

Charter School Application

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Introduction

Distance learning courses have been available to students for four decades in one form or another. Early distance learning courses were delivered to students via phonograph record or radio. In the 1960's and 1970's television became the most common form of delivery for distance learning. However, the most dramatic change in distance learning has occurred within the last decade when the Internet spawned the growth of two-way communication technologies that has allowed participants in distance learning activities to communicate in real-time (synchronous) or whenever a teacher's or student's schedule allows (asynchronous). In addition, the ability of the Internet to support text, graphics, video, and audio has created a teaching and learning environment where instruction can be delivered in ways that best meet the needs of the student.

The first schools that used the Internet to deliver instruction, known as virtual schools, were established in the mid-1990's. According to a report sponsored by the North American Council for Online Learning (Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning, 2006) 24 states now have state-led online education programs. Enrollment in these schools continues to grow with some reporting growth rates of over fifty percent in one year (Florida and Idaho). The largest virtual school in the nation, the Florida Virtual School, promises any time, any place, any path learning, was established in 1997 and has seen it's enrollment grow to over 33,000 students (2004-2005). The growth of virtual schools has also been promoted by the National Educational Technology Plan authored by the U.S. Department of Education which calls for states and school districts to support distance learning by providing all students with access to on-line courses; allowing all teachers to have access to e-learning training; supporting the use of e-learning as an option to meet NCLB requirements for highly qualified teachers, supplemental services, and parental choice; explore ways to fund e-learning opportunities;

and to develop criteria for earning credit through e-learning that mirrors the criteria for earning course credits in local schools. Michigan recently became the first state in the nation to require all high school students to take one online course before graduation (2006, Chronicle of Higher Education, http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/index.php?id=1193). The New Hampshire Educational Technology Plan also includes language that calls for the study of the viability of a statewide virtual school by June 30, 2004 and to work with stakeholders to assist in the development of a virtual high school. The new Standards for Public School Approval in New Hampshire (2005) require that school districts develop a policy that determines how distance learning courses will be approved and administered.

Virtual schooling continues to gain in popularity and acceptance throughout the country. The northeastern states currently lag behind the rest of the country in this regard. The only established virtual school in the New England area is the Virtual High School (VHS) based in Maynard, Massachusetts. This school has enjoyed a great deal of success with its unique model for delivering virtual education. School's pay an annual membership fee and provide a teacher to teach one virtual class. In return, the local school can access courses from the Virtual High School's extensive course catalog. To date, some New Hampshire school districts offer students the opportunity to participate in distance learning programs through external vendors; however, there is no New Hampshire based virtual school that has been established to provide students with the opportunity to take advantage of the power and flexibility offered by virtual schools in other states.

There are four factors that can help to explain the increasing popularity of virtual schools: personalization, flexibility, choice and technology advancements. Personalization of a student's education has long been the goal of many educators, but the traditional industrial-based model of schooling can prevent the development of a truly individualized learning plan.

The virtual school environment is ideally suited for helping schools to develop personalized education plans both in a traditional school environment or as a full-time alternative to a brick and mortar school. Students can access a virtual class at anytime of the day which could enable them to take courses otherwise not available due to scheduling conflicts or to participate in a course that the school does not provide. Personalization of education is also enhanced in a virtual environment given the fact that virtual school teachers are in constant one-on-one communication with students. Since teachers are not working with twenty-five students during a scheduled period or block they are available to communicate directly with students, as needed. The flexibility built into the virtual school delivery model also allows access from any computer that is connected to the Internet. Additionally, many virtual school courses can provide flexibility in the pace at which students can progress through a course. Advanced students have the opportunity to move through coursework as quickly as they can master the required competencies while other students may find that a slower pace is better suited to their learning style or schedule. Virtual schools also provide students, parents, and schools with new choices for meeting student needs. Courses available through a virtual school may not be available locally. For example, many small schools find it difficult to fund advanced placement courses for only few students. Or, students may find that a required course cannot be scheduled due to conflicts with other courses while a virtual course can fit into most any schedule. Virtual schools also provide parents and students with an alternative to attending their local public school. The maturation of the Internet technologies that deliver audio, video, graphics, and text to end users is another reason that has contributed to the increasing popularity of virtual school courses. Students can now participate in high quality video conferences with teachers or their peers and see live, or archived, demonstrations via an Internet connection as well as access online textbooks and other resources.

While there are many advantages to virtual schooling, it is not the best educational choice for all students. Students who are not motivated to complete assignments or who have difficulty working independently will find that the virtual environment does not suit their needs. Additionally, students who have reading deficits or who are limited English language proficient may have difficulty understanding the content delivered by virtual school courses. Of course, it could be argued that students in any school setting will have difficulty given these issues.

Imagine there was a New Hampshire school where....

Imagine that there was a school where students could work at their own pace and receive personalized assistance with their work. Imagine that there was a school where students could schedule their school work around their real-world interests. Imagine that there was a school that would collaborate with public schools to extend or supplement the courses offered by public schools. Imagine that their was a school where real personalized learning is practiced. This school will exist in New Hampshire with the establishment of the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS, pronounced “vee-lacks”). The vision of the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will be to provide students with an on-line learning environment where the promise of any time, any path, any place, and any pace learning is available.

VLACS Possibilities

SCENARIO 1: Mary is interested in working in the health care industry someday, but as a high school junior she is not sure whether she wants to be a doctor or nurse. She has been able to schedule an internship at a local hospital that will require that she work from 7:00AM to noon three days a week. Unfortunately, she will not be able to take part in the internship and complete her course of studies at her local public high school as some of the college

preparatory classes she needs are available only in the morning. Enter VLACS. By becoming a full-time VLACS student Mary will be able to take all of her courses when it makes the most sense for her. She is planning to work on her courses each afternoon and during the evening. She also found out that she will be able to take an Advanced Placement Biology course that was not offered by her local high school. Mary and her parents were also able to work with her local school to make sure that she can continue to play on the varsity basketball team during the winter months. That is, as long as she passes her courses!

SCENARIO 2: John has always been very interested in music and theater, but he found school boring. He enjoyed being in the band and participating in school plays, but these activities took place after school. By the end of his junior year, John had fallen behind his classmates and found that he would not be able to graduate with his class. John's teachers characterized him as very bright, but found him to be easily distracted. He was repeatedly told that “he didn't apply himself.” Uninterested in school and embarrassed by the thought of sitting in class with students two years younger than himself, John decided to quit school and work at a local fast-food restaurant. Enter VLACS. John's parents read about the new virtual charter school that would be opening in the fall. They talked with John about going back to school and finding a way to pursue his interest in music and theater at the same time. John agreed and was able to get a minor part in a local theatrical production. Rehearsals for the play often lasted late into the night. Since he was taking courses at the VLACS, the late nights did not cause problems as he was able to sleep until mid-morning before starting his coursework. John found that the courses required a lot of work, but they were interesting. In his science class John was required to propose a solution to reducing carbon emissions. John traveled to a local car dealership and scheduled an appointment with the chief mechanic to learn more about car emission systems. John was surprised to learn about the many

computer-assisted emissions controls installed on new cars. He was also impressed by how much the mechanic knew about science and computers. In his science course at the VLACS John quickly gained the reputation among his peers as a top student for some of his creative solutions for controlling emissions based on his visit with the mechanic. John found himself enjoying VLACS classes as it was easier to be attentive while working from home. He also found that the courses were very challenging and that his teacher was in constant contact with him. There was no way to “sleep” in the back row of a virtual classroom. Finding success for the first time in many years, John became interested in his studies and worked through the summer to complete his courses and to earn his diploma.

SCENARIO 3: Hillside High School serves two small middle class communities in New Hampshire. Both communities have high tax rates which, in turn, limits the growth of the school budget and the school's ability to add new courses and teachers. Many students would like to take advanced placement courses, but the school can't justify the expense for a small number of students. Each year a small, but significant percentage of the population drops out of school. The school is working to address these problems, but it is difficult to add programming to meet the needs of all students with limited financial resources. Enter VLACS. The principal of Hillside High School contacted the VLACS and arranged for VLACS courses to be taken at Hillside. He next provided students with access to a classroom outfitted with computers where they could take courses at the VLACS that are not available at Hillside. The school was able to staff the room with a teacher and an aide through some creative scheduling on the part of the school's administration. The new VLACS lab, as it was named by the students, was a success as Hillside students were now able to register for advanced placement courses and other courses such as basic computer programming and marine science.

An Entrepreneurial Sprint

The BellSouth Foundation recently published a report that examined the costs of virtual schools (2006, Anderson, Augenblick, DeCescre, and Conrad, Costs and Funding of Virtual Schools). This report states that the estimated annual cost to attend a virtual school on a full-time basis for two semesters will be between $7,500 and $3,650 per student. However, according to the same authors, a virtual school funded at the $3,650 level would produce "a program that is large, not growing, and not investing in significant professional development for teachers and similar quality measures. Funding at the lowest level would allow a program to operate day-to-day but would not allow the program to invest in research, development, innovation, quality assurance, and planning for growth." Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, the VLACS will rely on an estimated tuition of $3,780 per student. A second report, Cost Guidelines for State Virtual Schools (2006, Southern Regional Education Board), described the startup costs for virtual schools. Table one compares the VLACS cost per pupil per semester during the first five years of operation with the cost per pupil stated in the SREB report. It is estimated that the cost per student at the VLACS will be less than 50% of the cost per student cited in the SREB report for each of the first five years of operation. Using these reports as an indicator of the future financial health of the VLACS leads to one obvious conclusion: the start-up grant funding and state tuition payment rates used as revenue sources in this application, while adequate to meet the needs of the school as proposed, is not sufficient to guarantee the long-term growth and sustainability of the school especially in the areas of research, development, innovation, quality assurance, and planning. Other sources of income for the VLACS could include additional state funding, grants, private funding, or the generation of revenue through other means. The most logical solution to the funding problem is to look for some combination of these revenue streams. Therefore, in the entrepreneurial spirit of the charter school movement, the VLACS will seek to establish itself

School Year	# students per semester	VLANH Budget per semester	SREB Report	VLANH cost per student per semester	SREB Report cost per student per semester
2007-2008	625	$430,669.50		$689.07	
SREB	1,000		$1,500,000.00		$1,500.00
2008-2009	1,425	$569,738.20		$399.82	
2009-2010	1,875	$708,777.50		$378.01	
2010-2011	2,775	$1,075,216.00		$387.47	
2011-2012	4,075	$1,618,393.50		$397.15	
SREB	5,000		$4,000,000.00		$800.00

Note: In order to make comparisons to the SREB report, the following calculations were performed. The per student per semester cost was calculated by multiplying the number of potential full-time VLACS students by five courses per semester. The VLACS budget per semester was calculated by dividing the annual budget in half.

as “the” virtual school for the New England region while maintaining a focus on the needs of New Hampshire students. The VLACS will implement the following procedure when enrolling students: (1) New Hampshire resident students will receive first preference when requesting courses, and (2) out-of-state tuition will be set at a rate equal to 125% of the established VLACS in-state tuition rate. For example, if five seats are available in a mathematics course after allowing an adequate period of time for New Hampshire students to register, then these vacant seats will be made available to out-of-state students at the appropriate tuition rate. Out-of-state school districts may wish to purchase these seats or out-of-state families, looking for an alternative educational environment for their son/daughter, may make payment directly to the school. The VLACS may decide not to accept out-of-state students during its first year of operation to ensure that the school's trustees, administration and teaching staff will have time to develop policies and practices to ensure success for New Hampshire students.

The VLACS may also explore the possibility of allowing “post-grads” to take a VLACS course if they are willing to pay the established per course tuition fee. This could be a win-win situation for the students and theVLACS. The student will have the opportunity to take an

course to improve his/her skills before applying to a post-secondary institution and the VLACS will have an additional revenue source.

VLACS Foundation

In a second report on virtual schools sponsored by the BellSouth Foundation (2006, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc., Revenue and Expenditure Patterns in State Virtual Schools) the authors reported that less than fifty percent of state virtual schools provided computers for their students while Internet access was provided to students by only forty-one percent of virtual schools. It is understandable why this occurs as it would tax any school budget to provide the hardware, software, and technical support structure to fund this service to students. Given the previous discussion regarding charter school funding in New Hampshire, it is predictable that there are insufficient funds to purchase computers and Internet access for each student. There is little research on computer and Internet access in New Hampshire; however, data collected from student registrations in SAU 16 indicate that up to ninety-five percent of students have access to a computer connected to the Internet at home, while anecdotal information from school districts in the northern part of the state paint a vastly different picture. Educators from this region report that, in many cases, under fifty percent of students have access to a computer connected to the Internet at home. We can predict, with some certainty, that this pattern will repeat itself throughout the state with families in many areas reporting a lower percentage of computers and Internet access in their homes.

Having a computer with Internet access is becoming a required resource for students in our increasingly connected society. Students who do not have a computer with Internet access at home are at a distinct disadvantage when compared to students who can access the thousands of educational resources currently available to students on the Internet. Additionally, students without a computer at home do not develop the same set of digital skills

as those with a computer in their home. This problem could become an issue of equity once the VLACS is operational if some students are not able to access the VLACS offerings due to economic limitations. Local schools can help with this problem by providing access to computers during the school day, but for those students who would like to take a VLACS course at home, a computer with Internet access is required. Therefore, it will be the goal of the VLACS to establish a non-profit organization known as the VLACS Foundation. The purpose of the VLACS Foundation will be to solicit donations in the form of cash or computer equipment and then to use these donations to provide computers and Internet access to families who could not otherwise afford to make such purchases. Hopefully, through the generosity of the New Hampshire residents and businesses, the VLACS Foundation will be able to bring virtual courses to all corners of the state.

Why SAU 16 and the Exeter Region Cooperative School District?

The Exeter Region Cooperative School District is uniquely qualified to sponsor and support the establishment of the VLACS. First, we are a large school district with a technology support department and technology infrastructure that will allow us to design, build, and support the technology needs of the VLACS. Second, we have experience in the development of a charter school. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School was the first charter school in the state to be sponsored by a local education agency. While only in its third year of operation, GBeCS has grown to nearly eighty students in grades nine through twelve and has received many favorable comments from students, parents, and state level administrators. We believe this experience will be invaluable as we begin the design process for the VLACS. Third, we will have the opportunity to house the VLACS offices and technology infrastructure at our high school's vacated campus. Lastly, and most importantly, the creation of the VLACS is a “win-win” for students in SAU 16, and all students throughout

the state as many new and unique learning opportunities will be available to meet their needs.

(a) Educational ~~mission~~

The mission of the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School is to provide elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult learners with rigorous, personalized, flexible learning via a relationship-focused, online experience designed to ensure college, career, and life readiness. ~~The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will use new and emerging distance learning technologies to provide any time any where access to a rigorous "personalized education that helps students learn today, graduate tomorrow, and prepare for the future" (2006, NHDOE).~~ The educational mission of the VLACS integrates the philosophy of the New Hampshire Department of Education's *Follow the Child* initiative with the power of distance learning technologies. The VLACS will provide all students with the opportunity to personalize their education by combining rigorous academic study with the flexibility that is inherent in the any time, any place, any pace philosophy to be practiced by the school. Ongoing, one-on-one communication between students and teachers will ensure that all students are provided with the supports necessary for success. The VLACS is also committed to collecting meaningful data to measure growth in personal, physical, social, and the academic characteristics of each student. It will be the goal of the VLACS to apply to the Commissioner of Education to become a Follow the Child school. Furthermore, the VLACS will work with teachers to encourage them to become Follow the Child designated teachers.

The VLACS will be able to meet the needs of a wide variety of students and foster 21st century skills such as global awareness, self-directed learning skills, information and communications technology literacy, problem-solving skills, and time management and personal responsibility (2006, Virtual Schools and 21st Century Skills, NACOL). Gifted, talented, or motivated students will find a wide variety of challenging courses that will allow

them to progress at a faster rate than the average student. Other students will appreciate the opportunity to access the same curriculum as gifted or talented students, but at a rate in

which they can have time to understand and master the material. However, some students will not find the virtual learning environment to meet their individual learning style. The VLACS is not for all students, but it will provide many students with a high quality alternative to the traditional classroom that will meet their academic, personal, and career goals.

It is well documented that both Governor Lynch and Commissioner of Education Tracy are proponents of raising the compulsory education age to eighteen and supporting plans to decrease the school dropout rate. The VLACS can play a role in assisting with both initiatives. The flexible scheduling of VLACS courses will meet the needs of non-traditional students as they design alternative learning plans to meet their unique needs. For example, a students that may need to work during the school day could take courses at the VLACS at night. Also, students who would like to pursue a GED can take a VLACS course to prepare for the GED exam or they could enroll in academic courses that advance their skills and knowledge in preparation for the GED exam.

(b) Governance and organizational structure and plan

The VLACS will be governed by a Board of Trustees in accordance with RSA 194-B:5. The Board of Trustees will use the National School Boards Association's “Key Work of School Boards” concepts to focus the trustees work in eight key areas: (1) vision, (2) standards, (3) assessment, (4) accountability, (5) alignment, (6) climate, (7) collaborative relationships, and (8) continuous improvement. By the third year, the Board of Trustees will be comprised of eleven voting members.

The Board of Trustees will exercise its authority to set policy and make decisions that serve the mission of the school philosophy and will have oversight and authority to render final decisions on matters pertaining to:

Approval and oversight of annual budget

Hiring of professional personnel

Adopting policy

Appointment of one or more advisory members or committees

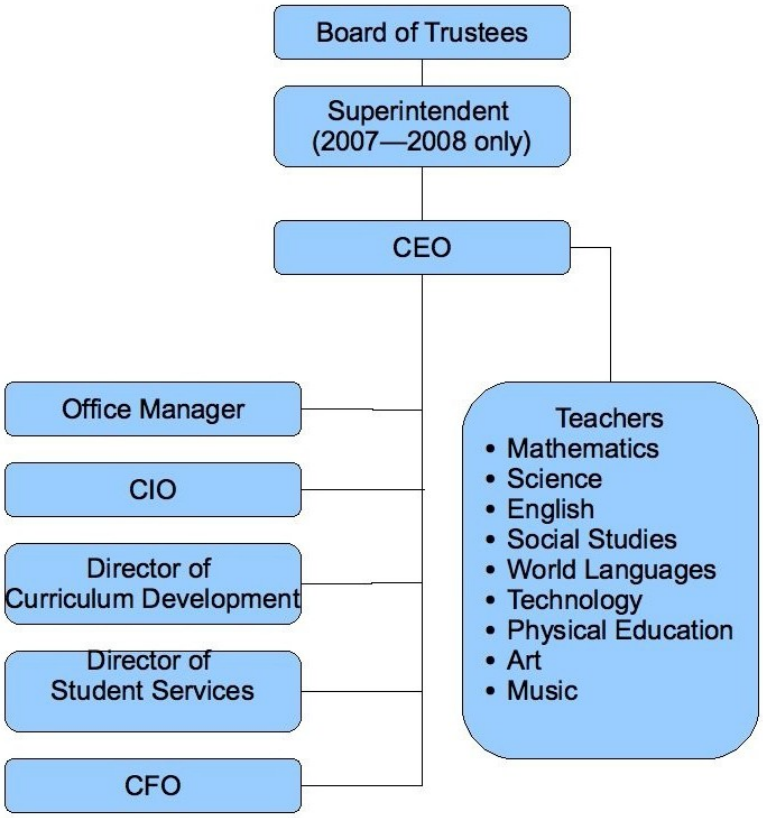
Appoint new members to the board of trustees

Overseeing and revising by-laws as needed

Approving professional salaries and total compensation program(s)

Any other matters that are not administrative in nature or that are prescribed in statute or rule

Figure 1: VLACS Organizational Chart



To conduct business, a majority of the board members must be present and participating

in person or through video or voice communication. All Board of Trustees meetings will be held in public session and follow the requirements of RSA 91-A. The organizational chart for VLACS appears below (figure 1). This represents the organization of the school when fully operational. The directors positions will begin as part-time positions and will be expanded as the job requirements expand (see table 2). The Superintendent of SAU 16 will assume the role of Superintendent through the 2007-2008 school year to assist with appointment of the trustees and the establishment of policies, budgets, curriculum, etc. By July 1, 2008, the CEO of the VLACS will assume these duties along with that of the head of the school.

