

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE
3340 FOREST HILL BOULEVARD, C-316
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406-5869

(561) 434-8200 FAX: (561) 434-8571

ARTHUR C. JOHNSON, Ph.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

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CHAIRMAN

WILLIAM G. GRAHAM
VICE CHAIRMAN

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DEBRA L. ROBINSON, M.D.

November 14, 2006

Sue Wilkinson, Deputy Chief
Office of Grants Management
Florida Department of Education
325 W. Gaines Street, Room 325
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Dear Ms. Wilkinson:

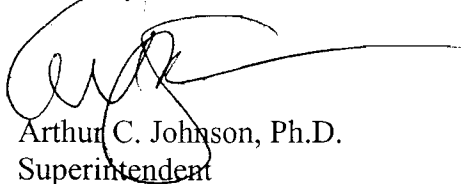
The School District of Palm Beach County submits one original proposal and two copies (three total) of the enclosed *Public Charter School Grant Program 2007-2009 Implementation Projects* grant application for the following Charter School:

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning

This cover letter is sent with the application, which is subject to School Board approval in January, 2007.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate and look forward to your announcement following the review process.

Sincerely,



Arthur C. Johnson, Ph.D.
Superintendent

ACJ/JMM/pjs

c: Ann Killets
Janice S. Cover, Ed.D.
Juanita W. Edwards

Attachments (one original proposal and two copies)



Florida Public Charter School Grant Program

Proposal Checklist/Table of Contents

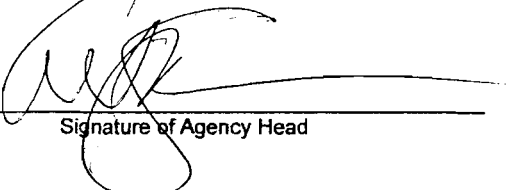
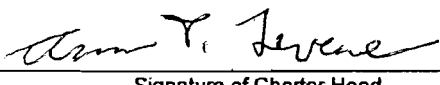
INCLUDED	ITEM	PAGE #
X	Proposal Checklist/Table of Contents (Attachment A)	1
X	DOE 100A Application Form (Attachment B)	2
X	DOE 101 Budget Narrative (Attachment C)	3
X	Project Budget Detail (Attachment D)	4
X	Assurances page (Attachment E)	6
X	Signed ED 80-0013 (Attachment F)	8
X	Charter School Overview Form (Attachment G)	10
X	One-page Abstract	11
X	Project Narrative	11
X	Letters of Support	31
X	Copy of Charter Application	34
X	Copy of Charter Contract	83

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Project Application

TAPS Number

073098

Please return to: Florida Department of Education Bureau of Grants Management Room 325 Turlington Building 325 West Gaines Street Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400 Telephone: (850) 245-0496	A) Program Name: Public Charter School Grant Program 2007-2009 Implementation Project	DOE USE ONLY Date Received
B) Name and Address of Eligible Applicant: The School District of Palm Beach County Palm Beach Academy for Learning 6201 South Military Trail Lake Worth, FL 33463		Project Number (DOE Assigned)
C) Total Funds Requested: \$ 30,800.00 <hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> DOE USE ONLY Total Approved Project: e	D) Applicant Contact Information	
Contact Name: Louisa M. Legato		Mailing Address: 6201 South Military Trail Lake Worth, FL 33463
Telephone Number: (561) 649-7505		SunCom Number:
Fax Number: (561) 649-7507		E-mail Address: llegato@bellsouth.net
CERTIFICATION		
<p>I, Arthur C. Johnson, Ph.D., do hereby certify that all facts, figures, and representations made in this application are true, correct, and consistent with the statement of general assurances and specific programmatic assurances for this project. Furthermore, all applicable statutes, regulations, and procedures; administrative and programmatic requirements; and procedures for fiscal control and maintenance of records will be implemented to ensure proper accountability for the expenditure of funds on this project. All records necessary to substantiate these requirements will be available for review by appropriate state and federal staff. I further certify that all expenditures will be obligated on or after the effective date and prior to the termination date of the project. Disbursements will be reported only as appropriate to this project, and will not be used for matching funds on this or any special project, where prohibited.</p> <p>Further, I understand that it is the responsibility of the agency head to obtain from its governing body the authorization for the submission of this application.</p>		
E)	 Signature of Agency Head	 Signature of Charter Head



A) PALM BEACH ACADEMY FOR LEARNING

Name of Eligible Recipient:

TAPS Number
07C098

B)

Project Number: (DOE USE ONLY)

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Budget Narrative Form

(1) FUNCTION	(2) OBJECT	(3) ACCOUNT TITLE AND NARRATIVE	(4) FTE POSITIO N	(5) AMOUNT
5200	310	Professional/Technical Services (Behavioral Consultant, Therapists, etc.)		\$2,300.00
6100	310	Assessment and Evaluation Consultant		\$500.00
6300	310	Curriculum and Development Consultant		\$4,500.00
6400	310	Staff Development Consultant		\$2,000.00
7100	330	Travel, Out-of-County/Registration (Governing Board)		\$1,350.00
7300	330	Travel, Out-of-County/Registration (Administrative)		\$1,350.00
7300	390	Other Purchased Services (Marketing, Recruiting)		\$1,898.28
5200	510	Materials and Supplies (ESE Classroom) – (Puzzles, Paint, Clay, blocks, other assorted manipulatives)		\$1,500.00
6100	510	Assessment and Evaluation Materials and Supplies – (Harcourt Assessments, ABLLS, Brigance Early Developmental Checklist)		\$300.00
7300	510	Materials and Supplies (Administrative) – (Paper, file folders, printer ink, copy machine toner, etc.)		\$500.00
5200	642	Equipment, (ESE Classroom) – (Tables, Chairs, Desks, Shelf units, Projector, Digital video camera)		\$7,500.00
5200	644	Computer, Hdw, (ESE Classroom) – (4 Dell Dimension Desktop Computers)		\$4,000.00
7300	644	Computer, Hdw (Administrative) – (Dell Optiplex GL620 Desktop Computer)		\$1,000.00
5200	692	Software, (ESE Classroom) – (Waterford Learning System, Reader Rabbit Series)		\$1,000.00
7300	692	Software, (Administrative) – (Omnipage, Omniform, Adobe Acrobat)		\$700.00
7200	790	Indirect Cost 2.48% FY 2006-2007		\$401.72
C) TOTAL				\$30,800.00

**Florida Public Charter School Grant Program
Project Budget Detail**

First Budget Period

_____ First Year Implementation _____

Anticipated time frame (from __award__ to __6/30/07__):

