprehensive General Liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate
- Automobile: \$1,000,000
- Excess umbrella liability: \$5,000,000
- Workmen's Compensation: Complies with current statutory limits in accordance with California Labor Code

The Board has obtained a Director's & Officer's Liability policy that provides \$1,000,000 in coverage. The certificate of insurance is included in Exhibit K.

A robust health insurance policy will be provided to eligible teachers and administrative staff through the Connections Academy plan with Blue Cross/Blue Shield, but may be provided through another carrier, as determined by Connections Academy and the Governing Board. Other benefits for employees will be detailed in the Employee Handbook and Benefits Guide, published annually.

CapoCA and its vendors will continue to maintain and keep in force such insurance, or self-insurance, as Worker's Compensation, Liability and Property Damage, as will protect it from claims under Worker's Compensation Acts and also such insurance, or self-insurance as will protect CapoCA from any other claims for damages for personal injury, including death, and claims for damages to any property of CapoCA, or of the public, which may arise from school operations, whether such operations be by CapoCA or by any subcontractor or anyone directly or indirectly employed by any of them.

VII.D.ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Describe the structure for providing business/administrative services (including, at a minimum, personnel transactions, attendance accounting; accounting, and payroll) that reflects an understanding of school business practices and expertise needed to carry out administrative services or a reasonable plan and timeline to develop and assemble such practices and expertise. For any contract services planned to serve the school, describe the criteria and procedures for the selection of contractors. [Ref. Criteria for the Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(c)(3)(A)]

Under the Professional Services Agreement approved by the Board (see Exhibit I), the day-to-day operations of the school are administered by Connections Academy who has the infrastructure and experience necessary to successfully manage the business aspects of the school. (See also Section VII.I) While the Governing Board maintains overall control over personnel, Connections Academy manages the employees and provides human resource and payroll services for staff. In addition, accounting services are carried out by Connections Academy staff with oversight and monitoring by the Business Manager and Board Treasurer.

The partnership between the Board and Connections Academy can be severed according to the terms of the Professional Services Agreement (see Exhibit I) by the Board if Connections Academy is not meeting the Board's expectations.

VII.E. FACILITIES

Describe the types and potential location of any facility/ies needed to operate the size and scope of educational program proposed in the charter. If (a) specific facility/ies has/have not been identified, provide evidence of the type and projected cost of the facility/ies that may be available in the location of the proposed charter school(s). Facilities plans must reflect reasonable costs for the acquisition or leasing of facilities to house the charter school. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(g) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(c)(3)(D)]

As a virtual charter school, CapoCA does not require a physical facility for day-to-day learning. Students work from the setting of their families' choice, such as the home or a supervised community location. As a non-classroom based charter, the school is not currently eligible to request facilities from the District under Proposition 39 regulations.

CapoCA leases permanent office space for its administrative and teaching staff, which also serves as a resource center for students. The facility is in an attractive and safe area, providing good access for administrators and teachers and any students or parents who visit the school. The facility has a certificate of occupancy, is air-conditioned, heated and illuminated with fluorescent lights, provides male and female bathrooms and parking, is handicapped accessible,

and is fully equipped with sprinklers and other fire safety equipment. In 2010, the school moved into a commercial office facility in Aliso Viejo, and the lease there is in effect through July of 2014.

The facility provides the necessary infrastructure to support the required computer network. Should there be a need for further renovations, they will be made in compliance with applicable building and safety codes.

The CapoCA budget includes funds for lease of such a facility, based on the current lease agreement. Facility and janitorial maintenance are currently the responsibility of the commercial space provider.

CapoCA has located its facility within the geographic boundaries of CUSD. The facility is accessible from major roadways, allowing students and staff to reach it easily.

The majority of the CapoCA educational program operates from this facility. Staff members who work from remote locations report to the school principal. In addition, some administrative and educational support is provided from other locations in accordance with the professional services agreement with Connections Academy. Since the technological infrastructure is in place, providing long distance support is both effective and efficient. In addition, in the future, the school reserves the right under California Education Code § 47605.1 (c), to open additional resource centers if there is a need for them as determined by input of staff and families. CapoCA will provide all required notification to the district and county of all facilities that it operates.

VII.F. TRANSPORTATION

Provide a description of the arrangements, if any, to be made for transportation of students, including expected level of need, proposed contracts, and adequate types and levels of insurance.

