

PACE CAREER ACADEMY

Charter School Application



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Submitted by:

Pembroke School District/SAU 53
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PACE CAREER ACADEMY Charter School Application

(a) Educational Mission

PACE Career Academy is dedicated to the promise and success of students who have struggled in more traditional school structures through offering a rich and focused education founded in students' attainment of the Common Core Academic Standards and their evolving awareness of and preparation for the myriad career and educational possibilities open to them; an understanding of how their unique talents, abilities and aspirations complement those possibilities; and a depth of preparation in the technological, interpersonal, attitudinal and practical aspects of successful integration into the business and entrepreneurial realm.

Goals:

1. To support students' development of self-confidence, personal responsibility, work ethic, and a life plan.
2. To utilize both Common Core and cross-cutting competencies to provide students with a concrete, focused and practical pathway to graduation and their adult lives.
3. To emphasize the use of authentic assessment in the evaluation of student's attainment of competencies.
4. To provide a rich and varied background in the uses and manipulation of various technologies, which will supply students with the foundation to apply and evolve their expertise with these tools in any career setting.
5. To work collaboratively with students, school personnel, parents and community members to create a highly personalized and inclusive education and career plan for each student.

(b) Governance

The *PACE Career Academy* will be governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees who, during the planning and implementation phase of the school's development, will be appointed by the Pembroke School Board.

This initial Board of Trustees will be comprised of one representative from each of the following constituencies:

- Pembroke School Board
- SAU 53 AREA Executive Committee
- Pembroke Academy Administration
- Pembroke Academy Faculty
- Pembroke Academy Student Body
- AREA Parents
- AREA Community Members

This original Board will be charged with oversight of the identification, purchasing and renovation of the school's proposed facility; hiring of its Director; and planning and development of its curriculum.

The Board will meet at least monthly and report to the Pembroke School Board and AREA Executive committee quarterly.

Upon the opening of the *PACE Career Academy*, the Pembroke School Board shall have the option of either reappointing existing members of the Board of Trustees or appointing new members for a term covering the first year of the *PACE Career Academy's* operation.

Prior to January 1 of the second year of the school's operation, a public election will be held to determine the make-up of the Board of Trustees, which will be comprised of two-year terms for representatives of the following constituencies:

One Pembroke School Board member
 One *Pembroke Academy* Administrator
 One *PACE Career Academy* faculty member
 Three SAU 53 parents or community members
 One *PACE Career Academy* student

c) Methods by which Trustees and their terms will be determined

Once the public election has been held to determine the Trustees (as outlined above), the Board of Trustees themselves will have the responsibility to oversee this election process within the framework of the terms and Board composition outlined above.

d) General description and proposed or potential location of facilities to be used, if such information is available.

The selection and purchase of the site for the *PACE Career Academy* is contingent upon the funding of this grant. The identification, acquisition and preparation of a suitable facility will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

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

The *PACE Career Academy* will serve high school-age students with a geographical emphasis on those residing within SAU #53's five towns of Pembroke, Allenstown, Epsom, Chichester and Deerfield.

Normally, *PACE* students' days will be equally divided between meeting academic and cross-cutting competencies at the school and community-based internships and apprenticeships. Consequently, the school will be able to accommodate between 25 and 30 students.

f) Curriculum

The detailed curriculum of the *PACE Career Academy* will be developed over the months leading up to the school's proposed opening in September of 2011 by a committee comprised of SAU 53 educators, community and business people, and IHL teachers.

Philosophically, the curriculum of the *PACE Career Academy* will be founded in three interlocking areas:

1. *Students' attainment of specific "cross-cutting" competencies*, which will be measured through both academic and community and work-based venues:

- Decision-making and Problem-solving
- Self-management
- Communication Skills
- Ability to Work with Others
- Information Use (Technology, Research and Analysis)

2. *Students' attainment of academic competencies as described by the school approval standards for New Hampshire*. This process will occur within a context established through the use and analysis of a variety of standardized tools to establish students' attainments and needs. Typical of these tools will be NECAP, NWEA (MAP), school-based assessments, and Special Education assessments (as appropriate). Emphasis will be placed on students' attainment of competence in literacy and numeracy, especially as those skills affect students' success in disciplines like science and social studies, and upon their competence with a breadth of technological tools.