Category	Item	Month	Item Description/Justification	Estimated # Items	Estimated Cost/Item	Total Estimated Cost
Professional/Technical Services	Behavioral Consultant	upon award	Behavioral Consultant to evaluate behavior plans for students	1	\$ 2,300.00	\$ 2,300.00
Instructional Support Services	Assessment and Evaluation Consultant	upon award	ESE Specialists to help with evaluation of students' educational needs	1	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Instructional Support Services	Curriculum Development Consultants	upon award	Experts in the various available curriculums to help develop teaching strategies.	6	\$ 750.00	\$ 4,500.00
Instructional Support Services	Staff Development Consultant	upon award	ESE Consultant will provide staff development activities for teachers in the following areas: a) appropriate teaching strategies for students with disabilities b) develop appropriate IEPs c) maintain written documentation of consultative services for students whose IEPs indicate services are needed.	2	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
General Support Services	Out of County Travel/Governing Board	February	Travel for Board members to training session	2	\$ 675.00	\$ 1,350.00
General Support Services	Out of County Travel/Administrative	February	Travel for Administrative staff to training session	2	\$ 675.00	\$ 1,350.00
Other Purchased Services	Marketing/Recruiting consultant	February	Marketing/Recruiting consultant to develop dissemination plan	1	\$ 1,898.28	\$ 1,898.28
ESE Instruction	Classroom materials	February	Puzzles, blocks, Legos, reproducibles, arts & crafts supplies, motor skills development toys and other assorted manipulatives	150	\$ 10.00	\$ 1,500.00
Instructional Support Services	Assessment and Evaluation Materials and Supplies	upon award	Harcourt Assessments, ABLLS, Brigance Early Developmental Checklist	3	\$ 100.00	\$ 300.00
Administrative	Materials and Supplies	March	Paper, file folders, printer ink, copy machine toner	10	\$ 50.00	\$ 500.00
ESE Instruction	Classroom Equipment	March	tables, chairs, desks, shelf units, projector, digital video camera, digital still camera	10	\$ 750.00	\$ 7,500.00
ESE Instruction	Classroom Computers	April	4 Dell Dimension Desktop Computers	4	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Administrative	Computer Hardware	April	1 Dell Optiplex GL620 Desktop computer	1	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
ESE Instruction	Classroom Software	April	Waterford Early Learning System, Reader Rabbit Series	2	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Administrative	Software	April	Omnipage, Omniform, Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Office	4	\$ 175.00	\$ 700.00
General Administration	Miscellaneous	June	Indirect Cost 2.48% FY 2006-2007	1	\$ 401.72	\$ 401.72
						\$ -
First Budget Period Total:						\$ 30,800.00

This format must be followed.

CHARTER SCHOOL ASSURANCES

FISCAL AGENCY:

NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR ENTITY: **The Palm Beach Academy for Learning**

ADDRESS: **6201 South Military Trail, Lake Worth, FL 33463**

PART I:

THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUIRES FLORIDA TO DOCUMENT THAT A CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR A GRANT UNDER THE FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ASSURANCES. THESE ASSURANCES MAY BE ADDRESSED IN THE GRANT NARRATIVE OR THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER APPLICATION. STATE THE PAGE NUMBER TO INDICATE WHERE EACH OF THE STANDARDS IS ADDRESSED IN EITHER OF THE TWO DOCUMENTS. PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF THE STANDARD IS NOT ADDRESSED IN EITHER DOCUMENT.

ASSURANCES	GRANT NARRATIVE PAGE NUMBER	CHARTER APPLICATION PAGE NUMBER
1. A description of the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including: (a) how the program will enable all students to meet challenging state student academic achievement standards; (b) the grade levels or ages of children to be served; and (c) the curriculum and instructional practices to be used.	15	19
2. A description of how the charter school will be managed.	22	28
3. A description of (a) the objectives of the charter school and (b) the methods by which the charter school will determine its progress toward achieving those objectives.	27	14
4. A description of the administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency.	27 & 28	
5. A description of how parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design and implementation of the charter school.	12 & 13	13 & 31
6. A description of how the authorized public chartering agency will provide for continued operation of the school once the Federal grant has expired, if such agency determines that the school has met the objectives described in Assurance #3 above.	22 & 23	29
7. A request and justification for waivers of any Federal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that the applicant believes are necessary for the successful operation of the charter school; and a description of any state or local rules, generally applicable to public schools, that will be waived for, or otherwise not apply to the school.	N/A	N/A
8. A description of how the subgrant funds or grant funds, as appropriate, will be used, including a description of how such funds will be used in conjunction with other Federal programs administered by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education.	23	35
9. A description of how students in the community will be (a) informed about the charter school and (b) given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.	29 & 30	33
10. An assurance that the eligible applicant will annually provide the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives described in Assurance #3 above.	16 to 20	22

11. An assurance that the eligible applicant will cooperate with the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education in evaluating the charter school assisted under this subpart.	23	22
12. A description of how a charter school that is considered a local educational agency under state law, or a local educational agency in which a charter school is located, will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act.	26	23 & 24

PART II:

FLORIDA REQUIRES AN APPLICANT FOR A GRANT UNDER THE FEDERAL CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM TO DOCUMENT THE FOLLOWING ASSURANCES. ON A SEPARATE PAGE, ATTACH AN EXPLANATION FOR ANY ASSURANCE MARKED "NO."

ASSURANCES	YES	No
1. Funds received under this grant will be used to supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the level of funds that would be made available from nonfederal sources, and in no case will such funds be used to supplant funds from nonfederal sources.	X	
2. Activities will be implemented which are consistent with state and federal fiscal and program requirements.	X	
3. The charter school will maintain accurate and timely project records which document progress in implementing this project, and which demonstrate compliance with all state and federal fiscal and program requirements.	X	
4. The charter school and the district will provide all information required by the Florida Department of Education for fiscal audit, program evaluation and annual reporting to the U.S. Department of Education.	X	
5. The charter school will provide the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education any information that may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives described in its charter.	X	
6. The charter school will cooperate with the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education in evaluating the charter school assisted under this program.	X	
7. The charter school will submit a timely annual report to the school district and to the Florida Department of Education, as required by Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, containing all the information required by law.	X	

CERTIFICATION IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ALL FACTS, FIGURES, AND REPRESENTATIONS MADE IN THIS APPLICATION WITH REGARD TO PARTICIPATION OF THE ORGANIZATION OR ENTITY SPECIFIED ABOVE ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (TYPED):



SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

MM 10.06

DATE SIGNED

Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements

Applicants should refer to the regulations cited below to determine the certification to which they are required to attest. Applicants should also review the instructions for certification included in the regulations before completing this form. Signature of the form provides for compliance with certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," and 34 CFR Part 85, "Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)." The certifications shall be treated as a material representation of fact upon which reliance will be placed when the Department of Education determines to award the covered transaction, grant, or cooperative agreement.

1. Lobbying

As required by Section 1352, title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;

(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants, contracts under grants and cooperative agreements, and subcontracts) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

2. Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters

As required by Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions, as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.105 and 85.110 --

A. The applicant certifies that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default; and

B. Where the applicant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, he or she shall attach an explanation to this application.

3. Drug-Free Workplace (Grantees Other Than Individual)

As required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, Subpart F, for grantees, as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.605 and 85.610--

A. The applicant certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

(a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;

(b) Establishing an on-going drug-free awareness program to inform employees about--

(1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;

(2) The grantees policy of maintaining a drug free workplace;

(3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and

(4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;

(c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);

(d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will--

(1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and

(2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;

(e) Notifying the agency, in writing, within 10 calendar days after receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to: Director, Grants and Contracts Service, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. (room 3124, GSA Regional Office Building No. 3), Washington, D.C. 20202-4571. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant;

(f) Taking one of the following actions within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2), with respect to any employee who is so convicted --

(1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or

(2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;

(g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f).

B. The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (street address, city, county, state, zip code)

6201 South Military Trail
Lake Worth, Palm beach County, FL 33463

Check if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.

Drug-Free Workplace (Grantees who are Individuals)

As required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, Subpart F, for grantees, as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.605 and 85.610 --

A. As a condition of the grant, I certify that I will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in conducting any activity with the grant; and

B. If convicted of a criminal drug offense resulting from a violation occurring during the conduct of any grant activity, I will report the conviction, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the conviction, to: Director, Grants and Contracts Service, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. (room 3124, GSA Regional Office Building No. 3), Washington, D.C. 20202-4571. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certifications.

NAME OF APPLICANT

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning

PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED CHARTER SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

Ann T. Levene, Governing Board President

SIGNATURE



DATE SIGNED

November 10, 2006

Florida Public Charter School Grant Program Charter School Overview Form

Full name of charter school: The Palm Beach Academy for Learning

Contact name: Louisa M. Legato

Street address: 6201 South Military Trail

City: Lake Worth, FL Zip Code: 33463

Telephone: 561-649-7505 Fax: 561-649-7507

Email address: llegato@bellsouth.net

Has the school previously received a grant under the Public Charter School Grant Program?