Students at CapoCA will not require transportation services for regular school activities. While the school will help facilitate local extracurricular and recreational activities among CapoCA students and their families, the families will be responsible for providing their own transportation for these activities. The school will assist families with arranging transportation to the greatest extent possible. The only required school events that may require students to report somewhere other than their home or immediate neighborhood will be: a) special orientation sessions, if held, and b) state or school-mandated examinations, which students will take at proctored locations. If CapoCA provides transportation for any special event, school administrators will assure that such transportation meets all applicable safety standards and bears any motor vehicle insurance required under California state law. Any parent or guardian (or their designee) transporting students in their car to school organized events will sign appropriate waivers/release forms if required by school policy. The School Handbook (Exhibit B) also discusses parental responsibility for transportation to school events.

VII.G.AUDITS

Describe the manner in which annual, independent financial audits, as required by law, will be completed by December 15 following the close of each fiscal year, and the anticipated timeline in which audit exceptions and deficiencies (if any) will be resolved to the satisfaction of the school district. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(b)(5)(l) and (m) and Criteria for Review; CCR-5, §11967.5.1(f)(9)] Additionally, describe who will be responsible for contracting and overseeing the independent audit, including a specification that the auditor will have experience in education finance. Outline, as applicable, the process for providing audit reports to the State Board of Education, California Department of Education, or other agency as the State Board of Education may designate. [Ref. Criteria for Review §11967.5.1(f)(9)]

Annual independent audit: CapoCA is audited annually by an independent certified public accounting firm according to the guidelines applicable to public charter schools in California. The Board commissions the audit and engages an auditor with experience in public school finance. The cost of the independent audit is borne by CapoCA. Copies of the audit are submitted to CUSD, the county office of education, the state controller's office, the CDE, and any other agency required by law within 180 days of the end of the fiscal year, and in no case later than December 15 of each year. The Governing Board may appoint a standing or ad hoc Audit Committee to engage the auditor, review the audit and make decisions on resolving any audit findings.

Audit exceptions and deficiencies: CapoCA has not historically had any audit exceptions or deficiencies. A copy of the audit, including any auditor's findings is forwarded to the Board, or if appointed, to a standing or ad hoc Audit Committee of the CapoCA Board. If so appointed, the Audit Committee would review any audit exceptions or deficiencies and then report to the CapoCA Governing Board with recommendations on how to resolve them. This report would include timelines and deadlines for resolving the exceptions or deficiencies. The Board then would report to CUSD regarding how the exceptions and deficiencies have been or will be resolved. Any disputes regarding the resolution of audit exceptions and deficiencies are referred to the dispute resolution process contained in Section V.E. The district may elect, at its own cost and expense, to have its accountants review the audit exceptions and deficiencies.

VII.H.CLOSURE PROTOCOL

Provide a detailed description of the procedures to be used in the case of a decision by School District or State Board of Education to revoke the school's charter, a decision by the school district not to renew the charter, or a decision by the school voluntarily to close, including plans for a final audit of the school; disposition of net assets; communication of the closure to parents and staff; and maintenance and transfer of student records. [Ref. California Education Code 47605(b)(5)(P)]

In the event that CapoCA ceases operation for any reason, CapoCA and its Governing Board will be responsible for school closure procedures and will cooperate with CUSD and the CDE to the extent necessary to provide an orderly return of the students to their local schools. CapoCA will follow the charter school closure procedure regulations from the CDE. [CCR-5 §11962] In the event of school closure and election of the Board to wind up and dissolve the corporation, disposal of any net assets remaining after the liabilities of the charter school have been paid or otherwise addressed shall occur in accordance with applicable law and the corporation's

articles of incorporation and bylaws, including (1) the return of any grant funds and restricted categorical funds to their source in accordance with the terms of the grant or state and federal law, as appropriate, which may include submission of final expenditure reports for entitlement grants and the filing of any required Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, and (2) the return of any donated materials and property in accordance with any conditions established when the donation of such materials or property was accepted. The decision on distribution of the school's assets will be made by the Governing Board. If CapoCA does not have sufficient assets to pay all of its bills at the time it ceases operation, neither CUSD, the Orange County Department of Education, or the CDE will be responsible for its unpaid bills.