(c) Methods by which trustees and their terms are determined

The founding members of the VLACS will appoint the first seven trustees before the opening of the school. The founding members of the charter school application may, but are not required to, participate on the original Board of Trustees. These seven trustees will then be charged with appointing the final four members and designing a policy for appointing new trustees using the following guidelines:

A staggered pattern of trustee membership shall be established

Trustee terms shall be limited to 3 years. A trustee may submit his/her name for reappointment. During the first three years, some members will be assigned terms of one or two years in order to establish a staggered term pattern.

Appointment/reappointment to the board of trustees shall be based a majority vote of the board of trustees.

The anticipated representation on the Board of Trustees will be:

Two (2) members of the business community

Two (2) members who are parents of students enrolled in the program

Two (2) members will be a post-secondary educator or administrator

Three (3) members will be public school educators or administrators

Two (2) members from any New Hampshire school board

In addition, there may be two student representatives to the Board of Trustees who will be non-voting members. The board may elect to include additional *ex officio*, non-voting members whose involvement shall assist in providing a broad range of talent and vision to the school's governance. *Ex officio* Board members will have 2-year terms. The Board of Trustees will have a slate of officers which shall include: the chairperson, co-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Officers of the board shall be elected by majority vote of those present at the annual organizational meeting, to serve until the next annual organizational meeting.

(d) Facility plan

PHYSICAL PLANT: The offices for administrators of the VLACS will be located at the Tuck Learning Campus (former Exeter High School campus), Linden Street, Exeter, NH. At this time, there are a number of empty classrooms that can be easily renovated to meet the facility needs of the VLACS. The initial space will include over 2,000 square feet distributed between two former classrooms. Partitions will be installed as needed to create administrative office space, a conference room, information technology center, and storage space. The facility will be rented from the Exeter Region Cooperative School District. The VLACS can rent additional space at the Tuck Learning Campus to fulfill the needs of the VLACS as the number of staff members are increased to meet the needs of a growing online student population.

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE: The VLACS will rely on a remote hosting service to house all courses and administrative software applications. This approach will reduce the need for the VLACS facility to support multiple servers and the technical personnel required

for 24x7x365 operation and support. Additionally, the use of a remote hosting service will also reduce the need for redundant high speed network access. VLACS administrators, teachers, and technical support staff will have the ability to administer servers and applications from the Exeter location via the Internet.

The VLACS facility in Exeter will have a small local area network (LAN) connected to the Internet through the Verizon fiber optic network (FIOS) which will provide access to remote servers, off-site staff, students, and parents. Local and long distance telephone services will be provided through voice over IP (VOIP) technology. This approach will allow the VLACS staff to make both local and long distance phone calls to students and parents for little or no cost. The VLACS staff will also have access to high quality video conferencing equipment which to provide professional development to staff, share educational resources (speakers, virtual field trips, etc.), and to conduct state-wide meetings with parents and students.

REGIONAL VLACS FACILITIES: Since the VLACS is a virtual school there is little need for housing students. However, face-to-face contact among staff, students, and parents will be necessary on a periodic basis. VLACS students may participate in other face-to-face activities such as field trips or social events. In order to meet these needs the VLACS will need to rent regional facilities on a periodic basis. Toward this end, we propose that the Local Educational Support Center Network (LESCN) be used for this purpose. VLACS staff will negotiate a reasonable fee structure for the use of these professional development centers as meeting places for staff, students, and parents. The LESCN will also provide students, staff, and parents with regional access to high quality video conferencing equipment which can be used for virtual field trips, state-wide meetings, and other events.

(e) Maximum number, grade or age levels, and, as applicable, other information about pupils to be served.

In order to provide students with a personalized education with any time any where access the VLACS model will include the option to be either a full-time or part-time student. For example, a senior could decide to enroll as a full-time student and complete his/her coursework online and become a graduate of the VLACS. Another student may opt to continue as a full-time student at his/her current high school and take an advanced placement course that is not currently offered at his/her school. Yet another possibility is for a school to offer students the option to dedicate a part of their day to taking VLACS courses and to provide the students with access to a computer lab during the day. Students who are currently home schooled could decide to become full-time or part-time VLACS students. The possible options provided through the VLACS model are almost limitless as a result of the any where any time access to high quality educational programming.

The student population targeted by the VLACS will include any student who can meet the following criteria (adapted from Valencia Community College):

1. Self-directed, motivated, and self-disciplined;
2. Can set a personal schedule and complete assigned work by the required dates;
3. Average or better writing and communication skills;
4. Can solve problems and work through difficulties independently;
5. Can read and follow detailed instructions;
6. Comfortable with using the Internet as a means of communication and research;
7. Access to a computer with an Internet connection.

Students who could meet this criteria may include current public school students, home schooled students, students attending private school, or students who have dropped out of school. Roblyer (2005) has determined that there are five technical and psychological factors

which can influence success in a virtual education environment: (1) access to computers and the ability to use software applications; (2) organization and self-discipline; (3) the desire to achieve and a belief in the ability to be successful; (4) the ability to accept responsibility; and (5) a willingness to take risks. These criteria for successful on-line students can pertain to many students regardless of grade level or level of academic achievement. Highly successful students will obviously have met each of these criteria. Less successful students may opt for an on-line environment and discover that the personalized approach and flexibility of the school schedule meets their unique needs which, in turn, will increase students motivation to be successful.

The VLACS will take a three-part approach to targeting and supporting students who are interested in taking online courses. First, each student will be required to submit their most recent English language arts scores as reading and writing skills are necessary for success in an online learning environment. Second, each student will take an online assessment known as Educational Success Prediction Instrument (ESPRI). ESPRI was developed by Roblyer and Marshall as a method for predicting which students will be successful in an online learning environment. Students who do not score favorably on the ESPRI or have borderline English language arts test scores may be required to correct these deficiencies before being allowed to take VLACS courses. Another alternative will be to place such students on probationary status and require that they create a plan for addressing their weaknesses.

All full-time VLACS students will be assigned to a teacher advisor who will remain in contact with the student and parents throughout their VLACS career. The goal of the advisory program is to provide each student with an adult contact who knows the student and can provide knowledgeable advice about the student's academic program at the VLACS. The advisor will also serve as a contact should the student or parent have any questions about

courses, procedures, college placement, etc. It is hoped that teacher advisor will be available in all parts of the state so that students and parents can meet face-to-face during regional school activities.

It is anticipated that the VLACS will open with over 500 part-time students. Plans will be in place to expand the number of students to over 500 full-time students and over 1,500 part-time students by the 2011-2012 school year (see table 2). Full-time students will receive a diploma from VLACS upon completion of all graduation requirements. Part-time students can enroll in any VLACS course provided that they can meet course prerequisites. Prerequisites can be satisfied through prior course completion, test results, or by demonstration of skills or knowledge through other means (portfolio, demonstration, etc.). Additional courses and/or course sections will be added each year. The final number of grades and courses will be determined by the needs of the students in the state. Although the proposed plan specifies the size of the student population each year, this number could be lowered or raised depending upon the popularity of the school or the school's ability to grow at a faster rate.

A successful startup requires that time be devoted to establishing policies, designing and updating curriculum, hiring and training staff, and testing the technology infrastructure. Therefore, the the 2007-2008 school year will be used for this purpose. Phase I of the startup will begin by July, 2007 and will include the establishment of offices, hiring staff, and building the technology infrastructure. Phase II will being in January, 2008 with a pilot of 550 half-credit and full-credit courses. Phase III, and the official opening of the school for full-time and part-time students, will begin September, 2008.

Table 2: VLACS Staff and Students

Administration					
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
CEO	0.8	1	1	1	1
CIO	1	1	1	1	1
Student Services consultant	12 hrs/wk	12 hrs/wk	12 hrs/wk		
Director of Student Services				0.8	0.8
Professional Development		0.25	0.5	1	1
Curriculum		0.25	0.5	1	1
Business services	Contracted	Contracted	Contracted		
CFO and HR				0.5	0.5
Administrative Assistant	1	1	1	2	2
Total Personnel (FTE)	2.8	3.5	4	7.3	7.3
Teachers					
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Adjunct teachers for .5 credit courses	6	6	10	18	22
Adjunct teachers for 1 credit courses	22	49	50	50	35
Full-time teachers		1	4	10	23
Total Teachers (unique)	28	56	64	78	80
Total Teacher (FTE)	5	11.4	15	21.8	32.2
Students					
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Part-time students taking .5 credit courses	150	150	250	450	550
Part-time students taking 1 credit courses	550	725	750	925	1050
Full-time students	0	125	200	325	550
Total Students (unique)	700	1000	1200	1700	2150
Total Students (FTE)	125	285	375	555	815

All charter schools must look for alternative funding mechanisms to ensure their sustainability of the long term. The VLACS will propose that non-resident students be allowed to enroll in courses where seats are available if the following criteria are followed: (1) residency outside of the state of New Hampshire, (2) pre-payment of tuition (125% of in-state tuition), (3) meet all prerequisites, (4) no New Hampshire resident student is applying for the empty course seat, and (5) all VLACS requirements are met. The additional tuition payments made by out-of-state students will serve as a secondary funding source for the school.

VLACS students who decide to become full-time students will progress through a traditional sequence of courses designed to meet New Hampshire Department of Education standards and testing schedules. Students can decide to take additional courses to progress

through the program at an accelerated pace. A part-time student can use VLACS courses as a method for credit recovery, enrichment, or for accelerating their progress through a traditional school program. For these reasons, the chronological age or grade of a student is not necessarily relevant to part-time VLACS students. Any student who can demonstrate that they have the skills or background knowledge required for participation in a course will have the opportunity to enroll in a VLACS course. For example, an eighth grade student who can demonstrate that he/she has the skills to begin work in a high school biology course should have the option to do so. If students can provide evidence that they can meet the prerequisites for such coursework it will not be necessary to take a prescribed sequence of courses before enrolling in the course.

Table 3: Reasons for Attending a Virtual School	
Advanced placement courses	Students may take AP courses which are not offered by their local public school or an online course could be used to solve a scheduling conflict.
Credit acceleration	Students can proceed through online courses at their own pace which can mean that they can finish their courses at a faster pace than in traditional schools.
Credit recovery	Students who have failed courses or who have dropped out of school could use online courses as a method for earning credits toward graduation.
Flexible scheduling	Online courses can be taken at anytime from anyplace which provides students and families with many options for scheduling courses and other activities.
Lack of programming at sending school	Many schools cannot afford to offer a wide variety of courses. Online courses can provide students with courses not otherwise available to them.
Home schooled students	Any New Hampshire resident is eligible to attend VLACS. Homeschooled students may wish to take one, or more, courses online to supplement their current academic program.
Enrichment	Students may choose to take an online course just for the enjoyment of learning something new at their own pace, from any location, and at anytime.
Meeting diverse learning styles	The interactive nature of online classes lends itself to meeting a variety of learning styles.

Disability or sickness	There are times when students may need to work from home due to a disability or illness. Online courses provide homebound students with an alternative means for continuing their education.

(f) Curriculum

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: In order to create and provide rigorous and engaging content for students, the VLACS curriculum will be designed using the three part curriculum development model that has been tested and adopted by the Florida Virtual School (FLVS). First, Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction will be used as a model for lesson and unit development (see table 4). Introduced in 1969, Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction have been used by curriculum developers and teachers as a model for high quality instructional design. Second, all units of instruction will address the use of levels 4, 5, and 6 of Bloom's taxonomy (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Third, the VLACS curriculum will engage students by connecting real-world applications to learning through the use of problem or project based learning. For example, in a FLVS history unit students are asked to research a current political issue, create products supporting their opinion, and finally, to contact their representatives at the state or federal level to inform them and to share their findings.

Table 4: Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction

Instructional Event	Internal Mental Process
Gain attention	Stimuli activates receptors
Inform learners of objectives	Creates level of expectation for learning
Stimulate recall of prior learning	Retrieval and activation of short-term memory
Present the content	Selective perception of content
Provide learning guidance	Semantic encoding for storage in long-term memory
Elicit performance	Responds to questions to enhance

	encoding and verification
Provide feedback	Reinforcement and assessment of correct performance
Assess performance	Retrieval and reinforcement of content as final evaluation
Enhance retention and transfer to the job	Retrieval and generalization of learned skill to new situation
	http://www.e-learningguru.com/articles/art3_3.htm

CURRICULUM CONTENT: The VLACS will offer students access to a college preparatory curriculum, advanced placement courses, and special interest courses. Additionally, some middle school and elementary level courses will be offered. The expansion of offerings at the middle and elementary school level will be addressed after the successful establishment of a high school curriculum. An introductory course in world languages will be offered at the elementary level due to the difficulty that public school districts have had in funding and scheduling world language classes. A list of classes that will be offered each year at the VLACS is provided in Appendix B.

All VLACS curriculum will be aligned to national curriculum standards as well as New Hampshire grade level and grade span expectation (GLE's and GSE's). In most cases, content for each online course will be purchased from the Florida Virtual School (FLVS). FLVS courses have undergone review and have been revised based on the feedback received from teachers and students. FLVS has met the standards and requirements for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and as a Distance Learning School by the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA). The NCAA has also approved all core courses for establishing eligibility of student athletes.

During the 2005-2006 school year over 36,000 students enrolled in FLVS courses. FLVS

reported in their 2005-2006 summary of stakeholder surveys that 48% of students felt that their online courses were better or much better than traditional classroom experiences. Thirty percent indicated that their online experience was of the same quality as that of the traditional classroom while 6% reported that their experience was worse or much worse. Parents have also been supportive of the quality of the FLVS online experience. Fifty-six percent of respondents felt that their child learned more in the online format than in a traditional classrooms while 27% believe that either method of instruction delivers the same quality. Three percent of parents believed that their child learned less in an FLVS course than in a traditional classroom. This data, along with the rigorous research and development process which all FLVS courses undergo, has led to the selection of FLVS as the content provider for the VLACS. Additionally, FLVS can provide the VLACS staff with the training and resources necessary to create a successful virtual school. FLVS offers the option to purchase perpetual licenses that will allow VLACS staff to alter course content as required to meet NH curriculum standards. The FLVS serves all Florida school districts as well as schools and school districts in 26 states.

Courses and curriculum units may be designed by New Hampshire educators, when needed. For example, New Hampshire history must be covered within a U.S. History course. New Hampshire educators will be trained in online curriculum design and then hired to create units of instruction. If there are courses requested by parents, students, or schools that cannot be provided by a commercial vendor, or it is determined that commercial vendors cannot meet the requirements for VLACS courses, then a custom course will be designed by VLACS staff. It will be the policy of the VLACS to make all units and course materials available to any school that would like to use and improve the materials.

One of the most common misconceptions regarding online learning is that there is no

interaction between students and teachers (Appendix C). The FLVS has developed a set of procedures which have proven to increase the retention rate of online students by mandating certain communication practices. These communication “best practices” will also be used at the VLACS.

All students and parents will receive a welcome call before being activated in the class or within two weeks of being activated in the class.

All students and parents will receive a phone call from the teacher at least once per month.

Progress reports are will be completed by the 15th of each month.

All emails and phone calls from students and parents will be returned within 24 hours.

All successful phone calls and attempted phone calls will be logged into the student management system.

All submitted work is graded and returned within 48 hours, unless some other arrangement has been communicated.

(g) Academic and other learning goals and objectives

The VLACS goals are divided into three areas; (1) students, (2) parents, and (3) administrators, teachers, and staff. Data will be collected through test results, annual surveys, personnel records, student records, and from other sources, as required. A report on the progress made toward attaining these goals will be included in the school's accountability plan.

Students

1. All eligible New Hampshire students will be able to access VLACS courses through

computers connected to the Internet from any location. All students will be required to have access to a computer at school, at a library, at home, or through some other means. The VLACS Foundation will assist families in need with obtaining a computer or assist them with finding an Internet service provider.

2. Eighty percent, or more, of all enrolled students will complete their selected course(s). At one time virtual schools reported completion rates of only 50 percent, however, it is not unusual for today's virtual schools to have completion rates of 70 percent or more. Successful virtual schools understand that ongoing communication and support are necessary to ensure the success of virtual school students. Not every student will find the virtual world to be the best fit for their academic needs. If a student is unmotivated or cannot complete assignments on time it is a good bet that he or she will find it difficult to be a success in a virtual school.

3. On average, full-time VLACS students will meet, or exceed, the average scores of New Hampshire students on state-mandated assessments. Research indicates that virtual school students do as well as their peers in traditional settings. VLACS course content will be aligned with New Hampshire curriculum standards and will be taught by certified teachers who have been trained to teach in an online learning environment.

4. On average, full-time VLACS students will meet, or exceed, the average scores on administered nationally normed achievement tests. As noted in goal three, research indicates that virtual school students will perform at levels equal to their traditional school peers.

5. Eighty percent, or more, of VLACS students will indicate on an annual survey that compared to traditional courses VLACS courses are of equal or better quality. VLACS

will administer an annual student survey as a method for gathering data that will be used to assess and improve services to students.

6. Eighty percent, or more, students will indicate on an annual survey that communication with their teacher(s) has been good, or better. As previously stated, communication between a teacher, student, and parents/guardians is necessary for the success of students in virtual schools.
7. Eighty percent, or more, students will indicate on an annual survey that they would recommend VLACS to another student. Student satisfaction will be a key indicator for determining the level of success of VLACS classes. Without high satisfaction rates, the VLACS will not achieve long term success.
8. Eighty percent, or more, of all full-time VLACS students will pursue admission into a post-secondary program of study. A post-secondary program of study may include traditional college and university programs as well as community colleges, technical colleges, and trade schools, or the military.
9. All full-time VLACS students will create a plan for post-secondary education, entering the workforce, or pursuing other interests after graduation. While the ultimate goal of the VLACS would be that all graduates pursue a post-secondary education, it may be more realistic, and helpful to students, to create a personalized plan for meeting their personal goals after graduation.

