



STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

131 WEST NITTANY AVENUE • STATE COLLEGE PENNSYLVANIA • 16801-4899
TELEPHONE: 814-231-1042 FAX: 814-231-4130

VI-C

TO: Board of School Directors

FROM: Jason Perrin

DATE: March 19, 2015

RE: Charter Renewal Request: Young Scholars of Central PA

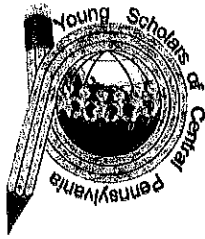
Young Scholars of Central PA (YSCP) has requested a five-year renewal of their charter. They are currently in the fifth year of their most recent renewal. As part of the renewal process, our district team visited YSCP on February 13, 2015. During the visit, administration of YSCP provided documents in two binders relative to aspects of their programming. The district team has concluded its review of the documentation provided and reflections on the visit. The team has also reviewed documentation provided by YSCP in response to further requests and inquiries for information in specific areas after the initial visit.

Attached, please find a summary of our visit and review. Also included are copies of our requests for information prior to the visit. If no further information is requested by the board, we will bring a recommendation forward on April 13th as an action item. If the board requests further information, we will bring that information forward during the April 13th board meeting, and move the recommendation for action to April 23rd.

Members of the review team and their area(s) of review:

Scott Etter/Robert O'Donnell
Jason Perrin
Randy Brown/Donna Watson
Donna Reinhardt
Linda Pierce
Jeanne Knouse/Mike Hardy
Pat Moore
Deirdre Bauer

Charter School Law/Process
Achievement/Enrollment
Finance/Contracts
Accounting
Certification
Child Accounting/Student Services
Special Education
Curriculum



**YOUNG SCHOLARS OF CENTRAL
PENNSYLVANIA**
CHARTER SCHOOL

Address:
1530 Westerly Parkway
State College, PA 16801
Phone: (814) 237-9727
E-mail: kaya@yscp.org
www.yscp.org

September 3, 2014

Dr. Robert J. O'Donnell, Superintendent
Board of State College Area School District
131 W Nittany Ave,
State College, PA 16801

Re: Request for Renewal of Charter of Young Scholars of Central Pennsylvania Charter School

Dear Dr. O'Donnell and School Directors,

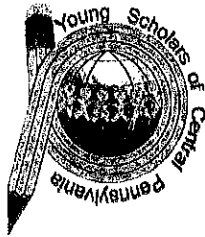
Based on the success we have demonstrated through our annual reports, financial audits, state assessments, continuously increasing demand for enrollment, sound financial and management practices, parent and employee satisfaction Young Scholars of Central Pennsylvania Charter School (YSCPCS) requests renewal of its charter for a 5 year period. Our education program is a success, YSCPCS is a viable organization, we are faithful to our charter, and we have strong plans for future to continue to enrich the education environment in the State College area.

We appreciate your cooperation in advance. YSCPCS sincerely appreciates the occasion to work with you and the Board of State College Area School District. We look forward to a complimentary and cooperative relationship for educating our children and providing this opportunity for them.

Sincerely,

Dr. Levent Kaya
CEO-CAO
Young Scholars of Central Pennsylvania Charter School

cc. Wendy Whitesell, President of the Board of Trustees
Joshua Pollak, Esquire



**YOUNG SCHOLARS OF CENTRAL
PENNSYLVANIA**
CHARTER SCHOOL

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September 3, 2014

Dr. Robert J. O'Donnell, Superintendent
Board of State College Area School District
131 W Nittany Ave,
State College, PA 16801

Re: Young Scholars of Central Pennsylvania Charter School High School Application

Dear Dr. O'Donnell and School Directors,

We would like to withdraw our High School Amendment Application dated November 14, 2012 until such time that we find a suitable facility to hold our high school.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Levent Kaya
CEO-CAO
Young Scholars of Central Pennsylvania Charter School

cc. Wendy Whitesell, President of the Board of Trustees
Joshua Pollak, Esquire



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October 17, 2014

Dr. Levent Kaya
Young Scholars of Central PA Charter School
1530 Westerly Parkway
State College, PA 16801

Dear Dr. Kaya:

The State College Area School District has received your request for a five-year charter renewal for Young Scholars of Central PA Charter School. As we prepare for this process, we are interested in visiting your school and meeting with you. We wish to conduct a site visit in January 2015, and will be in touch to schedule a date and time.

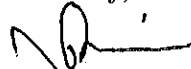
Below is a list of information and data documentation that should be provided to our district team during the site visit. These documents should be collected prior to the visit and be made available to the team upon arrival. Several copies of the documents would be helpful, so that the team may review them further after the visit. A secure room where the team can meet and review the documents is most appreciated. This is not an exhaustive list of documents as other data may be requested.

- Charter School Mission Statement/Copy of Approved Charter
- Copy of the most recent "Performance Audit" from the PA Auditor General
 - Information that addresses any "Findings" from the "Performance Audit" listed above*
- Charter School Annual Goals
- List of staff and their roles
- PSSA scores for multiple years
- National standardized test results and any analysis by the Charter School
- AYP status for multiple years
- SAT scores for multiple years
- Grading policies
- Grading analysis by grade level
- Attendance/Drop Out data
- Demographic data (enrollment, gender, age, grade level)
- Title I Monitoring Report (including SES)
- SES Tutoring Report (or any other tutoring provided by the school)
- Highly Qualified Teacher Report
- Safe Schools Report
- Weapons and School Violence Report
- Special Education reports (Penn Data)
- Technology Plan
- Professional Development Plan
- Discipline policies or support strategies for teachers/administrators
- Discipline policies/discipline report monitoring
- Charter School Teacher Evaluation Plan

- Current Charter School budget
- Course of study and sequence
- Curriculum adoption or evaluation cycle

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to visiting with you soon.

