



Great Bay

CHARTER SCHOOL

To: Members of the New Hampshire Board of Education
Frank Edelblut, Commissioner
Talmage Bayer, Administrator, Charter School Office, NH Dept. of Education
From: Peter Stackhouse, Executive Director of Great Bay Charter School
Date: March 29, 2024

Subject: Clarification of Charter Documents

I am writing to clarify the submission of three charter documents with this current expansion application. Great Bay eLearning Charter School was chartered in 2004 based upon the original charter application (attached). This document was prepared by SAU 16 Asst. Superintendent Steve Kossakoski as GBeCS was originally proposed by the Exeter Region Cooperative School District to serve ERCSD students.

The school operated from January, 2005 through June, 2011 as an entity affiliated and integral with ERCSD. All employees of GBeCS were employees of the ERCSD and there was administrative business office oversight by SAU 16. In 2011 all employees contracts had been severed by the District and the school became its own employer of all its staff members, with an independent administration without SAU 16 oversight.

At the time of the separation, we felt it was important to update our charter language and describe the evolution of GBeCS to the Department of Education. We submitted a document on October 7, 2011 entitled *Great Bay eLearning Charter School Standing Charter*. I believe Roberta Tenney was the Administrator working with us in the Charter Office at that time. That document reflected the evolution of our program to date and the new structural arrangement of our school.

We became aware earlier this year, that the updated document was not considered to be the charter document of record as it was not brought before the State Board of Education at the time. Therefore, with this expansion application, we are submitting the *original charter application*, essentially replacing all language with the updated *Great Bay Charter School Proposed Charter Revision of March 29, 2024*.

All three documents are attached with the markups made on the *original charter application*. Due to the extensive nature of the language changes (structural, not philosophical) we ask that the newly submitted document replace the original in its entirety.

Great Bay Charter School Proposed Charter Revision

Submitted to:

New Hampshire Department of Education

Submission Date: March 29, 2024

Original Application Filed: February 4, 2004

Revision Submitted: October 7, 2011

Amendment and Proposal Submitted By:

Great Bay eLearning Charter School

(DBA Great Bay Charter School)

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GREAT BAY CHARTER SCHOOL

Updated Charter with Proposed Amendment 2024

Overview:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School (DBA Great Bay Charter School) opened in January of 2005 with a population of about 30 students. The population increased to approximately 150 in the year 2011. The school expanded in 2024 to include grades 5 – 12 (the original application was for grades 9 and 10). All grades between the 2005 opening and today were added incrementally with approval from the New Hampshire Department of Education.

As a duly chartered public school in the state of New Hampshire, the Great Bay Charter School (GBCS) targets students whose academic records, classroom anxiety, attendance issues, or other circumstances place them at risk of academic struggle precipitated by not showing up, a lack of genuine cognitive engagement, or not finding a space that accommodates their individual learning style or interests. Research clearly shows that many students require an alternative approach to education in order to remain fully involved, meet high academic standards, and to fulfill all state, school, and ultimately, graduation requirements. Great Bay Charter School remains committed to being that choice for families.

The establishment of GBCS in 2004 laid the foundation for presenting new and exciting methods of involving students in their own education. Great Bay Charter School was established to maintain student interest, increase academic achievement, and more fully address the needs of at-risk students. The program still combines elements of traditional educational programs enhanced by project-based, personalized, and innovative teaching approaches. The results are a high-quality program of study that accepts students as they are and attempts to personalize a program that works for them.

Although the original charter was very technology driven and based on the premise that most students would be working independently by using a variety of technology resources, we quickly realized that the student population craved working in groups of varying sizes with other students and trusted adults in a risk-free academic environment where they felt comfortable enough to be wrong. As all good educators should do, we pivoted and taught the students we had, not the students we *thought* we were going to have.

Given the variety of student learning styles and backgrounds represented at the Great Bay Charter School, we do not have a “One Curriculum Fits All” model. Rather, students are offered a variety of courses, experiences, and fields of study that meet both their personal interests and identified academic needs. While offering this broad range of educational studies, educators collaborate with the student and parents to assure that each student has a balanced program that prepares them for entry into the next class, the next grade span, higher education, a gap year, and/or the world of work.

At the Upper School (6-12), learning takes place through participation in scheduled classes, small special interest groups and independent project initiatives. Student learning plans are based upon student interest and needs. Assistance is provided to aid students in attaining the skills necessary to reach educational goals. Each student is assigned to one advisor to ensure that an adult mentor, who

knows the student, can provide knowledgeable advice regarding the student's academic program. In addition, the grade-level base-teams have a low ratio of students to adults.

At the Lower School (K-5), students will also be part of a base cohort with one trusted core adult and a varying number of other teachers and coaches depending on grade level. The older the student, the more they will change classes during the day. The younger students will spend the majority of the day with their core adult and work with specials as scheduled. The lower school will also be driven by project-based interdisciplinary education as they are guided through the educational fundamentals necessary to build a strong foundation for the upper grades. The younger students will have an advisory where they will explore, discover, and gain competence in the skills they need to be a good community member and a successful student.

Regardless of the grade, Great Bay Charter School is characterized by an interdisciplinary, project-based, flexible and personalized educational program for each student. The manner in which students fulfill their own unique requirements differs from student to student; however, a high level of academic and behavioral expectations is consistent for all students of all ages. We hold ourselves to the highest standard on providing an environment where students feel comfortable and parents feel confident that their children are in safe hands. We pride ourselves on introducing all students to community service opportunities, social emotional learning experiences and relationships with at least one trusted adult.

The Future of the Great Bay Charter School: Our future is to serve grades K-12 in one school by providing an innovative, personalized, interdisciplinary and project-based learning environment. Families have continued to voice a need for a school of choice that spans those grades and affords the younger students the opportunity to stay in an environment that they have found success in. Currently they would have to transition to a new school and for many of these students transitions can be a real setback. It is also a chance for us to prevent some of the angst and anxiety that some students experience in those grades. That brings them to us with baggage that has to be undone while they learn (or relearn) to trust and believe in their own ability to be a successful and confident student. Additionally, we will continue to advocate for charter schools in the state and try to change the negative perception that some people have of us by educating and extending ourselves to other schools and educational professionals. We will also widen our attempts to partner with sending districts to become collaborators rather than competitors.

GBCS Community Goals: The goal of the greater learning community is to support the development of a high-quality educational alternative to traditional community school for students at risk of underachieving or becoming disengaged at school. A segment of public school students need a flexible and innovative environment that prepares them for the next educational step. We view our school as another public choice available to families in New Hampshire – not a better choice, not a worse choice. Just a different choice for students who may learn differently or need a smaller environment. Such a school must capture the interest of the students, empower them in their own program, provide a safe educational climate and engage parents in their child's program. When seeking alternative educational programs, research regarding school choice suggests that parents and students seek a program that has the following seven key characteristics:

- *High academic standards,*

- *Innovative approaches,*
- *Small size,*
- *Special interests curriculum,*
- *Greater flexibility in the educational program,*
- *Parental philosophies that perceive the charter school as a “best fit” for their child, and*
- *Flexibility and an emphasis on community service, project-based learning, and real-life experiences provided through authentic applications, practicums, internships, and job shadowing.*

Mission

The Great Bay Charter School will provide an engaging, respectful, accepting learning environment enriched with flexible, project-based options in support of students with diverse needs and interests as they navigate their personalized educational their educational path through primary school, to elementary school, to middle school, to high school, to college and career readiness, and ultimately to participatory citizenship, and service to others.

Statement of Core Values and Beliefs

We, the Great Bay Charter School Learning Community, believe that students and teachers benefit most from a respectful, diverse, project-based learning environment. Our program is based on the strong conviction that every student can learn. We further believe that all learners teach and all teachers learn. We are committed to sharing our experiences about teaching and learning with other schools, as well as individual educators and students from outside of our school. Above all, we value open minds, acceptance, healthy relationships, active cognitive engagement, student voice, integrity, and social responsibility.

The following core beliefs form the basis for the educational assumptions that underlie all goals, objectives, activities and outcomes of GBCS:

- *Students can learn if educators allow for differences in learning styles, abilities, interests, and needs,*
- *Engaging students in project-based and service oriented educational curriculum allows students to more fully achieve their educational goals,*
- *The judicious and appropriate use of technology enhances education, and prepares students for either post-secondary education programs or employment, and*
- *Educators in the Great Bay Charter School are responsible for, and capable of, providing assistance to other students and teachers in the area, the state, and beyond.*

The Great Bay Charter School and its administration believe that by providing a unique and innovative educational option for those students whose needs are not fully met in traditional settings, they have been (and will continue to be) successful in engaging students in a challenging education. Each individual learning plan is relevant to the student’s goals and facilitates the student’s meeting of high school graduation requirements. Supported by a coalition of educators and professionals from a wide variety of disciplines, the Great Bay Charter School is committed to capturing and maintaining the interest of students who may otherwise have left school without realizing their full potential. No

distinction is made between “college prep” and “technical education”. No division that might exist between ethnic groups, social classes, or gender groups is fostered or tolerated.

Families are our “consumers” and we want to ensure consumer satisfaction through their participation in a high-quality academic program that meets their needs. By utilizing individual learning plans written in a collaborative manner by students, parents, and teachers, and by developing personal learning contracts, students assume a greater degree of responsibility for their learning. Teachers are supported in their exploration of innovative teaching practices and both teachers and students are expected to participate in collaborative learning projects with others.

Curriculum:

The academic program meets all local, state, and national standards for high-quality. As students advance, they are encouraged to take classes from other education sources and utilize curriculum from a variety of content providers. Because the curriculum allows for an individual learning plan for each student, the opportunity to collaborate with other students is one of the distinguishing factors regarding the operation of the school. Additionally, the GBCS K-12 model is designed for both vertical and horizontal articulation of essential curriculum standards resulting in outcomes that reflect deep levels of understanding.

Coordination with a wide variety of business and industry partners is an ongoing goal. The Administration is responsible for outreach in the community and beyond. It identifies prospective partners from the fields of science, mathematics, technology, medicine, veterinarian medicine, vision, dental health, software production, video production and editing, media and others and will work to establish mentoring, job shadowing, internships, summer and part-time jobs, and corporate giving.

General Curricular Learning Expectations

Students will:

1. *Demonstrate and apply the skills necessary to read, write, speak, view, and listen effectively (English Language Arts)*
2. *Demonstrate and apply mathematical reasoning and computation skills (Mathematics)*
3. *Demonstrate and apply understanding of the history, culture and art of America and the world (Social Studies and Arts)*
4. *Demonstrate and apply the principles of physical and biological sciences (Science)*
5. *Demonstrate and apply their understanding of the use of appropriate tools and a variety of techniques to effectively collect, research, analyze, organize and present information (Cross-curricular)*
6. *Demonstrate and apply appropriate problem-solving strategies in a variety of contexts, both individually and in groups (Cross-curricular)*
7. *Demonstrate and exhibit personal qualities such as responsibility, self-management, integrity and respect for oneself and others (Cross-curricular)*

The Great Bay Charter School was evaluated and lauded by teams of educators who conducted re-charter visits and evaluations. Additionally, the GBCS Directors set yearly goals and conduct spring evaluations of the school, its success in meeting goals, and the curricular and co-curricular programs. A presentation of findings is presented to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. The presentation is based upon the yearly goals and the seven principles outlined above.