<u>Parents</u>

1. Eighty percent, or more, of VLACS parents will indicate on an annual survey that compared to traditional courses, VLACS courses are of equal or better quality. Parents will be an important member of each student's educational team. Their perception and feedback about of the quality of the courses at VLACS will be a very important

indicator of success for the school.

2. Eighty percent, or more, parents will indicate on an annual survey that communication between their child's teacher(s) has been good, or better. As stated previously, communication between a teacher, student, and parents/guardians is necessary for the success of students in virtual schools. The quantity and quality of the communication between the VLACS staff and parents must be a strength for the school in order to support student learning.
3. Eighty percent, or more, parents will indicate on an annual survey that they would recommend VLACS to another parent. As stated in the student goal section, satisfaction will be a key indicator for determining the level of success of VLACS classes. Without high satisfaction rates, the VLACS will not achieve long term success.

Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

1. All teachers and administrators will be fully certified and meet highly qualified status as defined by the New Hampshire DOE and No Child Left Behind legislation. The need for qualified teachers and administrators is equally as important as the qualifications of teachers and administrators in traditional brick and mortar schools.
2. Eighty percent, or more, of the VLACS staff members will indicate on an annual survey that they are provided with the necessary professional development opportunities to advance their skills and understanding of the methods for delivering and supporting learning using distance learning technologies.
3. Eighty percent, or more, of the VLACS staff members will indicate on an annual survey that they have the necessary resources to support their work with students. Teaching in a virtual learning environment will present new challenges to teachers, support staff,

and administrators. It will be necessary to assess their needs and to make the necessary changes that will be required to ensure that the VLACS provides students with a high quality education.

Public School District Goals

1. Eighty percent, or more, of responding school districts will indicate on an annual survey that their school encourages enrollment in VLACS courses.
2. Eighty percent, or more, of responding school districts will indicate on an annual survey that the VLACS benefits their school and students.

(h) Achievement tests to be used to measure pupil academic and other goal achievement limited to, objective and age-appropriate measures of literacy and numeracy skills, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science, and mathematics.

The VLACS will use four measures to assess the level of academic achievement of its full-time students. First, the New England Common Assessment (NECAP) will be administered in October, 2008 in the areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. Other NECAP tests will be added as required by the NH DOE. Students will not be tested in 2007 since the VLACS will not have any full-time students in grade eleven until the following year. Second, a norm referenced test such as the Iowa Tests of Educational Development which will assess academic growth in the areas of vocabulary, reading comprehension, language and writing, spelling, mathematics, computation, social studies, science, and the use of information sources. This assessment will be administered during each student's freshman and junior years. Third, teachers will administer traditional course related quizzes and tests as students progress through courses. Fourth, all students will be required to maintain a digital portfolio of their work that will include reflections on what they have learned as well as

teachers responses that will help students to understand their strengths and to identify areas where improvements can be made. Additionally, the VLACS staff will recommend that all full-time students participate in the PSAT and SAT assessment programs in order to prepare each student for the college admissions process. Additional assessments at the middle school and elementary school levels will be added as needed. The NECAP and IOWA assessments will be administered at six sites in the state and will be proctored by staff members who will be hired and trained by VLACS staff members. Advanced Placement exams will be available to students who successfully complete advanced placement courses.

Table 5: VLACS Assessments

Assessment	Type	Full-time Students	Part-time Students
NECAP	Criterion referenced	Grade 11 or as required by the NH DOE	
IOWA	Norm referenced	Grades 9 and 11	
Course level quizzes, tests, and final exams	Developed by content provider and/or VLACS staff	All grades	All grades
Digital portfolio	Assessed by VLACS staff based on core competencies	All grades	All grades
Advanced placement		Available to students who participate in AP courses	Available to students who participate in AP courses

(i) Graduation requirements sufficient to ensure that the school has provided an adequate education.

All VLACS graduates will meet, or exceed, all New Hampshire graduation requirements. Courses will be offered so that the requirements outlined in the table below can be met by all full-time VLACS students. See Appendix B for a complete listing of proposed courses.

Table 6: NH Graduation Requirements	
Required Subjects	Credit(s)
Arts education	.5 credit
Information and communications technologies	.5 credit or demonstrate proficiency
English	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Physical sciences	1 credit
Biological sciences	1 credit
US and NH history	1 credit
US and NH government/civics	.5 credit
Economics	.5 credit
World history, global studies, or geography	.5 credit
Health education	.5 credit
Physical education	1 credit
Open electives	6 credits
Total	20 credits

From: http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/laws/Ed306.htm

(j) Staffing overview, including qualifications sought for professionals and paraprofessionals.

STAFFING OVERVIEW: The VLACS will open with a .8 FTE chief executive officer (CEO), chief information officer (CIO), and administrative assistant. The CEO for a virtual school serves as a combination superintendent and principal of the school. The CIO will attend to all technology related development and issues. Student services will be provided by a part-time consultant who will develop online content and serve as a counselor to students. The student services consultant will create workshops that will lead teachers and their advisees through the development of a post-secondary education plan, understanding the college application process and how to succeed in an online learning environment.

By the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, the VLACS administrative staff will grow to include the personnel described above along with a director of curriculum, director of professional development, part-time director of student services, part-time chief financial officer (CFO), and two administrative assistants. The director of curriculum will be in charge of reviewing and updating all course content and leading new course development efforts. The director of professional development will be assigned the task of developing and implementing face-to-face and online professional development for all VLACS teachers. The CFO will attend to all financial and human resource needs for the VLACS. During the first year of operation, the VLACS will hire adjunct teachers to teach courses. By the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year it is projected that the VLACS will employ twenty-three full-time teachers and fifty part-time teachers (see table 2).

QUALIFICATIONS: Personnel who have the proper academic credentials, who are innovative, and who are interested in using distance learning technologies to meet the needs of a wide variety of students, will be selected to work at the VLACS. More specifically, administrators hired to work at the VLACS will possess a New Hampshire certification in administration, curriculum, or professional development or have experience that indicates that they are certifiable in these areas. Additionally, the CEO must have experience in the use of distance learning technologies, a strong general technology background and administrative experience. Both the curriculum director and professional development director must have experience working in K-12 schools along with strong technology skills. The CIO must have a broad skill set in technology including networking and facility with the Windows, Macintosh, and Linux operating systems. Additionally, the CIO will be expected to administer the VLACS's learning management system (Moodle) and have the ability to develop application modules and to integrate other applications into this system.

The teaching staff at the VLACS will meet or exceed the requirements of RSA 194-B: 14 IV, which states that the teaching staff of a charter school will consist of a minimum of fifty percent of teachers who are either New Hampshire certified or qualified for certification with at least three years of experience. It will be the goal of the VLACS to hire teachers who are certified by the New Hampshire Department of Education or those who are covered by certification reciprocity agreement also known as the Interstate Contract Concerning Qualification of Education Personnel. After the first year of operation, all new VLACS teachers will be provided with a mentor who will provide professional coaching, support, and advice. A job description for VLACS teachers is included in Appendix E.

In a traditional school environment administrators have the opportunity to observe a new teacher's interaction with students and staff everyday. Moreover, new teachers come to their new job with much of the background and training that they will need to be successful. Teachers in a traditional school environment also know much about school culture as they are products of the traditional face-to-face education process. In a virtual school environment, teachers will be on their own much of the time and will not be working in a familiar environment. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers hired to teach in a virtual school environment are not only good teachers, but have the ability to work independently, thrive in a fast-paced and rapidly changing environment, and have the technological skills necessary to be an effective virtual school teacher. The VLACS will use a unique hiring process in order to ensure that the best teachers who are suited to the virtual school learning environment are hired. The process will include:

1. Review all completed application packets and selecting only those candidates with the requisite academic expertise and technology skills.
2. Conduct a preliminary interview.

3. Invite finalist(s) for a teaching position to attend a two-day professional development session. This time will also be used by VLACS administrators and staff to get to know each candidate and to assess their ability to be successful teachers. All candidates will be paid to attend these sessions.
4. Finalists will be selected from this group to attend a final interview.
5. Based on the final interview, finalists may, or may not, be offered a teaching position with the VLACS.
6. Candidates who accept a job offer from the VLACS will be required to attend an additional 1 or 2 day-long professional development session. Teachers will be compensated for their time at these sessions.
7. Conduct a criminal records check for all professional staff who accept a VLACS contract.

Support staff, such as administrative assistants and/or computer technicians will be required to have superior customer service skills as well as the skills and knowledge required of their position. Ideally, support staff will have a bachelor's degree, while the minimum qualification for such positions will be an associates degree in an appropriate discipline.

EVALUATION OF TEACHERS: According to the National Education Association (Guide to teaching online courses, http://www.nea.org/technology/images/02onlinecourses.pdf), there are three keys to developing an effective teacher evaluation system in an online environment. First, teachers should be provided with the opportunity for self review and reflection on their performance. Second, teachers should be provided with the opportunity to receive feedback from their peers, and, third, administrators must have the knowledge and skills required to assess the performance of teachers in the non-traditional classroom environment of virtual schools. The VLACS will address these three keys to successful teacher evaluation in the

following manner. The VLACS will use the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) “Essential Principles of Quality Online Teaching” as the basis for teacher evaluation. The SREB has also published an evaluation tool called the “Online Teaching Evaluation for State Virtual Schools” which is based on the “Principles of Quality Online Teaching.” A revised version of this evaluation instrument will be used in the VLACS's mentoring program and by the school's administration as the instrument for facilitating the formative and summative evaluation process (see appendix G). VLACS administrators and teachers will work together to make sure that there is the necessary balance between support, peer coaching, professional development and evaluation necessary to continuously improve the school's capacity to provide students with a high quality online learning environment.

(k) Personnel compensation plan, including provisions for leaves and other benefits, if any.

Teacher and administrative salaries at the VLACS are all derived from an established per pupil cost. For example, during the 2007-2008 school year the base per student rate is $218 per student. A teacher with a bachelor's degree in his/her first year of teaching at the VLACS would receive compensation equal to $218 x 20 or $4,360 for teaching a one-credit course. Salary scales for VLACS teachers can be found in appendix H. Teachers with a masters degree receive an additional 10% per student. When the number of students per class exceeds twenty the per pupil cost rises an additional 10% per student. While salary scales have been presented for twenty, twenty-five, and thirty students per class, the targeted class size for VLACS classes will be twenty-five. To qualify as a full-time teacher five classes must be taught during a thirty-six week period. Teachers may elect to earn additional compensation by teaching for three semesters per calendar year. Full-time teachers who teach for two semesters will also receive a medical benefit stipend of $7,000 during the 2007-

2008 school year or $9,000 if they elect to teach for three semesters (see appendix I). Teachers may use this stipend to purchase medical or dental insurance from a provider of their choice or invest the funds as they see fit if their spouse is eligible for medical insurance at their place of employment. Additionally, all full-time teachers will participate in the New Hampshire Retirement System. Job requirements, reimbursable expenses, sick leave, and vacation leave are outlined in appendix F.

Administrative salaries are based on the top teacher compensation scales. For example, the Chief Executive Officer will receive compensation that is 40% greater than the top teacher's pay scale. All other administrative positions will receive compensation that is 20% higher than the top teacher's pay scale. Administrators will receive a medical stipend equal to that of the a three-semester teacher (see appendix I). A monthly travel stipend of $300 will be paid to the CEO while other administrators will receive $200 per month.

Administrative assistants will be paid an hourly rate of up to $17.50 per hour during the 2007-2008 school year and receive a medical stipend equal to that of a three-semester teacher if they are on a full-time, full-year contract. Full-time administrative assistants will participate in the New Hampshire Retirement System. Administrative assistants will be eligible for the same sick leave/emergency leave as teachers (see appendix F). Full-time administrative assistants will receive ten vacation days and ten paid holidays per year.

The charter school will comply with all state and federal laws pertaining to employment compensation and leave provisions. Educators hired to teach at the VLACS must understand the necessity of flexible scheduling which is required in an online educational environment. The school will comply with all laws pertaining to pre-employment requirements, such as Criminal History Records under RSA 91A:1.

(l) Pupil transportation plan, including reasonable provision from the charter school's own resources for transportation of pupils residing outside the district in which the charter school is physically located.

A pupil transportation plan is not required since students can attend the VLACS from their own home. However, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing transportation for students to regional locations for required testing or orientations. Voluntary events which will require parents/guardians to provide transportation could include field trips or school sponsored social events.

(m) Statement of assurances related to nondiscrimination according to relevant state and federal laws.

The VLACS will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of its educational programs or in any other way as is prohibited by law.

(n) Method of coordinating with a pupil's local education agency (LEA) responsible for matters pertaining to any required special education programs or services including method of compliance with all federal and state laws pertaining to educationally disabled pupils.

The VLACS is designed to serve the educational needs of all students, including those with special needs deemed eligible and appropriate by the sending school district. Too often students with special needs are not expected to meet high standards because it is difficult for them to adapt to the curriculum. However, the flexible nature of a virtual learning environment makes it easier for the curriculum to be adapted to the needs of students. Much like the tenets of Universal Design for Learning, a virtual learning environment can facilitate multiple

methods of presentation, multiple options for presentation, and multiple means of expression. Therefore, the virtual environment employed by the VLACS, may, in fact, provide students with special needs with the opportunity to excel because of the flexible and individualized nature of the curriculum delivery system.

The VLACS will comply with federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a NH charter school. Under New Hampshire's charter school statute: RSA 194-B: 11, III, the local school district continues to be responsible for special education decision-making for any identified student who seeks attendance at a charter school. Decision-making for special education services and student placement stays with the local school district. Local school district responsibility is current law for students placed in private schools or other public schools. Thus, these guidelines represent no change from current decision-making placement and services procedures. RSA 194-B:11 states that all options available to the parent and the local education agency are retained. Regarding special education, options now available to parents and the local district include: 1) the parent accepting or rejecting the district proposed education plan in full or in part, 2) the local education agency providing some services to the child outside the assigned district school or outside the typical school hours, 3) an education plan of short duration or one that allows for a trial period in a program, 4) either the parent or the schools initiating the resolution of disagreements about the district's recommended program through the Department of Education. Should a parent or legal guardian want his/her special education-eligible child to be considered for the charter public school program, nothing prevents that parent from applying to the charter school. However, the local education agency and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) would need to discuss this placement at a required decision-making meeting.

The LEA shall provide the VLACS with a copy of a student's complete IEP for working

and monitoring purposes. The VLACS will also assist the local education agency in development of procedures designed to ensure that individualized education programs are monitored in a regular and systematic manner. The VLACS retains the right to deny admission to a student who does not meet admission requirements.

(o) Admission procedures

Admissions procedures for VLACS students are divided into the categories of full-time and part-time students. Full-time students will be defined as those students taking five credits during two consecutive semesters and part-time status will be defined as taking less than five credits during two consecutive semesters. Students must be 19 or younger on or before September 1 to be admitted, unless the student qualifies for Special Education and has a current IEP. All course prerequisites, admissions forms, and paperwork must be completed before students will be provided with access to their course or courses. A detailed description of the admissions process can be found in appendix J.

Timeline for admission to VLACS courses

Semester I – Fall Timeline

First day of classes: Day after Labor Day

Last day of classes: 18 weeks

Semester II – Spring Timeline

First day of classes: 19 weeks after Labor Day

Last day of classes: 36 weeks after Labor Day

Semester III – Summer Timeline

First day of classes: 37 weeks after Labor Day

Last day of classes: last weekday before Labor Day

Charter schools shall notify all students and parents 60 days prior to the first day of

classes of the host school district whether the pupil's application for admission has been accepted or denied. If the charter or open enrollment school makes an offer of acceptance to a pupil to enter the school, the pupil and pupil's parents shall accept or deny the offer in writing no later than 30 days after being informed. If a pupil accepts admission to the VLACS, the school shall inform the sending school no later than 30 days prior to the first day of classes at the host school district. However, it is possible that there may be less than thirty days before classes upon enrollment at the VLACS. In this situation, VLACS personnel will notify the sending school in a timely manner.

(p) Philosophy of student governance and discipline, and age-appropriate due process procedures to be used for disciplinary matters including suspension and expulsion.

It is rare that online students exhibit behaviors which necessitate the use of due process policies. However, since unforeseen student discipline issues could arise the proper policies need to be in place. Policies for student governance will be developed by the Board of Trustees and will reflect the same high expectations for student behavior that exists within a traditional program. The policy will be clear, will state expectations for student behavior, and indicate possible consequences. Mentors, volunteers, and counselors will be assigned as needed to help students meet behavioral expectations. Should the student be unable to perform satisfactorily in a manner that maintains a respectful environment for all students, the student may be suspended or expelled from the VLACS. The VLACS will provide fair and age appropriate due process to students and will comply with the current suspension and expulsion provision as detailed in RSA 193:13 (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) and RSA 194-B, 9,III, the pupil may withdraw from a charter school based upon criteria determined by the Board of Trustees consistent with the advice of the administration and faculty and in conformance with RSA 193:13. No public school shall be compelled to enroll an expelled

student.

Participation in an online environment does present students and teachers with situations that may not be covered by traditional discipline policies. Therefore the following discipline policies will be adopted (full-text for each policy is available in Appendix D).

Academic integrity

Right to privacy

Student contact and drop policy

Student code of conduct

(q) Method of administering fiscal accounts and reporting, including a provision requiring fiscal audits and reports to be performed by an independent certified public accountant.

The VLACS will follow public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets. The VLACS will maintain accurate financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit corporations. An annual audit and financial report will be provided. The VLACS will contract with Dumais and Ferland, CPAs, LLC of Newmarket, NH to act as an independent auditor. The VLACS Trustees will appoint a Treasurer who will provide the oversight necessary to monitor the financial status of the school. The Trustees shall also adopt policies for the financial management of the school, including policies on Conflict of Interest for Board members and faculty. A payroll account will be set up for the exclusive use of transactions related to compensation, separate from accounts payable. The Treasurer and one other member of the Board of Trustees will have check-signing authority. The secondary person will be appointed by the Board of Trustees and will sign checks if the treasurer is unable to do so.

Except for emergency purchases cleared with the school's CEO, all expenditures and

contracts will be handled through the encumbrance system of purchase orders for clear tracking of expenditures and for monitoring the status of account balances. Each individual with check-signing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with the guidelines set by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. Accounting activities will consist primarily of the bi-weekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due to vendors. The VLACS shall comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B: 101-V). The VLACS will contract with SAU 16 for fiscal services and budget oversight for the first three years of operation. Beginning in year four, the school will hire a half-time chief financial officer and a full-time bookkeeper/clerk. The VLACS will also look to the SAU 16 CFO to assist with the design of an efficient fiscal services department for the charter school.