3. *Individualized competencies that are defined collaboratively by the student and school personnel and which focus on specific areas of student interest particularly as those interests pertain to possible career directions*. In this category we will specifically draw upon some of the competencies developed by the *Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)* program. For example,

- Career development

- Job attainment
- Job survival
- Leadership and Self-development
- Personal skills
- Life survival skills

(h) Achievement tests to be used to measure pupil academic and other goal achievement including, but not limited to, objective and age-appropriate measures of literacy and numeracy skills, including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science and mathematics.

As noted under “g,” *PACE* students’ level of achievement and subsequent academic needs will be assessed through analysis of both NECAP and the NWEA (MAP) testing. Both of these instruments are utilized throughout SAU 53, thus offering continuity of measurements of academic attainment between *PACE Career Academy* and its primary sending towns.

Since the many of *PACE Career Academy* students will likely be drawn from *Pembroke Academy*, which successfully integrated a full competency-based assessment system during the 2009-10 school year, students’ attainment of specific competencies as they pertain to individual courses will also be utilized to ascertain students’ level of achievement and academic needs.

In addition, we will utilize the *Choices* program to establish specific career interests and objectives that will be central in defining individualized, self-directed competencies for each student. *Choices* offers a reasonably comprehensive information source regarding career opportunities, including training programs and institutions that specialize in specific career fields, the requisite high school courses students need to enter specific fields, current average salaries and benefits associated with various career fields, as well as resume building and cover letter writing skills.

(i) For schools offering high school grade levels, there are graduation requirements sufficient to ensure that the school has provided an adequate education for its pupils.

The PACE Career Academy will offer students at least two routes to obtaining their high school diplomas: the default path will have students mastering an array of competencies-- through a combination of courses and academic experiences at both their sending high school and the *PACE Career Academy*-- equal to those required for a *Pembroke Academy* diploma (125 credits).

PACE students will also participate in a rigorous and mandatory summer-time component that will be offered in conjunction with *Manchester Community College*. This

will give students access to both *MCC*'s academic and vocational programs and staff as well as allow PACE students the ability to earn dual (high school/college) credits.

It is also our intention to establish a relationship with the *Pembroke Adult Education Program* to offer students another option between high school and their careers or further education. .

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

Staffing will consist of certified and highly qualified teachers for core content areas. In addition, professionals in counseling, mentoring and vocational development will be a core part of the program. The staffing numbers will depend on enrollment, with an ideal staff to student ration of 1:4.

These professionals will need to have demonstrated through experience and/or commitment an ability to effectively collaborate with colleagues, engage students in learning and pursuing their goals, and actively promote positive relationships with students. An articulation agreement with other district schools for services such as in the case of nursing, special education, and administration may be negotiated by the Board of Trustees. The model plan also will incorporate community professionals in job development and mentoring.

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

Initially, in the development year, the PACE Career Academy personnel will be compensated through the grant. Following the development year, the costs of personnel salary and benefits will be paid through the funding per pupil that the PACE Career Academy receives. The PACE Career Academy will also seek out grant funds from other sources to compensate professionals in specific areas of program, i.e. vocational development and counseling.

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

Students may be transported to vocational sites by a PACE Career Academy contracted school bus.

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

District assurances as established will also apply to the PACE Career Academy.

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

Students requiring Special Education and services will be administered through their LEA. Compliance with special education laws will be enforced as is the case at all district schools.

(o) Admission procedures

A Student Assessment and Admissions team will be formed in Spring 2011 to develop application and admission criteria. This team, a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees will:

- 1) Develop an admissions packet
- 2) Advertise and seek referrals for students for Fall 2011.
- 3) Interview students and parents
- 4) Select students for admission
- 5) Develop an orientation procedure for all new students

The admissions process will include:

- A community meeting to be held in Spring 2011 to explain to all interested students and parents the mission of the charter, educational programs, services and the admissions process.
- A review by the Assessment and Admissions team of all applications and interview materials and a determination of appropriate candidates based on the established criteria.
- Upon selection, candidates will meet with a member of the Admissions and Assessment team to discuss individual educational needs and services.
- Development of individual learning plans based on an assessment of needs, interests and future plans.
- An orientation session(s) for students.