Governance:

The Board of Trustees, whose policies comply with all state and federal statutes and regulations, is the only governing body of the school. The Board of Trustees is prepared to exercise authority, set policy and make decisions that serve the best interests of Great Bay Charter School.

Program Design:

The Great Bay Charter School program meets all traditional curriculum requirements using innovative methods enhanced by the judicious use of technology and a vast array of courses and methods from which students and parents can choose. In the same way, faculty members write much of their own content and students are able to complete courses from all curriculum areas. At all grade levels, a heavy emphasis is placed on student collaboration and learning from others. The goal is for students to achieve competence. Much less emphasis is placed on *how* the student chooses to meet the course competencies.

GBCS supports the use of supportive advisory programs and activities to reduce academic and social issues and continues to foster a strong and effective advisory program.

Instructional Materials:

Faculty at the Great Bay Charter School develop much of the content for all grades, courses and subjects offered. Classes may have experiential activities, career-related components, practicum opportunities, field experiences and community service as a part of the course of study. Each individual learning plan documents specifically the criteria for completion of the course. Students selecting outside courses are required to meet all requirements set by that instructor and the course requirements are reviewed by the advisor and student. Even the youngest students are involved in choosing some materials or specialties they may be interested in learning about.

The Technology Environment:

The Great Bay Charter School founders recognized the power of technology in the classroom. Visual literacy has developed significantly over the past half century and computers and design software are widely used across the professional spectrum. Students at GBCS are exposed to the computer as a design tool, and armed with extensive technology resources in preparation for their future in both school and the real world. Students are also expected to use all technology in a responsible manner and from the earliest grades will be engaged in the acceptable use of media and electronic resources. Additionally, internet safety protocols will be both presented and practiced.

One of the primary goals of incorporating technology into the curriculum is to introduce the youngest students to the necessary skills to effectively use technology in the classroom and to facilitate

the process as the older students explore how to use it in various professions, and perhaps creating a potential career path after completion of high school. In order to support an atmosphere that allows students to develop their potential while fully engaging in the educational process, the school provides enough devices to insure a one-to-one student-to-computer ratio.

Students have the tools necessary to produce age-appropriate digital portfolios that document their success in school and progress on individualized learning plans. These portfolios will follow them for their entire time at GBCS – potentially a student could graduate with a portfolio that memorializes 13 years of school! Samples of their best work can be saved from year to year and eventually their digital portfolio (which may include drawings, journals, writing, self-reflections, exemplars, resume, letters of recommendation, awards, transcripts and other appropriate material) will be the foundation of all student-led conferences which start with the very youngest students as they become accustomed to reflecting on, and taking ownership over, their own learning. Ultimately these portfolios can be used as students apply for college admission and/or places of work.

Advancement Requirements for Great Bay Students:

The educational requirements for Great Bay students meet all local and state requirements. Matriculation from grade to grade is dependent upon satisfactory work in the areas assigned in the student's individual learning plan. In addition to academic work, the upper school student may select community service, a part-time job, or an internship or practicum as a part of the individual learning plan.

Lower and Upper School students may also demonstrate competence in any subject area by filing a written request with a core teacher who will forward it to the subject area teacher and administrator. For example, a student involved in music lessons may have arts noted on their summative report or evaluation. The student will then share with a teacher and administrator artifacts that document the competence and if successful that will be reflected on academic records.

Students who have completed a year of schooling in the GBCS program with satisfactory results are not required to petition for space in the program for the following years. Each student who performs satisfactorily and is making progress has the right to continue in the Great Bay program until graduation. Progress and satisfactory performance is determined by the administration.

Staffing Overview:

Personnel hired to teach in the charter school comply with RSA 194- B: 14 IV, which requires the teaching staff of a charter school to consist of a minimum of fifty percent certified teachers. Personnel who have appropriate academic credentials, are innovative, and are interested in the application of real

world concepts to education, are qualified for selection. Administrative responsibilities are assigned to the Executive Directors and Dean of Students.

Personnel share the following personality characteristics:

- *Intellectual curiosity*
- *Flexibility*
- *Innovative nature*
- *Commitment to the mission of the Great Bay Charter School*
- *Ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other teachers*
- *Ability to value all students for who they are*

Personnel Compensation - The Great Bay Charter School complies with all state and federal laws pertaining to employment compensation and leave provisions. The school also complies with all laws pertaining to pre-employment requirements, such as Criminal History Records under RSA 91A:1.

Statement of Assurances:

The Great Bay Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, gender, 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.

Special Education:

Methods of coordinating with a pupil's LEA for matters pertaining to Special Education: GBeCS comply with federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a New Hampshire charter school setting (see Commissioner of Education's memos (FY 07) numbers one and fourteen regarding special education and charter schools)

Additionally, RSA 194-B: 11-III states that all options available to the parent and LEA are retained in the charter school setting. Current options include:

1. the parent has the right to accept or reject the district-proposed plan in part or in full
2. the local education agency may provide 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 school may initiate the resolution of disagreements about the district's recommended program through the Department of Education. Advisors and case managers work to assure that special education students have an appropriate individual learning plan -- one that allows them to be successful.

The Great Bay program recognizes and respects the input of the sending LEA, which has the responsibility for providing special education services and assigns a charter school liaison to collaborate on matters that pertain to an individual student.

While the Great Bay educational program is unique in both its approach and the degree of involvement the student has in planning his/her program of studies, the program meets or exceeds New Hampshire content standards.

Admissions Policy (in compliance with Ed 318.05):

The Great Bay admissions policy does not intentionally discriminate against any individual or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

Factors taken into consideration in the approval of applicants include academic need (based on past-performance), parental recommendations, teacher and/or guidance counselor recommendations, and space availability. Should demand for participation exceed space availability, a lottery is held. Eligible students are identified and placed in a pool from which random drawings occur until fifty students have been selected. Students not selected from the lottery pool are placed upon a wait list in the order of the date and time of their application. In the event that a student withdraws from the school, the student whose application is dated earlier than other applications is given the opportunity to participate. The selection process continues until all available spaces are filled.

Student Behavioral Expectations:

Policies for student governance are developed by the Board of Trustees and reflect the same high expectations for student behavior that exists within the traditional program. The policy is clear, states expectations for student behavior, and indicates possible consequences. Mentors, volunteers, and counselors are assigned as needed to help students meet behavioral expectations. Should the student be unable to perform satisfactorily in a manner that allows a respectful environment for all students, the student may be suspended or expelled from the Great Bay Charter School. The Great Bay Charter School provides fair and age appropriate due process to students and complies with 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.

The administration recognizes that expulsion is seldom an answer to student behavior issues and takes the position that through counseling, mediation, mentoring, and a wide diversity of learning

opportunities, students are helped to maintain an acceptable level of behavior and may remain in school.

Pupil governance and discipline are age-appropriate and due process procedures are in place for all disciplinary matters including suspension and expulsion.

Method of Administering Fiscal Accounts and Reporting:

Great Bay Charter School follows public nonprofit accounting guidelines and accounting controls that protect the good name of the school and its assets. The Board of Trustees implement policies for the fiscal management of the charter school. The Executive Director for Business Services, in conjunction with the treasurer of the Board of Trustees for the Charter School, oversees the management of the funds. The school complies with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:101-V. This list includes the following:

- *annual report*
- *annual financial audit and report*
- *program audit*
- *annual school budget process*

Annual Budget and Funding:

Pursuant to Ed. 318.07, Great Bay produces an annual report that includes but is not limited to the following components:

- General progress report regarding operation of Great Bay Charter School
- Budget plan for operation of Great Bay Charter School
- Assessment and reporting of the manner in which Great Bay is able to meet its educational and financial goals, as identified in the Great Bay Charter School mission statement
- Balance sheet identifying assets, liabilities, fund balances, equities, donations, grants awarded, grants in progress, endowments
- Income and expenses projections for coming year

The Board of Trustees has established policies for the administration of funds, for check writing authority, and has determined a ceiling on discretionary expenditures. In addition, the trustees empower the business department to establish a purchase ordering system which provides a clear picture of expenditures and the status of accounts. Those individuals with check writing authority are bonded in accordance with guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Donations, endowments, and other liquid assets are deposited in a separate account set up to handle those transactions and the Executive Director for Business services, in conjunction with the treasurer appointed by the Board of Trustees, is responsible for assuring that all donations are used as directed by the donor.

School Calendar and Hours of Operation:

Great Bay fulfills the intent of RSA 194-B.8,II in regard to its annual calendar. Hours of operation are flexible, as are the strategies for meeting the calendar requirement. While classes begin at approximately 7:45 a.m. and end at approximately 2:15 p.m., the school may opt to use less traditional hours and/or stagger the hours for upper and lower schools.

Evidence of Adequate Insurance Coverage:

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1,III, Great Bay Charter School is 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.

Parent Involvement:

Great Bay Charter School expects maximum participation from parents and members of the community. Parents participate on the Board of Trustees and committees to develop and revise strategies to enhance student success, increase student involvement in community service, practicums, internships, and field experiences.. In addition, parents participate in efforts to bring substantial donations, endowments, and grant opportunities to the school. Parents of students enrolled in the school are encouraged to volunteer. This consists of support for the faculty, assistance to students on special projects, co-curricular activities, work on a committee, assistance with the facility or other types of support designed to assist in operating a state-of-the-art program while maintaining a cost-neutral budget.

Severability provisions and statement of assurance:

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.

Provision for dissolution of the charter school including disposition of its assets:

The Board of Trustees for the Great Bay Charter School is committed to assuring that the management of the school is exemplary and that Great Bay becomes an educational option of which the community is proud. However, in the event that the charter is terminated and the dissolution of Great Bay Charter School 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 will:

- *Research best use of property and retire all debt obligations*
- *Acknowledge that all personal property of the faculty and administrators shall remain their property*
- *Coordinate with the faculty and parents of students being reintegrated into the traditional programs*

A minimum of one semester notice of closing will be provided to parents and students. All records will be transferred in a timely manner and the staff and trustees of the Great Bay Charter School 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.

Great Bay eLearning Charter School

Charter School Application

Submitted to:
New Hampshire Department of

Education February 4, 2004

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GREAT BAY eLEARNING CHARTER SCHOOL

Overview:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School (GBECS) targets students in that 60% of middle range students whose academic records, attendance records, or other circumstances place them at risk of school failure. At Exeter High School, 59.2% of the this year's freshmen class average a C+, or less. Research clearly shows that these students require an alternative approach to education in order to remain fully engaged, meet high academic standards, and, ultimately, to fulfill all graduation requirements. The establishment of a state-of-the-art charter school that is technology oriented, and presents new and exciting methods of engaging students in their own education is the answer to maintaining student interest, increasing academic achievement, and more fully addressing the needs of students who are at risk.

The proposed project will combine elements of traditional educational programs enhanced with project-based, innovative teaching approaches, resulting in a high-quality, technology-oriented program of study. GBECS will incorporate two forms of distance learning technologies in order to take advantage of the "best of both worlds." GBECS will design its own online content for use on the Internet (asynchronous streaming and web-based learning), allowing students to work independently with material delivered to the desktop. Additionally, interactive content will be developed and delivered over distance learning/video conferencing technologies, allowing students at both local and remote sites to freely interact, asking questions and receiving answers in "real-time" and in essence, creating a virtual classroom. Content created by GBECS will be offered free, or at a minimal cost, to all interested schools. Through this process, an "Open Source Content" program will be established where online content is freely available to all schools in the world to reuse or improve with the understanding that the content remains available to all schools. This initiative is based on the software distribution pro

grams known as “Open Source” and “Free Software.”