(r) Annual budget, including all sources of funding.

A five year projected budget for the VLACS is included in appendix P. The projected revenues for 2007-2009 include pre-charter grant funds and tuition. Tuition projections are based on RSA 194-B:11, I which describes how the annual state-funded tuition rate will be determined. For the 2007-2008 school year, it is estimated that for each full-time student the VLACS will receive payment equal to $3,600. State law is silent on the payment for part-time students; however, it is logical to assume that the stated annual tuition per student will be divided by 5 single credit courses per year to yield a per course tuition rate. A single credit course will be defined as a traditional school year course covering a 36 week academic year. It should be noted that VLACS students will have the opportunity to either extend or shorten the amount of time required to complete a course. For example, a strong math student could complete a single credit algebra course in 15 weeks while another student who struggles with

algebraic concepts could take up to 38 weeks to complete the same course. The experience of other virtual schools does indicate, however, that there must be limits placed on the length of time allowed for completing a course. In each case the VLACS will receive the same tuition payment. More importantly, in each case the student will be required to show evidence of achieving the academic competence and will not be awarded credit base on “seat time.”

The budget projections provided in appendix P illustrate how the VLACS will allocate funds in order to remain financially viable with revenues provided by the state. It should be noted that the expenses of the school are not comparable to a traditional school in that facility costs, transportation, and special education costs are not part of a virtual school's budget.

The VLACS may also receive unanticipated tuition payments from out-of-state students who may enroll in courses as previously described (see pgs. 11 & 12). The dollar value of these tuition payments is difficult to project as it will be based on interest and the ability of the VLACS to grow to meet the needs of students outside of New Hampshire. The VLACS Foundation will be setup as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Funds or equipment targeted to this foundation will not be co-mingled with funds for the VLACS charter school.

(s) School calendar arrangement and the number and duration of days pupils are to be served pursuant to RSA 194-B:8, III

RSA 194-B:8, III requires that all charter schools comply with compulsory attendance laws and requirements for minimum attendance hours. However, the new school approval standards require that all high schools develop methods for allowing students to earn credit through mastery of required course competencies instead of meeting clock hour requirements. The New Hampshire Department of Education offered further clarification on this topic in Technical Advisory #12 – Competency Assessment of Student Mastery as follows:

While sufficiency of evidence and appropriate assessment methods are local responsibilities, the Department and the Committee encourage school districts to think of

these as extending beyond a single test to multiple forms of assessment, for the following reasons:

it is consistent with national research-based best practice;

multiple forms of assessment allow for the use of formative assessment; encouraging students to learn and reach beyond current understanding and performance, and;

multiple forms of assessment minimize the use of single tests to be used solely as a means to test out of courses perhaps inappropriately.

Given the new state school approval standards, the VLACS calendar will be developed to (1) meet the rules set forth by the New Hampshire Department of Education and (2) coincide with the beginning and ending of the traditional school year in New Hampshire schools. This will mean that one credit VLACS courses will begin in late August while half credit courses will begin in late August and late January. Additional courses will be scheduled for a summer session, as well. Students will be assessed on the mastery of competencies which will supersede the requirement for adherence to meeting attendance hour requirements. For example, it is possible that students will complete their work before the end of the traditional academic calendar or they could also require time beyond the traditional school calendar in order to meet competency requirements.

(t) Provision for providing continuing evidence of adequate insurance coverage.

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1,III, the VLACS will be subject to the protections afforded any public school under RSA 507 (b) which provides for Limited General Liability for the charter school and its agents. The founding board will produce evidence of adequate insurance coverage to the state, as required. The VLACS intends to purchase comprehensive liability coverage from the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange (Primex).

(u) Identity of consultants to be used for various services, if known.

The VLACS will use the following consultants to assist with the development of programming, policies, technology resources, fiscal services, human resources, etc.

Table 7: VLACS Consultants

Consultant or Organization	Description of work
Arthur Hanson, Supt, SAU 16	Founding member of school, leadership, oversight of project
Paul Flynn, Associate Supt., SAU 16	Assist with human resource design and implementation
Jerome Frew, Assistant Supt., SAU 16	Assist with curriculum design of school
Nathan Lunney, CIO, SAU 16	Assist with design of fiscal services and budget oversight
Steve Kossakoski, Assistant Supt., SAU 16	Virtual school design, program development and implementation, policy design, technology
Florida Virtual School, James Russell, Smart Solutions, regional representative for FLVS	Course content, virtual school design consulting.
Seacoast Professional Development Center	Coordination of professional development for VLACS teachers
ComCoach Design and Marketing, Kingston, NH	Development of publicity and marketing plan
Matthew Oquist, Majen.net Consulting, Hudson, NH	Technology design and support, application development
Great Bay eLearning Charter School	Charter school startup design, student recruitment, parental involvement, meeting students needs, etc.

(v) Philosophy of parent involvement and related plans and procedures.

Parent or guardian participation and support will be vitally important to the success of students at the VLACS. Therefore, it is important the VLACS be designed to be not only student-centered, but parent and family centered as well. Parents must feel that they are an important partner in the education of their son and/or daughter. With this in mind, the

following criteria will guide the development of the VLACS parent philosophy:

The school will:

1. Provide parents with live access to student progress (grades, assignments, homework, etc.).
2. Provide parents with access to course resources so that they may assist their son or daughter with their coursework.
3. Provide parents with access to teachers and staff through the use of phones, email, chat sessions, and face-to-face meetings.
4. Teachers will contact parents and students on a monthly basis to discuss progress, celebrate successes, and discuss challenges.
5. Provide parents with the opportunity to meet with other VLACS parents through virtual meetings.
6. Solicit parent input on annual surveys to measure the strengths and weaknesses of VLACS programs.
7. Provide training sessions in how to provide support to virtual school students.
8. Provide opportunities for parents to plan and/or participate in regional and state-wide social events with other parents and students.
9. Provide opportunities for parents to plan and/or participate in regional and state-wide field trips with other parents and students.
10. Provide all parents with orientation materials and information about the school and its programs and policies.

The parents will:

1. Sign a written letter of consent which will allow their son or daughter to participate in VLACS courses.

2. Provide the technology necessary(computer, printer, Internet connection) for their son or daughter to participate in VLACS courses.
3. Support and supervise their son or daughter while participating in VLACS courses and activities.
4. Participate in monthly phone meetings with their child's teacher(s).
5. Provide transportation to regional school event (e.g., meetings, testing sessions, etc.)
6. Complete annual VLACS surveys to provide the school with feedback on the quality of its programs.

(w) A plan to develop and disseminate information to assist parents and pupils with decision-making about their choice of school.

All students in the state and their parents must have ample opportunity to enroll in the VLACS. The experience of other virtual schools that have been established in other areas of the country indicates that the virtual school environment will appeal to many students, regardless of ability or past performance. Therefore, it is important that all eligible pupils have equal opportunity for enrollment. To ensure that all interested parties have access to equal knowledge and availability, eligibility criteria will be distributed through the school's website. Additionally, a public relations plan will be developed to market the school throughout the state of New Hampshire. Television and radio will be utilized to highlight the VLACS program and local news agencies will be asked to provide coverage. Parents will be invited to attend regional informational meetings where they and their children will hear an overview of the school and have the opportunity to ask questions of the VLACS staff. Information packets including application paperwork will be distributed at the parent meetings. All New Hampshire school districts will receive informational packets relevant to the operation of the school and will be invited to attend regional meetings designed to inform local school personnel about the

VLACS program. A copy of the Charter school document will be made available on the school's website. Informational brochures will be widely distributed to organizations that work with students and their families.

(x) Hold harmless clause.

The charter school, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless the (school district), any other school district which sends its students to the charter school, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the "indemnified parties") from any and all claims, demands, actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the charter school, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils.

(y) Severability provisions and statement of assurance that any provision of the charter school contract found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.

If any provision of the charter agreement is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the charter agreement shall remain in effect unless otherwise terminated by one or both of the parties in accordance with the terms contained herein.

(z) Provision for dissolution of the charter school including disposition of its assets or amendment of its program plan.

The Board of Trustees for the VLACS is committed to assuring that the management of the school is exemplary and that the VLACS becomes an educational option of which the state of New Hampshire is proud. However, in the event that the charter is terminated and

the dissolution of the VLACS should occur, all property that the school has purchased, leased, or otherwise contracted for shall be transferred to the traditional program or returned as per contractual agreement.

Under circumstances that require dissolution, the Board of Trustees will ensure that the following guidelines are implemented and followed:

Research the best use of property and retire all debt obligations.

Assign and relocate existing equipment to the appropriate educational setting.

All personal property of the faculty and administrators shall remain their property.

(aa) In the case of the conversion of a public school to a charter conversion school, provision for alternative arrangements for pupils who choose not to attend and teachers who choose not to teach at the charter school.

This requirement is not applicable to schools who apply directly to the NH Board of Education under the NH Charter School Pilot Program.

(bb) A plan for the education of the school's pupils after the charter school may cease operation.

The board of trustees for the VLACS is committed to assuring that the management of the school is exemplary and that the VLACS becomes an educational option of which the state of New Hampshire is proud. However, in the event that the VLACS ceases operations, then creating a smooth transition for students to a new learning environment will become a primary goal for all VLACS employees as follows:

A minimum of one semester of notice of closing will be provided parents and students who will be reentering their member school.

Individual learning plans for each reentering student will be transferred to the receiving

site.

All records will be transferred in a timely manner and the staff and the Board of Trustees of the VLACS will work with the receiving site to make the transition as educationally sound as possible.

School personnel will obtain permission for a release of information prior to transfer of information.

(cc) In addition to an application, each charter school applicant, in consultation with the local school board, shall prepare a proposed contract. The contract shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following elements:

(1) Purpose. (2) Written policies. (3) Authority of trustees. (4) Reporting, fiscal accounting and fiscal audits to be performed by a certified public accountant. (5) Contract agreements. (6) Indemnification. (7) Secular orientation. (8) Non-discrimination. (9) Health and safety. (10) Enrollment. (11) Attendance. (12) Availability of services. (13) Assessment of pupils. (14) Tuition and funding. (15) Property ownership. (16) Records. (17) Severability in accordance with subparagraph (y) above. (18) Assignment of contract. (19) Insurance. (20) Revocation. (21) Amendment. (22) Renewal. (23) Entire agreement. (24) Location, which shall be identified prior to submission to the legislative body.

This requirement is not applicable to schools who apply directly to the NH Board of Education under the NH Charter School Pilot Program.

(dd) An outline of the proposed accountability plan which clarifies expectations for evaluating the school's program and which contains an acknowledgment that a full accountability plan shall be developed and ready to implement prior to the date of opening.

The VLACS will provide annual accountability reports that will cover each of the areas

required by the New Hampshire Charter School Accountability Process. The report will include data and narrative statements that provide evidence to answer each of the following questions:

1. Is the school making progress toward achieving its mission?
2. Is the school responsibly using public funds?
3. Is the school promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
4. Is the school sustainable?

See appendix O for a copy of the template that will be used to create the annual accountability report.

Work Plan

Table 8: VLACS Work Plan	
Estimated date	**Description**
February , 2007	Application submitted
March, 2007	Work with public relations firm to develop materials and marketing plan (funding – vision grant)
May or June, 2007	Public forum to discuss virtual school plan and issues Appear before the NH Board of Education – To be determined by NHDOE Submit application for start-up funding Advertise for VLACS administrators if school is approved.
Phase 1: July, 2007	Startup funding available – To be determined by NHDOE Advertise for VLACS administrative assistants CIO begins work Purchase course content and school administration software Begin renovating office space Order technology equipment Marketing materials sent to schools, parents, media outlets, etc. Identify possible trustee candidates
August, 2007	Install technology infrastructure in office space VLACS offices ready for occupancy

	Marketing materials sent to schools Invite trustees to first VLACS trustees meeting First reading of required policies at trustees meeting
September, 2007	Student services consultant and administrative assistant begin work Courses installed and tested School administration software installed and tested Advertise for VLACS teachers and administrative assistants Trustees meeting Second reading and adoption of policies at trustees meeting
October, 2007	Student registration begins Professional development institute for teachers Teachers hired
November, 2007	Trustees meeting, continued policy review and adoption
Phase II: January, 2008	Pilot classes launched, Sept. 5 (400 seats for 1 credit courses, 150 seats for .5 credit courses)
Phase III: September, 2008	Official opening of school for full-time and part-time students

VLACS Policies

It shall be the goal of the VLACS trustees to create and adopt policies on the following topics. Additional policies will be adopted as required.

SECTION A: FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS
AC Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity
ACE Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap/Disability
ADC Tobacco Products Ban

SECTION B: SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS
BAAA Board of Trustees Policies and Administrative Procedures
BB Board of Trustees Legal Status
BBA Board of Trustees Powers and Duties
BBAA Board of Trustees Member Authority
BBBC Board of Trustees Resignation
BCA Ethics Policy Statement
BCA-R School Board Member Ethics
BCB Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest
BDA Board of Trustees Organizational Meeting
BDB Board of Trustees Officers
BDD Board-CEO Relationship
BDDD Quorum
BEA Regular Board of Trustees Meeting
BEC Non-Public Sessions

BEDB Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
BEDH Public Participation at Board of Trustees Meetings
BFE Administration in Policy Absence
BG Board of Trustees Policy Development
BGA Policy Development System
BGC Policy Review and Evaluation
BGE Policy Dissemination
BGF Suspension of Policies
BHDA Written Communication Policy
BHDB Electronic Communications

SECTION C: GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
CHCA Approval of Handbooks and Directives

SECTION D: FISCAL MANAGEMENT
DB Annual Budget
DBB Fiscal Year
DI Fiscal Accounting & Reporting
DJ Purchasing
DJE Bidding Requirements
DJF Local Purchasing
DJG Vendor Relations

SECTION E: SUPPORT SERVICES
EBCD Emergency Closings
EDC Authorized Use of School Owned Materials
EEBB Use of Private Vehicles to Transport Students
EGA Appropriate and Acceptable Computer, Network and Internet Use
EGAG Internet File Log Retention
EGAH E-mail Retention
EHB Records Retention
EHB-R Records Retention Schedule

SECTION G: PERSONNEL
GBA Equal Opportunity Employment
GBAA Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence
GBAA-R Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Report Form
GBCD Criminal Records Check
GBCD-R School Employee Background Investigation
GBEA Staff Ethics & Employee Conflict of Interest
GBEC Drug Free Workplace
GBJ Personnel Records
GBJ-R Personnel Records
GCQC Resignation of Instructional Staff Member

SECTION I: INSTRUCTION
IC School Year
ICA School Calendar
IGA Curriculum Development

IGD Curriculum Adoption
IJNDB Technology Integration
IJOA Educational Field Trips
IJOC Volunteers
IKE Promotion & Retention of Students

SECTION J: STUDENTS
JHB Truancy
JHBA Student Contact and Course Drop
JHC Student Release Precautions
JICD Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process
JICDA Student Code of Conduct
JICDB Academic Integrity
JICE Student Publications
JICH Drug and Alcohol Use by Students
JICK Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention
JICK-R Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Procedure and Form
JKD Student Suspension
JKE Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion
JLCB Immunizations of Students
JLCB-R Immunization Requirements
JLF Reporting Child Abuse
JRA Student Records and Access
JRB Right to Privacy

SECTION K: SCHOOL-COMMUNITY-HOME RELATIONS
KEB Public Complaints about School Personnel
KEC Public Complaints about Curriculum or Instructional Materials
KHB Advertising in the School

Questions Raised by the Creation of the VLACS

The innovative nature of this school has raised many questions about funding and curriculum. Questions that cannot be answered without input from the NH DOE, local school districts, and other stakeholders are presented here.

Topic	Question	Possible Answer	Who can answer this question?
Funding	A student is enrolled as a full-time student at his/her local high school. The school will allow the student to take a one credit course at the VLACS during the school day. Will the VLACS receive state funding for this student? How will the local high school's ADM be affected by the student taking a VLACS course?	We recommend that the VLACS receive 1/5th of the established tuition rate for charter school students. The question regarding ADM should be answered by the NH DOE.	NH DOE
	Currently, charter school student tuition has been set at approximately $3,600 per school year. How is funding calculated if a student elects to take courses on a year-round basis?	We recommend that students receive 1/5th of the established charter school tuition for up to five charter school courses during the traditional school year. Additionally, we recommend that students be allowed to take additional courses during the summer session and that the VLACS receive 1/5th of the established charter school tuition per one credit course completed .	NH DOE
	A student is a full-time student at his/her local high school. They would like to take two one credit courses at the VLACS. Will the VLACS receive state funding for this student?	We would recommend that students be allowed to take no more than one additional course at the VLACS during the traditional 180 day school year.	NH DOE
	A student is enrolled as a full-time	We recommend that students be allowed to take	NH DOE

	student at his/her local high school. They would like to classes during the summer semester. Will the VLACS receive funding for this student?	classes during the summer for advancement, credit recovery, or for enrichment. The VLACS should receive funding equal to 1/5th of the established charter school tuition rate per one credit course.	
Curriculum	A local middle school offers Algebra I in the eighth grade. Students who successfully complete this course are eligible to take Algebra II or Geometry when they enter the high school. However, they do not receive high school credit from the high school. A student could elect to take Algebra I in grade eight at the VLACS and earn a high school credit. Why would a student elect to take the Algebra I course at the local middle school when he/she could earn a high school credit through the VLACS?	First, not all students will find the virtual environment to meet their learning styles. However, this question is one that local middle schools and high schools will have to answer. Maybe this begs the question: Why wouldn't we allow advanced students to earn high school credit for completing a high school level course? Isn't this similar to Advanced Placement students earning a college credit during high school?	Local school districts.

Appendix A: Online Education Survey

This survey is designed for high school students who are interested in Internet-based distance education. Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can.

DIRECTIONS: Circle the number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement below. Strongly Agree is a "1" and Strongly Disagree is a "7."