Other Closure Procedures:

- The decision to close the charter school will be documented by an official action of the school's Governing Board and the district Governing Board. The action will identify the reason for closure. A notice of school closure will be sent to the District, CDE Charter School Unit, the County Office of Education, the school's SELPA, the State Teachers' Retirement System, as well as all other agencies as required. This notice will contain all relevant and required information, including the effective date of closure.
- Parents/guardians and students will be notified in writing and will be provided with or have access to student information necessary to facilitate transfer to another school.
- Any other school districts that may need to provide services to charter school students will be notified in writing.
- The school's Governing Board, or its designee, shall create a list of students in each grade level and the classes they have completed, together with information on the students' district of residence.
- A process for transfer of student records, all state assessment results and any special education records will be established and followed. In addition, a plan for the maintenance of school and student records for a reasonable period of time following the closure will be made. All student records will be turned over to the students' district of residence, unless otherwise agreed in the adopted plan. Personnel records will be transferred or maintained as required by law.
- As stated, the CapoCA Corporation will handle closing out all affairs related to the charter school. This will include dissolution of the corporation only if necessary and appropriate.
- An independent audit of the school will be completed as quickly as feasible, but not later than six months following closure of the school to determine the net assets and liabilities of the charter school.
- Any required final financial or other reports will be submitted to the CDE and other applicable agencies.

- Copies of all financial and attendance records will be provided to the sponsoring district according to state and federal requirements, unless otherwise agreed upon by both the Board and the district Governing Board.
- If financial liabilities are incurred during the closure procedures, CapoCA will be fully responsible for payment of these, according to the Board adopted financial plan.

VII.I. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

If the proposed charter school intends to enter into a contract with an education management organization (EMO), include the following:

- *A description of the proposed contract including roles and responsibilities, performance evaluation measures, payment structure, conditions for renewal and termination, and investment disclosure;*
- *A draft of the proposed management contract;*
- *A description of the firm's roles and responsibilities for the financial management of the proposed charter school and the internal controls that will be in place to guide this relationship;*
- *A list of other schools managed by the school management company, including contact information; and*
- *A summary of the company's history and philosophy, past results of its school management efforts, and background on its corporate leaders.*

Roles and responsibilities: CapoCA has approved a professional services agreement (or management contract) with Connections Academy of California, LLC for the following services as described in the agreement (also see Exhibit I):

- Licensing of Connections Academy curriculum for use in CapoCA
- Use of Connections Academy's Personalized Learning Plan
- Administration and ongoing evaluation of student assessment tools
- Certain instructional services and personnel as permitted by California law
- Use of assignment management and tracking tools, including Connexus
- Communication via multiple technologies, including phone, webmail and chat
- Technology tools for students, teachers and other school staff
- Training materials for Learning Coaches and teachers
- Student record management
- Special needs accommodations
- Other administrative services
- Trademark agreement

The professional services agreement outlines the respective roles of the Board and Connections Academy. Under the agreement, Connections Academy maintains responsibility for providing the virtual educational program outlined in this charter, while the Board maintains full responsibility for oversight of Connections Academy. The Board is also responsible for evaluating the performance of Connections Academy in other operations of the charter school. In order to evaluate performance, the Board requests, and Connections Academy provides, all

appropriate data, both financial and educational. Performance data is collected, analyzed and reported in keeping with the terms of this charter, and is also tied to state and district accountability standards.

Financial reporting and controls: (See also Section VII.B.) Connections Academy and CapoCA work together to ensure that financial reporting and budget development occur within all district and state required timelines. Connections Academy provides the administrative and fiscal services to prepare the financial documents, and the Board Treasurer and Board are responsible for reviewing, evaluating and approving these items, and for providing them to the appropriate state and local agencies.

Term, termination and renewal: In order to provide a guarantee that the charter school program is of high quality and is accountable, detailed language regarding termination and renewal is included in the professional services agreement. In order to provide a stable educational program for CapoCA families, the term of the agreement covers the five years of the charter renewal. The agreement is renewable. While termination is not desirable, the professional services agreement does provide for several different reasons that termination could occur. For example, the Board may terminate its agreement with Connections Academy if it determines Connections Academy has not performed as expected, or if it determines that Connections Academy has failed to provide educational services that meet California independent study requirements. Connections Academy may terminate the agreement if CapoCA does not meet its financial obligations to Connections Academy. Either party may terminate if there is breach of contract. The breaching party would be given an opportunity to respond and cure, and written notification is required at all times. In order to minimize disruption of students and staff, termination would be planned to occur at the end of an academic year.