Yes No

Grade levels served: Currently K-2 adding a grade each year

For schools scheduled to open for the 2007-2008 school year, provide the estimated # of students the charter school will serve during its first year of operation: _____

For schools that have been operating for less than one year and have not previously received a grant under the Public Charter School Grant Program, provide the number of students currently enrolled: 17

Is the school a conversion charter school? Yes No

Will the school share any of the following with one or more other schools?

- facility _____
- administration (one or more administrators);
- 50% or more of governing board members.

Yes No If yes, check which ones apply, and provide the name(s) of the schools: The Palm Beach School for Autism

Is the school sponsored by a municipality? Yes No

If Yes, what city? _____

Is the school run by a management company? Yes No

If Yes, what company? _____

Is the school affiliated with a university or community college? Yes No

If Yes, what university or community college? _____

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning

The Palm Beach School for Autism, Inc., which currently operates a charter school for children with autism three to five years of age, has opened The Palm Beach Academy for Learning, on August 16, 2006, serving children with autism from Kindergarten through second grade, adding one grade each subsequent year. The need to offer a continuum of services for families attending our preschool age program was determined by the demands of our families, the overburden school district having to meet the vast and growing numbers of children with autism, and the lack of educational choices in our community for families who are in search of alternative schools that can specifically address the challenges that children with autism present.

Autism is a permanent neurological disorder. Children who suffer from autism face many obstacles including deficits in speech and language, gross motor and fine motor skills, cognitive development, severe social retardation and for most severe behavioral challenges. However, children with autism can become independent and successful adults if we reach them in the early years by providing them with intensive intervention that addresses all the deficits discussed prior. Many of these children have unique strengths, which allow them to excel in certain academic areas far beyond typical children. The Palm Beach Academy for Learning recognizes the strengths in each individual child with autism and teaches to encourage skills that are strong and teaches to improve the skills that are challenging in order to help the child reach their fullest potential so that they may grow to encounter meaningful life experiences and a sense of community.

We also have the vision to not only educate students with autism but to also provide education and support services to the families and the community. Autism affects the entire family adding a tremendous amount of stress, financial burden, and this can lead to in many cases, the breakdown of families. By providing specific educational programming to the children, we also recognize that families need resources, support, advocacy and networking in order for their child to continue to improve not only in our school but also in the family home and in the community.

The Need

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning, an elementary charter school for children with autism, opened its doors this past August 2006 because of a strong demand from the community. As the number of children who are diagnosed with autism continues to grow nationally, our own numbers in Palm Beach County continue to climb as well. Palm Beach County School District serves over 871 students with autism pre-12th grade. The number of students they serve between kindergarten and 5th grade is close to 500 with autism. The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities has over 1100 families registered as having a child with autism. Nationally, just over 10 years ago, the number of children being diagnosed with autism was 1 out of 10,000. Only 10 years later autism has reached epidemic proportions with 1 out of every 166 children being diagnosed nation wide. Just take a close look at the media where fundraisers for autism are taking place across all the major television networks and being led by politicians, actors, comedians and business men to raise much needed funds for research to find the causes and cures for autism. Throughout the United States, America's favorite cereal, Rice Krispys, has displayed the 'signs of autism' on the side of its cereal boxes for the public to recognize the early signs of autism in their own children. The National

Ad Council has run ads speaking on the epidemic numbers of children being diagnosed with autism. Therefore, the need for our charter school is clear and the continuation of our program is considered necessary. We have watched as our own school district continues to struggle to meet the overwhelming needs of these students as the population in our county continues to increase; Palm Beach County is one of the fastest growing areas in Florida. According to the Florida Trend Economic Yearbook 2005, the total population of Palm Beach County is 1,283,853 residents. According to this same report, the projection for population growth is 10% or more (128,385) by the year 2009. Therefore, if you take the number of children being diagnosed with autism and the population growth just in our county alone it is very clear the need for our charter school is more than necessary.

It is the **mission** of The Palm Beach Academy for Learning to provide students with autism a developmentally appropriate education that builds on the strengths and needs of each student. We believe that IDEA (Individual Disabilities Education Act 1975) was created so that each child with a disability, who deserves the right to be educated, would be educated in schools that provide programming specific to meet their individual needs. The IEP (Individual Educational Plan) is written for the individual student, by a team, including the families, that strive to meet the educational goals of each student. However, if the curriculum and teacher training are not specific to the student (student with autism) then the likelihood of meeting those annual goals are slim. At the charter school of The Palm Beach Academy for Learning we are designed so that instruction is provided within highly structured environments by staff trained to offer intense behavioral support (one of the biggest challenges in working with children with autism). Instruction is delivered through one-to-one instruction, small groups, and in the community whenever possible. Learning strategies implemented in each setting are based on the individual needs of the students and includes applied behavioral analysis, direct instruction, and a developmental approach to learning. Key components to the success of our educational philosophy and mission include:

- High academic and behavioral expectations
- A school environment that fosters achievement in all areas including functional academics, self-help skills, social skills, building independence, and improving fine and gross motor skills
- Dedicated and highly competent staff with experience specifically in autism
- Involved parents/guardians in all phases of the school's operations
- Accountability to the students, parents or guardians and the community through a continuous cycle of planning and reviewing success of students
- Individual therapies provided including occupational, physical, speech/language, behavioral and family supports

In conclusion, The Palm Beach Academy for Learning addresses the learning needs of the students that we serve through the individual educational plan, a highly trained teaching staff, the choice of various curriculum to suit the individual needs of the student with autism and focuses on the specific challenges of these children including but not limited to behavioral, communication, and language interventions.

Founding and Governance

The Board of Directors for the Palm Beach Academy for Learning includes parents of children with autism as well as professionals who work with children with

autism. Our founding parents, whose child attended our charter preschool for children with autism, were the ones who rallied all of the board members from the preschool charter to pursue the next step: to open an elementary school in order to offer families a continuum of programming. One of the founding parents does sit on the board. It was important to our board to maintain a balance by providing a few positions for parents whose children attend the charter school presently, a few parents who have children with autism but who are not enrolled in the school (because of age) and to involve community partners as well. Our board members include the following members:

*Ann Levene, Board President of the Palm Beach School for Autism, Inc (2 years) which includes The Palm Beach Preschool for Autism and The Palm Beach Academy for Learning. Ann served as Vice President for the first two years the preschool opened as a charter and took over the presidency in 2005. She is the Director of Special Needs for the Jewish Community Center of the Greater Palm Beaches where she manages a budget of over \$150,000, manages over 40 staff, writes grants, develops programming and is an advocate for families of children with disabilities and she is a mother of a 15 year old with autism.

*Ranee Gabriel, Vice President of the Palm Beach School for Autism, Inc. (1 year) is the Director of Parent-to-Parent of Palm Beach County for the past four years. Ranee has a database of over 1200 families that she programs for throughout the entire county. Ranee provides workshops, conferences, support, networking, information and advocacy. Ranee is a parent of two children with special needs.

*Carol Howison, Owner/CEO of Cats Gymnastics operates several programs in the county for children with autism. For the past 15 years Carol has been known as the individual that welcomes children with special needs into her facility with open arms. She has developed a strong following of children with autism because of her ability to manage the behaviors and offer a recreational environment that most kids with autism are not welcomed in. Carol has an outstanding reputation in Palm Beach County and she joins us this year as one of our newest board members.

*Jonathan Cohen is the owner/CEO of Advanced Pediatrics a full service agency serving children with disabilities who need speech, occupational, behavioral and physical therapies. Jonathan has been in operation for over 8 years and has developed strong ties to families of children with autism. He started his business in a small storefront and now has expanded across counties to better serve families' from outside Palm Beach County.