Name of School: _____

Name of Instructor: _____

Last 4 digits of your social security number: _____

1. I am a competent person in my schoolwork.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

2. I believe that I am a valuable person.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

3. I try to achieve in all my classes, regardless of their level of difficulty.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

4. I am well prepared for my schoolwork and believe that unfair tests rarely happen.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

5. I have the ability to learn new tasks.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

6. I really enjoy going to school because I like to learn.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

7. It is important that my teachers give me knowledge of results or feedback that I can use to further enhance my performance.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

8. I have a need to achieve and feel competent.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

9. Feedback is very important in helping me to attain my goals.

   Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

10. Having control over my learning environment is important to me (i.e., choosing when to perform an activity).

    Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

11. I like to take risks if they are reasonable.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

12. I feel that I am a worthy individual.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

13. If I do not perform well on a test, it is probably because I did not have enough time.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

14. I enjoy going to school and learning about new ideas.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

15. I receive material rewards from my family if I attain high grades (for example, money).

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

16. I believe myself to be a very organized individual.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

17. I believe myself to be a high achiever.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

18. I frequently find myself to be very stressed, as I tend to cram too many things together at the last possible moment.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

19. I believe that luck plays a large role in anyone's success.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

20. I do not care what other people think of me if I make mistakes.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

21. I have younger brothers and sisters at home that are frequently under my care.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

22. The goals I set are often too easy.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

23. I find it easier to study for my exams at the last possible moment.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

24. As classes become harder, I feel that I have the ability to overcome many of the difficult obstacles that may present themselves.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

25. I use e-mail at least once a week.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

26. Studying for tests is often a waste of time because test questions may not be related to course work.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

27. The only reason I study hard in school is to achieve high grades.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

28. I find that I try harder if I set high goals for myself.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

29. I feel good about myself.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

30. I tend to schedule my daily activities to allow enough time to accomplish them.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

31. When something goes wrong, I usually feel that it is my own fault.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

32. I have my own e-mail account.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

33. When several demands are placed upon me, I will determine which tasks are most important and complete those first.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

34. I rarely set goals for myself.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

35. I tend to persist at tasks until they are accomplished.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

36. I have good word processing skills.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

37. When I have a difficult exam coming up, I tend to start studying a week or two ahead of time.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

38. If I am unsure what to do in a situation, I will frequently wait for someone to give me advice.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

39. I know how to use a browser to locate Internet sites.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

40. I have the ability to achieve in all of my courses.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

41. If I am unsure of what to do in a situation, I tend to wait for instructions rather than go ahead.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

42. Planning too far ahead is not smart because many things are a matter of timing or luck.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

43. When I plan activities, I can almost always make them work.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

44. If I make a mistake, I will often blame others.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

45. If I miss questions on a test, it is usually the teacher's fault.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

46. I have a computer in my home.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

47. I study hard for all of my classes because I enjoy acquiring new knowledge.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

48. Personal contact with my classmates is important to me.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

49. I am afraid of failure.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

50. Face-to-face interaction with my teachers is important to me.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

51. I believe myself to be a task-oriented person.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

52. I am more comfortable working on class projects in small groups than I am alone.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

53. I like taking chances and performing risky tasks.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

54. When working with others on projects, I frequently find myself doing everything to ensure it is done properly.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

55. It is difficult to say "no" to the requests of other persons.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

56. I take responsibility for my actions most of the time.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

57. If I am given a task to perform that I know little about, I don't mind taking a chance.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

58. If I do not perform well on a test, it is probably because I did not get good instruction from the teacher.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

59. I find it easier to study for an important test by breaking it into sub-parts rather than studying the whole subject matter at one time.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

60. If I do not perform a task well, it is probably because it is too difficult.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

61. I will often set short-term goals to help me reach a long-term goal.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

62. Many times, the goals I set are too difficult to reach.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

63. I strive to achieve higher grades only for recognition (e.g., to be in National Honor Society).

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

64. Many times, I lose interest in attaining the goals I set.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

65. I feel motivated to perform well in my classes because of the approval I receive from other individuals.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

66. I feel comfortable using a computer.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

67. I have easy access to a computer with Internet capability.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

68. I feel that I am a very self-directed individual (a self-starter).

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

69. Having control over the pace of learning an activity is important to me (i.e., the time I

take to complete an activity).

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

70. When I perform well on tasks, it is usually due to my own efforts.

Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Disagree

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Appendix B: Proposed VLACS Course Offerings

VLANH Course List							
		Credit	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	Adult Education						
	GED Prep	This course will be offered if there is sufficient interest					
	High School Courses						
	Art						
100	AP Art History	0.5					50
	Business						
200	Business Systems Technology	1.0					50
201	Web Design I	1.0				50	50
202	Web Design II	1.0					50
	Computer Science						
300	AP Computer Science A	1.0			50	50	50
301	AP Computer Science AB	1.0				50	50
302	Computer Programming Basic I	0.5	50	50	50	50	50
	World Languages						
400	Latin I	1.0		50	50	50	100
401	Latin II	1.0			50	50	100
402	Latin III	1.0				50	100
403	Spanish I	1.0	50	50	50	100	100
404	Spanish II	1.0		50	50	100	100
	Health						
500	Life Management Skills	0.5			50	50	50
	Language Arts						
600	English I / English I Honors	1.0			50	50	100
601	English II / English II Honors	1.0		50	50	50	100
602	English III / English III Honors	1.0		50	50	50	100
603	English IV /English IV Honors	1.0	50	50	50	50	100
604	AP English Language and Composition	1.0	50	100	100	100	100
605	AP English Literature and Composition	1.0		100	100	100	100
	Mathematics						
700	Algebra I a	1.0		50	50	50	100
701	Algebra I b	1.0			50	50	100
702	Algebra I / Algebra I Honors	1.0	50	50	50	50	100
703	Algebra II / Algebra II Honors	1.0		50	50	50	100
704	AP Calculus AB	1.0	50	100	100	100	100
705	Geometry / Geometry Honors	1.0	50	50	50	50	100
706	Pre-Calculus	1.0		50	50	50	100
	Physical Education						
800	Fitness Lifestyle Design	0.5				50	50
801	Personal Fitness	0.5				50	50
	Science						
900	AP Biology	1.0	50	50	50	50	50
901	Biology / Biology Honors	1.0		50	50	50	50
902	Chemistry / Chemistry Honors	1.0	50	50	50	50	50
903	Earth Science / Earth Science Honors	1.0		50	50	50	50
904	Marine Science / Marine Science Honors	1.0	50	50	50	100	100
904	Physics / Physics Honors	1.0	50	50	50	100	100
904	**Social Studies**						
1000	American Government / Am. Gov't. Honors	1.0		50	50	50	50
1001	American History / Am. Hist. Honors	1.0		50	50	50	50
1002	AP Microeconomics	1.0	50	50	50	50	50
1003	AP Macroeconomics	1.0					50
1004	AP U.S. Government and Politics	1.0				50	100
1005	AP U.S. History	1.0				50	100
1006	Economics / Economics Honors	1.0		50	50	100	100
1007	Global Studies	1.0					50
1008	World History / World History Honors	1.0				50	100
	Study Skills						
1100	Thinking and Learning Strategies	0.5	50	50	50	50	50
1102	SAT Prep	0.5	50	50	50	50	50
	Middle School Courses						
	Art						
2000	Orientation to Art 2-D	0.5					50
	Business						
2100	Keyboarding	0.5			50	50	50
	Study Skills						
2200	Reading 1, grade 6	1.0					50
2200	**Language Arts**						
2300	Language Arts 1	1.0					50
2301	Language Arts 2	1.0				50	50
2302	Language Arts 3	1.0			50	50	50
	Mathematics						
2400	Mathematics 1	1.0					50
2401	Mathematics 2	1.0				50	50
2402	Mathematics 3	1.0			50	50	50
	Science						
2500	Comprehensive Science 1	1.0					50
2501	Comprehensive Science 2	1.0				50	50
2502	Comprehensive Science 3	1.0			50	50	50
	Social Studies						
2600	World Cultures	1.0					50
2601	U.S.History	1.0				50	50
2602	World Geography	1.0			50	50	50
	Elementary School Courses						
	World Languages						
3000	Introduction to World Languages (designed by NH teachers)	0.5				200	200

Appendix C: Top 10 Myths About Virtual Schools

Provided by NACOL

1. Myth: Virtual schools are a separate delivery system from traditional education.
Truth: There are more than 500,000 enrollments in online courses across the U.S, in schools and districts, meeting rigorous state academic standards as virtual schools provide courses to students inside schools. Online courses are in all 50 states and make it possible to offer advanced courses or instruction that are otherwise not offered at the local level.

2. Myth: Online courses are for gifted and talented students only.
Truth: Online courses have worked well with students of all kinds, including at-risk students, students in urban and rural areas, those with limited English proficiency, and those with special needs. Online learning has also been used successfully as part of systemic reforms to help students who are performing below grade level in large urban school districts.

3. Myth: Online courses lack interaction.
Truth: Students typically have more one-on-one interactions with their teachers and fellow students in online courses, especially when team projects are assigned. Teachers report getting to know their students better, and students who are shy or do not think well “on their feet” tend to contribute more in online environments. Students are often actively interacting with both resources and others in online environments.

4. Myth: Online students are isolated and therefore will be socially disadvantaged. Truth: In fact, students often engage actively both online and off as they complete assignments and socialize with other students and adults in their schools, at home, and in the community. Online students typically take only one or two courses online, blending their learning opportunities with traditional instruction in brick-and-mortar schools.

5. Myth: Online teachers have easy jobs. Truth: Online teachers report that they work much harder and spend more hours online than in the classroom, but that they love it. They do not simply “move a class online” and “put up what they teach.” Online instructional design, writing, management of instruction, and communicating with students can take considerable time and be quite different from what goes on inside a traditional classroom.

6. Myth: Online courses have to be developed from scratch.
Truth: Many online courses already exist that meet state standards and are accredited by recognized organizations. These online resources have been developed by states, private business, and independent organizations. At least initially, collaborating and sharing these options may be more cost-effective and practical for school systems than developing online instruction in-house.

7. Myth: Online courses are easier for students than regular courses.
Truth: Most online courses are not condensed or easier versions of regular courses. They are aligned to rigorous state standards. They require active participation and operate in settings under supervision of state-certified teachers, require students take state assessment tests, have attendance policies, and have competency-based academic progress requirements in effect.

8. Myth: A student is more likely to cheat online. Truth: Cheating is no more prevalent online than in the classroom. In addition, there are many technological ways to deter it and track it. In many cases, the online venue and communication enables teachers to get to know their students' idiosyncrasies and skills much better. Teachers say that student writing has a voice and that it is often easier to spot work that is inconsistent or unlike earlier communication in online environments.

9. Myth: Virtual schools are about technology.
Truth: Virtual schools are about curriculum and instruction for students. The “medium” is not the message because the student, instructor, content, and learning goals are key. Networks simply make it possible to provide communication, access to extended resources, and use of sound, graphics, video, text, interactivity, and other digital capabilities to strengthen instruction. Most schools have the basic technology, Web browsers, plug-in software, and access that are needed.

10. Myth: Online courses represent an “add-on” to already burdened school systems and teachers.
Truth: Online education does not represent an “add-on.” It does represent an opportunity to take advantage of online resources, enable teachers to help students learn in ways that match students’ needs and learning style, and transform schools. Online courses may or may not decrease costs, depending on how budgets are allocated and how online courses are integrated into instruction. Training and support of teachers is important.

From: http://www.nacol.org/resources/VS%20Top%2010%20Myths%20draft%20040606%20SP.pdf

Appendix D: Student Behavior Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

VLACS expects a full commitment to academic integrity from each VLACS student. Your signature on your Course Request Form (CRF) is your commitment to academic integrity as a student at VLACS.

Academic integrity means:

Your work on each assignment will be completely your own;
Your collaboration with another classmate on any assignment will be pre-approved by your instructor;
You will not practice plagiarism in any form;
You will not allow others to copy your work;
You will not misuse content from the Internet.

Plagiarism is defined as follows: copying or using ideas or words (from another person, an online classmate, or an Internet or print source) and presenting them as your own.

Please be aware that all VLACS instructors utilize a myriad of technologies to check student work for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has plagiarized work in any manner, the student will be subject to consequences determined by VLACS administration and may be removed from the course with a failing grade.

Right to Privacy Policy

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will abide by the student privacy guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The following persons have access to student records:

* VLACS Board of Trustee members
* President and CEO. administrative team, and professional staff of the school (teachers, guidance counselor, the General Counsel)
* Appropriate administrative support staff members and other professionals who have a legitimate educational or legal interest in student records as designated by the CEO.

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School provides an academic transcript to the student's primary school of record upon completion of the online course(s), or upon any request of the primary school and/or student's legal guardian.

In accordance with state and federal privacy laws, students who attain the age of 18 may transfer certain rights related to their academic records. To learn more about this please contact your guidance counselor.

Some schools assign a lab facilitator to help students who use school labs to access VLACS courses. Facilitators will have access to students' online work. Facilitators will not have access to students' demographics.

No member of the VLACS staff is authorized to release student information without the written permission of the student's legal guardian or without approval of the VLACS CEO.

Names, images, and/or course work of VLACS students will not be published in print, video/film, or on our website without written student and guardian consent.

All VLACS students are provided a unique password to access online courses. It is the student's responsibility to keep his/her password in confidence.

Statistical Information: We use a web statistics tracking application to track visitors to our site, but this data does not include any personally identifying information such as name or email address. Individual identifying information is not provided to any other party without your consent, or as otherwise required by law. However, aggregated and anonymous data about groups of members may be collected and shared with participating agencies and/or companies. An example of such information might include, "X% of visitors come to our site between the hours of 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. "

Security Information: All the data you provide to us is protected to ensure both the privacy and security of your data. We use state-of-the art technology to keep your personal information as secure as possible to ensure that no one will be able to tamper with, intercept or access your data. Remember to keep your account information private and secure; do not share your password with anyone!

Cookies: We may, from time to time, use cookies when you log in to your account. These cookies allow us to remember you when you visit our site. Although one cookie would reside on your computer so that we can recognize you each time you visit our site, any session-specific cookies will expire once you shut down your browser.

Student Contact and Course Drop Policy

Only through continuous communication can students be successful in an online course. Within each course the instructor outlines the weekly minimum work requirements. It is essential that the student and instructor maintain regular contact. To ensure that our students are aware of this commitment, the four-part process below will be followed:

1. If the student does not submit the expected number of assignment(s) within a period of seven (7) consecutive days, the student and parent(s) will receive a letter notifying them of the student's unacceptable pace for submitting assignments.

2. If the student does not respond to the letter by submitting assignments within seven (7) days, the instructor(s) will make a telephone call to the student/parent(s).

3. If the student does not respond by submitting assignments within fourteen (14) days of

the initial letter, VLACS will assume that the student does not intend to remain in the course, and the student will be administratively dropped from the course.

4. Upon completion of the course and return of course materials, an official final grade report will be sent electronically to the student's school of record for inclusion on the student's official transcript.

Student Agreement: Students are expected to agree to the following as part of the registration process.

I acknowledge that during the first 28 days of being activated into my VLACS course I may drop the course without penalty. I understand that for each online course there are a minimum number of assignments that must be completed each week. Failure to submit the minimum number of assignments on a weekly basis will result in my removal from the course and may result in a failing grade being assigned to my academic transcript. If I drop the course after completing 50% of the class requirements and fail to take the final exam, Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will issue an "F" for my final grade.

Student Code of Conduct

Internet access is required for all VLACS students, but access must be used in a responsible, safe, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. With expanded access to electronic information, availability of inappropriate material is not uncommon. Some sites contain illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive information. Although it is impossible to control such misuses, we believe that with responsible use, the benefits of the Internet as an educational tool outweigh the negatives. We especially appreciate partnering with parents to teach responsible Internet use.

Please review the following netiquette rules and VLACS expectations carefully:

* Students are responsible for good behavior on the VLACS course management system, just as they are in a traditional school building. Always use a computer in a way that shows consideration and respect. It is illegal to use obscene, profane, threatening, or disrespectful language. (f.s. 847.001 Obscene Literature; Profanity).
* We take integrity and authenticity of student work very seriously at VLACS. Do not cut, copy, or plagiarize Internet content or the work of your online classmates. VLACS instructors do utilize technologies to check for authenticity. Copying, knowingly allowing others to copy from you, and/or misusing Internet content could result in removal from our courses.
* Security is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you can identify a security problem in the school's computers, network, or Internet connection, notify a teacher or other school personnel.
* It is illegal to create harmful computer viruses. (f.s. 815 Computer-Related Crimes).
* Email is not private. Never say anything via email that you wouldn't mind seeing on the school bulletin board or in the local newspaper.
* Beware of emails from anyone, particularly adults you don't know, asking for personal information, attempting to arrange meetings, or engaging in personal contact. Alert your teacher or other Virtual Learning Academy Charter School employee of any message you

receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.

* Email with your online classmates should be course-related. It is prohibited to send unsolicited email to your online classmates.

* Email addresses that use profanity or may be construed as offensive, shall not be permitted for VLACS correspondence. The VLACS administration reserves the right to determine if student email addresses are inappropriate. When necessary, students will be asked to use an alternative email address or the will not be allowed to participate in VLACS courses.

* Protect your password. Keep it secret from anyone except your parents.

* Virtual Learning Academy Charter School assumes no responsibility for any phone charges, line costs or usage fees for connectivity to the Internet.

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School administrators will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through Internet access. In the event there is a claim that you have violated this policy, you will be provided with notice of the suspected violation and have an opportunity to present an explanation. Any violations may result in removal from VLACS course(s), as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

From: http://www.flvs.net/students_parents/index_of_links_sp.php

Appendix E: Full-time Teacher Job Description

Job Title: Teacher

Reports to: CEO or other administrator as assigned by the CEO

Education, certification, experience: Bachelor's degree or higher, valid New Hampshire teacher's certificate, classroom teaching experience preferred

Primary activities:

Plans, prepares, and implements instructional activities that contribute to a climate where students are actively engaged in meaningful learning experiences.
Identifies, selects, and modifies instructional resources to meet the needs of the students with varying backgrounds, learning styles, and special needs.
Assists in assessing changing curricular needs and offers plans for improvement.
Maintains effective and efficient record keeping procedures.
Provides a positive environment in which students are encouraged to be actively engaged in the learning process.
Communicates effectively, both orally and in writing, with students, parents, and other professionals on a regular basis.
Collaborates with peers to enhance the instructional environment.
Models professional and ethical standards when dealing with students, parents, peers, and community.
Ensures that student growth and achievement is continuous and appropriate for age group, subject area, and/or program classification.
Establishes and maintains cooperative working relationships with students, parents, and schools, as measured by VLACS district/school survey results.
Assumes responsibility for meeting his/her course and school-wide student performance goals.
Meets professional obligations through efficient work habits such as: meeting deadlines, honoring schedules, coordinating resources and meetings in an effective and timely manner, and demonstrates respect for others.
Participates in scheduled Virtual Learning Academy Charter School professional development offerings.
Participates in the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School mentoring program.
Additional duties as assigned.

Job Requirements

Ability to work on a flexible schedule including day, evening, and weekend hours, as needed.
The ability to work independently with little direct supervision
Ability to work from home
Excellent communication skills, both oral and written
Customer focused approach
High degree of flexibility

Demonstrated ability to work well in fast paced environment
Team player track record
Technologically proficient and can use all applications required by the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School
Willingness to travel on occasion for marketing and state testing events.

Adapted from:
Florida Virtual School, Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow, Connections Academy

Appendix F: Conditions of Teacher Employment

The following items are a list of expectations and conditions for teachers employed to serve in the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School program.