Sincerely,



Jason Perrin
Assistant Superintendent (K-8)

Copied to: Dr. Robert O'Donnell, Superintendent of Schools
 Ms. Penni Fishbaine, President Board of School Directors



STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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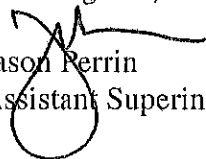
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January 30, 2015

Dr. Kaya:

Along with the information contained in the previous request, please provide documentation for the applicable areas listed below. We look forward to speaking with you and visiting your school on February 13th.

Best Regards,


Jason Perrin
Assistant Superintendent (K-8)

Finance:

Financial Statements for previous 4 years (2010-2014)

Budget Documents for previous 4 years (2010-2014)

Copies of all contracts including employment either individual and organization/association representing employees, vendors for services contracted services, equipment or property leases for the previous four years

Human Resources:

Listing of employees, including years teaching at the school, years of teaching at prior schools, degree completion, and certification information

Act 48 Information

Copy of teacher contract

Annual turnover report by classification

Administrative salary and compensation plan

Certification policy and process

Policy and procedures to implement the new "Pass the Trash", Mandatory Reporter, and background check clearances regulations

Student Services:

Truancy Protocol

Alternative Education Protocol

Homeless Protocol

ESL program policy/guidelines

Service of gifted students

Special Education:

Special Education Plan (Current 3 year Plan)

Cyclical Monitoring Documents:

Facilitated Self Assessment

Corrective Action Plan (if required)

Results of Parent Survey

Results of Teacher Survey

Curriculum:

Curriculum and Samples of Resources used to support implementation

Young Scholars Review 2015

Timeline:

January 9: Review Committee Pre-Visit Meeting
January 30: Pre-Visit Meeting with Dr. Kaya (YSCP)
February 13: Site Visit/Information Collection
March 3: Post Visit Meeting with Review Committee
March 23: Information/Discussion Item
April 13: Recommendation/Action Item (If board requests more info; then April 23)
April 23: Recommendation/Action Item

Summary for Board of School Directors

Section A: Charter School Procedures

Renewal or Closure of Charter Schools

A charter school must notify, in writing, the chartering school district between July 1 and October 1 of the final school year of its current charter that it is requesting renewal of the charter. The renewal decision begins with the previously submitted Annual Report and may require additional items as requested by the chartering district. Upon providing this notice to the chartering school district, the chartering district shall inform the charter school, within 30 days of the receipt of the charter school's notice, of what additional information beyond the Annual Report is to be provided to the district for review. If districts wish to grant a charter renewal, they may waive a public hearing.

The chartering district's request for information and documents may include, but is not limited to, the following: (1) all financial audits and financial reports; (2) standardized test scores; (3) PSSA results; (4) special education reports from the Bureau of Special Education, but not including any student identifying information; (5) audit reports from the Office of the Auditor General, and (6) documentation that shows the charter school met the measurable goals set forth in the charter school's application. Charter schools shall provide the requested information within 60 days of the notice by the chartering district of the information being requested. Within 45 days of receipt of the information from the charter school, the chartering district shall notify the charter school that it intends to renew or non-renew the charter, following the proceedings described in the law in the case of nonrenewal.

Charter schools that wish to change a portion of the charter agreement due to changes in the charter school's educational program during the renewal process or anytime while the charter is in effect, should request that the chartering school district board of directors approve an amendment to the charter. Amendment procedures should be utilized rather than submitting

a new charter application. As with any contract, a party to the contract (charter agreement) may submit to the other suggested changes or amendments. When and if both parties to the contract agree, the charter agreement may be amended following approval from both the board of school directors and the charter school Board of Trustees.

The charter school's annual report will provide an on-going, comprehensive assessment of the charter school's progress towards its goals; the chartering school district should look to that report to begin its renewal process. The National Association of Charter School Authorizers recommends the renewal process should be a "transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive data to make merit-based renewal decisions." In their Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing, this organization has established the following standards for charter renewal:

Transparent Process

- Articulates the criteria for renewal.
- Publishes a timetable and process for renewal.
- Clearly communicates the options and consequences available under state law including revocation, non-renewal, probation, and renewal.
- Explains any available rights of appeal, whether to administrative or legal bodies, through which the decisions of the authorizer can be challenged.

Comprehensive Data

- Analyzes and weighs data regarding a school's student, organizational, and mission-specific performance over time in relation to the terms of its contract.
- Considers multiple sources of data, including state-mandated, standardized and internal test data, evidence of mission-related outcomes, and qualitative reviews, to judge school quality.
- Solicits parent and public input into the charter renewal process and articulates how input will impact the decision.

Merit-Based Decisions

- Grants renewal only to a school with a high quality educational program that has achieved the goals and standards identified in its contract, is organizationally and financially viable, and has been faithful to the terms of its contract and applicable law.
- Outlines a protocol for the orderly closure of a school.

Nonrenewal

A charter may be non-renewed for reasons listed in Section 1729-A(a).

(1) "One or more material violations of any of the conditions, standards or procedures contained in the written charter signed pursuant to section 1720-A."

Material violations are substantive breaches in the terms and conditions of the charter school. Examples of a material violation of the charter may include repeated failure to meet the deadline for submitting an Annual Report or providing substandard responses to the educational quality questions on the report.

(2) "Failure to meet the requirements for student performance set forth in 22 PA Code Ch. 5 (relating to curriculum) or subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 PA Code Ch.5 or failure to meet any performance standard in the written charter signed pursuant to section 1716-A."

Failure to meet the requirements of Chapter 4 of the State Board of Education regarding state academic standards and curriculum and/or failure to meet any student academic performance standards contained in the signed charter.

(3) "Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management or audit requirements."

Copies of local audits and state audits should be made available to the board to help determine if a failure has occurred in this area. Routine audit findings or suggestions do not rise to the level of material violations that would violate generally accepted standards of fiscal management. Audit findings or suggestions that the charter school has addressed and corrected also do not rise to the level of material violation.

(4) "Violations of any provisions of this article."

(5) "Violation of any provision of law from which the charter school has not been exempted, including Federal laws and regulations governing children with disabilities."

Copies of the state special education audits should be made available to the board to help determine if a violation of federal law has occurred.