The charter school will have 500 video conferencing “connections” available to educators throughout the nation and beyond. There will be no “One Curriculum Fits All” within the Great Bay eLearning Charter School. Rather, students will be offered a variety of courses, experiences, and fields of study that meet both their interests and academic needs. While offering this broad range of educational studies, educators will collaborate with the student and parents to assure that each student has a balanced program that prepares them for entry into higher education and/or the world of work. Rather than a specific “list” of required courses, students may choose from an almost infinite number of learning opportunities brought to them from throughout the world. Learning plans may incorporate the student’s work or interests outside the school, such as a part-time job in a career field of interest to the student. Some student work will be built around a common theme or project. Other activities may use the considerable technology planned for the charter school as a means of furthering student learning. Learning will take place through participation in small groups, however many students will work independently on projects. Student learning plans will be based upon student interest and needs, and assistance will be provided so that the student is assured the skills necessary to reach his or her educational goal.

Each student will be assigned to one advisor for their entire GBECs career to ensure that an adult mentor, who knows the student, can provide knowledgeable advice regarding the student’s academic program. In addition, the small groups or learning teams will have a low ratio of students to adults. A student-mentor program will allow students from each grade level to have a mentor one or more grade levels above their current placement. Additionally, flexible scheduling will allow educators and corporate partners to collaborate with students to enhance student learning in real-life settings. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School is characterized by a flexible and

personalized educational program for each student. Students participating in the charter school may move across settings for courses in either the charter atmosphere or the more traditional classroom setting. The manner in which students fulfill requirements will differ from student to student; however, a high level of expectation will be consistent for all students.

Instruction will reflect project-based learning—an approach proven to be highly effective with at-risk students. The emphasis on project-based learning may help to reduce the number of students who have trouble transitioning from 8th to 9th grades. While the curriculum will meet all local, state, and national standards and methods used to present the material will reflect “best practices,” the method of delivery and the procedures for fulfilling requirements will reflect the innovation required to fully engage students in the learning process.

This eLearning concept involves the implementation of the latest in educational technology that will provide expanded learning opportunities for students and professional development and continuing education opportunities for teachers and administrators. GBECS fully understands that technology-based projects fail unless proper training, instruction and support is provided, and has engaged corporate “technology partners” for the purposes of this project. TANDBERG (a global video-conferencing manufacturer), View Communications (a New Hampshire technology integrator), Dasher Enterprise (an Educational Consulting firm), Howe Schools (an award-winning Oklahoma school district and Professional Development provider) and Southeast Island School District (an Alaskan School district with a deployed distance learning program) will all be active participants and educational/technical support systems for the purposes of this project.

SAU 16/ERCSD is uniquely qualified to initiate the development of a technology

intensive charter school program. Technology leadership, at the district level, is provided by the position of Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Research. Additionally, SAU 16 maintains a Technology Services support team which includes a manager and six technicians. This team of support personnel will be available to the GBECS to trouble shoot and maintain hardware, software, and network services. SAU 16/ERCSD has a history of successfully implementing "cutting-edge" technology in the K-12 environment. The district has been a leader in the development of e-learning courses and resources (via WebCT). Moreover, the district has been active in promoting the advancement of technology integration by developing its own in-house training programs. The district is also the home to the Seacoast Professional Development Center which is one of four professional development centers established through grants from the NH Department of Education. This center has focused on providing professional development to educators working in the seacoast region in the areas of e-learning, technology integration, and data-driven decision-making.

The Future of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School:

The future of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is bright. By 2007, the GBECS may grow to include students from grades 11 and 12. If this occurs, it is anticipated that students could move from traditional high school programs to the GBECS for their final high school years or, students from the GBECS may decide to return to more traditional programs. In either case, it will be the academic needs and interests of the students that will drive these decisions. The future of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School may also include a partnership with other local school districts. Students from area schools could travel to the GBECS site or, through the use of video conferencing and e-learning technologies students could participate in a full complement of courses from a remote location.

Many other possibilities will be available to the educational community through the Great Bay eLearning Charter School. For example, teachers may choose to use the school as a hands-on professional development site for advancing their skills.

Moreover, researchers can use the school to study the effective use of e-learning, video conferencing, project-based learning and many other aspects of this unique program.

(a.) Mission:

The mission of the Great Bay e Learning Charter School is to address the needs of that middle range of students in the Exeter Region Cooperative School District (ERCSD) whose needs are not adequately met in traditional programs, and to educate those students in such a way that they will graduate as caring, productive and contributing members of society.

Core Beliefs :

The ERCSD School Board and its administration believes that by providing a unique and innovative educational option for those 60% of students whose needs are not fully met in traditional settings, they will be successful in engaging students in a challenging education. Each individual learning plan will be relevant to the student's goals and will facilitate the student fulfilling high school graduation requirements. Supported by a coalition of educators, industry, business, and professionals from a wide variety of disciplines, the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will capture and maintain the interest of students who might otherwise have left school without realizing their full potential. No distinction will be made between "college prep" and "technical education". The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will demonstrate equivalent academic gains across a student body representative of the school district's population as a whole. It will be designed in such a manner that any current "digital divide" that might exist between ethnic groups, social classes, or gender groups will be eliminated. Students

will be viewed as “customers” and customer satisfaction through participation in a high quality program is the goal of the proposed charter school. By utilizing individual learning plans written in a collaborative manner by students, parents, and teachers, and by developing personal learning contracts, students will assume a greater degree of responsibility for their learning. Teachers will have new opportunities for professional growth through video conferencing technology and team teaching and through “teacher exchanges” with educators throughout the state, the nation and beyond. They will be supported in their exploration of innovative teaching practices and will be given the opportunity to develop a proposal, obtain approval, and try something new! Both teachers and students will be encouraged to participate in collaborative learning projects with others. Throughout the pre-charter period, teachers and administrators will research best practices for the different content areas and devise strategies for the application of those practices in a highly technology-oriented charter school program. Committees made up of professional educators from each discipline will develop a proposal for providing high quality curriculum to the student body. When the individual disciplines have devised their methods for teaching, the groups will meet as a body and will blend the different strategies into a cohesive plan of instruction.

The following core beliefs from the belief statement have formed the basis for the educational assumptions that underlie all goals, objectives, activities and outcomes: *

Students can learn if we, as educators, allow for differences in learning styles, abilities, interests, and needs

*Engaging students in project-based and service-oriented educational curriculum will allow our students to more fully achieve their educational goals

~~• The judicious use of technology is essential to enhance education, and to prepare students for either post-secondary education programs or employment~~

~~• Educators in the Great Bay eLearning Charter School have the responsibility, the capability, and the will to provide assistance to other students in the area, the state, and beyond~~

Community Goals:

~~The goal of the community is to support the development of a high-quality educational alternative for middle-range students at risk of underachieving or dropping out of school. Today's students need a high-quality, flexible and innovative environment that prepares them for entry into post-secondary educational programs and/or for the world of work. Such a school must capture the interest of the students and engage them more fully in their learning program. When seeking alternative educational programs, research regarding school choice suggests that parents and students seek a program that has the following seven key characteristics:~~

- ~~• High academic standards~~
- ~~• Innovative approaches~~
- ~~• Small size~~
- ~~• Special interests curriculum~~
- ~~• Greater flexibility in the educational program~~
- ~~• Parental philosophies that perceive the charter school as a "best fit" for their child~~
- ~~• Flexible hours and an emphasis on community service, project-based learning, and real-life experiences provided through practicums, internships, and job shadowing.~~

~~The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will be evaluated by SAU 16 and GBECS administration. A presentation of findings will be presented to the Board of Trustees on~~

~~an annual basis. The presentation will be based upon the seven principals outlined above. The administration will use focus groups and surveys as part of their evaluation model.~~

(b) Governance- goal, organizational structure and plan:

~~The founding body of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is made up of individuals who are deeply committed to students. Recognizing that a large number (as many as 60%) of pupils in the ERCSD are not fully served by a traditional program, they have determined that it is the best interest of the students to establish an alternative program. The group, identified as Great Bay Charter Founders (GBCF) has as its stated responsibility the promotion of the charter concept and completion of the process necessary to bring this concept to fruition.~~

~~As an important step toward the opening of such an educational alternative, and in accordance with 194-B:5, GBCF will establish an effective board of trustees that will develop policies that foster widespread community involvement, enhance student responsibility for learning, and facilitate service-oriented activities as a part of student studies. The Board of Trustees plan for governance supports the National School Board Association "Key Work of School Boards" which focuses governance on student achievement.~~

~~In accordance with 194-B:5, the charter public school will be governed by a Board of Trustees, ranging from five to eleven members. By the third year, the Board of Trustees will be comprised of eleven (9) voting members. 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~~

~~One (1) member will be a University of New Hampshire educator~~

~~Two (2) members will be professional educators~~

~~Two (2) members from the Exeter Region Cooperative School Board. In addition, there will 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.~~

~~To conduct business, a majority of the board members present and participating in person or through video or voice communication shall be considered as a quorum. Records and minutes of the meetings will be kept in accordance with the New Hampshire Right to Know statute which applies to all public schools.~~

~~**Sub-goal 3:** The Board of Trustees will elect officers and shall include a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the board and will serve for one year.~~

~~**Sub-goal 4:** Sub-committees shall be established as deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees and shall have the responsibility to report to the board on matters pertaining to:~~

- ~~▲ Budget management~~
- ~~▲ employment of professional personnel~~
- ~~▲ policy matters~~
- ~~▲ updating and revision board policy as needed~~
- ~~▲ student achievement~~
- ~~▲ any business that comes before the board and is not administrative in nature~~

~~**Sub-Goal 5:** Within three months following approval, the board of trustees will consist of up of seven (5) members including one member from the founding group. The initial board of trustees will develop the schedule of terms for board members and policies for filling board vacancies.~~

~~**Sub-Goal 6:** The Board of Trustees will be prepared to exercise authority, set policy~~

~~and make decisions that serve the best interests of Great Bay eLearning Charter School. Areas of oversight include but are not limited to:~~

- ~~• budget development and management~~
- ~~• hiring of project personnel~~
- ~~• policy development~~
- ~~• development of a compensation package and an established salary scale~~
- ~~• identification of project priorities and a plan of action for meeting goals~~
- ~~• establishing advisory committees as deemed necessary~~
- ~~• evaluation and approval of recommended measurement standards~~
- ~~• developing, implementing and revising bylaws as needed~~
- ~~• all other matters that are non-administrative and/or that are prescribed in statute or rule~~

Outcomes for governance:

~~The Board of Trustees, in conjunction with administrators and faculty, will have:~~

- ~~1. Developed and approved governing policies prior to opening of the school.~~
- ~~2. The Board of Trustees is an effective governing body.~~
- ~~3. Members of the Board of Trustees will serve either two or four year terms, resulting in stability on the board.~~

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

~~The initial founding board, (GBCF) will research and appoint an initial Board of Trustees will may include one member of the GBCF . Terms of trustees will be staggered three year terms. Approximately one half of the initial trustees may be appointed for 2 or 4 year terms to allow for initial school stability and evolving staggered terms. The board may appoint a member to fill a vacancy to complete a term according to established term timelines. *Ex officio* Board members will have 2-year terms. Board members may serve consecutive terms if so voted by a Board majority. The Board of Trustees will have a slate of officers which shall include: the chair person, 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:

The ERCSD is fortunate to have an existing building on the current high school campus where the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will be housed. Classrooms will be renovated during the initial three years of the project, as enrollment increases. One learning center/library will be designed to accommodate large groups and include video conferencing capabilities and traditional print resources. Of the additional four proposed classrooms, one will include a Science Solutions Lab, used for carrying out Biology, Chemistry, and Physics experiments. This lab will be equipped with specially designed interactive video science lab equipment, allowing remote sites to join the science classes and interact seamlessly while performing or viewing experiments. One room will be equipped with distance learning equipment, creating a "virtual field trip" lab that allows students visits to museums and other content providers throughout the country at the click of a button. The remaining two classrooms will also have distance learning capabilities as well as open workspace for project work. Computers will be added as enrollment grows in order to maintain a one-to-one student-to-computer ratio.