All school policies and procedures must be followed.
Teachers must be accessible via telephone (land-line or cell phone and VOIP) and e-mail.
Daily use of the Staff Log Database is required.
Teachers are responsible for providing hardware as specified in the Staff Member Equipment Information sheet.
Teachers are responsible for their own consumable supplies.
Teachers are responsible for their own Internet connectivity as well as a publishable phone line for VLACS business. The phone must have a voice mail capability to record incoming messages.
Teachers are responsible for their own consumable supplies.
Teachers participate in a continuous monitoring and evaluation process.
Teachers who will be inaccessible to their students for more than five consecutive days need prior approval from the CEO.
All employees must clear a current background check.
Attendance at staff meetings is required via phone, web broadcast, or video conference for all full-time staff. Staff members located in the Exeter area are welcome to attend meetings at the VLACS offices. Adjunct faculty are required to read all meeting minutes. A list of required meetings for adjunct faculty will be published each term.

The VLACS will provide teachers the following items necessary to perform their tasks:

A VLACS e-mail account (firstinitiallastname@VLACS.org)
Limited hardware and technical support
Training in the use of software (learning management system, student information system, etc.)
Professional development institutes where teachers are taught how to teach in an online environment
Calling cards for phone contact with students and parents when a VOIP telephony solution is not available.

The VLACS will reimburse the teacher for the following items when applicable:

Travel expenses incurred to attend required trainings or meetings will be reimbursed at the established federal mileage rate. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed for optional trainings unless approved by administration in advance.
$150 per day for each day of on-site training in preparation for serving as an online instructor in addition to the mileage rate.
Background check and fingerprinting

Sick Leave/Emergency Leave

Full-time teachers will qualify for 5 days of sick leave/emergency leave per semester. Sick leave/emergency leave is cumulative from year to year to a maximum of fifty days. Part-time teachers will qualify for 1 day of sick leave/emergency leave per semester, per course taught.

Vacation

The VLACS will publish an annual calendar which will show holidays and vacations during which the school will be officially closed. Whenever possible the VLACS will close class sessions during traditional school vacations weeks and holidays. Vacation days are not available when VLACS classes are otherwise in session.

Appendix G: VLACS Formative and Summative Teacher Evaluation

Adapted from: Southern Region Educational Board, Online Teaching Evaluation for State Virtual Schools, http://www.sreb.org/programs/EdTech/pubs/2006Pubs/OnlineTeachingEvaluationSVS.asp

Academic Preparation

Standards	**Indicators**	**To what extent does the teacher meet the standards?**
The teacher meets the professional teaching standards established by a state-licensing agency or the teacher has academic credentials in the field in which he or she is teaching.	1. Meets the state's professional teaching standards or has academic credentials in the field in which he or she is teaching 2. Provides evidence that he or she has credentials in the field of study to be taught 3. Knows the content of the subject to be taught and understands how to teach the content to students 4. Facilitates the construction of knowledge through an understanding of how students learn in specific subject areas 5. Continues to update academic knowledge and skills	

Observations and Action Steps (ongoing) Date:

Content Knowledge and Skills for Instructional Technology

Standards	Indicators	To what extent does the teacher meet the standards?
The teacher has the prerequisite technology skills to teach online.	1. Demonstrates the ability to effectively use word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation software 2. Demonstrates effective use of Internet browsers, e-mail applications and appropriate online etiquette 3. Demonstrates the ability to modify and add content and assessment, using an online Learning Management System (LMS) 4. Incorporates multimedia and visual resources into an online module 5. Utilizes synchronous and asynchronous tools (e.g., discussion boards, chat tools, electronic whiteboards) effectively 6. Troubleshoots typical software and hardware problems 7. Demonstrates the ability to effectively use and incorporate subject-specific and developmentally appropriate software in an online learning module 8. Demonstrates growth in technology knowledge and skills in order to stay current with emerging technologies	

Observations and Action Steps (ongoing) **Date:**

Online Teaching and Learning Methodology, Management, Knowledge, Skills and Delivery

Standards	Indicators	To what extent does the teacher meet the standards?
The teacher plans, designs and incorporates strategies to encourage active learning, interaction, participation and collaboration in the online environment.	1. Demonstrates effective strategies and techniques that actively engage students in the learning process (e.g., team problem-solving, in-class writing, analysis, synthesis and evaluation instead of passive lectures) 2. Facilitates and monitors appropriate interaction among students 3. Builds and maintains a community of learners by creating a relationship of trust, demonstrating effective facilitation skills, establishing consistent and reliable expectations, and supporting and encouraging independence and creativity 4. Promotes learning through group interaction 5. Leads online instruction groups that are goal-oriented, focused, project-based and inquiry-oriented 6. Demonstrates knowledge and responds appropriately to the cultural background and learning needs of nonnative English speakers 7. Differentiates instruction based on students' learning styles and needs and assists students in assimilating information to gain understanding and knowledge 8. Demonstrates growth in teaching strategies in order to benefit from current research and practice	

The teacher provides online leadership in a manner that promotes student success through regular feedback, prompt response and clear expectations.	1. Consistently models effective communication skills and maintains records of applicable communications with students 2. Encourages interaction and cooperation among students, encourages active learning, provides prompt feedback, communicates high expectations, and respects diverse talents and learning styles 3. Persists, in a consistent and reasonable manner, until students are successful 4. Establishes and maintains ongoing and frequent teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction and teacher-parent interaction 5. Provides an online syllabus that details the terms of class interaction for both teacher and students, defines clear expectations for both teacher and students, defines the grading criteria, establishes inappropriate behavior criteria for both teacher and students, and explains the course organization to students 6. Provides a syllabus with objectives, concepts and learning outcomes in a clearly written, concise format 7. Uses student data to inform instruction, guides and monitors students' management of their time, monitors learner progress with available tools and develops an intervention plan for unsuccessful learners 8. Provides timely, constructive feedback to students about assignments and questions	

	9. Gives students clear expectations about teacher response time	
The teacher models, guides and encourages legal, ethical, safe and healthy behavior related to technology use.	1. Facilitates student investigations of the legal and ethical issues related to technology and society 2. Establishes standards for student behavior that are designed to ensure academic integrity and appropriate uses of the Internet and written communication 3. Identifies the risks of academic dishonesty for students 4. Demonstrates an awareness of how the use of technology may impact student testing performance 5. Uses course content that complies with intellectual property rights policies and fair use standards 6. Provides students with an understanding of the importance of Acceptable Use Policies (AUP) 7. Demonstrates knowledge of resources and techniques for dealing with issues arising from inappropriate use of electronically accessed data or information 8. Informs students of their right to privacy and the conditions under which their names or online submissions may be shared with others	
The teacher has experienced online	1. Applies experiences as an online student	

learning from the perspective of a student.	to develop and implement successful strategies for online teaching 2. Demonstrates the ability to anticipate challenges and problems in the online classroom 3. Demonstrates an understanding of the perspective of the online student through appropriate responsiveness and a supportive attitude toward students	
The teacher understands and is responsive to students with special needs in the online classroom.	1. Understands that students have varied talents and skills and uses appropriate strategies designed to include all students 2. Provides activities, modified as necessary, that are relevant to the needs of all students 3. Adapts and adjusts instruction to create multiple paths to learning objectives 4. Encourages collaboration and interaction among all students 5. Exhibits the ability to assess student knowledge and instruction in a variety of ways 6. Provides student-centered lessons and activities that are based on concepts of active learning and that are connected to real-world applications	
The teacher demonstrates competencies in creating and implementing assessments in online learning environments in ways that assure validity and reliability of	1. Creates or selects fair, adequate and appropriate assessment instruments to measure online learning that reflect sufficient content validity (i.e., that adequately cover the content they are designed to measure),	

instruments and procedures.	reliability and consistency over time 2. Implements online assessment measures and materials in ways that ensure instrument validity and reliability	
The teacher develops and delivers assessments, projects, and assignments that meet standards-based learning goals and assesses learning progress by measuring student achievement of learning goals.	1. Continually reviews all materials and Web resources for their alignment with course objectives and state and local standards and for their appropriateness 2. Creates assignments, projects and assessments that are aligned with students' different visual, auditory and hands-on ways of learning 3. Includes authentic assessment (i.e., the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of acquired knowledge and skills as opposed to testing isolated skills or retained facts) as part of the evaluation process 4. Provides continuous evaluation of students to include pre- and post-testing and student input throughout the course 5. Demonstrates an understanding of the relationships between and among the assignments, assessments and standards-based learning goals	
The teacher demonstrates competencies in using data and findings from assessments and other data sources to modify instructional methods and content and to guide student learning.	1. Assesses each student's background and content knowledge and uses this data to plan instruction 2. Reviews student responses to test items to identify issues related to test validity or instructional effectiveness	

	3. Uses observational data (e.g., tracking data in electronic courses, Web logs, e-mail) to monitor course progress and effectiveness 4. Creates opportunities for self-reflection or assessment of teaching effectiveness within the online environment (e.g., classroom assessment techniques, teacher evaluations, teacher peer reviews)	
The teacher demonstrates frequent and effective strategies that enable both teacher and students to complete self- and pre-assessments.	1. Employs ways to assess student readiness for course content and method of delivery 2. Employs ways for students to effectively evaluate and assess their own readiness for course content and method of delivery 3. Understands that student success (e.g., grade, level of participation, mastery of content, completion percentage) is an important measure of teaching and course success 4. Provides opportunities for student self-assessment within courses	

Observations and Action Steps (ongoing) **Date:**

Summary Evaluation (completed at end of year)

Description of overall performance, how well expectations were met, and any achievements beyond expectations.

Goals for next year (completed at end of year)

Evaluator's Signature:

Date:

Teacher's Signature:

Date:

Appendix H: Teacher Salary Scales

Teacher Salary Scales

2007-2008

	Per Student Rate		Per Course Salary – 2 Semester Adjunct			2 Semester Salary (5 courses)			3 Semester Salary (5 courses)		
Degree/Experience	20 students	21-30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students
Bachelors	$218	$240	$4,360.00	$5,559.00	$6,758.00	$21,800.00	$27,795.00	$33,790.00	$32,700.00	$41,692.50	$50,685.00
Masters	$240	$264	$4,796.00	$6,114.90	$7,433.80	$23,980.00	$30,574.50	$37,169.00	$35,970.00	$45,861.75	$55,753.50

Longevity stipends per year @ VLANH for full-time teachers 0

Annual increase 1.05

2008-2009

	Per Student Rate		Per Course Salary – 2 Semester Adjunct			2 Semester Salary (5 courses)			3 Semester Salary (5 courses)		
Degree/Experience	20 students	21-30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students
Bachelors	$229	$252	$4,578.00	$5,836.95	$7,095.90	$22,890.00	$29,184.75	$35,479.50	$34,335.00	$43,777.13	$53,219.25
Masters	$252	$277	$5,035.80	$6,420.65	$7,805.49	$25,179.00	$32,103.23	$39,027.45	$37,768.50	$48,154.84	$58,541.18

Longevity stipends per year @ VLANH for full-time teachers 500

Annual increase 1.05

2009-2010

	Per Student Rate		Per Course Salary – 2 Semester Adjunct			2 Semester Salary (5 courses)			3 Semester Salary (5 courses)		
Degree/Experience	20 students	21-30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students
Bachelors	$240	$264	$4,806.90	$6,128.80	$7,450.70	$24,034.50	$30,643.99	$37,253.48	$36,051.75	$45,965.98	$55,880.21
Masters	$264	$291	$5,287.59	$6,741.68	$8,195.76	$26,437.95	$33,708.39	$40,978.82	$39,656.93	$50,562.58	$61,468.23

Longevity stipends per year @ VLANH for full-time teachers 500

Annual increase 1.07

2010-2011

	Per Student Rate		Per Course Salary – 2 Semester Adjunct			2 Semester Salary (5 courses)			3 Semester Salary (5 courses)		
Degree/Experience	20 students	21-30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students
Bachelors	$257	$283	$5,143.38	$6,557.81	$7,972.24	$25,716.92	$32,789.07	$39,861.22	$38,575.37	$49,183.60	$59,791.83
Masters	$283	$311	$5,657.72	$7,213.59	$8,769.47	$28,288.61	$36,067.97	$43,847.34	$42,432.91	$54,101.96	$65,771.01

Longevity stipends per year @ VLANH for full-time teachers 500

Annual increase 1.07

2011-2012

	Per Student Rate		Per Course Salary – 2 Semester Adjunct			2 Semester Salary (5 courses)			3 Semester Salary (5 courses)		
Degree/Experience	20 students	21-30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students	20 students	25 students	30 students
Bachelors	$275	$303	$5,503.42	$7,016.86	$8,530.30	$27,517.10	$35,084.30	$42,651.50	$41,275.65	$52,626.45	$63,977.26
Masters	$303	$333	$6,053.76	$7,718.55	$9,383.33	$30,268.81	$38,592.73	$46,916.65	$45,403.21	$57,889.10	$70,374.98

Longevity stipends per year @ VLANH for full-time teachers 1000

Appendix I: VLACS Medical Stipends

Medical Stipends

	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	2 Semester Teacher, admin ass't	Administrator or 3 Sem teacher	2 Semester Teacher, admin ass't	Administrator or 3 Sem teacher	2 Semester Teacher, admin ass't	Administrator or 3 Sem teacher	2 Semester Teacher, admin ass't	Administrator or 3 Sem teacher	2 Semester Teacher, admin ass't	Administrator or 3 Sem teacher
1.0 FTE	$7,000.00	$9,000.00	$8,000.00	$10,000.00	$9,000.00	$11,000.00	$10,000.00	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	$14,000.00

Appendix J: Admissions Process

Step 1: Student and Parent/Guardian Information

Student information

Name, birth date, gender, race, email address, phone number, home address, current grade

Parent or guardian information

Name(s), email address, phone number(s), home address, employer, work address, work phone

Step 2: School information

Name of school, address, phone number, principal's name

Step 3: Forms to be signed by student and parent/guardian

- Right to privacy
- Academic integrity
- Student code of conduct
- Student contact and drop policy
- Technical requirements for VLACS courses

Step 4: Forms to be signed or provided by parent/guardian

- Residency affidavit (appendix K)
- School forms release (appendix L)
- Parental permission for the release of information (appendix M)
- Copy of student's birth certificate
- Immunization verification
  - Provided by health care provider
  - Required immunizations may be found at: http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/IMMUNIZATION/LIBRARY/Best+Practice/immunizations-info.htm

Step 5: Full-time or part-time status

Students who declare themselves as part-time students (.5 to four credits) will be required to provide the following information:

- Online education survey
- Test results which document the student's reading ability

Students who declare themselves as full-time students (five credits) will be required to provide the following information:

- Online education survey
- Test results which document the student's reading ability

Essay which explains why the student believes that he/she will be a successful VLACS student

Interview with a VLACS representative, prospective student, and a parent/guardian. This interview may take place by phone. The purpose of this interview will be to determine if the prospective student is motivated, independent, self-disciplined, and has the supports necessary to be a successful VLACS student.

Step 6: Course placement

Students who successfully complete steps 1 through 5 will be placed in either a full-time or part-time student course request pool. If there are more requests for a course than can be accommodated by the VLACS then a lottery will be held.

1. Full-time students will be assigned to requested courses.
2. Part-time students will be assigned to requested courses.
3. If a lottery is required for either group it will be organized as follows:
   - 3.1. The lottery will be administered by one VLACS employee and witnessed by either another VLACS employee or a member of the public.
   - 3.2. All students will be assigned a lottery identification number which will be written on 3” x 2.5” inch cards.
   - 3.3. All cards will be placed in a box.
   - 3.4. The box will be shaken to redistribute the cards.
   - 3.5. Cards will be withdrawn from the box and the lottery numbers recorded. All cards must be selected before the lottery is deemed complete.
   - 3.6. Lottery numbers will be matched with students to determine who has been selected to take the requested course.
   - 3.7. A waiting list will be generated and students will be contacted in the order in which they were selected during the lottery process.

Step 7: Starting a VLACS Course

All VLACS students will be contacted by the teachers assigned to the course selected by the student for an introductory phone call. Both the student and at least one parent/guardian must participate in the introductory phone call. A student will be considered officially enrolled in a course once this call has been completed. A student may withdraw from a VLACS course within 20 days of this call without academic penalty.

Appendix K: Residency Affidavit

I attest that I am the legal guardian of the child/children listed below:

Name _____DOB _____

Name _____DOB _____

Name _____DOB _____

and that I and the above-named child/children are legal residents of and reside in the Town of _____in the State of _____.

Our physical address is: _____.

I have been residing at this address since _____. I intend that I shall continue as a resident of that town during the _____school year. I agree that, immediately upon any change in my residency or the residency of my children, I shall inform the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School.

The facts set forth in this residency affidavit are true and complete. I understand that providing misleading or false information about residency is a criminal offense.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

To be completed by a Notary Public/Justice of the Peace

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

COUNTY OF _____, ss.

On this _____day of _____, 200_, personally appeared the above-named _____, known to me or satisfactorily proven to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument, and acknowledged that he/she executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

Before me,

_____

Notary Public/Justice of the Peace

Developed by Susan Hollins, January 4, 2006

Appendix L: Request for Transcripts and Records

Date:_____

Please give this request to the Principal of your present school.

Applicant's Name:_____

Town of Legal Residence:_____

To the Principal:
This student is applying to the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School. Please send us a transcript of records for the past three years, including any standardized test scores that are available.

I hereby give my permission to _____School to release the records

of_____to the Virtual Learning Academy

Charter School.

Mailing Address: Admissions Office
Virtual Learning Academy Charter School
38 Linden Street
Exeter, NH, 03833

Signature of Parent/Guardian:_____

Comments:

From: http://www.nhequestrianacademy.org/Applications.htm

Appendix M: Parental Permission for the Release of Information

The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School is required to obtain written consent from the parent or eligible student before personally identifiable information from a student's education records is disclosed to any party other than those who are permitted access by law. Consent is also required before personally identifiable information is used for any other purpose than to aid in the planning for and provision of appropriate educational services to the student.

Parents/Guardian:_____

Student:_____

Address:_____

SASID #: _____ DATE:_____

Records to be disclosed:

□ IEP ※ 504 plan ※ tests results which document reading level of student

□ other: _____

Purpose of Disclosure: Planning and provision of appropriate educational services.

Records to be disclosed by: School _____

Address _____

_____

Records to be disclosed to: Virtual Learning Academy Charter School
38 Linden Street
Exeter, NH 03833

PARENTS: Please indicate your response to this request by checking the box which reflects your decision and then sign the document in the space provided. A copy of the records to be released will be provided to you upon request. Thank you.

▫ I CONSENT to the disclosure of the information as described above.

▫ I DO NOT CONSENT to the disclosure of the information as described above.