Audit findings or suggestions that the charter school remediates do not rise to the level of material violation.

(6) "The charter school has been convicted of fraud."

Immediate Revocation

In cases where the health or safety of the school's pupils, staff or both is at serious risk, the local board of school directors may take immediate action to revoke a charter of a charter school. An immediate revocation of a charter by the local board of school directors requires the charter school to immediately close the charter school upon receipt of the revocation

notice, which shall state with reasonable specificity the grounds for the action taken. When the local board of school directors orders an immediate revocation, it shall hold a public hearing on the matter, subject to the Sunshine Act, within 20 days of the revocation notice. At the hearing, the local board of school directors shall present and substantiate the cause for its actions, allow the charter school the opportunity to offer testimony, and vote on whether to revoke the charter. An immediate termination overrides the requirement for the 30-day public comment period set forth in Section 1729-A(c), and is not subject to the provision that the charter remains in effect until final disposition by CAB.

Revocation or Closure

The chartering school district should inform the Department of Education, Bureau of Community and Student Services, Charter Schools of the date of the revocation hearing, and subsequently, the outcome of the revocation hearing.

Immediately upon revocation of the charter or decision to close the school, the charter school's Board of Trustees shall, by Board resolution, authorize the person who will be responsible for concluding the affairs of the charter school and provide to the Department of Education, Bureau of Community and Student Services, Charter Schools, a copy of this Board resolution and the name, address, phone number, fax number and email address of this person.

Section B: Achievement/Enrollment

At the time of our visit on February 13, 2015, Young Scholars Charter School of Central Pennsylvania (YSCP) had 305 students enrolled in grades K-8. Of the total, 199 students are residents of the State College Area School District, making up 65% of the total student population. The remaining 106 students are from school districts in Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Huntingdon, and Mifflin Counties. The following school districts are represented through at least one enrolled student:

- Bald Eagle Area
- Bellefonte Area
- Clearfield Area
- Huntingdon Area
- Juniata Valley
- Keystone Central
- Mifflin County
- Moshannon Valley
- Penns Valley Area
- Philipsburg-Osceola Area
- Tyrone Area
- West Branch Area

YSCP made “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) for the following school years:
2009-2010, 2010-2011, and 2011-2102, based on PA Department of Education reports.

In 2012-2013, “Adequate Yearly Progress” was replaced with the State of Pennsylvania’s “School Performance Profile” (SPP) system. In 2012-2013, YSCP had an SPP score of 82.3. In 2013-2014, YSCP had a SPP score of 82.6. Kevin Wallace, from the PA Department of Education, affirmed that scores of 70 and above are considered “adequate/acceptable” and scores of 80 and above are considered “strong”. As a point of reference, 11 State College Area schools achieved SPP scores ranging between 81.8 and 94.8 in 2013-2014.

YSCP achieved the following overall PSSA results for Spring 2014, with the percentages below indicating percent of students that scored proficient and advanced:

Subject	YSCP	District	State
Math	86.4	N/A	73.3
Reading	78.0	N/A	69.4
Science	88.2	N/A	69.7
Writing	78.8	N/A	67.6

PSSA reports provided by YSCP indicated the following PSSA percentages for each area from 2012-2014. These percentages indicated the percent of students that scored proficient or advanced.

Mathematics

2014	86.4%
2013	85.0%
2012	84.1%

Reading

2014	78.0%
2013	73.5%
2012	80.7%

Science

2014	88.2%
2013	87.1%
2012	94.7%

Writing

2014	78.8%
2013	77.8%
2012	73.9%

Along with testing required by the PA Department of Education, YSCP also utilizes a nationally normed testing program, which would be considered a local assessment as it is something that they purchase and choose to implement. The program is called STAR, and assessments are given in the areas of reading and math in grades 2-8. These assessments are used to measure student progress on key concepts/standards much like SCASD uses MAP and CDT exams.

Section C: Finance/Contracts/Accounting

Review of Financial Information Document

As part of the Young Scholars Charter review, SCASD reviewed the financial information documentation related to the charter school contract. SCASD's review included the Auditor General Audit report, Audit Report corrective action, charter school contracts with related parties, charter school expenditures, and expenditure comparisons.

1. Performance Audit from the PA Auditor General (July 2008 - November 2010)

- a. Certification Deficiencies and Failure to Comply with the 75% Certified Staff Requirements of the Charter School Law
 - i. Employee certification deficiency and failure to comply (Reviewed within Section C)
- b. Finding #2: Possible Ethics Act Violation
 - i. The audit revealed potential conflicts of interest and violations of the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (Ethics Act) resulting from transactions between the charter school and the related nonprofit organization (landlord). The charter school and the landlord are related party entities by way of sharing common officers. Consequently, the same officers were involved in the approval, administration and

oversight of the lease agreement between these related parties. Per the Auditor General, these relationships may result in the charter school being ineligible to receive state lease reimbursement for its building.

- ii. SCASD follow-up review on Finding #2 above
 1. Per review of the YSCP corrective action plan approved by the board of trustees, it was noted that the charter school addressed each of the Auditor General's concerns mentioned above.
 - a. Common officers issue: The common officers included Dr. Bulent Tarman and Dr. Riza Ulker. SCASD noted through review of the Statement of Financial Interest forms for the common officers that the forms were amended to disclose the real estate interest (Dream Schools Board Member) for the 2007-2008 period. Subsequently, each of these officers was removed from the YSCP board leadership.
 - b. SCASD obtained a listing of current YSCP Board members and requested the related SFI statements for the most recent charter term (2011 - present).
 2. To further follow up on the remediation action of the Young Scholars Charter School, SCASD reviewed the most recent IRS 990 forms for appropriate independence between Young Scholars and Dream Schools. Per review of the respective IRS 990 forms, each entity operates as a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity (tax exempt status). The following chart shows the Board members for the 2011- 2015 period. It was noted that there is no longer an overlap of Board members based on review of the IRS- 990 forms.