By the opening of school, in January of 2005, two former Industrial Arts labs (3,385 square feet) will be renovated and configured to include the learning center/library, a classroom, workspaces/conference rooms, and offices. This space is currently used for storage and is located on the campus of Exeter High School. These labs are located in an area where an entrance for the GB ECS can be established which is separate from Exeter High School. It is anticipated that a portion of the cost for design, materials, and labor will be donated by area businesses to assist with this project.

The existence and availability of the building on the Exeter High School campus allows

~~the development of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School without undue expenses for rental or construction of a facility and is a major factor in the district's ability to operate a charter school at a cost-neutral or near neutral cost. Furthermore, the ERCS is currently constructing a new high school with an anticipated opening projected for September, 2006. At that time, the current Exeter High School Campus will be vacated providing the GBECS will additional room for growth.~~

(e) Maximum number, grade or age levels, and as appropriate, additional information regarding participating students:

~~The Great Bay eLearning Charter School initially will serve approximately fifty (50) 9th grade students from that middle range of students known to be at risk for academic failure or dropping out. One grade per year will be added as students move through the grades and at the end of three years the Charter School will serve students grades 8-10. The flexible schedule which will be utilized in the Charter School will allow the program to "attract back" those students who were early dropouts but who desire to complete a high school education. Future plans are to expand this program to include students from other school districts depending interest and need. Preliminary meeting with representatives from area school indicate that there would be significant interest in such a partnership.~~

~~The Great Bay eLearning Charter School is scheduled to open in January of 2005 with a population of 50 students. The population will increase by 50 additional students each year until 2007. The school at that time will accommodate 150 students in grades 8-10. Prior to the 2007 school year, a study will be conducted to determine if the GBECS should expand its offerings to include grades 11 and 12. Factors that will be taken into consideration in the approval of applicants will include academic need (based on past performance), parental recommendations, teacher and/or guidance counselor~~

recommendations, and space availability. If the number of qualified applicants exceeds the capacity of the school then a lottery system will be used to determine which students will be admitted.

Projected Enrollment			
	2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Grade 8			50
Grade 9	50	50	50
Grade 10		50	50
Total	50	100	150

Student recruitment for the initial year of operation of the Charter School will begin in the fall of 2004. Students who have completed a year of schooling in the GBECS program with satisfactory results will not be required to petition for space in the program for the following years. Each student who performs satisfactorily and is making progress shall have the right to continue in the Great Bay eLearning program until graduation.

(f) Curriculum:

The student's program of study will meet all local, state, and national standards for high-quality, challenging curriculum and will meet the same high expectations for student progress that are found in the traditional educational program.

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will use a "hybrid" e-learning model, blending on-line learning and video conferencing technology with a project-based approach to instruction. Research has consistently shown that a meaningful, project based approach to education can improve student achievement (Edutopia, http://gief.org/php/article.php?id=Art_887&key=037). Advocates for distance learning posit

that students are motivated by interactive online learning. Additionally, students involved in online learning have access to the best educational resources from any part of the world at any time of the day. By combining the best face-to-face project-based instructional strategies with e-learning technology and strategies students will be motivated to meet high academic standards.

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will establish a vigorous partnership with the University of New Hampshire. The GBECS will become a school where UNH teaching interns will develop their educational teaching skills through observation, teaching, and by assisting students with projects. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will provide on-the-job training for pre-service teachers in a high-tech setting which will be beneficial to all schools. Many current teacher graduates are familiar with technology, but have little, or no, experience in the effective use of technology in the classroom. UNH will also provide the GBECS with access to scientists, historians, mathematicians, and other experts through e-learning and face-to-face visits. Additionally, UNH researchers will be provided with access to the GBECS to study the effectiveness of the school's educational model.

As students advance, they will be encouraged to take classes from other higher education sources and to utilize curriculum from a variety of content providers throughout the nation and beyond. Because the curriculum represents an individual learning plan for each student, the opportunity to collaborate with other students will be one of the distinguishing factors regarding the operation of the charter school.

Coordination with a wide variety of business and industry partners is proposed. The Principal will be responsible for heading up a team of educators and other interested parties who will do outreach in the community and beyond. The team will identify prospective partners from the fields of science, mathematics, technology, medicine, veterinarian medicine, vision, dental health, software production, video production and

editing, media and others and will work to establish mentoring, job shadowing, internships, summer and part-time jobs, and corporate giving.

Program Design:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School program will meet all traditional curriculum requirements, but in an innovative manner enhanced by the judicious use of technology and a vast array of courses from which students can choose. Students who must take European History may take it from a German High School. A foreign language can be taken from a native speaker in the country of origin. In the same way, Great Bay eLearning faculty members anticipate writing much of their own on-line content and students may choose courses from those areas as well. There will be a heavy emphasis of student collaboration and learning from others via interactive video conferencing. What is important is that the student achieves mastery, with less emphasis on how the student chooses to meet the course requirements. It is anticipated that the academic and career preparation of participants graduating from the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will exceed those of their peers who continue their studies in a traditional educational environment.

Supplemental programs

One particularly important aspect of the Charter School is the after-hours support program. This aspect of the program is designed to provide a three-hour tutorial Monday through Thursday. Any student who needs further instruction in a particular area of study may sign up for one-on-one time with the educator and/or a volunteer of his or her choice. These meetings may take place at the GBECS or online through the school's secure course management system. The student may sign up because he needs further assistance, or because he or she desires to carry out an in-depth study of a particular area of interest. This type of program has been referenced in many of the dropout and academic improvement reports by educational researchers and has shown

to be highly effective.

Student technical assistants will be established as a part of the Student Advisory system. The students will be given training in the operation of all technology equipment. They will be encouraged to serve in the "Student Technology Leadership Program" (STLP) established as a part of the charter school program. This program will be based on the STLP originally designed by the Kentucky Department of Education. The goals of the STLP are to: (1) to develop instructional activities that integrate technology into the school's administrative and instructional programs, (2) to form learning partnerships with students of varying technological levels, (3) to develop activities that benefit communities, (4) to provide leadership opportunities for all students, and (5) to develop activities that foster the academic, social, and emotional growth of students. Students in this program may be called upon to demonstrate, teach, and monitor equipment. They may also participate in late afternoon, evening, and weekend activities for students attending during atypical class hours. STLP participants may elect to receive credit for their assistance with technology, and upon passing exams for technical proficiency, may earn dual credit for an Introduction to Technology course offered by institutions of higher learning. By utilizing students for peer advising, and technical assistance, the GBECS will be able to provide after-hour and weekend courses at a lower cost than would otherwise be possible and at the same time, will encourage students to explore careers in education and technology.

The emphasis on project-based learning will also help to reduce the number of students who have trouble transitioning from 8th to 9th grades. Research indicates that many students transitioning to high school experience a drop in grades, view themselves more negatively, and experience anxiety about the high school environment (Mizelle, 1995; Phelan, Yu, & Davidson, 1994). However, research also supports the use of supportive advisory programs and activities to reduce the problems

associated with the transition (Maclver & Epstein, 1991). The GBECS curriculum will meet all local, state, and national standards and methods, however, the method of delivery and the procedures for fulfilling requirements will reflect the innovation required to fully engage students in the learning process, to ease the transition from middle school to high school and to boost the achievement levels of all students.

Unique aspects of the proposed Charter School may include the following:

- ▲ Anywhere anytime learning that addresses the need for alternative schedules
- ▲ Judicious use of technology to allow participation in course work and research that spans the state, the nation and beyond
- ▲ Courses of study that are tailored to the interests and capabilities of the student
- ▲ The participation of higher education personnel to enhance student learning in a particular area of study for which highly advanced knowledge may be required
- ▲ Practicum and field work that expands developing skills in a particular field
- ▲ The potential for supporting students who would like to become certified in a technology related field
- ▲ Distance learning and E-learning
- ▲ Fully equipped electronic classrooms that allow the use of a wide variety of
- ▲ technologies to support student learning

The eLearning concept utilizes high-tech equipment to provide important learning opportunities for students in the school. Pre-service teachers and others who desire the ability to perform in a high-tech work environment will also be able to benefit from this unique learning environment.

Instructional materials:

Faculty at the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will develop much of the content for courses offered through the program. Classes may have work-study components, practicum opportunities, field experiences and community service as a part of the course of study. Each individual learning plan will document specifically the criteria for completion of the course. Students selecting on-line courses from

~~collaborating schools will be required to meet all requirements set by that instructor and the course requirements will be reviewed by the counselor and student to assure that the course meets the exacting standards in place for all ERCSD students.~~

~~By the year 2010, 60% of all jobs in New Hampshire will require technical skills. Those jobs pay, on average, \$36,000 more per year than jobs in the private sector that do not require technology. Thus, the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will have a heavy emphasis of the use of technology, both to enhance education for students, and to prepare them for further study or careers in fields that require technology. This effort is essential to the state's employers who currently must hire from outside the state to fill existing high-tech jobs due to the lack of workers with technology skills sufficient to fill their high-tech, high-paying jobs.~~

~~Other career-oriented programs of study, such as Project Lead the Way, Cisco Academy, Project Running Start and courses of study from the New Hampshire Community Technology College System will allow students to graduate from high school certified in a vocational field of their choice and prepared to enter the workforce.~~

Student contracts:

~~Participating students and their parents must make a commitment to meet Great Bay eLearning requirements. A contract, including an individual course of study (learning plan) will be developed by the student, the parent(s), the counselor and the school. The contract will outline the mutual expectations that are held for the student. Elements of the contract will include but are not limited to:~~

- ~~• 95% attendance rate~~
- ~~• satisfactory progress in every course of study~~
- ~~• behavior that brings credit to the Charter School and the student~~
- ~~• student agreement to complete academic requirements satisfactorily~~

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School attests to:

- provision of a highly interactive, high-tech environment that is of interest to students
- emphasis on project learning, field work, practicums, and part time jobs that bring real life into the classroom and can be successfully incorporated into a course of study
- strong counselor and mentoring programs to guide students and help to assure success

• community interface with a wide variety of professionals from all walks of life
The parent will:

- attend quarterly parent meetings during the year and participate in jointly held student, counselor, mentor, and parent meetings
- set firm guidelines that result in the student meeting his/her commitment to school policies and programs including attendance, participation, and scholarly endeavor
- meet with school personnel as needed to assure that any student problems are resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner for all
- maintain a high degree of communication with appropriate school personnel via written communications, email, telephone, or in-person meetings

The eLearning Environment:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School founders recognize the power of technology in the classroom. Visual literacy has developed significantly over the past half of a century. There is an increased need for professionals qualified to designing coursework that can be presented in this medium. Computers and design software are widely used across the professional spectrum. Students should be exposed to the computer as a design tool, and armed with extensive computer skills in preparation for careers in graphic design, photography, animation and many others.