Payments: Payments are made by the charter school to Connections Academy under the terms of the professional services agreement. The determination of fees includes: disclosure between the charter school and Connections Academy of estimated revenues and expenditures, development and approval of budgets, and an annual negotiation of fees due to Connections Academy. Payments are made to Connections Academy on a periodic pro-rated basis, and the payment timeline is tied to receipt of revenue by the charter school from state, local and private agencies.

Connections Academy, LLC background and experience: Connections Academy, LLC currently provides a broad range of services – including complete integrated, state standards-aligned curriculum; technology; teacher training and oversight; and administrative support – to virtual public schools in 23 states.

Descriptions of Connections Academy staff backgrounds and qualifications are also included in Section I.C.

VIII. CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY, RENEWAL AND REVOCATIONS

Include a statement reflecting the conditions under which the charter may be revoked and/or may not be renewed.

VIII.A. ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

In order to ensure adequate progress towards renewal of the charter, CapoCA will compile and provide a accountability report or plan to the district as well as to any other required agencies as required by law (currently found in EC Section 47606.5). The format and evaluation of the report will adhere to state regulations (currently laid out in EC Sections 52064 and 52064.5). Additional information regarding the Local Control Accountability Plan is found in Section III.A. The school may request that the district Governing Board review and accept the report or plan. This report or plan will include any state required elements and may include other optional data, such as:

- Summary data showing student progress toward the goals and outcomes specified in Section III.A from the assessment instruments and techniques in Section III.C.
- An analysis of whether student performance is meeting the goals specified in Section III.A. This data will be displayed on both a school-wide basis and by subgroups, which are disaggregated by numerically significant racial and ethnic categories.
- Data on the level of parent involvement in the school's governance (and other aspects of the school, where applicable) and summary data from an annual parent and student satisfaction survey.
- Data regarding the number of staff working at the school and their qualifications.
- Information on the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the school, and a demonstration of whether the school implemented the means listed in charter Section VI.B to achieve a racially and ethnically balanced student population.
- Information regarding the school's admissions practices during the year and data regarding the numbers of students enrolled.
- Data on the number and resolution of disputes and complaints under the school's Uniform Complaint Procedures.
- Other information regarding the educational program and the administrative, legal, and governance operations of the school relative to compliance with the terms of the charter generally.
- The annual audit and other relevant financial information.

In addition to meeting any requirements of the state, CapoCA will work with CUSD to jointly develop content, evaluation criteria, timelines, and process for the accountability reports. These arrangements may be laid out in the MOU with CUSD, which is reviewed annually.

The school and district also jointly develop an annual site visitation process and protocol to enable the district to gather information needed to confirm the school's performance and compliance with the terms of this charter.

VIII.B. TERM OF THE CHARTER

The term of the charter will be five years, commencing on the first day of the fiscal year following the date that the charter is renewed by the CUSD, Board and expiring five school years later, unless renewed. This charter is not intended to expire prior to the end of the fifth school year following this renewal.

VIII.C. OVERSIGHT AND RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES

CUSD may inspect or observe any part of the school at any time, but will provide reasonable notice to the principal to the extent practicable prior to any observation or inspection. CUSD will provide such notice at least three working days prior to the inspection or observation unless the school's Governing Board or principal agrees otherwise. Inspection, observation, monitoring, and oversight activities may not be assigned or subcontracted to a third party by CUSD without the consent of the CapOCA Governing Board, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

The school agrees to promptly respond to all inquiries, including requests for financial records, from the district, the county office of education, or the CDE.