Review Year	Young Scholars	Dream Schools
2011 (1)	Ann Kusnadi, Pres. Wendy Whitsell, VP Omer Gul, Treasurer Stewart Combs, Secretary Patreese Ingram, Member Bulent Tarman, Member	Hasan Ozcan, President Yasin Kucak, Treasurer Sait Onal, Secretary
2012 (1)	Wendy Whitsell, Pres. Ann Kusnadi, VP Omer Gul, Treasurer Stewart Combs, Secretary Patreese Ingram, Member Mahmut Kandemir, Member	Hasan Ozcan, President Yasin Kucak, Treasurer Sait Onal, Secretary

2013 (1)	Wendy Whitsell, Pres. Ann Kusnadi, VP Omer Gul, Treasurer Stewart Combs, Secretary Patreese Ingram, Member	Hasan Ozcan, President Yasin Kucak, Treasurer Sait Onal, Secretary
2014/2015 (2)	Wendy Whitsell, Pres. Dr. Ann Kusnadi, VP Dr. Patreese Ingram, Secretary Dr. Aydin Alptekinoglu, Treasurer Dr. Omer Gul, Member	Hasan Ozcan, President Yasin Kucak, Treasurer Sait Onal, Secretary

(1) Obtained information from publicly available IRS Form 990

(2) Obtained information from Charter Review contacts at Young Scholars.

Conclusion: Overall, SCASD determined that Young Scholars has remediated the audit finding from the Auditor General and no longer presents a conflict of interest concern.

2. Review of all Charter School vendor and employment contracts

The SCASD review of contracts within the last four years identified several specific areas. The contract for special education services with the intermediate unit is discussed in Section E. The employment contracts subsection 4 of Section B (below). The final contract reviewed was for property rental. This review included current rental expense and comparisons related to other real estate in the area.

- a. On average, the annual rent expense for the Young Scholar's school building is \$447,000. The total square feet for the building is 18,800. Below is a breakout of rent expense from August 2012 through June 2015.
 - i. **August 2012:** $(18,800 \times \$17 \text{ sq ft} = \$319,600 \text{ annually} / 12 = \$26,633 \text{ monthly})$
 - ii. **Sept 2012-June 2013:** Rate \$17/sq ft (\$319,600 annually) plus parking charge \$121,006 is an annual payment of \$440,606 or \$36,717/month; charge including parking is approx. \$23/sq. ft
 - iii. **July 2013-June 2014:** Rate \$17.25/sq. ft (\$324,300 annually) plus parking charge \$122,785 is an annual payment of \$447,085 or \$37,257/month; charge including parking is approx. \$24/sq ft
 - iv. **July 2014-June 2015:** Rate \$17.50/sq ft (\$329,000 annually) plus parking charge \$124,565 is an annual payment of \$453,565 or \$37,797/month; charge including parking is approx. \$24/sq ft
- b. Comparison to similar property
 - i. Unofficial analysis through our solicitor by a local realtor showed comparable cost estimate of \$22 to \$25/sq ft for similar property.
 - ii. Note: The estimated cost by the realtor includes real estate taxes, which in this case the owner is exempt, meaning the lease agreement

between Young Scholars and Dream Schools may be inflated by the amount of real estate tax. (Taxes estimated at \$25,000).

3. Expenditure Comparison-

a. Overall Expenditure Comparison (All Expense Account Activity)

- i. SCASD completed an overall review of total expenditures and expense per student between SCASD and Young Scholars (Table 1) for the last four years based on available Annual Financial Report (AFR) information. The Young Scholars expense per student in general has decreased over the four-year period. This decrease appears to be related to the increase in student enrollment.
- ii. In addition, Table 2 below shows a comparison of all Centre County charter school expenditures. In general, Young Scholar's total expenditures were in the low to middle range in relation to the other charter schools.

Table 1: SCASD and Young Scholars Expenditures

Fiscal Year	State College Area SD			Young Scholars of Central PA CS		
	# of Students	Total Expenditures	Expense Per student	# of Students	Total Expenditures	Expense Per student
2009-2010	7,083	\$103,968,751	\$14,679	159	\$2,118,828	\$13,326
2010-2011	6,944	\$110,215,393	\$15,872	172	\$2,410,070	\$14,012
2011-2012	6,848	\$108,712,142	\$15,875	187	\$2,362,662	\$12,635
2012-2013	6,794	\$119,875,287	\$17,644	246	\$2,925,877	\$11,894

Table 2: State College Area Charter School expenditure comparison.

Charter School	Fiscal Year	Student Count	Total Expenditures	Expense Per Student
Young Scholars	2009-2010	159	\$2,118,828	\$13,326
	2010-2011	172	\$2,410,070	\$13,326
	2011-2012	187	\$2,362,662	\$12,635
	2012-2013	246	\$2,925,877	\$11,894
Centre Learning Community	2009-2010	102	\$1,202,928	\$11,793
	2010-2011	94	\$1,257,773	\$13,381
	2011-2012	94	\$1,428,381	\$15,196
	2012-2013	103	\$1,317,746	\$12,794

Nittany Valley CS	2009-2010	47	\$716,320	\$15,241
	2010-2011	48	\$686,516	\$14,302
	2011-2012	48	\$711,302	\$14,819
	2012-2013	59	\$747,185	\$12,664
Wonderland CS	2009-2010	36	\$400,634	\$11,129
	2010-2011	29	\$406,697	\$14,024
	2011-2012	64	\$847,966	\$13,249
	2012-2013	68	\$881,933	\$12,970

Instructional Expenditures (1000 Account Activity)

- iii. SCASD reviewed the instructional expenses between SCASD and Young Scholars for the last four years based on available AFR information. The Young Scholars instructional costs were also compared to the neighboring Charter Schools. SCASD noted that Young Scholar's instructional expenditures compared to the SCASD were substantially lower per student, consistent with the comparison of total expenses. Young Scholar's instructional expenditures in relation to the other Charter schools were lower per student, which may be a function of the demographic and instructional needs of the respective student bodies.

Table 3: SCASD and Young Scholars instructional expenditures.