*Ann Osorio, Secretary/Treasurer of The Palm Beach School for Autism, Inc. (3 years) is a parent who works for the Veterans Hospital as assistant to the Speech, Language and Hearing department. Her son attended the charter preschool for autism and she has been involved in many facets including fundraising and searching for foundations and grants.

*Ina Landy is the founder for the Palm Beach Academy for Learning. Her son attended the preschool for autism. Ina has a Master Degree in Special Education and has played a key role in curriculum development, teacher training and fundraising.

* Joe Landy, partner in a law firm in Palm Beach, is one of founders for the Palm Beach Academy for Learning. Although time does not allow him to be able to sit on our board, he does provide us with legal assistance whenever asked including negotiating our lease for the building that we currently occupy.

Therefore, the long range viability of our proposal is best demonstrated by the fact that the same group of parents and professionals responsible for the creation and continued

success of the Palm Beach Preschool for Children with Autism are the same individuals who have open the Palm Beach Academy for Learning on August 16, 2006.

School Personnel

Our Principal, Olive Balbosa has a Master Degree in Exceptional Student Education Pre K-grade 12. She has devoted her professional career to helping children and families faced with emotional, physical, and developmental difficulties. As an experienced educator for over 25 years, she has served a multitude of populations from early childhood through adulthood. Olive was lead teacher when our Preschool for Autism opened its doors in 1997. When a position became available for Assistant Principal Olive was promoted. For over three years she was Assistant Principal and then took the position of Principal for the Palm Beach Academy for Learning in 2006. Also on board at the Academy is a full-time speech and language therapist and a part-time occupational therapist to provide the services to the children as indicated as on the Individual Educational Plan.

Our hiring process follows Palm Beach County School District guidelines which includes FBI background check, fingerprinting, TB test, as well as a Master degree in Special Education with at least three years experience working with children with autism.

Training Plan

It is necessary for governing board members and administrative staff to feel supported through trainings that are on-going throughout the school year and summer. The Palm Beach Academy for Learning has and will offer a myriad of professional development opportunities existing at the school site to increase competence in the field. The Florida Association of Charter Schools will be providing the following training to our board and administrative staff:

1) Mission and Vision: Maintaining mission and vision throughout planning and implementation and aligning your mission with your student population.

Trainers: George Farrow, Cheryl Valantis and Kristine Santos

2) Improving Individual Student Achievement: Designing curriculum, teaching methodologies, tutoring and mentoring programs, school academic and delivery models, and evaluation strategies. Trainers: George Farrow, Cheryl Valantis, Neil Drake, Louis Dunbar and Don Lewis

3) Data Driven Decision Making: Methods of collecting and analyzing student achievement data. Successful models for delivering specific remediation. Trainers: Louis Dunbar, Neil Drake and Kris Santos

4) Continuous Improvement: Under expert tutelage, each attendee will outline and then flesh out the continuous improvement model for their school. Trainers: Louis Dunbar, Kris Santos and Don Lewis

5) Board of Directors Governance Training: This training will be provided by the charter's lawyer, Kathleen Schoenberg, which will review the board's roles and responsibilities and the requirements of the Florida charter school law. This workshop is designed to familiarize the board of their obligations and to provide a venue for the board to work on the foundation of the charter school through policy development.

Trainers will include:

***Don Lewis:** Mr. Lewis is an 8-year veteran of charter school accountability in his role as District Charter School Director for Alachua County School Board. He has written the book on charter school monitoring, charter contracts, district relations, appeals (former commissioner of the Charter School Appeals Commission) and Personnel Issues. Mr. Lewis was the Curriculum Department Head for the school board for many years and has done much training in continuous improvement.

***Neil Drake:** President of the Florida Association of Charter Schools, Charter Appeals Commission member, Founder of One Room School House, principal of two charter schools, board member on 5 charter schools, charter school consultant since 1998 (Charter Schools of Florida), facilities developer for 4 charter schools (Central Florida Charter school Development Corporation), grant project development and management (many start up grants, many Title One Grants, many dissemination grants, Americorps, Challenge Foundation), charter school administrator 9 years.

***Cheryl Valantis:** Charter school founder and director for 7 years. Expert in elementary curriculum design. Has had her school at the very top of the state's performance levels every year through a strong mission-related curriculum.

***George Farrow:** Suwannee Valley Educational Options, Mr. Farrow's company, has been working with charter schools on curriculum, administrator and board training for many years. Mr. Farrow has served as a charter school director, board member, and president. He was the primary founder of one school and has assisted in the founding of others. Expert in middle and high school curriculum design.

***Kristine Santos:** Ms. Santos has founded and directed an award winning middle school. Her expertise is in the areas of school mission, continuous improvement, middle school initiative and reading initiative.

Some of this training will take place before the start of the school year at sessions held in Gainesville, Florida and other trainings are on-going throughout the year as they are being offered. Our board training led by Kathleen Schoenberg will be held before the end of 2006.

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability High Quality Instruction

Children with autism have considerable deficits in the area of language/communication. By using language-based instruction, educators seek to teach language skills through lessons that involve subjects of interest to the student. During the lesson students are focused on learning about anything that interests them from a serious science subject to their favorite pop star; or even a news story or film. They learn about this subject while the teacher is fostering opportunities for new language to be used. This is also the principle used in the state approved, researched based *Open Court Reading Program* designed for typical developing readers. This program enriches the interests of young readers while challenging their acquisition of reading and language arts standards. This is thought to be a more natural way of developing language ability and one that corresponds more to the way we originally learn our first language; through modeling, inquiry, and the opportunity to interact. This method is an effective way to encourage language especially when used in a language rich environment using: visual supports, sign, augmentative devices, vocalizations, classroom literacy centers, collaborations with speech/ language clinicians, and

collaborations with the family. This methodology permeates the curriculum. It is also used effectively in math, science, and social studies.

The foundation of The Palm Beach Academy for Learning program is the application of various therapies (applied behavioral analysis, speech/ language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, family coaching) infused with innovative learning methods that include sensory integration, behavioral intervention, hands on learning, team collaboration, individualized instruction, achievement portfolios, language based instruction. These various techniques are tailored to reflect the individual ways and rates in which children learn, as well as, clearly measuring the outcomes of each method.

Our school is too small to receive a grade from the Florida A+ grading system. However we support the move to create individual school rubrics by which every school can be evaluated under this program. Again, although our charter is too small to receive a grade "C" or better, by individualizing student instruction and by focusing on the special needs of our students, as described throughout this narrative, we know that our students will perform academically to the best of their ability regardless of their disabilities. Our students will make Adequate Yearly Progress for the same reasons. Students with disabilities, while often starting at a deficit for their grade level, can raise their individual achievement levels at a pace equal to or greater than a year of learning gains for a year of teaching. This measurement has become the standard for measuring school wide achievement and we welcome it.

It is important to note that the students that we receive at our charter school are children with significant autism. These students are not on track for a regular diploma nor will they have the ability to sit for the FCAT. Therefore, a letter grade for our school will not apply as our students, once again, will not be taking the FCAT. To measure success of each individual student is addressed in this section specifically.

Sensory Integration Methods

When addressing sensory integration needs of children with autism, we realize a distinctive approach is necessary. A child's relationship to his/her body and even to gravity is rooted in the brain stem where fundamental awareness of the body and environment is integrated. Without normal integration, the child may suffer from hyperactivity, poor attention span, a fear of being touched, anti-social choices, or other related problems. Much of this behavior makes sense when we realize that the child, often feeling isolated and confused, is struggling to put the pieces together to bring inner and outer experiences into harmony. Physical, occupational, and speech therapy can help the child using sensory integration therapy. Many autistic children suffer from sensory integrative dysfunction, which can be indicated by:

- Over sensitivity to touch, movements, sights, or sounds.
- Under reaction to sensory stimulation.
- Unusually high or low levels of activity.
- Coordination problems.
- Delays in speech, language, and motor skills.
- Behavior problems.
- Poor self-concept.