VIII.D. REVOCATION

Prior to commencement of revocation proceedings, district and school will first endeavor to resolve any dispute under the dispute resolution process set forth in Section V.E. If, following the completion of that process, the Governing Board of the district believes it has cause to revoke this charter, the district agrees to notify the Governing Board of the school in writing, noting the specific reasons for which the charter is in danger of being revoked, and grant the school reasonable time to respond to the notice and take appropriate corrective action. In accordance with California Education Code § 47607 (2)(b) and 47607.3, the following items may be considered violations that could lead to revocation or non-renewal of the charter:

1. A material violation of any of the conditions, standards or procedures set forth in the charter
2. Failure to meet or pursue the pupil outcomes identified in the charter
3. Failure to meet generally accepted accounting principles
4. Fiscal mismanagement
5. Violation of the law

The charter and district agree to follow the interventions laid out in California Education Code § 47607.3 regarding failure to meet pupil outcomes. If the charter school disputes the cause(s) for revocation, the dispute procedures listed in Section V.E will apply. Notwithstanding any other provision of this charter, the district shall comply with applicable laws and regulations regarding revocation proceedings.

All attempts will be made to avoid school closure due to revocation in the middle of a school year.

In the event that the school is closed, the closure protocols and processes as laid out in Section VII.H will be followed.

VIII.E. RENEWAL AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

The Governing Board of the charter school may request from the district Governing Board a renewal or amendment of the charter at any time prior to expiration. However, renewal requests should be presented by the school to the district no later than 120 days prior to the expiration of the charter. The district Governing Board agrees to hear and render a renewal decision pursuant to the initial charter petition review timelines and processes as specified in the California Education Code § 47605.

Renewals will be for a period as specified in California Education Code § 47607.

The charter may be amended at any time using a process similar to the renewal process. Any material revision of the charter requires an amendment that must be approved by the Governing Board of the charter granting authority. Non-material amendments to the charter may occur by approval of the charter school Governing Board, and notification to the authorizing district. The charter school and district must agree on whether an amendment is material or non-material. The charter school agrees to contact the designated district liaison when any amendment, either material or non-material, is proposed. The charter school and CUSD do not anticipate that language regarding student performance, student outcomes, school finances or any other elements of the Local Control Accountability Plan or its annual updates will constitute or create material revisions to the charter.

IX. IMPACT ON THE CHARTER AUTHORIZER

Provide information regarding the potential effects of the charter school on the school district, including, but not limited to, the facilities to be utilized by the school, the manner in which administrative services of the school are to be provided, and potential civil liability effects. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(g)]

CUSD's Mission: "CUSD's mission, in partnership with the home and our richly diverse community, is to educate students and to assist them in realizing their full potential as responsible, productive, and contributing members of society by providing an educational environment in which students are challenged, excellence is expected, and differences are valued."²¹

CapoCA supports and enhances this mission by providing each student with a Personalized Learning Plan which challenges individual students to excel and succeed through a differentiated educational path. When students work at a challenging but realistic level that fits their educational needs and goals, they develop academic confidence, feel positive about their school experience, and in turn realize their potential. CapoCA has reviewed the five pillars addressed in CUSD's Strategic Plan and, as a charter school authorized by CUSD, CapoCA supports each pillar as follows:

- **Pillar 1: Community Relations** – CapoCA involves the community in the school and communicates openly providing reliable and timely information about the progress of the school via the website and newsletter.
- **Pillar 2: Safe & Healthy Schools** – CapoCA prioritizes the safety of students and staff by implementing best practice policies regarding discipline, student behavior, and emergency preparedness.
- **Pillar 3: Academic Achievement & Enrichment** – CapoCA focuses on provide a high quality instructional program engaging all students and fostering high level thinking. The teachers and professional staff participate in PLCs and collect and analyze data to drive instruction and create school operations policies.
- **Pillar 4: Character Development** – CapoCA creates a positive school climate focused on students developing a strong character including honesty, integrity, respect, and responsibility.
- **Pillar 5: Effective Operations** – The Governing Board and Principal work together with school staff to implement effective best practices in school operations. CapoCA is financially sustainable.

²¹ http://capousd.ca.schoolloop.com/cms/page_view?d=x&piid=&vpid=1232963502369

Benefits: There are many benefits that CUSD receives through sponsoring CapoCA. One of the most significant benefits is being able to serve students that were underserved or not being served within the district and larger community. Providing access for students to highly qualified teachers and to innovative, interactive 21st century curriculum from a partner who has demonstrated success meets the goals and mission of CUSD.

The district will provide supervisory oversight as required by law, in exchange for an oversight fee of up to 1% of the portion of the charter school's annual public revenue, as defined in California Education Code §47613 (f). The definition of which staff functions constitute district oversight is included in the MOU (Exhibit C).