Fiscal Year	State College Area SD			Young Scholars of Central PA CS		
	# of Students	Instructional Costs	Expense Per student	# of Students	Instructional Costs	Expense Per student
2009-2010	7,083	\$65,518,497	\$9,250	159	\$1,011,916	\$6,364
2010-2011	6,944	\$65,265,661	\$9,399	172	\$1,337,484	\$7,776
2011-2012	6,848	\$64,847,140	\$9,470	187	\$1,278,276	\$6,836
2012-2013	6,794	\$66,597,497	\$9,802	246	\$1,588,871	\$6,459

Table 4: State College Area charter schools instructional comparison.

Charter School	Fiscal Year	Student Count	Instructional Costs	Expense Per Student
Young Scholars	2009-2010	159	\$1,011,916	\$6,364
	2010-2011	172	\$1,337,484	\$7,776
	2011-2012	187	\$1,278,276	\$6,836
	2012-2013	246	\$1,588,871	\$6,459
Centre Learning Community	2009-2010	102	\$813,345	\$7,974
	2010-2011	94	\$842,166	\$8,959
	2011-2012	94	\$852,022	\$9,064
	2012-2013	103	\$870,843	\$8,455
Nittany Valley CS	2009-2010	47	\$450,379	\$9,583
	2010-2011	48	\$462,546	\$9,636
	2011-2012	48	\$498,833	\$10,392
	2012-2013	59	\$556,127	\$9,426
Wonderland CS	2009-2010	36	\$264,075	\$7,034
	2010-2011	29	\$253,225	\$8,732
	2011-2012	64	\$516,607	\$8,072
	2012-2013	68	\$592,508	\$8,713

b. Special Education Expenditures (1200 Account Activity)

- i. SCASD reviewed the special education expenses between SCASD and Young Scholars for the last four years based on available information. In addition, SCASD reviewed the special education expenses between Young Scholars and the other State College Area charter schools. SCASD noted that the Young Scholars special education costs were substantially less than SCASD, which was deemed to be reasonable. However, it was noted that there were significant fluctuations from year to year for Young Scholars. As shown below, the special education costs decreased to \$7,278 in 2010-2011, compared to the \$94,827 in the prior year, and then increased to \$73,374 in the following year. From the school's business manager, SCASD learned that the grouping methodology fluctuated in previous years, and therefore is not easily comparable. It can also be noted that the neighboring charter schools' tend to have more consistent and comparable Special Education historical data. The SCASD will recommend to Young Scholars that its reporting of Special Education costs should be more accurately and consistently recorded in the account groupings.

Table 5: SCASD and Young Scholars special education expenditures

Fiscal Year	State College Area SD			Young Scholars of Central PA CS		
	# of Students	Special Ed Costs	Expense Per student	# of Students	Spec Ed Costs	Expense Per student
2009-2010	835	\$13,303,217	\$15,932	15	\$94,827	\$6,322
2010-2011	793	\$13,752,943	\$17,343	20	\$7,278	\$364
2011-2012	750	\$13,740,262	\$18,320	20	\$73,374	\$3,669
2012-2013	743	\$13,955,905	\$18,783	10	\$112,544	\$11,254

Table 6: State College Area charter schools special education expenditure comparison

Charter School	Fiscal Year	Student Count	Special Ed Costs	Expense Per Student
Young Scholars	2009-2010	15	\$94,827	\$6,322
	2010-2011	20	\$7,278	\$364
	2011-2012	20	\$73,374	\$3,669
	2012-2013	10	\$112,544	\$11,254
Centre Learning Community	2009-2010	22	\$127,586	\$5,799
	2010-2011	22	\$128,793	\$5,854
	2011-2012	24	\$121,078	\$5,045
	2012-2013	28	\$132,054	\$4,716
Nittany Valley CS	2009-2010	15	\$158,825	\$10,588
	2010-2011	13	\$142,142	\$10,934
	2011-2012	15	\$176,289	\$11,753
	2012-2013	13	\$156,120	\$12,009
Wonderland CS	2009-2010	11	\$15,099	\$1,373
	2010-2011	0	\$9,900	\$0
	2011-2012	7	\$13,044	\$1,863
	2012-2013	7	\$10,501	\$1,500

4. Employment Contract/Salary Review

- a. SCASD received the employment contracts for the two administrative positions for the the 2014-2015 year. The salaries were deemed reasonable and in line with expectations. See salary breakdown below:

Administrator	Salary
CEO-CAO	\$95,354
Business Manager	\$62,242

Section D: Certification

Charter schools are required to have at least 75 % of their professional staff hold appropriate State certification, hold at least a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate competency in the core academic areas in which they teach.

Young Scholars provided a roster of 39 professional staff. Of those, 7 hold an Instructional II certification, 23 hold an Instructional I certification, 5 hold a HOUSSE – Charters Only certification, 2 hold an Emergency certification, and 1 does not hold any certification. The CEO/Principal holds an Administrative Provisional I Principal PK – 12 certification.

YSCP currently meets the certification requirements listed above.

Section E: Child Accounting/Student Services (Knouse/Hardy)

Truancy Protocol

- YSCP does not have a dedicated person working on attendance full-time. Teachers take attendance daily, collect excuses and turn them into the chair of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The chair of PBIS oversees the attendance and reviews it weekly.
- It is the responsibility of the school district to enforce the compulsory attendance laws in accordance with the Public School Code.
 - YSCP explains that they provide the parents/guardians of a student who has accumulated three unlawful absences notice with a notice stating any subsequent unlawful absences will result in a citation being filed with the magisterial district judge. However, it is the school district of residency's responsibility to file the citation and notify the charter school of any scheduled hearing.

Note: all the other cyber/charters in the State College Area School District issue the first offense (3 unexcused absences or more) letter because SCASD is the district of residency.

Truancy Elimination Plans

- YSCP addresses its infrequent cases of unexcused absences on a case-by-case basis. While it has developed a formal Truancy Elimination Plan for use when appropriate, it has not yet found the need for such a plan. Instead, it has utilized other less formal methods to ensure the regular attendance of its students including but not

limited to: conferencing with parent/guardian, contacting CYS, meeting with guidance counselor/school psychologist, and partnering the child with a mentor.