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

A philosophy of mutual respect and personal responsibility will govern the interactions of all students and staff. A code of behavior and procedures will be developed by the Board of Trustees. Students will have access to due process rights as governed by law. Any matters involving suspension or expulsion will be referred to the Board of Trustees.

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

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

PACE Career Academy will operate on the standard 180-day school calendar, with start dates, ending dates, and vacation times to correspond with those of SAU 53.

The school day will be approximately 7 hours long, potentially starting at 8:00am and ending at 3:00pm. Final schedules will fulfill the time requirements set forth for the awarding of academic credits within public schools.

The school day will be divided into two distinct mods: The Academic Mod, and The Career Mod, separated by a lunch break. Students will complete their traditional academic requirements during their Academic Mod, and pursue vocational training, in the form of off-site internships and on-site career awareness training, during their Career Mod. It is expected that half of the student body will attend an AM Academic Mod, and a PM Career Mod. Conversely, the other half of the student body will attend an AM Career Mod, and a PM Academic Mod.

Expanded supplemental programming will be offered during some evening hours. Truncated hours will be maintained during the summer, so as to help students remain connected to the school and their teachers during the long vacation period, thus providing students with uninterrupted access to school supports and resources.

(t) Provision for providing continuing evidence of adequate insurance coverage, pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, III.

PACE Career Academy, as a charter school, will be subject to the same protections as are afforded to any public school, as set forth under RSA 507 (b). This provides for Limited General Liability for a charter and its agents. Quotes from several insurance carriers will be requested by the planning team, and coverage will be secured based on a variety of factors to include overall cost of coverage, premiums, deductibles, and the company's ability to provide the charter school with adequate protection and coverage. Proof of current coverage will be on-file in the school's business office. The adequacy and cost of coverage will be reviewed annually by the school's board of trustees, with recommendations to follow for the forthcoming school year.

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

(v) Philosophy of Parent Involvement and related plans and procedures.

According to sources including the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, the Michigan Department of Education, and the National Parent Teacher Association, decades of research indicate that students whose parents are involved in their education generally experience:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates

- Better school attendance
- Increased motivation

(v) (cont.)

- Better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behavior

Subsequently, the leadership of the PACE Career Academy, through board appointments, parent forums, surveys, and overall outreach and communication, will strive to involve stake-holding parents in their children's schooling at every level, including, advocacy, policy-development, decision-making, fund-raising, and volunteering. Furthermore, just as students will be expected to sign a contract of commitment before they are enrolled at the school, so too will their parents.

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

Upon approval, local media outlets will be contacted to run news/interest stories about the PACE Career Academy. Informational literature will be mailed to all Pembroke school district families with students in grades 9-12. Administrators and guidance professionals at Pembroke Academy and those at other area districts will also be provided informational literature. An annual Open House will be held and publicized to the Greater Pembroke public. Regular social events will be hosted by the school, and open to the entire community. Social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, will be greatly utilized, and all forms of media outreach and informational dissemination will direct interested parties to the PACE Career Academy website.

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

PACE Career Academy agrees to indemnify and hold harmless any sending district which sends students to the PACE Career Academy, 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 damage costs, losses, and expenses resulting from any act of omission by PACE Career Academy, its agents, employees or staff, relating to the operation of PACE Career Academy. PACE Career Academy 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.

(x) (cont.)

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

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

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

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

In the event the PACE Career Academy should cease operations for any reason, including the non-renewal or revocation of its charter, the Board of Trustees shall consult with its attorney and also with the New Hampshire Department of Education to assure that all contractual and financial obligations are met and that technical assistance is sought. The planned sale and distribution of any assets shall assure that any financial obligations of the PACE Career Academy are met. After that, any remaining assets will become the property of the Pembroke School District.

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

As the proposed PACE Career Academy will not be a charter conversion school, (aa) does not apply to this application.

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

In the event the PACE Career Academy should cease operations for any reason, students shall return to their respective sending school.