To further enhance the use of design software in the classroom, distance learning equipment allows teachers and students to connect with animators in Hollywood and Orlando to give students direct access to professional critiquing and tips. Digital cameras will be used by students and teachers, enabling students to capture and manipulate visual images, and incorporate them into presentations. In this case it would be appropriate to use Distance learning equipment to connect with

professional graphic designers and artists around the world for lessons in advertising layouts, commercial logo designs, product packaging, and even designing patterns for fashion.

In combination with web designing software and CD burning equipment, students will have the tools necessary to produce digital portfolios that document their success in school. Samples of their best work can be saved and burned from year to year and eventually their digital portfolio (which will include a resume, letters of recommendation, awards, transcripts and other appropriate material) can be used as they apply for college admission and/or places of work.

Video creation is another important aspect of visual literacy. While the differences between an amateur video production team and the elite cinematographers are unmistakable, the skills that youngsters will develop as they create media with basic video equipment is comparable to learning how to hold a pencil or type. Digital video recorders, microphones, editing software, and access to sound libraries will engage students of all ages in the learning process as they practice writing, producing, and editing videos.

One of the primary goals of incorporating technical elements into the curriculum is to introduce students to new skills and professions, creating a potential career path after completion of high school.

In order to provide an atmosphere that allows students to develop their potential while fully engaging in the educative process, the GBECS is designed to provide a challenging high tech environment. The school will provide enough computers to ensure a one-to-one student to computer ratio. A combination of desktop computers, diskless workstations, and laptops will be utilized in order to meet this goal. All computers and servers will run Linux software and applications in order to keep costs low and to further promote the concept of open source learning and computing. The GBECS will assist

~~any family who does not have a computer at home with acquiring a free computer and Internet hook-up. This will be accomplished through a partnership with local businesses and non-profit agencies.~~

~~A large library/conference room will be equipped with video conferencing equipment with an oversized screen, designed for training 30 or more individuals at a time. This will be of significant benefit to teachers for the purposes of professional development. Other community members (Firefighters, policemen, social services, etc) will benefit from the use of this equipment for training and collaboration purposes when school is not in session.~~

~~The smaller classrooms with the individual high tech workstations will allow students to simultaneously work on a variety of different projects. This concept provides an atmosphere that facilitates a multitude of learning experiences in an environment that is so exciting that being an "early leaver" is not an attractive option for a student. It is anticipated that students will enthusiastically embrace this exciting technology and will develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments.~~

~~Interactive video equipment will allow for collaborative projects throughout the nation and beyond. Collaborative software will allow for virtual school broadcasting for group instruction, with students throughout the state and the nation participating. Using content developed by Great Bay eLearning faculty, virtual field trips available from a multitude of sources, and free content from other schools will provide the wide diversity of courses conceptualized for the charter school.~~

~~Because there are numerous models that exist for virtual school technologies, the faculty, under the direction of Dr. Stephen Kossakoski, Assistant Superintendent of Technology and Research, Mr. Jerome Frew, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Assessment, and the Technology Instructor for the GB ECS will work with teachers to determine the best choices for the school.~~

All of these factors play a role in accomplishing the mission of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School: **to address the needs of that middle range of students in ERCSD and others whose needs are not adequately met in traditional programs and to educate those students in such a way that they will graduate as caring, productive and contributing members of society.**

(g) Academic goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes

GOAL 1: Develop the Great Bay eLearning Charter School as an educational option for under-served students in ERCSD; to provide an educational alternative that reflects state-of-the-art technology, is highly innovative, has a broad range of course options, and is free from many of the state regulations that impact traditional educational programs.

Sub-goal 1: Meet the needs of that middle range of students in ERCSD who are at risk for academic failure.

Activity 1: Identify those students who are under-served in the current traditional program based upon their academic progress, capabilities, and interests

Activity 2: Recruit and enroll those students who are identified as under-served, and at risk of becoming an early leaver

Activity 3: Provide a counselor and a mentor for each student and assign students membership in a small learning group

Activity 4: Engage the student, the parent, the educators and counselors in developing an individual learning plan for each student

Activity 5: Design an evaluation plan for each student(s) that incorporates the NHEIAP, a computerized adaptive testing system (Measures of Academic Progress, Northwest

Evaluation Association), and one or more of the following: student portfolios, “testing out” of courses through rigorous examination, credit based upon subject matter mastery rather than seat time, cumulative projects, student developed and taught units of study, and “stand and deliver” performances.

Activity 6: Utilize state of the art technology to enhance educational offerings and capture the interest of the students

Sub-goal 2: Reduce the dropout rate in ERCSD

Activity 1: Utilize interest inventories, student interviews, and aptitude instruments to identify and support student interest in a particular course of study **Activity 2:** Provide opportunities for student participation in programs of study and research in place at UNH and other post-secondary programs so that students feel a sense of “ownership” and a bond with those post-secondary programs of interest to the student or post-secondary program of study

Activity 3: Provide a wide range of course options that, upon completion, provides certification in a career field of the student’s choice

Activity 4: Create a learning environment where project-based and real world experiences are supported and valued as assisting students with the achievement of educational goals and standards

Sub-goal 3: Increase the number of students graduating from ERCSD

Activity 1: Assign students to small, highly personalized learning teams

Activity 2: Assign the same advisor(s) to the student throughout his/her participation in the program

Activity 3: Provide an anywhere-anytime learning format so that students are not bound by rigid hours of operation and can take advantage of classes offered from

~~different time zones, from outside the United States, or at a time that allows them to continue both school and a part-time job~~

~~**Activity 4:** Make school highly accessible by using extended day schedules and weekend accessibility~~

~~**Sub-goal 4: Increase the number of students who graduate from high school and enter a post-secondary education program**~~

~~**Activity 1:** Identify and make available programs such as Operation Running Start which provide students an opportunity to earn college credit at a greatly reduced cost while still in high school~~

~~**Activity 2:** Develop an extensive range of dual credit and A. P. courses for which the student can earn college credit prior to high school graduation~~

~~**Activity 3:** Explore the range of electronic courses, such as "Project Lead the Way", which provide a rigorous course of study that prepares students for ease of entry into college classes~~

~~**Activity 4:** Through collaboration, develop opportunities for students to participate in campus-based summer courses following completion of their 8th grade year and continuing through grade 12~~

~~**Activity 5:** Counselors will collaborate with the student and parents to design a course of study that includes college credit as appropriate for the academic ability and interest level of the student.~~

~~**Goal 2: Develop the Great Bay eLearning Charter School on a cost-neutral or near-neutral basis**~~

~~**Activity 1:** Utilize an existing building on the current high school campus to provide a~~

facility for the Great Bay eLearning Charter School

~~Activity 2: Utilize the administrative skills of SAU 16/ERCSD to support the design, implementation, and day-to-day administration of the school~~

~~Activity 3: Provide special training to teachers and counselors who elect or are reassigned to serve students in the charter program, eliminating the need for additional personnel~~

~~Activity 4: Provide the same transportation services as are provided for students in the traditional program~~

~~Activity 5: The Principal will establish internships and practicum experiences in the community and in higher education for participating students, and will coordinate a committee whose responsibility is to solicit donations, establish endowments, and seek federal as well as private funds. The funds are to be used as designated by the donor, with ultimate responsibility for the use of funds held by the Superintendent.~~

~~Activity 6: Establish a separate operating account to protect the integrity of funds~~

(h) Evaluation Strategies for the Charter School:

~~Evaluation strategies will fulfill RSA 194-B: 8,V, which states: "at least annually and near the end of each school year, a charter school shall evaluate the educational progress of each pupil as specified in RSA 104-B:3,II (h). Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program, as provided in RSA 193-C. The cost of the state assessment program shall be borne by the state." Great Bay educators will utilize a blend of the strategies identified below.~~

- ~~• Use of the NHEIAP on an annual basis~~
- ~~• Use of Northwest Evaluation Association computer-based adaptive tests on a quarterly basis~~

- ~~“Testing out” of a course through rigorous examination which includes analysis, synthesis and application of information in a content area~~
- ~~Credit based upon mastery rather than on seat time~~
- ~~Evaluation strategies that require the student to provide evidence of their knowledge and skills through application and exhibition~~
- ~~Exhibition requirements at the termination of a particular course of study~~
- ~~The requirement that every student develop and teach a unit of study to others – it is only as you teach that you fully understand~~
- ~~The GBECS will become utilize the Quality School Portfolio (QSP) data warehouse to assist school personnel with the ongoing assessment of progress.~~

(i) Academic requirements for Great Bay students:

~~The requirements for graduation for Great Bay eLearning students will be identical to those of students in the traditional education programs and will meet all local and state requirements.~~

~~Matriculation from grade to grade is dependent upon satisfactory work in the areas assigned in the student’s individual learning plan. In addition to academic work, the student may select community service, a part-time job, or an internship or practicum as a part of the individual learning plan. As discussed earlier in this document, through use of the technology and software which will be a part of the charter schools instructional materials, students will have the tools needed to produce digital portfolios that document their success in school. Samples of their best work can be saved and updated from year to year and eventually their digital portfolio (which will include a resume, letters of recommendation, awards, transcripts and other appropriate material) can be used as they apply for college admission and/or places of work.~~

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

~~Project personnel hired to teach in the charter school will comply with RSA 194-~~

~~B: 14 IV, which required the teaching staff of a charter school to consist of a minimum of fifty percent teachers either New Hampshire certified or qualified for certification with at least three years of experience. Personnel who have appropriate academic credentials, who are innovative, and who are interested in the application of technology to education, will be selected to work in the program.~~

~~Administrative responsibilities will be assigned to a teaching Principal during the first two years of operation. Additional support will be provided by middle school and high school administrative teams while oversight of the total program will continue to be provided by Dr. Arthur Hanson, Superintendent, and Dr. Steve Kossakoski, Assistant Superintendent. The Principal's position will transition to a full-time position beginning in year three.~~

~~Prior to the opening of school the following personnel will be identified:~~

- ~~• Teaching Principal~~
- ~~• Technology Aide~~
- ~~• Administrative Assistant~~
- ~~• Counselors and Special Education personnel~~

~~Dr. Stephen Kossakoski will play an instrumental role in the identification, purchase, and installation of the technical equipment and will also provide oversight to the project.~~

~~In addition, the middle school and high school principals will work as a team to assign shared responsibilities for the supervision of Great Bay eLearning Charter School. The projected list of personnel for the initial year of operation follows: Counselors, .5 FTE~~