Successful therapy increases the child's ability to integrate sensory information efficiently in the areas of motor coordination, reduction of hypo/hyper responsiveness to sensory stimuli, better emotional adjustment, and greater self-confidence.

Social/ Emotional Behavior Based Instruction

Most of the children we serve are in need of individual and group behavioral intervention. Our children must be able to manage their behavior before moving on to less restrictive educational and social environments. Positive behavior modification is the basis of our program. It is our firm belief that with appropriate and intensive behavioral interventions at an early age, the child will more successfully integrate into less restrictive programs in his/her community school. Our ultimate focus is to prepare the child for this anticipated inclusion. The Palm Beach Academy for Learning Charter School incorporates the following behavioral principles:

- Positive reinforcement. Incorporating differential reinforcement and behavior momentum.
- Extinction (ignoring) procedures. Generally used for inappropriate attention seeking behavior and inappropriate "in task" behaviors when the child is attempting to get out of task.
- Redirection
- Limited time out procedures as determined by the child's Individual Behavior Plan. Generally used in cases of aggression.
- Targeted behavior intervention will include collection of data and the reporting progress of deceleration of target behaviors.
- Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans will be developed as needed for each individual child.
- Training sessions will be implemented to train family members in consistent behavioral approaches.
- A Certified Associate Behavior Analyst (CABA) will be on staff to assist in collecting data, developing behavior plans, and following the success of each child's behavioral program.
- A Certified Behavior Analyst (CBA) will be on as "as needed" basis for consultation concerning difficult/severe behavioral problems.
- All placements will be determined by the IEP. If it is determined that placement at The Palm Beach Academy for Learning Charter School would not be appropriate, then a meeting will be held with district representatives, school staff, and parents to ascertain appropriate placement. The Palm Beach Academy for Learning Charter School will provide documentation.

Hands on experiential learning activities

A child with autism struggles to make sense of the environment around them; they experience difficulties in cause/ effect relationships and abstract concepts. Often times when students are able to master concepts in one area/ setting they have difficulties generalizing to others. By creating real-world experiences and hands on learning opportunities students are able to make cognitive connections between the information they have learned and where to apply it in life. Students participate in real-world simulated activities in the classroom as well as in the community whenever possible.

Achievement of Performance Goals

The educational program goal of The Palm Beach Academy for Learning is to increase the cognitive, communication, motor, sensory, social/ emotional behavior, and self-help skills of elementary school students with autism spectrum disorders in Palm Beach County. The specific curricular goals that are addressed are grounded in a behavioral and developmentally appropriate curriculums which are individualized through each student's IEP. These include:

- Cognitive Development- addressing the acquisition of age appropriate academic skills and concepts through applied behavior analysis and supplemental techniques.
- Communication (Expressive/ Receptive languages)- addressing the acquisition of functional communication skills, both gesture, pictorial or verbal and including the use of augmentative and communication devices.
- Motor Development- addressing the fine and gross motor development for students to succeed in the educational environment.
- Sensory Development- addressing the development or fading of sensory deficits that impact the student's ability to function in the general population.
- Social/ Emotional Development- addressing the acquisition of age appropriate pro social behaviors including peer interaction skills and emotional awareness.
- Development of Self-Help skills (functional academics)- addressing the acquisition of age appropriate eating, toileting, tooth brushing and hand washing skills

To meet curriculum goals, each child has an individual education plan which has been developed by a team of individuals who would include, but not limited to: parents, teachers, therapists, and district representatives. Appropriate curriculum materials are individualized; each child's educational program is based on his/ her IEP. The following are curriculum materials that may be used in order to meet IEP goals, Sunshine State Standard for Exceptional Student Education, and Sunshine State Standards for general education in each of the outlined goal areas.

If deemed appropriate by the students' IEP, The Palm Beach Academy for Learning strives for the student to meet the Sunshine State Standards through acquisition, fluency, mastery, and finally generalizations. Teaching of these standards is done through accommodating principals and methods of applied behavior analysis. Standards are met through the use of supplemental materials that are aligned with state standards. Due to the nature of our population a majority of students are working at a cognitive level that is below their chronological age level. In this instance the students' individual IEP may reflect the appropriateness of a modified set of standards, which will be the Sunshine State Standards for Exceptional Student Education. Teaching of these modified standards is also done through principal methods of applied behavior analysis and through some use of supplemental materials that are aligned with modified state standards.

Curriculum Design

As discussed under our mission, it is our intent that instruction is provided within highly structured environments by staff trained to offer intense behavioral support. Instruction is being delivered through one-to-one instruction, small groups, and in the community whenever possible. Learning strategies implemented in each setting are

based on the individual needs of the student population and may include applied behavior analysis, direct instruction, and a developmental approach to learning.

The primary purpose of the school is to recognize the unique characteristics of autistic children and to apply a curriculum specifically designed to meet their specific needs in order to effectuate standards of academic excellence. Many children with autism are left behind in a typical academic environment due to their deficits, especially their lack of communication. Equally important, the typical learning environment is not designed to allow educators to recognize each child's unique strengths.

The small teacher to student ratio at The Palm Beach Academy for Learning, coupled with educators having an expertise in the field of autism, serves to best address each child's strengths and weaknesses. It is our intent that this instruction is provided within highly structured environments by staff trained to offer intense behavioral support. Instruction will be delivered through one-to-one instruction, small groups, and in the community whenever possible. Our trained staff emphasizes instruction on targeted IEP goals in order to increase performance within the child's academic programming.

The school uses state adopted, researched based curriculum in all core subject areas. This curriculum guarantees that students are being exposed to all the sunshine state standards in every core subject area. This curriculum is being taught by highly qualified instructors as delineated in the No Child Left Behind Act.

Evaluating Student Performance

The vision and purpose of The Palm Beach Academy for Learning is to demonstrate that children with autism can learn at high levels through a structured academic program based upon the principles of applied behavior analysis. Key components of the program are: data based instructional decision making, predictability through a visually structured environment, consistent and contingent use of reinforcement, acquisition of skills through discrete trial presentation, and planned generalization of learned skills to ensure functional independence. It is our belief that intensive behavioral support for academic, functional academic and social readiness can be enriched with cognitive approaches to aide student in responding to new situations.

In educating students with autism, the Palm Beach Academy for Learning follows two major approaches toward education; developmental and behavioral. Through a developmental approach assessments are used as guidelines to teach skills that are developmentally appropriate for the child and as it applies to the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The behavioral approach of applied behavior analysis is used to teach IEP skills in small group settings and one on one instruction with documentation available through charting and graphing.

We recognize that children learn and test in a variety of ways and we also recognize that one particular assessment tool will not always meet the needs of an individual child. It is our responsibility to use, adapt, and (or) create whatever tools are necessary to ensure that each child's needs are met and his/ her potential is recognized, honored, and ultimately pursued. These assessments are listed in the Monitoring Student Progress section below. Gathered assessments, samples of work and projects, and Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) data will be compiled in an achievement portfolio that can be used to reflect the developmental growth of each student.

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning instructional program is data based and data driven. Incoming students are assessed on a variety of skills over an initial two-week period. This is considered the students baseline level of skills. Based upon the IEP goals and the level of skills displayed over the baseline period, skills are targeted for acquisition. Each student's program is based on highly individualized and on going assessment. A broad range of materials that apply the methods of applied behavior analysis, direct instruction, and developmental learning are used to meet the needs of students.

Monitoring Student Progress

Students enrolled in The Palm Beach Academy for Learning have an IEP as determined by our enrollment criteria. At a minimum, eligible students will participate in the statewide assessment program unless otherwise determined by the student's IEP. The student shall follow their individualized education plan; participating in all assessments as determined by the IEP committee. If a student meets the criteria for exemption from statewide assessments, the IEP committee determines appropriate assessments to be used by the school to measure progress. The assessments used are based on individual needs and abilities.