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____Date: _____

Printed Name:_____

Appendix N: Technical Requirements for VLACS Courses

Browser Plug-ins

Sun Java 1.4.2 JRE or higher (free)
Sun Java 3D 1.3 or higher (free)
Flash 7.0 or higher (free)
Acrobat Reader 5.0 or higher (free)

Software Requirements

Microsoft Office or OpenOffice (free) or NeoOffice (Macintosh, free)
Skype Internet based telephone (free)
Web browser
- Internet Explorer version 6.0 or higher (PC, free)
- FireFox 2.0 or higher (PC & Macintosh, free)
- Safari (Macintosh, free)

Internet Connection

A broadband connection (DSL or cable) is recommended. A 56K modem connection to the Internet will work, however, multimedia performance will be slow.

PC Requirements

Pentium II (233 MHz minimum, higher recommended)
Minimum of 3 gig free HDD space
Internet connection. A broadband connection is recommended.
Windows 2000, NT, XP, or Vista
256 MB RAM
12x CD-ROM (CD/DVD Recommended)
Display setting 1024x768 resolution
Printer required
Students need a method to backup work to a removable medium (Floppy, Zip, CD, or flash drive)
Audio: Sound card with speakers, microphone or headset

Macintosh Requirements

Power Mac G3
OSX
Students need a method to backup work to a removable medium (Floppy, Zip, CD, or flash drive)
128 MB Ram
Minimum of 3 gig free HDD space
12x CD ROM (CD/DVD Recommended)
Display setting 1024x768 resolution
Printer required
Audio: Speakers and microphone or headset

My son/daughter _____ will have regular access to a computer and Internet connection which meets the minimum requirements described above.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Appendix O: Annual Accountability Report Template

The School Accountability Report provides the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) with the opportunity to report on progress toward meeting the state and school expectations. This document is to be used as a template and guide for creating the annual accountability report.

SCHOOL

1. Description of the school
2. School Mission Statement
3. Summary of educational philosophy

TRUSTEES

1. Letter from Board of Trustee's Chair
2. List of Members of the Board of Trustees with details as defined
3. Summary of major policy decisions made by the Board of Trustees

STAFF

1. List of administrators and support personnel
2. List of teachers classes taught
3. Teacher attrition data

Characteristics: Full-time Teachers										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total										
Art										
Business										
Computer Science										
World Languages										
Health										

Characteristics: Full-time Teachers										
Language Arts										
Mathematics										
Physical Education										
Science										
Social Studies										
Study Skills										
MS Art										
MS Business										
MS Study Skills										
MS Language Arts										
MS Mathematics										
MS Science										
MS Social Studies										
Elementary World Languages										
First yr teacher										
1-3 yrs F2F experience										
4-10 yrs F2F experience										
11-20 yrs F2F experience										
20-30 yrs F2F experience										
30+ yrs F2F experience										
Previously retired teacher										
NH resident										
Out of state resident										
Meets HQT requirements										
Alternative certification										
Non-certified										

Characteristics: Part-time Teachers										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total										
Art										
Business										
Computer Science										
World Languages										
Health										
Language Arts										
Mathematics										
Physical Education										
Science										
Social Studies										
Study Skills										
MS Art										
MS Business										
MS Study Skills										
MS Language Arts										
MS Mathematics										
MS Science										
MS Social Studies										
Elementary World Languages										
First yr teacher										
1-3 yrs F2F experience										
4-10 yrs F2F experience										
11-20 yrs F2F experience										

Characteristics: Part-time Teachers										
20-30 yrs F2F experience										
30+ yrs F2F experience										
Previously retired teacher										
NH resident										
Out of state resident										
Meets HQT requirements										
Alternative certification										
Non-certified										

STUDENTS

1. Student Demographics
2. Total number of student applications received
3. Course completion rates
4. Drop-out rates
5. Average GPA by course
6. Number of students who have been expelled or who have been suspended

Enrollment: Part-time Students										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total										
Grade 12										
Grade 11										
Grade 10										
Grade 9										
Grade 8										
Grade 7										

Enrollment: Part-time Students										
Grade 6										
Grade 5										
IEP's										
African American										
White										
Hispanic										
Asian										
Home schooled										
Attend LEA										
Attend private school										
Out of state home schooled										
Out of state LEA										
Out of state private school										

Enrollment: Full-time Students										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total										
Grade 12										
Grade 11										
Grade 10										
Grade 9										
Grade 8										
Grade 7										
Grade 6										

Enrollment: Full-time Students										
Grade 5										
IEP's										
African American										
White										
Hispanic										
Asian										
NH resident										
Out of state resident										

Course Completion Rates: Part-Time Students										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total										
Grade 12										
Grade 11										
Grade 10										
Grade 9										
Grade 8										
Grade 7										
Grade 6										
Grade 5										
IEP's										
African American										
White										
Hispanic										
Asian										

Course Completion Rates: Part-Time Students										
Home schooled										
Attend LEA										
Attend private school										
Out of state home schooled										
Out of state LEA										
Out of state private school										

Course Completion Rates: Full-Time Students										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total										
Grade 12										
Grade 11										
Grade 10										
Grade 9										
Grade 8										
Grade 7										
Grade 6										
Grade 5										
IEP's										
African American										
White										
Hispanic										
Asian										
NH resident										
Out of state resident										

Applications: Part-time Students										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total
Total										
Grade 12										
Grade 11										
Grade 10										
Grade 9										
Grade 8										
Grade 7										
Grade 6										
Grade 5										
IEP's										
African American										
White										
Hispanic										
Asian										
Home schooled										
Attend LEA										
Attend private school										
Out of state home schooled										
Out of state LEA										
Out of state private school										

Applications: Full-time Students										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total
Total										
Grade 12										
Grade 11										
Grade 10										
Grade 9										
Grade 8										
Grade 7										
Grade 6										
Grade 5										
IEP's										
African American										
White										
Hispanic										
Asian										
NH resident										
Out of state										

Applications: By Discipline										
	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total	Accepted	Total
Total										
Art										

Applications: By Discipline										
Business										
Computer Science										
World Languages										
Health										
Language Arts										
Mathematics										
Physical Education										
Science										
Social Studies										
Study Skills										
MS Art										
MS Business										
MS Study Skills										
MS Language Arts										
MS Mathematics										
MS Science										
MS Social Studies										
Elementary World Languages										

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

1. Summary of external standardized test results for full-time students
2. Summary of internal assessment results for full-time students
3. Summary of performance relative to academic and other learning goals
4. NCLB summary
5. Summary of student, parent, and school surveys

CURRICULUM

1. Instructional days

2. Course offerings
3. Time spent on coursework
4. Teacher time with students
5. Student portfolio summary

PROGRESS TOWARD VLACS GOALS

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Student Goals					
All eligible New Hampshire students will be able to access VLACS courses through computers connected to the Internet from any location.					
Eighty percent, or more, of all enrolled students will complete their selected course(s).					
On average, full-time VLACS students will meet, or exceed, the average scores of New Hampshire students on state-mandated assessments.					
On average, full-time VLACS students will meet, or exceed, the average scores on administered nationally normed achievement tests.					
Eighty percent, or more, VLACS students will indicate on an annual survey that compared to traditional courses VLACS courses are of equal or better quality.					
Eighty percent, or more, students will indicate on an annual survey that communication with their teacher(s) has been good, or better.					
Eighty percent, or more, students will indicate on an annual survey that they would recommend VLACS to another student.					
Eighty percent, or more, of all full-time VLACS students will pursue admission into a post-secondary program of study.					
All full-time VLACS students will create a plan for post-secondary education, entering the workforce, or pursuing other interests after graduation.					
Parent Goals					
Eighty percent, or more, VLACS parents will indicate on an annual survey that compared to traditional courses VLACS courses are of equal or better quality.					

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Eighty percent, or more, parents will indicate on an annual survey that communication between their child's teacher(s) has been good, or better.					
Eighty percent, or more, parents will indicate on an annual survey that they would recommend VLACS to another parent.					
Staff Goals					
All teachers and administrators will be fully certified and meet highly qualified status as defined by New Hampshire and No Child Left Behind standards.					
Eighty percent, or more, of the VLACS staff members will indicate on an annual survey that they are provided with the necessary professional development opportunities to advance their skills and understanding of the methods for delivering and supporting learning using distance learning technologies.					
Eighty percent, or more, of the VLACS staff members will indicate on an annual survey that they have the necessary resources to support their work with students.					
Public School District Goals					
Eighty percent, or more, of responding school districts will indicate on an annual survey that their school encourages enrollment in VLACS courses?					
Eighty percent, or more, of responding school districts will indicate on an annual survey that VLACS benefits their school and students?					

FINANCE

1. Financial statement for the fiscal year 2007-2008
2. Balance sheet setting forth the charter school's assets, liabilities, and fund balances or equities.
3. Approved school budget for fiscal year 2008-2009

Appendix P: VLACS Five-Year Budget Projection

Proposed VLACS Budget										
Department	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition
Instruction										
Teacher salaries and benefits	$41,514	$124,541		$407,179		$593,290		$955,679		$1,684,034
Substitute salaries		$2,500		$5,700		$7,500		$10,900		$16,100
Teacher mentoring stipends				$4,500		$6,000		$10,500		$14,000
Student advisory stipends	$1,000			$5,000		$8,000		$15,600		$26,400
Regional student meetings		$22,000		$20,800		$22,400		$24,000		$25,600
FLVS courses	$110,250			$134,400		$79,100		$137,900		$215,950
Course resources		$26,275		$38,250		$41,250		$63,700		$92,375
Phone – calling cards		$1,250		$2,850		$3,750		$5,450		$8,050
Total Basic Instruction Costs	$152,764	$176,566	$0	$618,679	$0	$761,290	$0	$1,223,729	$0	$2,082,509
Professional Development										
Director of Professional Dev.				$23,112		$48,723		$52,164		$112,621
Summer PD for new teachers	$20,000		$40,000			$50,000		$60,000		$70,000
Teaching online 101	$5,000									
Supplies and meals for PD	$4,000		$6,000			$6,000		$9,000		$11,250
Professional Dev. Consultants	$8,000		$8,000			$8,000		$8,000		$10,000
Total Staff Development Costs	$37,000	$0	$54,000	$23,112	$0	$112,723	$0	$129,164	$0	$203,871
Student Services										
Student Services Consultant		$20,000		$20,000		$20,000				
Director of Student Services								$83,462		$90,096
Professional and technical services										
Travel										
Dues and fees										
Total Student Services	$0	$20,000	$0	$20,000	$0	$20,000	$0	$83,462	$0	$90,096
Curriculum Development										
Curriculum Director				$23,112		$48,723		$52,164		$90,096
Professional and technical services										
Course development						$43,194		$31,717		$23,900
Total Curriculum Development	$0	$0	$0	$23,112	$0	$91,917	$0	$83,881	$0	$113,996

Department	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition
School Administration										
CEO salary and benefits (begin July 10	$25,384	$76,152	$13,000	$93,982		$112,649		$120,510		$129,852
CFO and H.R.								$41,731		$45,048
Admin. Assistants salary and benefits (begin July 1)	$12,390	$37,171		$52,688		$55,921		$120,407		$197,146
Business Services Fee	$4,000	$6,000		$12,500		$16,000				
Consulting Services	$4,000	$5,000								
Legal fees & Audits	$2,000	$4,000		$7,000		$8,000		$9,000		$10,000
Travel	$1,000	$1,000		$2,000		$2,000		$2,000		$3,000
Postage	$4,000	$3,000		$9,000		$1,000		$10,000		$10,000
Copiers/printers lease	$3,000	$2,000		$6,000		$7,000		$8,000		$9,000
Supplies	$5,000	$5,000		$7,408		$9,146		$12,000		$13,000
Printing	$5,000	$3,000		$8,000		$10,000		$12,000		$12,000
Periodicals	$500			$500		$500		$1,000		$1,000
Virtual School Admin Software	$8,750			$19,950		$25,313		$37,463		$51,956
Training and implementation of VSA	$12,000									
Business and accounting software								$15,000		$15,000
Furniture	$13,770			$2,200		$3,000		$3,800		$3,000
Dues and fees	$2,000			$2,000		$2,000		$2,000		$2,000
Public relations/marketing	$18,000	$6,000	$8,411	$6,589		$15,000		$20,000		$20,000
Total School Administration	$120,795	$148,324	$21,411	$229,818	$0	$267,528	$0	$414,911	$0	$522,002
Information Technology										
CIO (begin May – 14 months)	$25,560	$76,681	$13,000	$79,446		$97,447		$104,328		$112,621
Supplies	$2,721	$2,329		$1,000		$2,250		$2,258		$3,142
Equipment	$43,250			$8,700		$7,000		$13,600		$10,000
Telecommunication – phone	$9,000			$9,000		$10,000		$11,000		$12,000
Telecommunication – Internet	$3,500	$3,500		$6,200		$6,400		$6,600		$6,600
Software		$3,350		$5,000		$6,000		$7,500		$7,950
Remote hosting service	$4,000	$10,000		$12,000		$15,000		$20,000		$22,000
Dues and fees										
Total Information Technology	$88,031	$95,860	$13,000	$121,346	$0	$144,097	$0	$165,286	$0	$174,313

Department	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition
Operation of Plant										
Rental	$5,000	$9,000		$15,000		$20,000		$50,000		$50,000
Renovation of office space	$8,000									
Other purchased services										
Total Operation of Plant	$13,000	$9,000		$15,000	$0	$20,000	$0	$50,000	$0	$50,000
Grand Total	$411,589	$449,750	$88,411	$1,051,066	$0	$1,417,556	$0	$2,150,432	$0	$3,236,788

	2007-2008		2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012	
	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition	Grant	Tuition
Tuition Revenue		$449,750		$1,051,066		$1,417,556		$2,150,432		$3,236,788
# classes		625		1425		1875		2775		4075
Tuition per class		$720		$738		$756		$775		$794
Grant Revenue	$411,589		$88,411							
Total Revenue (grant + tuition)		$861,339.35		$1,139,476.40		$1,417,555.78		$2,150,432.12		$3,236,787.80
Balance (revenue + expenses)	-$0	$0	$0	-$0	$0	$0	$0	-$0	$0	$0

VLACS Charter Revision #1

From: Application for Renewal of Charter
September 17, 2012
Charter renewed by the NH State Board of Education

What changes have been made or does VLACS plan to make regarding the Charter? Does VLACS wish to refine its charter?

VLACS' original charter indicated intentions to apply to be a '*Follow the Child'* designated school and it's efforts and actions have all been in the spirit of meeting that goal. Consistent with the philosophy of *Follow The Child* and best practices identified by the NHDOE, VLACS has incorporated and developed programs that allow for highly personalized educational opportunities for students that also track and monitor their progress to ensure their work and experience meet college, career, and citizenship ready standards. These programs both serve the individual student experience as well as collective student experiences that require adaptability that only technology and its inherent flexibilities can provide.

New and emerging programs, post 2008, that have further supported the VLACS Charter include:

- Development of dual credit courses with increased relationships with post-secondary institutions.
- The evolution of the school's competency-based approach to include all high school courses. This change has strengthened an already rigorous curriculum and provided students with the option to both recover credit and earn credit through real world experiences.
- Development of a blended learning lab program that provides training and support to schools to ensure that their students have a successful online learning experience.

The original VLACS mission statement is as relevant today as it was when it was developed over five years ago.

> "The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will use new and emerging distance learning technologies to provide anytime anywhere access to a rigorous "personalized education that helps students learn today, graduate tomorrow, and prepare for the future."

Going forward, VLACS will expand its definitions for "all students" and "rigorous personalized education." Due to the success and popularity of the school many parents, students, and community members have indicated that they would like to see the school's services expanded to include a full-time middle school program, elementary level courses, and an adult education program. Therefore, we are proposing that the student population be expanded to include elementary students as well as adults over the age of twenty-one. With respect to a rigorous personalized education, VLACS will adopt the following statement as its primary operating goal:

All students, *college, career, and citizenship ready*.

VLACS will adopt the definition of career and college readiness as described by the Educational Policy and Improvement Center (EPIC). EPIC's four keys to keys to college and career readiness will provide the school with the basis for creating a system for curriculum design and assessment (see Appendix J). It is equally important that schools prepare students to become engaged citizens. Therefore, VLACS will adopt civic competencies such as those developed by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and integrate them into the curriculum.

A timeline for new programs and initiatives that will support the college, career, and citizenship focus follows:

January 2013

1. College, career, and citizenship ready full-time program
    a. The school's successful full-time program will include a redesigned advisory program that will focus on preparing students for career and college readiness along with an emphasis on citizenship. In preparation for this change, the school's graduation requirements have been changed to include a half credit in geometry, a full credit in a college level course and/or the completion of an experiential learning project based in a real world setting (e.g., internships). The Accuplacer exam will be used both as a diagnostic tool and as one measure of college and career readiness. Programming will be customized to help students whose test results reveal a significant deficit in any academic area.

March 2013

2. Experiential learning opportunities (ELO) program
    a. The school's ELO program will include two new options for students: (1) virtual learning studios, and (2) learning through interests. In each of these new programs, competencies will be met through the demonstration and/or creation of artifacts.
    b. Virtual learning studios are comprised of a distributed learning team that is engaged in a single real-world problem. For example, a distributed learning team could be engaged in an environmental study to determine the effects of common lawn pesticides or fertilizers on local watersheds. The results of the study would be made available to homeowners. Some members of the distributed learning team may be located in the same town/school or while other members might be located hundreds of miles away. Experts such as professional gardeners or environmental scientist would be made available to students via online voice, video, and chat. Instructors would serve as learning coaches and content experts.
    c. The learning through interest program will allow individual students to pursue academic study through their interests and passions. For example, a student with an interest in photography could design a learning experience that will carry an English and technology credit. The experience could include working with professional photographer, journalist, and web designer to create a website that

reviews advances photographic technology.

May 2013

3. Middle college program
    a. High school students who have achieved a sufficient level of academic competency will have the option of beginning a full-time college program after their sophomore year. Students enrolled in this program will earn their high school diploma by taking dual credit high school and college level courses that will lead associate's degree. The high school diploma will be awarded by VLACS while the associate's degree will be conferred to the student by an accredited college or university.
4. College transition program
    a. Cost, local availability, lack of high school academic success, and maturity are among the many factors that may contribute to a high school graduate's decision not to enroll in college or to attend a career certification program. The VLACS college transition program will mitigate many of these issues by integrating the VLACS model of anyplace any pace learning with college curriculum. Students will have the opportunity to begin their college career online under the guidance of experienced high school instructors who have the appropriate academic background necessary to be approved to teach at the college level. Additionally, students will be able to proceed through college courses at their own pace and from any location. Students will be responsible for tuition payments, although the cost will be considerably less than that of traditional colleges and universities.