Process on verifying proof of residency

YSCP has several indicators when a student's residency changes:

- Notification from the parents
- Request of transportation changes
- Enrollment records updated annually for continuing students
- Notification from the districts
- Report through other means and followed up with parents
- Returned mail followed up with parents

Once it is verified that the residency has changed, parents are asked to fill out a new enrollment form. The school database is updated accordingly. If a situation were to arise where YSCP was to learn that a student had moved to another district, notification to both districts would be given at year-end and reconciliation of payments would be likely.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act Policy

- Staff of the YSCP are informed of the provisions of the Act to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as provided to other children and youth.
- Students choosing their school of origin have a right to remain there until the end of the school year. To date no YSCP students have fallen into this category.
- A homeless education liaison facilitates the immediate provision of meal benefits and homeless students, ensures provision for transportation and provides parents and unaccompanied youth with a list of their rights and the opportunities for parents participation.

English as a Second Language Program for English Language Learners

- The YSCP Principal/CEO and the ESL Director are responsible for informing charter school staff with instructional strategies and cultural needs of student who will receive ESL instruction.
 - When a new student is enrolled in YSCS, information about the student — including their exposure to world languages, home language questionnaire results, special needs, and any other relevant information — is shared with the student's teachers by the CEO. When a student's application indicates prior ESL program enrollment and/or another language spoken at home, as identified in the Home Language Questionnaire, an ESL teacher tests the student. According to the results of the test, the ESL teacher places the student in the ESL program. Information to teachers is provided individually about the needs and possible modifications that need to be implemented for the student.
 - The exact hours of direct language instruction will be determined based on each ELL's (English Language Learner) needs.

- YSCP implements direct language instruction pursuant to the Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular guidelines on English Language Learners, based on the following time determinations, with beginners receiving two hours of daily instruction:
 - Guidelines to consider when planning direct instruction of ESL:
 - Entering (level 1) / Beginning (level 2) students: 2 hours
 - Developing (level 3): 1-2 hours
 - Expanding (level 4): 1 hour
 - Bridging (level 5): up to 1 hour or support dictated by student need

The exit criteria for ELL's is intended to establish valid and reliable evidence of a student's English Language proficiency to exit from the ESL Program. YSCP ELL's may exit the ESL program if they meet exit criteria provided under applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Service of Gifted Students

- YSCP student's skills in subject matters are assessed at the beginning, middle and end for the year to ensure growth, place students accordingly, and intervene when needed.
 - Growth is measured using classroom assessments as well as STAR assessments. STAR reports include growth measures in terms of grade equivalent (GE), percentile rank (PR), normal curve equivalent (NCE), instructional reading level (IRL), and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). All students are expected to progress at least one grade equivalent, if they begin that grade level within the anticipated timeframe. The students who begin at a lower grade level than age dictates are expected to progress more than one grade level. The top, most able learners are expected to progress at least one grade level from the grade equivalent at which they began the school year. End-of-year tests are utilized as classroom assessments for math, while the Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) are used as assessment for reading. Achievement and progression regarding these two assessments are tracked three times a year. Most able learners are placed in advanced groups in math and reading, and expected to progress considerably from the grade level at which they originated.
 - The world language classes are leveled starting from first grade.
 - The world language classes are leveled within each grade, except for fourth and fifth grade. First- graders are leveled among themselves into three levels of beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Mixed-grade classes occur in fourth and fifth grade, where you might have fourth-graders and fifth- graders in the same class, depending on each student's world language skills. So it is not possible to have a first-grader and an eighth grader in the same class.

There are a few rare cases where such advancements are recommended by the team after carefully considering a student's social and academic development.

Accuracy Certification Statements

- Accuracy Certification Statement (ACS) for the October 1 upload: The data submitted to PDE indicates that YSCP has 0 immigrant children. This is very unusual as the definition of immigrant is:
 - Immigrant as defined by PDE (PIMS)- age 3-21; not born in any state (Puerto Rico doesn't count); has not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years. In the case of re-entry into US schools, the academic years are cumulative: 0-12 months = 1 year; 13-24 months = 2 years; 25-36 months = 3 years
 - Upon clarification, it was determined that YSCP serves 23 migrant students as of October 1, 2014. Necessary revisions were made in this regard and relevant templates were re-uploaded.

Note: YSCP administrators attempted to change their immigrant data once it was brought to their attention by State College. As per PDE, they would have received numerous emails telling them to look over their data and verify.

Safe Schools Requirements

- PDE requires that each school report specific offenses as outlined in the PIMS manual. The Safe Schools report provided by Young Scholars lists that there were no reportable offenses to the state. Yet a glance at their own report of offenses such as bullying, harassment, fighting, and property damage, which are reportable offenses to the state, shows these were not reported.
 - The referenced Safe Schools report details total out-of-school suspensions with which students were penalized for infractions including bullying, harassment, and fighting and property damage. That only consequences were originally listed on the report, while the corresponding infractions were omitted, was an oversight by YSCP.
 - The Safe Schools report indicates that this is out of 216 students. We would expect the student total to be closer to the 270 number that we see on their child accounting report.
 - YSCP explains that there is a discrepancy between school enrollment numbers entered in SWIS and enrollment numbers reported by YSCP. Utilization of the SWIS system began last year with a summer set-up, at which time the number of students registered to the YSCP database was 216. After that initial summer set-up, that total enrollment number of 216 was never updated, which explains the referenced discrepancy.
- The local law enforcement agency should have had an opportunity to review the Safe Schools Data. The state recommends that discipline data be provided to the local law enforcement agency by the end of June so that it has two weeks to review the data

and make corrections. According to the ACS, it indicated that YSCP provided the data to law enforcement but YSCP received no information back.