Individual goals and objects are developed within 30 days of enrollment using appropriate assessment tools in which baseline functioning levels can be determined (pretest.) These functional levels represent the following developmental areas: cognitive, language, motor development, social, emotional, and self-help. This information guides the teacher, specialists, and family in developing specific goals for the child. A posttest will be administered at the end of each academic year. Comparisons of pretests and posttests will be submitted to Palm Beach County Schools in the annual report.

Each child's progress on state standards and individual goals are to reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team which may include parents, teachers, therapists, and any other pertinent personnel. The initial findings, impressions, and recommendations are to be discussed with the family prior to and at the conclusion of the assessment. Written conclusions of assessments will be compiled and included in the students IEP folder as part of their record; available to Palm Beach County Schools. Progress reports reflecting the educational goals are completed quarterly for each student and will be shared with the family. Daily progress reports are given to parents.

The following are formal and informal testing measures that have been used at various stages of the educational process where appropriate:

Initial program assessment, review of progress:

- Brigance Early Developmental Checklist
- Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills
- ABLLS- Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills
- Applied Behavior Analysis-baseline probe
- Curriculum placement assessments (Example: Reading Mastery Plus Placement Test)
- Formal/ Informal assessment completed by occupational, speech/ language, physical, and behavioral therapists
- CARS- Childhood Autism Rating Scale
- Functional Behavior Analysis
- Vineland

- Statewide assessments if indicated by the IEP
 - Review of portfolio
- Ongoing assessments
- Applied Behavior Analysis- discrete trials and maintenance assessment
 - Curriculum assessment protocols (Example: Reading Mastery Plus Mastery Tests)
 - Multi-disciplinary observations and collaboration
 - Student Portfolio

ESE Training for Professional Staff

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning offers a myriad of professional development opportunities existing at the school site to increase competence in the field which has already been discussed prior. Through further education, staff are able to take advantage of opportunities to provide various therapies in after school programs and grow within the program and in their involvement with The Palm Beach Academy for Learning.

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning will take advantage of many of the same training that we have used at our sister school, the Palm Beach School for Autism. One of those training is discussed below:

Reaching Potentials provides classes open to educators, parents etc.

Overview Class:

This class has been specially designed to offer information that addresses topics such as:

- An overview of autism spectrum disorder
- The diagnostic criteria for Pervasive Developmental Disorders
- Learning Theories
- Information and research regarding Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- Information for families and caregivers interested in home based programs

Beginners Intensive Two-Day Discrete Trial Training

This seminar includes:

- An introduction to techniques used by our therapist
- The ABC's of problem solving
- Addressing challenging behaviors
- The pyramid approach explained (with video presentation)
- An explanation of data collection for large and small groups

This class is most beneficial for those who already have an understanding of the ABA model but are interested in advancing his/her training and methodology.

Shadowing Workshop

This workshop focuses on the skills and techniques necessary to become an effective shadow for a child in a classroom setting. Highlights include:

- What is shadowing
- Role of a shadow
- Prerequisites of shadowing
- Qualifications of a shadow

- Determining objectives
- Sample hierarchy of expectation
- Data collection
- Inclusion activities
- What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)
- Positive and negative reinforcement
- What is extinction
- Prompting techniques
- Reinforcement techniques
- Teaching skills at home
- Working with schools and teachers
- Fading of the shadow

School Leadership and Management

Our charter school, The Palm Beach Academy for Learning is led by our Principal, Ms. Olive Balbosa, an experienced teacher and administrator for over 25 years in the field of disabilities. Ms. Balbosa provides on-site training throughout the school day as well as training sessions provided on teacher work days and schedules trainings from outside agencies including Reaching Potentials, Butterfly Effects, The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and Advanced Pediatric Systems. Our principal is on-site on a daily basis managing staff, curriculum, day-to-day operations, as well as working closely with families. The charter school has a small student population, which makes it more than manageable for the principal to be efficient and effective. When the population does increase then an additional administrative staff will be hired to handle more of the day-to-day operations. Presently, the corporation of The Palm Beach School for Autism, Inc., has a full-time business manager who oversees all financial matters on an on-going basis including insurances, human resources, payroll operations and facilities management as well as obtaining materials and supplies.

Our corporation believes in not being too top heavy in management. At this time, when considering the size of the school, we are able to keep the roles and responsibilities of managing a charter school very manageable with minimum personnel.

Staff has easy access to Internet service through laptop computers situated through the school specifically for teaching staff. Our system is state-of-the-art with the ability to correspond with state and local agencies as well as with local, state and national organizations that provide resources, information, referrals and services to children with autism.

Initially, The Palm Beach School for Autism, Inc., applied for the planning, design and implementation grant for 2006-2007 program year. The budget that was written for that grant had very conservative figures for the first year of operation. Most of the budget showed the school purchasing furniture, materials and supplies needed for initial opening. However, we were denied the grant for 2006-2007 and the board elected to open The Palm Beach Academy for Learning relying on our corporate fundraising funds to cover our initial expenses. The actual enrollment for 2006-2007 was double than the original estimate and obtaining grant funds at this time would allow us to accommodate the growth of student population that is occurring and which will continue to increase. It is evident that the budget developed for the Palm Beach Academy for Learning, which allowed for operation without grant funding, was realistic and conservative since it

allowed us to continue to open and operate without the additional funds; therefore, we would continue even when the grant expires. Palm Beach Academy for Learning will continue its aggressive fundraising activities (which allowed this school to open without the 2006 grant) and will continue to work with its grant development director to obtain other grant funds.

Business, Finance and Accounting

- Sound Policies and Procedures:

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning will comply with and maintain all financial records in accordance with Florida Department of Education Manual "Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools." All accounting is performed by our Certified Public Accountant. This corporation has already been in operation for over three years and as such has a contractual agreement with an independent auditor. This charter school would be included as a separate entity in the existing annual corporate audit. This charter application will be the second charter school of the parent corporation. Accounting procedures and controls have been in place for over three years and have satisfied the requirements of the district staff and our independent auditor. No issues have been brought to our attention by these monitors that require corrective action in all three annual audits. These procedures and controls currently in place for the existing charter school will apply to the new charter school. Ken Kaneski, CPA has been the accountant and financial advisor for PBSA, Inc. since its inception. He is also under contract to several other Charter Schools in the Palm beach County School District.

- Sound Operating Budget:

This charter school is a very small specialized environment that caters to a special population of students. Our enrollment projections were very conservative due to this special nature. The projected enrollment for the first year was a reasonable number considering that the corporation's pre-k charter school will become a "feeder school" for this elementary school. Further, our projection of 10, 20, and 30 students in the first 3 years are small numbers that the administrators will be able to monitor closely. Our initial projection of 10 students the first year has already proven to be quite conservative as our October count was 17 students.

Palm Beach Academy for Learning

	PBAL Estimated 2006-07 Budget <hr/> 10 students	PBAL Actual 2006-07 Budget <hr/> 17 students
Income:		
FEFP	\$ 225,270	\$ 408,000
IDEA	15,230	26,759

Lead Teacher		504
Interest Income	-	0
After care	1,000	1,500
Donations	-	15,000
Camp fees, net of payroll		0
	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
Total Income	<u>241,500</u>	<u>451,763</u>
Expenses:		
Payroll & taxes	\$ 146,900	\$ 249,730
Humana & other insurance net of employee contribution	11,000	11,000
Payroll fees	2,500	2,500
Therapy (OT, PT)	6,300	6,300
Psychologist	2,000	0
Speech therapist	16,800	50,000
Rent, electricity, storage	20,000	60,000
Phone	3,000	3,000
Security monitoring	500	0
Cleaning contractor	-	0
Bldg supplies & repairs	1,000	0
Property/liability insurance	1,000	1,000
Admin supplies/postage	2,000	2,000
Classroom supplies	3,000	6,000
Acct'g, audit, bank fees	8,000	8,000

Legal	5,000	5,000
Dues & fees	1,000	1,000
Trng, Seminars & Travel Other	5,000	5,000
Advertising	3,000	3,000
Bus, transportation	3,000	0
Furn, fixture, equip	-	10,000
Total Expenses	<u>\$241,500</u>	<u>\$423,530</u>
Years Surplus	\$ -	\$ 28,233

As can be seen from the budget projections, the school will have substantial positive cash flow and balances into the foreseeable future as our preschool has. All Expenditures for Implementation grants are listed separately in the Budget Narrative DOE 101 form and Attachment D.