The school district and community benefit from the teaching and administrative positions that are created at CapoCA. This has an economic impact on the county and community.

CapoCA represents an outstanding educational choice for families in Orange County and contiguous counties and this builds awareness of CUSD's innovative approach to learning. Increased awareness of CUSD is of benefit to CUSD's own community outreach efforts.

Facilities: CapoCA expects that it will have no negative impact on the district with respect to facilities. Since the CapoCA program uses a non-classroom based model, the district is not expected to provide facilities for the charter school. As a non-classroom based program, CapoCA is not eligible for facilities under Proposition 39. To the extent that students leave traditional district schools to attend CapoCA, the district may experience a positive effect in schools that are currently overcrowded.

The school agrees to notify the district and county office of education of the location of all its sites and/or resource centers. The school agrees to comply with any legal geographic limitations on charter school sites.

Administrative services: CapoCA contracts with Connections Academy for the majority of its administrative services. Connections Academy and the CapoCA staff will cooperate fully with district staff in the preparation and reporting of all required data and financial information. The district and the charter school may enter negotiations during the MOU process to provide services to the charter school. Neither party is obligated to provide or accept such services, but may do so by mutual agreement. The Superintendent or designee of the district is authorized to negotiate and enter into an agreement to provide services to the charter school.

Civil liability effects: As a non-profit public benefit corporation, CapoCA is legally independent from CUSD. In addition, CapoCA maintains adequate insurance coverage to further limit liability of the district. Internal dispute processes are in place to decrease the incidence of legal disputes. CapoCA and Connections Academy have retained services of an attorney familiar with charter school legal issues to prevent legal problems from arising.

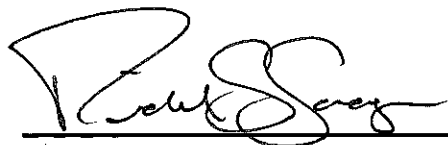
X. ASSURANCES

This form is intended to be signed by a duly authorized representative of the applicant and submitted with the full charter application.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for Capistrano Connections Academy to be located in Orange County, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further I understand that if awarded a charter renewal, the School:

1. Will meet all statewide standards and conduct the student assessments required, pursuant to Section 60605, and any other statewide standards authorized in statute, or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. [Ref. California Education Code §47605(c)(1)]
2. Will be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Act (chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of Division 4 of Title 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(b)(5)(O)]
3. Will be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
4. Will not charge tuition or other prohibited fees. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(1) and 49010 et seq.]
5. Will admit all eligible students who wish to attend the school, and who submit a timely application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each applicant will be given equal chance of admission through a random lottery process. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(2)(B)]
6. Will not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnic background, national origin, gender, or disability or any other basis required by law. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(d)(1)]
7. Will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, that are applicable to it.
8. Will meet all requirements for employment set forth in applicable provisions of law, including, but not limited to credentials, as necessary [Ref. Criteria for Review, §11967.5.1(f)(5)] and including the criminal record background check and summary required by Ed Code 44237.

9. Will ensure that teachers in the school (as defined in this charter) hold a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools are required to hold. As allowed by statute, flexibility will be given to non-core, non-college preparatory teachers. [Ref. California Education Code Section 47605(l)] Will also insure that copies of these credentials will be kept on file at the school and available for inspection upon request.
10. Will at all times maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.
11. Will submit an annual accountability plan to the authorizer as laid out in California Education Code § 47606.5.
12. Will follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the operation of the charter school.
13. Will comply with all regulations regarding independent study programs that are applicable to charter schools.
14. Will comply with all state audit and other state reporting requirements for charter schools
15. Will respond to all inquiries regarding records, both financial and other, and will provide access to the district to such records.



Authorized Representative's Signature

12/18/13

Date

EXHIBITS

Exhibit Letter	Description
A	Personalized Learning Plan Samples
B	School Handbook 2013-2014
C	Memorandum of Understanding
D	Master Agreement Sample
E	Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgement (PLCA)
F	Articles of Incorporation
G	Bylaws
H	Determination Letter from IRS for 501(c)(3) Status
I	Professional Services Agreement with Connections Academy, LLC
J	Charter School Business Plan, including Budgets and Cash Flow Narrative
K	Insurance Certificates (2013-2014 samples)