- YSCP maintains a productive and collegial relationship with Chief Diane Conrad and the Ferguson Township police, with whom YSCP has executed a Memorandum of Understanding. No offenses rose to the level of necessitating a report to local law enforcement, which is why the YSCP Safe Schools report was not sent to Ferguson Township police for their review and signature. In the past, YSCP has not sent the Safe Schools report to Ferguson Township police when there were no reportable offenses, actions never questioned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Safe Schools Office.
- Define the different levels of infractions
 - Levels of Infractions refer to the consequences outlined in the Discipline Code in our Original Charter, which is below. A Behavior Intervention Committee (BIC) consists of a CEO/Principal, Character Education Teacher, Chair of School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, School Psychologist (when available) and Special Education Teacher (when needed).
 - A **Level I** offense results in:
 - Student being asked to stay after class to speak with his/her teacher.
 - Student's mentor being informed of his /her inappropriate behavior.
 - Student being required to stay after school for an extended period of time.
 - If Level I offenses are recurring, the following consequences may apply:
 - Student will be required to meet with his/her teacher and mentor. If it is deemed necessary, student's parent/guardian will also attend this meeting.
 - A report will be sent to the Principal or his/her designee.
 - Student will be required to meet with the Principal or his/her designee who will determine if further action is appropriate.
 - Student will be sent home. Student will not be allowed to return to school until he/she has met with his/her teacher, the Principal or his/her designee and his/her parent/guardian.
 - A **Level II** offense results in:
 - Student being referred to the Principal or his/her designee.
 - In-School Suspension
 - Detention
 - Student being sent home. Student will not be allowed to return to school without a parent or guardian.
 - Student's parent or guardian being contacted immediately and informed of his /her offense.
 - Out-of-School Suspension

- Meeting with student's parent/guardian and the Principal or his/her designee.
- Student being required to perform a service project.
- Student being required to submit a written apology to the appropriate person(s) and/or the whole school community.
- A **Level III** offense results in a situation where all Level II Consequences may apply as well as expulsion.

Section F: Special Education

Special Education Students

Total Students Identified: 38 (18 are from SCASD)

Specific Learning Disability	7
Emotional Disturbance	1
Other Health Impairment	4
Autism	2
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	1
Speech and Language	28

Special Education Program Profile

Program Position #1 Itinerant Learning and Emotional Support	1.0 FTE
Program Position #2 Itinerant Speech and Language Support	.40 FTE
Program Position #3 Itinerant Speech and Language Support	.30 FTE

Special Education Support Services

Special Education Supervisor	.20 FTE
Paraprofessional	1.0 FTE
Occupational Therapist	1 Day per Week
School Psychologist	2 Days per Week
Physical Therapist	.20 Day per Week
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Teacher	.20 Day per Week

Charter schools do not submit a three-year Special Education Plan but rather an annual Special Education Plan Report. The plan is submitted to PDE in July following the end of each school year. The plan identifies their procedures for Child Find, Identification, Least Restrictive Environment, Behavior Support Services, and the Provision of FAPE, including for Hard to Place Students. Young Scholar's plan also delineates their Special Education Development targeted for completion June 2015. They have identified parent training (two

parent nights), Child Find Process and Forms (second year of refinement) and to create a Special Education Manual (one for teachers and school personnel and another for parents).

All Special Education services at Young Scholars are provided via a contract with the Central Intermediate Unit #10. Young Scholars was cyclically monitored by the Bureau of Special Education in April 2014.

Areas identified for Corrective Action included:

- Procedures for ESY determination
- Educational Benefit Review
- Complete Data on PTE Consent Form (33%)
- Complete Data on PTRE Consent Form (50%)
- Complete Data on Evaluation Report (33%)
- Complete Data on Reevaluation Report (33%)
- Complete Data on Invitation to Participate in IEP meeting (30%)
- Complete Data in IEP (70%)
- Implementation of IEP - type and amount of services (10%)
- Complete Data on NOREP (30%)

Improvement Plan Issues identified:

1. YSCP needs to ensure that all staff, general education and special education, understand and comply with federal and state requirements for serving students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment, as determined by the IEP teams.
2. YSCP needs to develop a structure for teams to use during common planning time, whereby there is accountability for a written work product generated during the common planning meetings.

A review of the YSCP Special Education Data Report School Year 2012-2013 (most recent available from state data) reports 91.7% of students with disabilities receive itinerant level of support and are in the general education environment 80% or more each day. In addition, 8.3% of their students with disabilities are in the general education environment 40%- 79% each day. The Special Education Plan Report (draft) for the current school year indicates “all of our students receive itinerant level supports, and are educated in the regular education environment the majority of their day.”

Section G: Curriculum

Review of Curriculum Documents

K-5 Scope of Curriculum

The elementary scope of the curriculum includes the following content areas:

- Language Arts (reading, listening, writing, speaking)
- Mathematics using the My Math series
- Socials Studies - Geography, History, Civics and Government, Economics
- Science, Ecology, and Health guided by Pearson's Interactive Science Curricula
- Technology Instruction (Chromebook cart for each grade one set of iPads for the school)
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Character Education
- World Languages — Spanish and Chinese

6-8 Scope of Curriculum

The middle school scope of the curriculum includes the following content areas:

- Language Arts (reading, listening, writing, speaking)
 - IB English (6th grade)
 - Standard English (7th and 8th grades)
 - Advanced English (7th and 8th grades)
- Mathematics guided by the Glencoe and Pearson Curricula
 - Courses 1, 2, 3
 - Pre-algebra
 - Algebra 1
 - Algebra 2
- Socials Studies - Geography, History, Civics and Government, Economics guided Pearson's My World Social Studies Curricula
- Science, Ecology, and Health guided by Pearson's Interactive Science Curricula
- Technology Instruction (Chromebook cart for each grade one set of iPads for the school)
- Art
- Music
- Physical Education
- Health
- Character Education

- World Languages — Spanish and Chinese

Curriculum Scope and Sequence Framework Grades K-8

The K-5 ELA curriculum documents reflect alignment to the PA Core Standards and a use of the Standards Aligned System (SAS) created by PDE. It appears that the Young Scholars Charter Program school curriculum reflects the big ideas, essential questions, concepts, competencies, and vocabulary linked to the PA Core Standards and Eligible Content. The curriculum is mapped out by month using each of the curriculum components for each grade. Curriculum units are created around specific strategies and skills as well as integrated literature themes. Within the curriculum documents, along with strategies and skills, specific texts are listed as well as activities, including the use of technology, to support the listed instruction. In addition, there are various links to resources, including Teachers Pay Teachers. It was unclear as to whether individual teachers needed to download and pay the fee for the resource or if the download was purchased by the school.