- Professional Development:

TRAINING PLAN: Business, Finance, and Accounting:

The Florida Association of Charter Schools will be providing the following training to our staff, administrators and Board:

Subject:	Description:	Trainers:
Finance Training:	Attendees will review successful documents and then create their own with expert assistance. Areas covered: Budget development, budget amendments, policy development, procedure development, internal controls, conflict of interest, financial reporting, preparation for audit, audit process and response, administrative and participation.	Steve Kattell Susan Merrill Neil Drake Gail Ahern Don Lewis

Trainers will include:

***Steve Kattell, CPA:** Mr. Kattell has performed scores of charter school financial audits over the past 6 years. He is intimately familiar with all aspects of charter school governance, finance, fiscal management, operating procedures and polices.

***Susan Merrill, Bookkeeper:** Ms. Merrill works with Red Book protocol and setting up charter school financial reporting.

***Don Lewis:** Mr. Lewis is an 8 year veteran of charter school accountability in his role as District Charter School Director for Alachua County School Board. He has written

the book on charter school monitoring, charter contracts, district relations, appeals (former commissioner of the Charter School Appeals Commission) and Personnel Issues. Mr. Lewis was the Curriculum Department Head for the school board for many years and has done many trainings in continuous improvement.

***Neil Drake:** President of the Florida Association of Charter Schools, Charter Appeals Commission member, Founder of One Room School House, principal of two charter schools, board member on 5 charter schools, charter school consultant since 1998 (Charter Schools of Florida), facilities developer for 4 charter schools (Central Florida Charter school Development Corporation), grant project development and management (many start up grants, many Title One Grants, many dissemination grants, Americorps, Challenge Foundation), charter school administrator 9 years.

***Gail Ahern:** Ms. Ahern wears many hats including: Secretary, Bookkeeper, Administrator. She has set up excellent procedures for internal controls, preparation for audits, record keeping, enrollment procedures, etc.

Special Populations Recognize and Address Needs of ESE and LEP Students

The basis of The Palm Beach Academy for Learning Charter School is exceptional student education for children with autism spectrum disorder. Students who meet eligibility criteria may have a pervasive developmental disorder or autism as their primary handicapping condition. Students shall be provided with programs implemented in accordance with federal, state, and local policies and procedures; and, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Florida Educational Equity Act (Section 228.2001) and Chapter 6A-6 of the Florida Administrative Code. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A non-discriminatory policy regarding identification, location and evaluation standards.
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Individual Education Plans (IEP's) to include an IEP meeting with the student's family

Students with disabilities are to be educated in the least restrictive environment and are segregated only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved. As it is the school's goal to place students in an environment where they can best flourish, those students whose needs cannot be adequately addressed at the school are appropriately referred. The school's staff will work together with contract personnel to ensure that the needs of our children are met. School staff will work closely and as early as possible in the planning development stages with the sponsor's staff to discuss the needed services, including all related services and programs, of the students with disabilities at the school. Parents of students with disabilities will be afforded in their native language procedural safeguards; which include, notice, consent, independent educational evaluations, and confidentiality of student records, due process hearings, and surrogate parents.

Students at the school who are of limited proficiency in English are to be served by ESOL- certified personnel who follow the Sponsor's District Plan for Limited English Proficient Students (LEP) and the assurances therein. The school meets the requirements of the LULAC et al. vs. State board of education Consent Decree. The mission of the ESOL curriculum is to prepare and develop successful bilingual,

bicultural and bi-literate students in an ever-increasing multicultural setting, equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century as participatory citizens in a global society. Parents of students with disabilities are afforded in their native language procedural safeguards; which include, notice, consent, independent educational evaluations, and confidentiality of student records, due process hearings, and surrogate parents.

Evaluation of School Performance

As stated previously, The Palm Beach Academy for Learning may be too small to receive a grade from the Florida A+ grading system. By individualizing student instruction and by focusing on the special needs of our students, as described throughout this narrative, we know that our students will perform academically to the best of their ability regardless of their autism. It is important to *emphasize* that we are solely an ESE program serving only children with autism. Thereby, the schools measurement of success is reviewing each individual educational plan for each student. In order to meet the annual goals, each child has an IEP which has been developed by a team of individuals including, but not limited to parents, teachers, therapists and district representatives. Appropriate curriculum materials are individualized; each child's educational program is based on his/ her IEP. Curriculum materials that have been used in order to meet IEP goals were discussed under *Curriculum Design*.

If deemed appropriate by the students' IEP, The Palm Beach Academy for Learning strives for the student to meet the Sunshine State Standards through acquisition, fluency, mastery, and finally generalizations. Teaching of these standards is done through accommodating principals and methods of applied behavior analysis. Standards are met through the use of supplemental materials that are aligned with state standards. Due to the nature of our population a majority of students are, likely, working at a cognitive level that is below their chronological age level. In this instance the students' IEP may reflect the appropriateness of a modified set of standards, which is the Sunshine State Standards for Exceptional Student Education. Teaching of these modified standards is also done through principal methods of applied behavior analysis and through some use of supplemental materials that are aligned with modified state standards.

Palm Beach Academy for Learning is a program addressing the individual specific needs of the children with autism. Therefore, the processes and procedures the school uses for on going tracking of activities and outcomes is reviewing the IEP's on a minimal annual basis as required by law. Quarterly report cards reviewing the students progress with regards to the IEP are sent home to the families so they, too, can monitor their child's progress. If the school or the parents at any time feel the student is not progressing, a team meeting can be called to discuss where the student is succeeding and where the student is struggling. This allows for different approaches, materials, and other services to be put into place in order to meet the needs of that student. Furthermore, twice a year, student progress is reported to the governing board to review success of students and search further for materials for those students who are not making their annual goals of at least 75% or above.

The Palm Beach County School District is an integral partner in our ongoing evaluation of all IEP's. Therefore, our plan for meeting the evaluation criteria is continuing our on-going relationship with the ESE and charter school personnel in evaluating (district charter personnel) on a quarterly basis the progress of each student. Our relationship with the district is one of mutual support. The district recognizes that we

are an excellent resource for our students with autism and know that we are reliant on the district for their assistance, knowledge and constructive criticism of our operations.

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning voluntarily enters into an agreement with the Palm Beach County School District for indirect costs.

Support for Strategic Imperatives Just Read, Florida!

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning strives to offer reading programs for non-readers, emergent readers, and readers. In doing so, we will use grant funds to compile materials that can be implemented at each developmental reading level to meet IEP goals, Sunshine State Standards, and Sunshine State Standards for Exceptional Student Education. Each program below meets each of the four program specifications of *Just Read, Florida!* for effective reading instruction in order to meet state standards.

The Open Court Reading Program is a literature rich, reading and language arts program that instills passion in children for lifelong learning and a love of reading. Open Court materials are used for students who do not display any deficits in reading/language acquisition. The Open Court program offers diverse and flexible materials that can challenge the typical developing reader as they meet the Sunshine State Standards for reading and language arts. Furthermore, Open Court can be enriched with a variety of supplemental materials that are available. This curriculum is developed by SRA and is a research-based program. Open Court and its supplemental materials meet all the requirements for Just Read, Florida.