~~Teachers, 2 FTE~~

~~Technology Instructor/teacher trainer. 1FTE~~

~~Evening and Saturday coordinator/tutor, .5 FTE~~

~~Personnel to be considered for faculty inclusion will have the following personality characteristics:~~

- ~~• Intellectual curiosity~~
- ~~• Open to new ideas~~
- ~~• Innovative nature~~
- ~~• Commitment to the mission of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School~~
- ~~• Flexible work schedule~~
- ~~• Ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other teachers~~
- ~~• Welcomes diversity~~
- ~~• One who values academic and technically oriented students equally~~

(k) Personnel Compensation, including provisions for leave and benefits, if any:

~~Employees of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will be considered public employees for the purpose of collective bargaining but are limited to membership in only one bargaining unit. Service in the Great Bay Charter School shall be considered as service in the Exeter Region Cooperative School District under RSA 100-A:4. Project personnel hired to teach in the charter school will comply with RSA 194-B:14 IV, which requires the teaching staff of a charter school to consist of a minimum of fifty percent teachers either New Hampshire certified or qualified for certification with at least three years of experience.~~

~~The charter school will comply with all state and federal laws pertaining to employment compensation and leave provisions. There shall be no distinction between compensation for faculty teaching in the traditional program and those teaching in the charter school. Educators electing to teach in the charter school will understand the necessity of flexible scheduling which may require hours of operation that differ from those of the traditional program. The school will comply with all laws pertaining to pre-employment requirements, such as Criminal History Records under RSA 91A:1.~~

(l) Pupil transportation:

~~As per RSA 194-B:2 IX, alternative charter students will be provided transportation under the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and RSA 189: 8. Due to the advantageous location of the building on the current high school campus (currently used for storage only), it will be possible for students to move between programs without additional transportation or loss of instructional time. Teachers will also be able to move between programs with ease. Transportation will be provided by the GBECSS for groups of students who participate in internships, attend specialized physical education programs, etc.~~

(m) Statement of assurances:

~~The Great Bay eLearning Charter School 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)Methods of coordinating with a pupil's LEA for matters pertaining to

Special education:

~~GBECSS will comply with federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a New Hampshire charter school setting.~~

Charter Public Schools and Special Education”

~~RSA 194-B: 11-III states that all options available to the parent and LEA are retained. Current options include:~~

- ~~1. the parent has the right to accept or reject the district proposed plan in part or in full~~
- ~~2. the local education agency may provide 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.

Counselors and mentors will work one-on-one to assure that special education students have an appropriate individual learning plan—one that allows them to be successful. Research has shown that special needs students achieve at a higher level if taught through methods that tap into their unique learning style. The use of a project-based learning approach, coupled with the use of technology, will allow students with special needs to be actively engaged in their studies and may allow them to become less dependent upon special services. Like all students in the school, they will demonstrate their mastery of a topic through portfolio and exhibition rather than exclusively through paper-pencil tests. Educators, members of the retired teachers association, and other professionals from the community will be available to provide small group or one-on-one instruction for students who require additional assistance to successfully complete their individual learning plan. Classroom learning will be enhanced by field work and practicum experiences appropriate to the student's interests and long-range employment goals. After a one-semester transition period, a review of the special education student's needs and progress will occur and shall include parents or guardian, counselors, faculty and administrators. At that time a decision will be made as to continued placement in the program.

Coordination with sending districts:

The Great Bay eLearning program will recognize and respect the authority of the local school board. The sending LEA will continue to have authority for special education decision making, and will assign a charter school liaison to collaborate with the sending district on matters that pertain to an individual student.

Coordination with other programs:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School is envisioned as serving the students currently enrolled in the ERCSD programs and others following a first year "proof of concept" period. Should demand support applications from outside the district students from surrounding district may be enrolled on a "space available" basis. Great Bay eLearning Charter School will respect the role and responsibility of the sending districts. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School is a "hybrid" model. It will blend with the traditional program to the degree necessary to meet an individual student's needs while maintaining a focus of the use of technology to enhance instruction. Students may move between programs as needed to address their interests and academic needs.

In addition, the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will establish a vigorous partnership with the University of New Hampshire. The GBECS will become a school where UNH teaching interns will develop their educational teaching skills through observation, teaching, and by assisting students with projects. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will provide on-the-job training for pre-service teachers in a high-tech setting which will be beneficial to all schools. Many current teacher graduates are familiar with technology, but have little, or no, experience in the effective use of technology in the classroom. UNH will also provide the GBECS with access to scientists, historians, mathematicians, and other experts through e-learning and face-to-face visits. Additionally, UNH researchers will be provided with access to the GBECS to study the effectiveness of the school's educational model.

As students advance, they will be encouraged to take classes from other higher education sources and to utilize curriculum from a variety of content providers throughout the nation and beyond. Because the curriculum represents an individual learning plan for each student, the opportunity to collaborate with other students will be one of the distinguishing factors regarding the operation of the charter school.

Coordination with a wide variety of business and industry partners is proposed.

The Principal will be responsible for heading up a team of educators and other interested parties who will do outreach in the community and beyond. The team will identify prospective partners from the fields of science, mathematics, technology, medicine, veterinarian medicine, vision, dental health, software production, video production and editing, media and others and will work to establish mentoring, job shadowing, intern ships, summer and part-time jobs, and corporate giving.

Educational program and standards:

While the Great Bay educational program will be unique in both its approach and the degree of involvement the student has in planning his/ her program of studies, the program will fulfill all requirements for district benchmarks and meet or exceed New Hampshire content standards.

(o) Admission procedures: Schedule of Events

September: Detailed instructions for applying to Great Bay will be provided to all rising 7th graders in October of 2004.

September: Parent letters will be sent home

October: A series of informational meeting will be held to inform parents and others of the nature of the school and availability. Application period is opened.

October-November: Student records of all applicants will be reviewed to determine academic need and potential eligibility. Eligibility will be established and students and parents will be notified accordingly.

December: Eligible students and their parents must visit the school and commit to the rigorous, high-tech nature of the program. Successful applicant pool finalized December 15th.

January: Program begins

Students who meet the criteria for admission and who are enrolling for the initial year of the school may enroll on a first come first served basis. Students who make satisfactory

~~progress will not be required to re-apply for the coming year and may continue in the program until they graduate. Should demand for participation exceed space availability, a lottery will be held. Eligible students will be identified and placed in a pool from which random drawings will occur until fifty students have been selected. Students who were not selected from the lottery pool will be placed upon a wait list in the order of the date and time of their application. In the event that a student withdraws from the school, the student whose application is dated earlier than other applications will be given the opportunity to participate. The selection process will continue until all available spaces are filled.~~

Timeline for Admission:

~~Parents of students wishing to enroll in the January 2005 opening of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School will be notified no later than Dec. 15th, 2004, of their selection for the program.~~

Admissions policy:

~~The Great Bay admissions policy will not intentionally discriminate against any individual or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.~~

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

~~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 the 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 allows a respectful environment for all students, the student may be suspended or expelled from the Great Bay eLearning Charter School. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will provide fair and age appropriate due process to students and will comply with 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.~~

~~The GBCF recognizes that expulsion is seldom an answer to student behavior issues and takes the position that through counseling, mediation, mentoring, and a wide diversity of learning opportunities, students will be helped to maintain an acceptable level of behavior and will remain in school.~~

Dispute Resolution:

~~A Student Conduct and Mediation Committee will be established to conduct peer review and determine appropriate steps to facilitate required changes in behavior of students with unresolved behavioral issues. The student mediation committee may recommend peer counseling, anger management classes, professional counseling, and other appropriate steps toward resolution of disputes. The student court may require appropriate compensation on the part of the student in question. The student court is overseen by the counselor assigned to the student in question. Should mediation and other recommended action fail to resolve the issue, the counselor in conjunction with the parent(s), faculty, and the student will work toward a higher level of intervention.~~

(q) Method of administering fiscal accounts and reporting:

Great Bay eLearning Charter School will follow public nonprofit accounting guidelines and will establish accounting controls that protect the good name of the school and its assets. The Board of Trustees will develop and implement policies for the fiscal management of the charter school. ~~Dr. Arthur L. Hanson, Superintendent of the ERCSD,~~ in conjunction with the treasurer of the Board of Trustees for the Charter School, will oversee the management of the funds. The Charter School will follow the same exacting standards in place for the ERCSD and will comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:101-V. This list includes the following:

- annual report
- annual financial audit and report
- program audit
- participation during the annual school budget process

(r)Annual Budget including all sources of funding:

~~Pursuant to Ed. 318.07, Great Bay will produce an annual report that will include but is not limited to the following components:~~

- ~~• general progress report regarding operation of Great Bay eLearning Charter School~~
- ~~• budget plan and explanation for pre-charter planning period~~
- ~~• budget plan for operation of Great Bay beginning in January, 2005~~
- ~~• budget forecast for five-year period~~
- ~~• assessment and reporting of the manner in which Great Bay is able to meet its educational and financial goals, as identified in the Great Bay eLearning Charter School mission statement~~
- ~~• Balance sheet identifying assets, liabilities, fund balances, equities, donations, grants awarded, grants in progress, endowments~~

~~Income and expenses projections for coming year~~

~~Members of the current business department will handle day to day management of funds and purchasing for the charter school.~~

~~The Board of Trustees will establish policies for the administration of funds, for check writing authority, and will determine a ceiling on discretionary expenditures. In addition, the trustees will empower the business department to establish a purchase ordering system independent of the traditional program and which will provide a clear picture of expenditures and the status of accounts. Those individuals with check writing authority shall be bonded in accordance with guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.~~

~~Funds for the over-all operation of the school will not be co-mingled with funding for existing educational programs. Donations, endowments, and other liquid assets will be deposited in a separate account set up to handle those transactions and Superintendent Arthur Hanson, in conjunction with the Principal and the Great Bay treasurer appointed by the Board of Trustees, will be responsible for assuring that all donations are used as directed by the donor.~~

(s) School Calendar details pursuant to RSA 194-B.8,II

~~Great Bay will fulfill the required 180-day calendar but may do so in an atypical format. The school envisions after-hours programs, weekend programs, and summer schedules. Thus, a student has flexibility in how the 180 requirement is met while fulfilling the intent of RSA 194-B.8,II.~~

Hours of Operation:

~~Great Bay hours of operation as flexible, as are the strategies for meeting the 180 day requirement. While classes will begin at approximately 8 a. m, they will continue until as late as 9 p.m. depending upon student need and course availability. In addition, students may choose to attend Saturday classes to fulfill attendance requirements while~~

~~at the same time fulfilling other responsibilities. Students will have access to three hour tutorials as needed Monday through Thursday from 3:30 to 6:30.~~

(t) Evidence of adequate insurance coverage:

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1,III, Great Bay eLearning Charter School 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.