September 2013

5. Adult education program
    a. New sections of VLACS courses such as Chinese, digital photography, math, science, and English will be created and made available to adults over the age of twenty-one. These courses can be applied to a high school diploma program, used for career advancement, or taken for enrichment. Participants in this program will be responsible for tuition costs. VLACS will work with current adult development programs throughout the state to supplement their programs.

January 2014

6. Full-time middle school program
    a. The VLACS full-time program will expand to include grades six through eight.

September 2014

7. Elementary level courses
    a. Elementary courses for students in grades four and five will be available.

In order for the VLACS program to grow to meet the diverse needs of New Hampshire students at all levels it will be necessary to create additional funding streams for the school. The school's charter application mentions the entrepreneurial spirit of the charter school movement and how it would apply to VLACS as it seeks to establish itself as "the" virtual school for the New England region while maintaining a focus on the needs of New Hampshire students. To date, only a small number of out-of-state students have enrolled at VLACS. However, as the school

transitions to the second five-year charter we will recruit students for both our full-time and part-time programs from out-of-state students. All out-of-state students will pay tuition to access VLACS courses and programs.

VLACS Charter Revision #2
From: Application for Renewal of Charter
October 29, 2018
Charter renewed by the NH State Board of Education

What changes have been made or does VLACS plan to make regarding the Charter? Does VLACS wish to refine its charter?

VLACS' original charter indicated intentions to apply to be a 'Follow the Child' designated school and its efforts and actions have all been in the spirit of meeting that goal. Consistent with the philosophy of Follow the Child and best practices identified by the NHDOE, VLACS has developed and implemented a customized learning model that serves the individual needs of students, maintains rigorous academic standards, and provides opportunities unlike any other school.

VLACS will continue to pursue the primary operating goal of preparing all students to be college, career, and citizenship ready. We believe that as our services evolve, we will be able to meet the needs of New Hampshire students from grades 4 through adulthood. Borrowing from the New Hampshire Business and Industry Association 2018 policy priority, we believe that we can achieve the following over the next five years:

- Increase awareness about careers in advanced manufacturing, technology, health care, and other key industries.
- Continue our role as a school that implements high standards through competency-based experiential and virtual education with opportunities for real-world learning to better prepare our students with the core 21st-century skills and professional behaviors necessary to be ready for post-secondary education and/or the workforce upon graduation from high school.
- Help reduce the cost of public higher education for students through innovative programs such as Early College and beginning or completing industry recognized certifications.
- Develop and implement adult education options where post 20-year-old students can build the skills and knowledge required to attend college or enter an advanced training program.
- Assist in building the talent pipeline for NH's workforce by increasing awareness about careers in advanced manufacturing, technology, health care, and other key industries.

- Engage students in real-world learning experiences with the goal of building skills and forming connections to New Hampshire employers before they consider taking their talents elsewhere.

To that end, we are planning to implement the following new programs during the next five years.

Industry Specific Experiences

Recent meetings with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hospital and First Robotics Competitions serve as examples of the potential that exists for the development of engaging Partnerships that serve the needs of students and industry. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Hospital, in Lebanon, N.H. is one of the most highly regarded teaching hospitals in the country employing over 9,000 workers. In order to meet their staffing needs, the hospital has developed an apprenticeship program and has initiated Partnerships with area high schools. Our discussions with hospital administrators have been focused on the development of badges and college curriculum that would lead to employment and admission to the hospital's apprenticeship program immediately after high school.

First Robotics aims to foster a culture where science and technology are valued, and students are motivated to become future leaders in the field. The organization accomplishes its mission by sponsoring competitions where students develop and use science and technology with the support of industry experts. The New Hampshire based non-profit organization now serves over 400,000 students worldwide. We have begun meeting with First Robotics to develop plans to integrate academic credit, industry certifications and college certificates into the work that students do in preparation for First Robotics competitions.

We intend to continue our work with liaisons from Dartmouth-Hitchcock and First Robotics to ascertain program needs and goals; develop competencies and expectations; schedule job shadows, develop work-based projects, create internships; and gather resources and develop online curriculum for badges and certifications.

Badging/Micro Credentials and College Certificates
We will integrate stackable credentials into our customized learning model so that students, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or location have the opportunity to engage in career and work-based learning activities that span the spectrum from career awareness to career preparation.

Badges, awarded by VLACS, will be available in STEM areas such as coding, robotics, engineering, and health and wellness. We also anticipate expanding to STEAM careers by adding badges in photography, video production, and graphic design. Badges will be designed for the career awareness and exploration stages, while college certificates, industry

certifications, and degrees will advance students to the career preparation stage.

Student Advisory

Students require ongoing academic and career counseling and support in order to maximize their potential. However, the authors of the Pathways to Prosperity report identified a major concern regarding traditional guidance and school counseling services: "America's current system of career guidance and counseling is wholly inadequate, and many adolescents receive virtually no useful guidance. In our middle and high schools, the average ratio of students to counselors is nearly 500 to 1, a load that would strain even the most dedicated professional. Moreover, many counselors are more interested in students' pressing personal, psychological and social problems, and do not have the expertise to provide high- quality career guidance" (Symonds, Schwartz, and Ferguson, 2011).

All full-time VLACS students are assigned to an advisor whose primary goal is to help every student become college, career, and citizenship ready. During a student's tenure at VLACS, the advisor serves as a student's advocate, coach, counselor, and the primary contact for parents. Advisors build positive relationships with students and parents, or guardians, and guide students through the development of a college, career, and citizenship plan. Advisors also provide students with opportunities for academic and personal reflection and growth, identify students' challenges and help them develop strategies to overcome these, and assist them with becoming college, career and citizenship ready.

We are planning to expand our successful advisory program on three fronts:
1. Improve and expand the curriculum and support that we provide to students during the development of their post-secondary plan. We will design a new continuum of age-appropriate career-related options that will allow middle and high school students to create a customized plan that moves them from the career awareness stage to career exploration and to career preparation.
2. Create a series of competency-based professional development options for experienced educators that will provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to support students in a customized and/or student-centered learning environment. These professional development options will serve two purposes: (1) to advance the skills of our advisors and staff, and (2) provide schools and other education agencies with high-quality professional development through our adult education program.
3. Offer advisory services to part-time students. Given high caseloads carried by traditional counselors, schools will have the opportunity to use our advisory system as a supplemental service. Typically, homeschooled students do not have access to a career-based advisory system and opening our program to all students will make this a possibility for a growing homeschool population.

Expand Early College Program

We plan to expand our Early College/dual credit program by adding new college certificates and

associate degree options for high school students. We hope to target high need career fields such as technology and health services.

Expand Adult Education

We will expand our offerings in two areas: (1) college and career preparation for adults, and (2) professional development for educators. There is a significant portion of the adult population of New Hampshire that do not have the requisite skills to enter college or to move into advanced training programs. It's our goal to expand our services so that adults can gain the skills and knowledge that they need to matriculate to the college of their choice or to enter a training program that requires college level reading and math skills.

Elementary Education

To date, we have not found high-quality elementary level curriculum content, however, we have spoken with content providers who are producing content that is of interest to us. Our goal is to begin offering elementary courses to students in grades four and five within the next two years and expand our offerings over time.

Professional Development

Over the last decade, we have developed a unique set of services and skills that easily translate into a traditional school model. With this in mind, we will add educator professional development opportunities to our adult education program. Our offerings will include an array of courses designed to support competency-based learning, customized learning, and online-learning. Educators will have the opportunity to package courses and learning opportunities into micro-credentials, as well.

PO Box 1050
30 Linden Street, Building B
Exeter, NH. 03833
Phone: 603.778.2500
Fax: 866.651.5038

July 1, 2020

Frank Edelblut, Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Education
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Commissioner Edelblut,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School, I am writing to request an amendment to our charter to allow us to expand our services to include grades kindergarten through three. The reasons for this request are:

- To assist families and schools both during the pandemic and after;
- To offer additional flexible learning opportunities for families, students, and schools, regardless of location; and,
- To fulfill our mission of helping all students become college and career ready by providing students with a competency-based and customized kindergarten through grade twelve (and beyond) learning option.

Our anticipated timeline for implementation is as follows:

- July: Hire certified and experienced instructors and begin training
- August: Complete the training of instructors, open enrollments to kindergarten through grade three offerings
- Week of August 24: Students begin working in courses. Students may be enrolled in a single subject or all subjects. Parents may elect to file a home education notification letter with the appropriate agency and supplement their home education program with VLACS courses.
- November: Parents may apply to have their child(ren) admitted as full-time VLACS students.
- January 2021: Full-time kindergarten through grade five program begins. The implementation of grades four and five is already underway.

I hope that this proposed amendment to our charter will help students, families, and schools throughout the state during this difficult time. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Steve Kossakoski, Ph.D.
CEO, VLACS

Kate Cassady
Littleton

Ann Lane
Dover

Phil Nazzaro
Newmarket

Drew Cline, *Chairman*
Bedford

Helen G. Honorow
Nashua

Cindy C. Chagnon
Bedford

Celina Griffin
Gilford

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
TEL. (603) 271-3144
FAX (603) 271-1953

July 9, 2020

Dr. Steve Kossakoski
Virtual Learning Academy Charter School
30 Linden Street
Exeter, NH 03833

RE: Virtual Learning Academy Charter School

Dear Dr. Kossakoski:

At its July 9, 2020 meeting, the State Board of Education voted to approve an amendment to the charter of the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School. The amendment will expand the grade four through twelve program by adding kindergarten through grade three (K-3), starting in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jane Waterhouse, NHDOE, Charter School Administrator (Jane.Waterhouse@doe.nh.gov or (603) 271-6813).

Sincerely,

Chairman

19 Hampton Road
Building B, Suite 11
Exeter, NH. 03833
Phone: 603.778.2500
Fax: 866.651.5038

Charter Expansion
November 10, 2023

Introduction: In response to the ever-evolving needs of our students and following an assessment of our work as part of the comprehensive school improvement process, we are proposing an amendment to our school charter. This amendment consists of three parts: (1) mission refresh, (2) the addition of interest-based learning, and (3) the addition of earning credit for prior learning. Our commitment to college, career, and citizenship readiness remains steadfast, and these amendments are designed to enhance this commitment by expanding the scope of customized learning options that we provide to students.

1. **Mission Refresh:** Our current mission statement was written well over fifteen years ago and its message is as relevant today as it was then; however, the language is not.

Current Mission Statement: The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will use new and emerging distance learning technologies to provide any time anywhere access to a rigorous "personalized education that helps students learn today, graduate tomorrow, and prepare for the future" (2006, NHDOE).

Revised Mission Statement: The mission of the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School is to provide elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult learners with rigorous and customized learning via a relationship-focused, online experience designed to ensure college, career, and life readiness.

The revised mission statement does not change our philosophy or reason for being, it serves only to accurately describe what we do to help students.

2. **Interest-Based Learning Program:** During the 2022-2023 school year, in collaboration with a consultant from WestEd, we determined that we should broaden our offerings to empower students to explore their interests as a means of increasing engagement, discovering career interests, and as an alternative means for earning academic or elective credits.

   Since our inception, VLACS has focused on providing students with the means to customize

their learning by deciding when, where, and how to learn based on their needs, interests, and talents. While we believe we have been successful, we continue to look for ways to engage more students and help them to achieve their goals and dreams. With this in mind, we intend to take the next logical step forward and expand our customized learning model to provide students with more flexibility by allowing them to pursue their interests to master academic and elective credit.

We have built an extensive competency-based infrastructure over that last fifteen years that places us in a position to make this possible. For example, we have a library of thousands of verified and reliable competencies aligned with national and state standards. We also have a team of educators who have years of experience writing competencies and designing assessment tools. Additionally, while all of our instructors work with competencies on a daily basis, a significant portion of the faculty have been involved with Experiences program where students work with a virtual or face-do-face mentor and their instructor. The skills and knowledge that our instructors have gained in our Experience program will serve as important fundamental training for supporting students who are interested in designing interests-based activities.

How will interest-based learning work?

a. Identify an interest: An instructor will meet with a student to explore how an interest area can be transformed into research questions.

b. Align competencies: The instructor will work with the student to identify academic or elective competencies that align with the student's research questions.

c. Project Management: The project plan will be completed collaboratively with the student and instructor and will include goals, timelines, resources, and deliverables.

d. Identifying resources: The instructors will help the student identify resources and potential connections with organizations, businesses, or mentors as needed.

e. Learning, researching, connecting: This is the experiential phase of the project where the student puts the planning into practice with guidance from the instructor and mentor. During this phase of the project, students will build a portfolio of learning artifacts that demonstrate they have completed competencies related to the topic of study.

f. Deliverables and learning artifacts: The student creates the deliverables as described in the planning phase. Also, known as learning artifacts, these could include pottery, paintings, or music for a student interested in art or videos, presentations, or a set of plans for a student interested in architecture.

g. Assessment: The VLACS instructor will be the teacher of record and will make the final decisions regarding competency assessment. Mentors will provide the student and instructors with feedback regarding the quality and completeness of the student's work. When deliverables for an individual competency have been completed and assessed the instructor will also schedule a discussion-based assessment also known as a DBA. DBA's are conducted via video conference when an individual competency has been completed and are typically completed within twenty to thirty minutes. Additional sessions will be scheduled if a student needs additional time to complete the competency.

h. Debriefing and celebrating: Upon completion of the requirements the instructor will meet with the student to inform her/him of the final grade and discuss the experience. There will also be time set aside to talk about the next steps in pursuit of interests or careers if the student is interested.

Inspiration from: https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/a-blueprint-for-interest-based-learning

3. **Credit for Prior Learning Program: Background:** Recognizing that many students acquire valuable knowledge and skills outside the traditional classroom, we will implement a learning option where students can earn credit for prior learning (CPL). Few, if any, high schools allow students to earn credit for prior learning. CPL is a missing piece to a truly customized and competency-based learning ecosystem. Why should a student who has gained the requisite knowledge and skills in creative writing be required to complete an English course that covers the same set of competencies? Or should a student who has repeatedly failed a math course be required to retake the entire course? From our perspective, earning credit for prior learning is one of many advantages of a customized and competency-based approach to learning. However, it is essential to note that CPL is not an easy or quick method for earning credit. Students must provide evidence of learning in documents, videos, presentations, or other approved formats. VLACS instructors will assess these learning artifacts using our competency rubrics, and students will complete a discussion-based assessment after completing a competency.

   How will CPL work?

a. Identify prior learning topics: An instructor will meet with a student to determine how a student's prior learning might align with academic and/or elective competencies.

b. Project Management: The project plan will be completed collaboratively with the student and instructor and will include goals, timelines, resources, and deliverables.

c. Collecting evidence: This is the experiential phase of the project where the student must gather evidence of prior learning or create new artifacts that "tell the story" of how the student gained certain skills and knowledge leading to a demonstration of competency. The student and instructor may discover that there are gaps in learning. In such instances, students will be required to build new skills and knowledge and create evidence that will be used to demonstrate competency.

d. Assessment: The VLACS instructor will be the teacher of record and will make the final decisions regarding competency assessment using competency rubrics. When deliverables for an individual competency have been completed and assessed the instructor will also schedule a discussion-based assessment. DBA's are conducted via video conference when an individual competency has been completed and are typically completed within twenty to thirty minutes. Additional sessions will be scheduled if a student needs additional time to complete the competency.

e. Debriefing and celebrating: Upon completion of the requirements the instructor will meet with the student to inform her/him of the final grade and discuss the experience. There will also be time set aside to talk about the next steps if the student is interested.

4. Timeline

ITEM #	TITLE	START DATE	DUE DATE	DURATION
1	**Goal 1: Build Student Relationship System by July 8, 2025**			
A	Phase I: CRM, Experiences, admissions, program of study, interests	1/3/24	5/8/24	125
B	Phase II: Prior learning, course enrollment, single sign-on, analytics	5/9/24	11/8/24	179

C	Phase III: Portals, compensation, analytics and reports	11/9/24	3/8/25	119
D	Phase IV: Iteration and new ideas, punch list completion	3/9/25	7/8/25	119
E	Replacement of SIS	1/3/24	3/8/25	425
2	**Goal 2: High school students will be able to enroll in interest-based learning options by April 30, 2024.**			
E	Create content in Canvas	1/11/24	3/30/24	79
F	Create portfolio assessment rubrics for competencies	1/11/24	4/30/24	109
G	Configure portfolio assessment system in Canvas	1/11/24	3/30/24	79
H	Create instructor and support staff training materials and knowledgebase articles	1/11/24	3/30/24	79
I	Create marketing materials and public knowledgebase articles	3/30/24	4/30/24	30
J	Complete instructor training	3/30/24	4/30/24	30
K	Complete support staff training	3/30/24	4/30/24	30
L	Marketing campaign and enrollment begins	4/30/24	6/30/24	60
3	**Goal 3: Interest-based learning options for students in grades K-12 will be available by August. 1, 2024**			
A	Kickoff for interest-based learning leadership team -grades K-8	5/1/24	5/1/24	0
B	Hire employees to complete projects	5/1/24	5/9/24	8
C	Create flowchart to describe interest-based learning process, from enrollment through assessment	5/1/24	5/8/24	7
E	Create content in Canvas	5/9/24	8/1/24	82
F	Create assessment rubrics for competencies	5/9/24	8/1/24	82
G	Configure Canvas assessments	5/9/24	8/1/24	82
H	Create instructor and support staff training materials and knowledgebase articles	5/9/24	7/9/24	60
I	Create marketing materials and public knowledgebase articles	7/9/24	8/1/24	22
J	Complete instructor training	7/9/24	8/1/24	22
K	Complete support staff training	7/9/24	8/1/24	22

L	Marketing campaign and enrollment begins	8/1/24	10/1/24	60
4	**Goal 4: Students will have the opportunity to earn credit for prior learning by January 1, 2025**			
A	Leadership team kickoff for credentialling prior learning in grades 9-12	8/15/24	8/15/24	0
B	Hire employees to complete projects	8/15/24	8/23/24	8
C	Create flowchart to describe credentialling prior learning process, from enrollment through assessment	8/15/24	8/22/24	7
E	Create content in Canvas	8/23/24	10/30/24	67
F	Create assessment rubrics for competencies	8/23/24	10/30/24	67
G	Configure portfolio assessment system in Canvas	8/23/24	10/30/24	67
H	Create instructor and support staff training materials and knowledgebase articles	10/30/24	11/30/24	30
I	Create marketing materials and public knowledgebase articles	11/30/24	12/30/24	30
J	Complete instructor training	11/30/24	12/30/24	30
K	Complete support staff training	11/30/24	12/30/24	30
L	Marketing campaign and enrollment begins	1/2/25	3/1/25	59

5. **Conclusion:** These amendments to our school charter represent VLACS's commitment to innovation, flexibility, and customized learning. We believe that by offering interest-based learning opportunities and recognizing prior learning, we will empower our students to reach their full potential, become active participants in their education, and better prepare for college, career, and citizenship. We look forward to your support in implementing these exciting changes that will benefit our students and our community.