The Reading Mastery Plus program created by SRA is a direct instruction-reading program designed with the Reading First initiative in mind. This is a comprehensive program that is flexible and diverse; to meet the needs of various learners at their level. Lessons are time efficient and skills are easily assessed continually through out the program to ensure mastery. Learning behavioral objective charts are included in tracking mastery of reading components; which are aligned with Just Read, Florida essential components of reading. Furthermore, materials and resources are provided by SRA to implement professional development trainings, and in-service trainings to ensure school-wide reading success.

The Waterford Early Reading Program created by Pearson Digital is a software-based curriculum completed under the supervision of the classroom teacher. This Program correlates with the Reading First initiative and the NCLB Act. This curriculum was chosen to target non-readers and (to be used with Reading Mastery Plus) for emergent readers with pervasive developmental disorders. Due to the integration of visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli, this program gains the interest and focus of students with autism. Waterford Early Reading Program incorporates skills like letter mastery, reading and listening development, controlled and natural language stories, complex spelling, basic writing skills, and comprehension strategies. The Waterford curriculum connects motivating software, continual assessment, classroom lessons, and a full set of student take-home materials to present an explicit and systematic instruction in Reading First's five essential reading components. Furthermore, Waterford helps administrators, teachers, and parents' work together to keep each student's progress on track. Pearson Digital Learning provides professional onsite services to ensure a successful implementation of this Reading Program.

Improve Student Rates of Learning

The Palm Beach School for Learning is aware of initiatives to “annually increase the percentage of students that meet or exceed proficiency levels on the FCAT.” The school does and will continue to make every effort to identify students who may have the capability to take the FCAT. The school exists to provide all the special services and essential educational elements to insure academic success with these students. By providing an educational opportunity for these students, one that they simply can not find elsewhere, the school increases the chances that these students will not only participate in state wide testing, but that they will also be successful. However, it must be understood that most of the students that attend The Palm Beach Academy for Learning are students whose autism is severe and will not be sitting for the traditional standardized testing. In the event that we begin to see our population of children with autism level out to include higher functioning students than we are prepared to have them ready for the FCAT.

Increase the Quantity and Improve the Quality of Educational Options

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning supports this initiative in the following way. The school will expand “the percent of parents who have been given meaningful choices and who have taken advantage of choices among public schools in Florida.” This school provides an option that is available almost nowhere in Florida. This school should be supported so that it can replicate itself in other school districts that lack this important choice.

Dissemination Plan

The Palm Beach Academy for Learning seeks to service qualifying students whom meet the criteria of our target population. All of the students at The Palm Beach Academy for Learning are considered exceptional education students with a primary diagnosis falling in the autism spectrum disorder range. The students will enter the school with an individualized education plan that will validate the appropriateness of their placement in the Palm Beach Academy for Learning’s program. Enrollment is on a first come first served basis; exceptions are made only in the event that students meet the criteria of our target population and meet one of the following additional criteria:

A charter school may give enrollment preference to the following student populations according to FS 1002.33 (10)(d):

- *Students who are siblings of a student enrolled in the charter school
- * Students who are the children of a member of the governing board of the charter school
- * Students who are the children of an employee of the charter school

If the student enrollment population supercedes the number of slots available a lottery system will be implemented which will include all student applicants awaiting the appropriate placement into available spots. Selection of applicants will be random from those eligible.

Community Outreach

An extensive marketing strategy to attract students from the Palm Beach County area was implemented and will continue. These efforts include:

- Community focus groups
- Direct mailing to pediatricians, neurologists etc. As well as translated flyers.
- Program tours and open house for parents and community members
- Requesting School District of Palm Beach County staff to refer students
- Presentation at relevant national organization meetings, conferences and other professional venues
- Media coverage
- It must be recognized that the parents and professionals responsible for this endeavor are well known, and highly integrated into the autistic community. As a result, we have already been approached by many parents who believe there is a strong need for this school in the community.

Innovative and Beneficial Methods

As can be seen from the list of dissemination activities above, the school is doing everything possible to reach its rather unique target population. The school strives to be beneficial in all respects to its clients and this is especially true in its outreach. The goal is to form a supportive community inside and outside the school by bringing families together for mutual support. We do these through innovative methods such as our focus groups, contacting medical professionals directly, and participation in local, state and national organizations and activities. The school does anything possible to find and attract the families that desperately need our services.

To: olivebalbosa@adelphia.net
Subject: Why PBAL is important
From: "Thomas Lee" <tlcpcpa@excite.com>
Date: Sun, 5 Nov 2006 22:30:13 -0500 (EST)

Dear Olive,

Being the parent of an autistic child is not an easy journey. There are appointments with doctors and therapists, tests and evaluations, and the ever lingering doubt of "Did we do something to cause our child to be this way?". Our son is a bright child who happens to be in a body where all the "wiring" does not function in a "normal" manner. While Kristoffer has attended other schools in the past, the Palm Beach Academy for Learning/Palm Beach School for Autism (PBAL) is the first school Kristoffer has attended where learning is the primary objective. Where other schools have focused on field trips and other non-core issues, the teachers and other staff value learning, and impart that value to our son. This is very important to us. If Kristoffer were to be put into the regular public school system, I have no doubt he would fail to thrive without extraordinary extracurricular effort. It is important that PBAL continues in order to provide Kristoffer and children like him the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Lee

From: RAMPRASADG@netscape.com
To: olivebalbosa@adelphia.net
Subject: The need for Palm Beach Academy for Learning
Date: Sun, 5 Nov 2006 7:53 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

As a parent of a child who has been diagnosed with the life long disease of autism, I strongly feel that the success of the school is tantamount to the success of my son. I know that the teachers, aides, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, and the principal want to make a difference in each of the students lives.

When I learned about the opening of the new charter school, I was hesitant at first to place my son there. My fears and concerns were put to rest when I met the principal and teachers. Their enthusiasm and dedication to help the students impressed me.

My son needs a lot of 1-1 instruction, smaller class size, speech therapy, and occupational therapy. He needs to be in a school which specializes teaching children with autism and grooming them for future success. I had the opportunity to meet Ms. Olive recently and I now have peace of mind knowing that she is at the helm. Ms. Michelle, my son's lead teacher, is an energetic, dedicated young lady who has my son's best interest at heart.

Whether typical or atypical, a child's future success always depends upon the family's involvement and the teacher's (guru's) involvement. At Palm Beach Academy for Learning, we are a small family coming together for one important cause- to lay a strong foundation for the future success of each of their students. I see a very bright future for my son. He will stand on his own two feet and be a responsible member of society. This is in part because he had an opportunity to attend Palm Beach Academy of Learning.

Thank You,
Kalpana Gopalan

To: olivebalbosa@adelphia.net
From: miracle95@bellsouth.net
Subject: PB Academy for Michael
Date: Mon, 6 Nov 2006 20:54:46 -0500

Olive,

Michael was diagnosed 6 years ago and the road has been bumpy. He has had intensive private therapy in which he has made great progress.

We have always believed Michael to be a smart child, and yet, his frustration level in the public school system seemed to get in the way of any academic progress.

We have had him in 4 different schools since 3 years of age, and more teachers than we can count. Last year alone, his classroom changed teachers 5 times and Michael suffered the consequences.

We were so excited to hear that The Palm Beach Academy for Learning was opening this year. We see it as the beginning of a whole new school life for Michael, a place where there is consistency, one-on one attention, and mostly, a trained, dedicated staff that understands this incredibly complex disorder. Michael is so happy going to school this year and it is wonderful to see and focus on academics for him.

This school must continue forever on, to provide these children the education they deserve from the professionals who can give it to them. This is a place where everyone can focus on the needs of these children without the frustrations and confusion of the public school classrooms.

We are behind this school 100 % and pray that this school can grow with these children's needs.

Carol and Mark Kaufman