(u) Consultants used in the development and implementation of the Great Bay eLearning Project include:

- ~~1. Staff & Students, The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, Providence, RI~~
- ~~2. Team Design, Architect~~
- ~~3. Steve Hermans, Attorney at Law~~
- ~~4. Plodzik and Sanderson, Public Auditors~~
- ~~5. Harvey, Construction Management firm~~
- ~~6. Technology Consulting, View Communications George Wiley~~
- ~~7. Technology integration, SAU 16 Technology Services~~
- ~~8. Andra Mattaliano, TANDBERG~~
- ~~9. Donna Sherrouse, Ed. D. Educational consultant~~

(v) Plan for Parent Involvement:

~~Great Bay eLearning Charter School looks forward to maximum participation from parents and members of the community. Parents will participate on the Board of~~

~~Trustees, and committees will be formed to develop and revise strategies to enhance student success, strategies to increase student involvement in community service, oversight of practicums, internships, and field experiences, collaboration with students in other districts throughout the nation, provision for tutorial support as needed, participation in the daily tutorials offered each afternoon from 3:30 to 6:30 Monday through Thursday, and support for the Great Bay library. In addition, parents will participate with the Principal in his/her efforts to bring substantial donations, endowments, and grant opportunities to the school. Parents of students enrolled in the school will be encouraged to volunteer.~~

~~This may consist of support for the faculty, assistance to students on special projects, tutoring, work on a committee, assistance with the facility or other types of support designed to assist in operating a state-of-the-art program while maintaining a cost-neutral budget.~~

(w) Dissemination of information:

~~All students in the district and their parents must have ample opportunity to enroll in Great Bay eLearning Charter School. This is an educational environment with high appeal to every student, regardless of ability or past performance. Therefore, it is particularly important that all eligible pupils have equal opportunity for enrollment. To assure equal knowledge and availability, eligibility criteria will be distributed through home room classes, posted on school bulletin boards, and announced via the intercom.~~

~~Public Television spots and public radio will be utilized to highlight the Charter program and local news agencies will be asked to provide extensive coverage. Parents will be invited to attend informational meetings where parents and their children will hear an overview of the school, view a presentation provided by technology consultants, and a~~

~~film clip from Howe, Oklahoma that provides a “snapshot” of the types of benefits experienced by other schools with similar programs. Information packets including application paperwork will be distributed at the parent meetings. Guidance counselors will receive training relevant to the operation of the virtual school and will assist in identifying potential enrollees for the program. A copy of the Charter school document will be made available in the school and public libraries. Informational brochures will be widely distributed to doctors’ offices, recreational facilities, teen centers, and other agencies where parents and students congregate. Presentations will be made to service clubs.~~

(x) GLOBAL HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless any district that sends students to the charter school, and their officers, directors, board members, agents, and employees (the “Indemnified Parties”) from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of action at law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses and expenses resulting from any act of omission by the charter schools, its agents, employees, or staff, relating to the operation of the charter school. The charter school shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims; damages, losses or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties’ own acts and omissions.

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School, its successors and assigns covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless any school district that sends its students to the charter school and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources and their successors and assign, (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 attorney's 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:

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:

The board of trustees for the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is committed to assuring that the management of the school is exemplary and that Great Bay eLearning becomes an educational option of which the community is proud. However, in the event that the charter is terminated and the dissolution of Great Bay eLearning Charter School 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 will:

- Research best use of property and retire all debt obligations
- Assign and relocate existing equipment to the appropriate educational setting within the ERCSD or other educational programs
- All personal property of the faculty and administrators shall remain their property
- Coordinate with the faculty and parents of students being reintegrated into the traditional programs

(z-1) 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 trustees of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School 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.

Ed 318.05 Additional Requirements:

1)Admissions:

~~1. Selective admissions will be based on the following criteria:~~

~~a. The students grade point average at their current school will not exceed 2.5 (C+).~~

~~b. The student will submit an application which will include the following: i. A short essay describing why they want attend the GBECS and which indicates that they are will to abide by all of the school's rules and regulations~~

~~ii. A completed parental permission form and recommendation~~

~~iii. A recommendation from a teacher/guidance counselor~~

~~c. A lottery will be held should requests for enrollment exceed capacity.~~

~~d. Exceptions to the grade point criteria will be made only for students whose recommendations from teachers/guidance counselors and parents justify a waiver.~~

Contracting under RSA 194-8:9, VII and RSA 194-B:5,V:

~~There are currently no plans to contract with other districts, or other private or public entities. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School will, however, enter into~~

~~collaborative projects with other districts throughout the United States. When circumstances warrant such a contract, the Charter School reserves the right to enter into mutually advantageous contractual relationships with others given trustee approval.~~

~~PLAN OF ACTION (WORK PLAN) AND TIMELINE OF EVENTS~~

~~Feb., 2004 Charter School approval from State Department of Education March Facility readiness is initiated~~

~~April Board of Trustees established, meeting schedule set, Personnel recruitment begins~~

~~April Great Bay eLearning team meets with UNH begins collaborative planning April Technology team researches/identifies equipment~~

~~May Personnel hired~~

~~July Workshops for board of trustees, faculty, guidance counselors, and administrators on daily operational strategies~~

~~July/August Curriculum writing teams begin work on online content~~

~~Online content collaborative development and reviewed by experienced online educators in the various disciplines such as faculty and technical directors from Howe School District, Howe, Oklahoma, Denali School District, Alaska, High Tech High School, California, New Hampshire Community Technical College, New Hampshire, Nova High School, Florida and others. The intent of this effort is to assure that online content meets the needs of students throughout the United States.~~

~~September Facility readiness is completed, equipment is installed, testing completed, training for all faculty is held~~

~~September Open House for students, parents, trustees, community student recruitment begins~~

~~November Enrollment begins, recruitment continues~~

~~December Lottery held if demand exceeds capacity~~

~~January Opening, Great Bay eLearning Charter School~~

Great Bay eLearning Charter School Standing Charter

Submitted to:

New Hampshire Department of Education

Submission Date: October 7, 2011

Original Application Date: February 4, 2004

Amendment Submitted By: Great Bay eLearning Charter
School Board of Trustees
30 Linden Street
Exeter, NH 03833

*Contact: Cheryl York McDonough, Executive Director of School/Student Affairs
Peter Stackhouse, Executive Director of School/Business Affairs
Phone: 603.775.8638
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GREAT BAY eLEARNING CHARTER SCHOOL Charter 2011

Overview:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School opened in January of 2005 with a population of about 30 students. The population increased to approximately 170 in the year 2011. The school has expanded to include grades 8, 11, and 12 – the original application was for grades 9 and 10. All grades were added with approval from the State Department of Education.

As a duly chartered public school in the state of New Hampshire, the Great Bay eLearning Charter School (GBeCS) targets those students whose academic records, attendance issues, or other circumstances place them at risk of school failure or lack of genuine cognitive engagement. Research clearly shows that many students require an alternative approach to education in order to remain fully engaged, meet high academic standards, and, ultimately, to fulfill all graduation requirements. Great Bay eLearning Charter remains committed to being that alternative.

The establishment of GBeCS in 2004 laid the foundation for presenting new and exciting methods of involving students in their own education. Great Bay eLearning Charter School was established to maintain student interest, increase academic achievement, and more fully addressing the needs of at-risk students. The program combines elements of traditional educational programs enhanced by project-based, innovative teaching approaches. The results are a high-quality program of study.

There is no “One Curriculum Fits All” at the Great Bay eLearning Charter School. Rather, students are offered a variety of courses, experiences, and fields of study that meet both their personal interests and identified academic needs. While offering this broad range of educational studies, educators collaborate with the student and parents to assure that each student has a balanced program that prepares them for entry into higher education and/or the world of work.

Learning takes place through participation in scheduled classes, other small groups and independent project initiatives. Student learning plans are based upon student interest and needs. Assistance is provided to aid students in attaining the skills necessary to reach educational goals.

Each student is assigned to one advisor to ensure that an adult mentor, who knows the student, can provide knowledgeable advice regarding the student’s academic program. In addition, the grade-level base-teams have a low ratio of students to adults.

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School is characterized by a flexible and personalized educational program for each student. The manner in which students fulfill requirements differs from student to student; however, a high level of academic and behavioral expectations is consistent for all students.

The Future of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School:

The future of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is bright. The population has consistently grown since the school opened and interest in the innovative practices and effective methods of instruction continues to be high. With the experience of the last seven years, GBeCS will seek initial accreditation through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges by the year 2014. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School intends to modify

its name for the 2012 – 2013 school year to better reflect the school it has become. The name will be changed to the Great Bay Charter Secondary School. This name change is a result of a significant amount of confusion surrounding the “eLearning” in the current title. People tend to believe that an eLearning school is an online school and many believe GBeCS is synonymous with the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS), located on the same campus as we are.

Mission:

The mission of the Great Bay e Learning Charter School is to address the needs of students whose needs are not adequately met in traditional programs, and to educate those students in such a way that they will graduate as caring, productive and contributing members of society. This mission will be fully articulated and have attached civic, social and academic expectations as the school conducts a rigorous self-study and meets its goal to be the first NEASC accredited charter school in the state of New Hampshire.

Core Beliefs:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School and its administration believe that by providing a unique and innovative educational option for those students whose needs are not fully met in traditional settings, they have been (and will continue to be) successful in engaging students in a challenging education. Each individual learning plan is relevant to the student’s goals and facilitates the student’s meeting of high school graduation requirements. Supported by a coalition of educators and professionals from a wide variety of disciplines, the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is committed to capturing and maintaining the interest of students who may otherwise have left school without realizing their full potential. No distinction is made between “college prep” and “technical education”. No division that might exist between ethnic groups, social classes, or gender groups is fostered or tolerated.

Students are viewed as “consumers” and consumer satisfaction through participation in a high quality program is the goal of the school. By utilizing individual learning plans written in a collaborative manner by students, parents, and teachers, and by developing personal learning contracts, students assume a greater degree of responsibility for their learning. Teachers are supported in their exploration of innovative teaching practices and both teachers and students are expected to participate in collaborative learning projects with others.

The following core beliefs form the basis for the educational assumptions that underlie all goals, objectives, activities and outcomes of GBeCS:

- *Students can learn if educators allow for differences in learning styles, abilities, interests, and needs,*
- *Engaging students in project-based and service oriented educational curriculum allows students to more fully achieve their educational goals,*
- *The judicious and appropriate use of technology enhances education, and prepares students for either post-secondary education programs or employment, and*
- *Educators in the Great Bay eLearning Charter School are responsible for, and capable of, providing assistance to other students and teachers in the area, the state, and beyond.*

Community Goals: The goal of the greater learning community is to support the development of a high-quality educational alternative for students at risk of underachieving or dropping out of school. Today's students need a flexible and innovative environment that prepares them for entry into post-secondary educational programs and/or for the world of work. Such a school must capture the interest of the students and engage them more fully in their learning program. When seeking alternative educational programs, research regarding school choice suggests that parents and students seek a program that has the following seven key characteristics:

- *High academic standards,*
- *Innovative approaches,*
- *Small size,*
- *Special interests curriculum,*
- *Greater flexibility in the educational program,*
- *Parental philosophies that perceive the charter school as a "best fit" for their child,*
and
- *Flexibility and an emphasis on community service, project-based learning, and real life experiences provided through practicums, internships, and job shadowing.*

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School was evaluated on how well it had fulfilled the terms of its initial charter application and was lauded by the educators who conducted the five-year re-charter visit and evaluation. Additionally, the GBECs Executive Directors set yearly goals and conduct spring evaluations of the school, the success in meeting goals, and the curricular and co-curricular programs. A presentation of findings is presented to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. The presentation is based upon the yearly goals and the seven principles outlined above.