The math curriculum documents also reflect alignment to the PA Core Standards and a use of the Standards Aligned System (SAS) created by PDE. The same curriculum framework is utilized for math as was used for ELA. The math units are framed around the chapters of their math book.

The social studies curriculum is organized through a “widening horizons” approach and includes connections to reading and language arts. The curriculum documents list the social studies chapters and lessons from the social studies text as a part of their units.

The science program “uses hands-on experimentation and text materials to teach children how to analyze and investigate problems and questions, develop their knowledge of science, and foster their curiosity about the natural world. Units of study address the areas of physical, earth, and life sciences guided by Pearson’s Interactive Science curricula.” The curriculum is organized around the chapters in the science resource, which includes essential questions, resources, technology and chapter assessments.

Each grade has a curriculum for technology that includes “computer awareness, computer operations, word processing, and multimedia presentations.”

The art curriculum includes “concepts of form and space, color and value, texture, shape, and line,” and are drawn from the National Core Arts Standards. The curriculum framework includes essential questions, suggested activities, resources, technology integration, and assessment.

The music curriculum is framed around essential questions, standards, objectives, competencies, vocabulary, suggested activities, resources, technology integration, and assessments. In addition, “The program provides a variety of experiences including singing, movement, music appreciation, music reading, composition, and improvisation.”

The physical education curriculum “emphasizes students’ skill development, wellness concepts, sportsmanship, and overall fitness levels.” The curriculum is clustered around K-2 and 3-5, with each cluster including activities, resources and assessments. Beginning in sixth grade, students take a health class.

The character education curriculum focuses on these concepts from K-5: kindness, courage, self-control, forgiveness, respect, diligence, loyalty, honesty, and confidence. The character education curriculum focuses on these concepts from 6-8: empathy and communication, bullying prevention, emotion management and coping, problem-solving, goal-setting, and decision-making, substance abuse prevention, and career education. Curriculum units are organized around these concepts and include objectives, essential questions, standards, vocabulary, activities, resources, technology integration, and assessments.

The Spanish and Chinese curricula follow the same curriculum framework as other contents areas, including big ideas, essential questions, concepts, competencies, vocabulary, and standards. There are three levels of Spanish and Chinese at each grade level beyond kindergarten. Furthermore: "The program is based on thematic units which connect other subjects with a focus on listening and speaking in the primary grades." The American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Standards for Foreign Language Learning were included as part of the curriculum document.

Beginning in grade 6, the following electives are offered: Fine Arts, Drama, and Turkish.

Observations of Instruction from February 13, 2015

Social Studies

- 13 students
- Some using text books, some using Chromebooks — following along with teacher directed lesson.

Fourth Grade Spanish

- 10 students
- Spanish recitation
- Posted on board: writing process, good-reader strategies, objectives

Music

- 19 students
- Much active participation and engagement.

Third Grade Spanish

- Small group making lanterns.

Second Grade Chinese

- Coloring lanterns

Second Grade Spanish

- Movie in Spanish
- Students had a Q & A guide to record answers during movie.

Advanced Chinese

- 16 students

- Students were practicing for a play using Chinese.

Intermediate Chinese

- Video for learning a song.

Middle School Technology

- Keyboarding
- 40 minutes

ESL

- 3 students working in a workbook with teacher.

Kindergarten

- 16 students with two adults
- Daily 5, Give Me 5, Word Wall, character education teacher was going to begin lesson.

Kindergarten

- 16 students with two adults
- Word Wall and Daily 5

Kindergarten

- 14 students with two adults
- Daily objective on board

Grade 1

- 18 students
- Heart estimation math activity

Grade 1

- 16 students
- Heart estimation math activity
- CAFE and Word Wall

In all observations, students worked in a large group on the same activity or lesson. There was no evidence of differentiation. Some classrooms posted objectives and essential questions and others did not. The following times were allocated to each content area, in general, based on schedules provided. Not every day was structured in the same way. Where two boxes are shaded, the schedules indicated combined or shared time with two content areas. The following schedules are based on a school day of 8:20 a.m.-3:50 p.m..

	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Math	40	40	40	40	40	40

Guided Reading Centers	70	80	80	80	80	0
Language Arts	30 on most days	2x/week for 40	2x/week for 40	4x/week for 20	2x/week for 40	120
Writing	30	3x/week for 45	3x/week for 40	4x/week for 20	2x/week for 40	40
Social Studies	2x/week for 20	2x/week for 40	2x/week for 40	1.5x/week for 40	3x/week for 40	2.5x/week for 40
Science	2x/week for 20	2x/week for 40	2x/week for 40	1.5x/week for 40	3x/week for 40	2.5x/week for 40
Technology	1x/week for 30	2x/week for 40	1x/week for 40	0	0	1x/week for 40
Chinese	20	40	40	40	40	40
Spanish	20	40	40	40	40	40
Specials	30	40	40	40	40	40
Lunch, Quiet, Play Time, Recess	90	50	50	50	50	50

Teacher Evaluation Plan

The Young Scholars Charter Program School Teacher Evaluation Plan is framed around two observation cycles per year, each of which consists of a pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation conference. In addition, a numerical rating tool is completed twice a year. Input from parent satisfaction surveys, completed at the end of each marking period, is considered as well as student performance on curriculum-based and standardized assessments. Unannounced observations are completed at least once a week.

During the site visit, it was suggested that the Young Scholars Charter Program school move away from the PDE 426 and PDE 428 forms and move to the newly PDE revised forms and processes, using the PDE-82-1. In addition, processes for pre-tenured and tenured faculty should be delineated.