Governance:

In accordance with 194-B:5, the charter public school is governed by a Board of Trustees, comprised of nine (9) voting members. The Board of Trustees has a slate of officers which shall include: the chairperson, co-chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. Officers are elected by a majority vote of those present at the annual organizational meeting and will serve until the next annual organizational meeting.

The 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*
- One (1) member is a University of New Hampshire educator*
- Two (2) members are professional educators*
- Two (2) members at large*

In addition, there are two non-voting *student* representatives to the Board of Trustees. 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.

Members are selected by the board and terms are staggered three-year terms. The board may appoint a member to fill a vacancy to complete a term according to established term timelines. Ex-officio members have two-year terms. Board members may serve consecutive terms if so voted by a Board majority.

To conduct business, a simple majority of the board members present and participating shall be considered as a quorum.

Records and minutes of the meetings are kept in accordance with the New Hampshire Right to Know statute which applies to all public schools.

Sub-committees are established as deemed necessary by the Board of Trustees and have the responsibility to report to the board on matters pertaining to:

- budget management,
- employment of professional personnel,
- policy matters,
- updating and revision of board policy as needed,
- student achievement, and
- any other business that comes before the board and is not administrative in nature.

The Board of Trustees, whose policies comply with all state and federal mandates, is the only governing body of the school. The Board of Trustees is prepared to exercise authority, set policy and make decisions that serve the best interests of Great Bay eLearning Charter School. Areas of oversight include but are not limited to:

- budget development and management
- hiring of project personnel
- policy development
- development of a compensation package and an established salary scale
- identification of project priorities and a plan of action for meeting goals
- establishing advisory committees as deemed necessary
- evaluation and approval of recommended measurement standards
- developing, implementing and revising bylaws as needed
- all other matters that are non-administrative and/or that are prescribed in statute or rule

Curriculum:

The academic program meets all local, state, and national standards for high-quality. As students advance, they are encouraged to take classes from other education sources and utilize curriculum from a variety of content providers. Because the curriculum allows for an individual learning plan for each student, the opportunity to collaborate with other students is one of the distinguishing factors regarding the operation of the school.

Coordination with a wide variety of business and industry partners is ongoing. The Dean of Students is responsible for outreach in the community and beyond. The Dean of Students identifies prospective partners from the fields of science, mathematics, technology, medicine, veterinarian medicine, vision, dental health, software production, video production and editing, media and others and will work to establish mentoring, job shadowing, internships, summer and part-time jobs, and corporate giving.

Program Design:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School program meets all traditional curriculum requirements using innovative methods enhanced by the judicious use of technology and a vast array of courses from which students can choose. In the same way, faculty members write much of their own content and students choose courses from all curriculum areas. A heavy emphasis is placed on student collaboration and learning from others. The goal is for students to achieve competence. Much less emphasis is placed on *how* the student chooses to meet the course competencies.

GBeCS supports the use of supportive advisory programs and activities to reduce academic and social problems and continues to foster a strong and effective advisory program.

Instructional materials:

Faculty at the Great Bay eLearning Charter School develop much of the content for courses offered. Classes may have work-study components, practicum opportunities, field-experiences and community service as a part of the course of study. Each individual learning plan documents specifically the criteria for completion of the course. Students selecting outside courses are required to meet all requirements set by that instructor and the course requirements are reviewed by the advisor and student.

The Technology Environment:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School founders recognized the power of technology in the classroom. Visual literacy has developed significantly over the past half century and computers and design software are widely used across the professional spectrum. Students at GBeCS are exposed to the computer as a design tool, and armed with extensive technology resources in preparation for post-secondary education and the professional world.

One of the primary goals of incorporating technical elements into the curriculum is to introduce students to new skills and professions, creating a potential career path after completion of high school. In order to support an atmosphere that allows students to develop their potential while fully engaging in the educative process, the school provides enough computers to ensure a one-to-one student-to-computer ratio. A combination of desktop and laptops are utilized in order to meet this goal.

Students have the tools necessary to produce digital portfolios that document their success in school. Samples of their best work can be saved and burned from year to year and eventually their digital portfolio (which may include a resume, letters of recommendation, awards, transcripts and other appropriate material) can be used as they apply for college admission and/or places of work.

Advancement Requirements for Great Bay Students:

The requirements for graduation for Great Bay eLearning students meet all local and state requirements. Matriculation from grade to grade is dependent upon satisfactory work in the areas assigned in the student's individual learning plan. In addition to academic work, the student may select community service, a part-time job, or an internship or practicum as a part of the individual learning plan. Samples of best work can be saved and updated from year to year and eventually their digital portfolio (which may include a resume, letters of

recommendation, awards, transcripts and other appropriate material) can be used as they apply for college admission and/or places of work.

Students who have completed a year of schooling in the GBeCS program with satisfactory results are not required to petition for space in the program for the following years. Each student who performs satisfactorily and is making progress has the right to continue in the Great Bay eLearning program until graduation. Progress and satisfactory performance is determined by the administration.

Staffing Overview:

Personnel hired to teach in the charter school comply with RSA 194- B: 14 IV, which requires the teaching staff of a charter school to consist of a minimum of fifty percent certified teachers. Personnel who have appropriate academic credentials, are innovative, and are interested in the application of real world concepts to education, are qualified for selection. Administrative responsibilities are assigned to the Executive Directors and Dean of Students.

Personnel share the following personality characteristics:

- Intellectual curiosity
- Flexibility
- Innovative nature
- Commitment to the mission of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School
- Ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other teachers
- Ability to value all students for who they are

Personnel Compensation - The Great Bay eLearning Charter School complies with all state and federal laws pertaining to employment compensation and leave provisions. The school also complies with all laws pertaining to pre-employment requirements, such as Criminal History Records under RSA 91A:1.

Statement of Assurances:

The Great Bay eLearning Charter School does 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.

Special Education:

Methods of coordinating with a pupil's LEA for matters pertaining to Special Education: GBeCS comply with federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a New Hampshire charter school setting (see Commissioner of Education's memos (FY 07) numbers one and fourteen regarding special education and charter schools)

Additionally, RSA 194-B: 11-III states that all options available to the parent and LEA are retained in the charter school setting. Current options include:

1. the parent has the right to accept or reject the district-proposed plan in part or in full

2. the local education agency may provide 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 school may initiate the resolution of disagreements about the district's recommended program through the Department of Education. Advisors and case managers work to assure that special education students have an appropriate individual learning plan -- one that allows them to be successful.

The Great Bay eLearning program recognizes and respects the input of the sending LEA, which has the responsibility for providing special education services and assigns a charter school liaison to collaborate on matters that pertain to an individual student.

While the Great Bay educational program is unique in both its approach and the degree of involvement the student has in planning his/ her program of studies, the program meets or exceeds New Hampshire content standards.

Admissions policy (in compliance with Ed 318.05):

The Great Bay admissions policy does not intentionally discriminate against any individual or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law.

Factors taken into consideration in the approval of applicants include academic need (based on past-performance), parental recommendations, teacher and/or guidance counselor recommendations, and space availability. Should demand for participation exceed space availability, a lottery is held. Eligible students are identified and placed in a pool from which random drawings occur until fifty students have been selected. Students not selected from the lottery pool are placed upon a wait list in the order of the date and time of their application. In the event that a student withdraws from the school, the student whose application is dated earlier than other applications is given the opportunity to participate. The selection process continues until all available spaces are filled.

Student Behavioral Expectations:

Policies for student governance are developed by the Board of Trustees and reflect the same high expectations for student behavior that exists within the traditional program. The policy is clear, states expectations for student behavior, and indicates possible consequences. Mentors, volunteers, and counselors are assigned as needed to help students meet behavioral expectations. Should the student be unable to perform satisfactorily in a manner that allows a respectful environment for all students, the student may be suspended or expelled from the Great Bay eLearning Charter School. The Great Bay eLearning Charter School provides fair and age appropriate due process to students and complies with 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.

The administration recognizes that expulsion is seldom an answer to student behavior issues and takes the position that through counseling, mediation, mentoring, and a wide

diversity of learning opportunities, students are helped to maintain an acceptable level of behavior and may remain in school.

Pupil governance and discipline are age-appropriate and due process procedures are in place for all disciplinary matters including suspension and expulsion.

Method of Administering Fiscal Accounts and Reporting:

Great Bay eLearning Charter School follows public nonprofit accounting guidelines and accounting controls that protect the good name of the school and its assets. The Board of Trustees implement policies for the fiscal management of the charter school. The Executive Director for Business Services, in conjunction with the treasurer of the Board of Trustees for the Charter School, oversees the management of the funds. The school complies with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:101-V). This list includes the following:

- *annual report*
- *annual financial audit and report*
- *program audit*
- *annual school budget process*

Annual Budget and Funding:

Pursuant to Ed. 318.07, Great Bay produces an annual report that includes but is not limited to the following components:

- general progress report regarding operation of Great Bay eLearning Charter School
- budget plan for operation of Great Bay eLearning Charter School
- assessment and reporting of the manner in which Great Bay is able to meet its educational and financial goals, as identified in the Great Bay eLearning Charter School mission statement
- Balance sheet identifying assets, liabilities, fund balances, equities, donations, grants awarded, grants in progress, endowments
- Income and expenses projections for coming year

The Board of Trustees has established policies for the administration of funds, for check writing authority, and has determined a ceiling on discretionary expenditures. In addition, the trustees empower the business department to establish a purchase ordering system which provides a clear picture of expenditures and the status of accounts. Those individuals with check writing authority are bonded in accordance with guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Donations, endowments, and other liquid assets are deposited in a separate account set up to handle those transactions and the Executive Director for Business services, in conjunction with the treasurer appointed by the Board of Trustees, is responsible for assuring that all donations are used as directed by the donor.

School Calendar and Hours of Operation:

Great Bay fulfills the intent of RSA 194-B.8,II in regard to its annual calendar. Hours of operation are flexible, as are the strategies for meeting the calendar requirement. While

classes begin at approximately 8:00 a.m. and end at approximately 2:00 pm., the school may opt to use less traditional hours.

Evidence of Adequate Insurance Coverage:

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1,III, Great Bay eLearning Charter School is 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.

Parent Involvement:

Great Bay eLearning Charter School expects maximum participation from parents and members of the community. Parents participate on the Board of Trustees and committees to develop and revise strategies to enhance student success, increase student involvement in community service, practicums, internships, and field experiences, and support for the Great Bay library. In addition, parents participate in efforts to bring substantial donations, endowments, and grant opportunities to the school. Parents of students enrolled in the school are encouraged to volunteer. This consists of support for the faculty, assistance to students on special projects, co-curricular activities, work on a committee, assistance with the facility or other types of support designed to assist in operating a state-of-the-art program while maintaining a cost-neutral budget.

Severability provisions and statement of assurance:

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.

Provision for dissolution of the charter school including disposition of its assets:

The Board of Trustees for the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is committed to assuring that the management of the school is exemplary and that Great Bay eLearning becomes an educational option of which the community is proud. However, in the event that the charter is terminated and the dissolution of Great Bay eLearning Charter School 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 will:

- Research best use of property and retire all debt obligations
- Acknowledge that all personal property of the faculty and administrators shall remain their property
- Coordinate with the faculty and parents of students being reintegrated into the traditional programs

A minimum of one semester notice of closing will be provided parents and students. All records will be transferred in a timely manner and the staff and trustees of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School 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.