


**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT
SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015**

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name: Providence Creek Academy

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Head of School

Date 11/24/15



Board President

Date 11/24/15

I. Charter School Program

Narrative:

Providence Creek Academy Charter School's present mission statement is to provide a dynamic educational experience for children to realize success in Academics, Athletics, and The Arts. Academics at PCA is hands-on, child-centered, and aligned with the State of Delaware Standards as a minimum educational requirement with high expectations to exceed beyond the minimum. Parents enjoy an active and collaborative role in the effort to integrate foundational skills with a broad scope of diverse and global knowledge.

During our renewal process we requested to change our mission statement to the following:
"The mission of PCA is to provide a safe, nurturing, and diverse campus environment allowing our K – 8 students to learn from experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting. Our students are empowered with opportunities to engage in a number of sports, visual and performing arts, creating connections with our community to provide deeper learning experiences."

Providence Creek Academy measures and tracks accomplishment in Academics, Athletics and The Arts. We review annual test scores, promotion/retention rates and student growth toward college and career readiness as the measures for Academics. Athletics is measured by participation numbers on the school sports teams, the number of competitive events, and creation of courses to teach healthy lifestyles. The Arts is tracked through the number of students participating in and the expansion of music and creative arts offerings. Participation in competitions is also included.

II. Performance Reflection

Please Complete the Questions that Match the Charter School's Performance Tier.

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
"Meets Standard" overall ratings on all of the following: - 2013-14 and 2014-15 Org Frameworks - 2013-14 and 2014-15 Financial Frameworks - 2013-14 Academic Frameworks	"Meets Standard" overall Ratings on one or more Performance Framework reports during 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years OR Opened in 2014-15 School Year, Never on Formal Review	At any point during 2014-15 school year: - Renewed with Conditions - Placed on Formal Review - Earned "Falls Far Below Standard" on any Framework Report

Tier 2 Narrative:

What are the school's academic performance outcomes that will demonstrate student growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness levels as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

In the spring of 2015 Providence Creek Academy students were administered the Smarter ELA/Literacy and Smarter Mathematics tests. The following information is based on the results published in September of 2015:

- 66% of PCA students were proficient in ELA compared to the state average of 51.9% and Smyrna School District's average of 56.5%.
- 43.3% of PCA students were proficient in Math compared to the state average of 38.8% and Smyrna School District's average of 41.8%.
- In ELA PCA averages were above the state average in every grade level (3-8) and above Smyrna School District in grades 3, 6, 7 and 8. In grade four PCA students were 2.7% below grade four students in Smyrna and 0.5% below grade five students in Smyrna.
- In Math PCA averages were above the state average in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 and above Smyrna School District in grades 3, and 7.

Based on this data, in conjunction with other school level data, PCA has shifted focus to Math and is working to implement changes that will help increase math scores. These math changes include:

- In 2014-2015 PCA purchased IMP (Interactive Mathematics Program) for our Algebra students and Ready Common Core Math for the rest of our upper school students in order to provide a challenging and more rigorous curriculum. In 2015-2016 PCA extended the Ready Common Core Math resources to grades 2-5.
- Scheduling specific time for each grade level for RTI
- Having the Math Specialist conduct Tier 3 RTI interventions
- Purchasing specific Math resources to be used with RTI
- Reinstating 90 minutes of Math instruction daily
- Utilizing a new benchmark assessment tool (Scholastic Math Inventory – SMI)
- Providing targeted Math professional development for teachers to provide support on how to use new resources effectively as well as strategies to help our students have continued success.

With the transition to Smarter Balanced in the 2014-2015 school year, PCA began providing more targeted instruction to all students. During spring break we held an Academy that provided targeted instruction to selected students based on benchmark testing scores. As a result of Spring Break Academy students showed an increased level of confidence, which improved scores on their benchmark assessments. We strengthened our Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI process and began including more parent meetings to help provide additional guidance and support at home. We are further strengthening the RTI process in the 2015-2016 school year by scheduling specific times in the day when Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI interventions will occur in each grade. During this time Tier 1 students will engage in enrichment activities, Tier 2 instruction will be given by classroom teachers, and Tier 3 intervention will be conducted by the Reading and Math Specialists.

PCA is utilizing Smarter Balanced resources to target instruction by claim level within regular classroom instruction. Based on subgroup data our lowest performing group overall is students with disabilities. During the 2015-2016 PCA made changes to our student services department, this change has helped to increase classroom level support for students. In addition to the supports these students receive in class they are also provided additional support through RTI.

PCA strives to continue to be above the state average in both ELA and Math, therefore we have set rigorous short term and long term goals for our students. With the changes that have been indicated above and continued analysis of data from state assessments, benchmark assessments and classroom assessments PCA will increase overall school proficiency as follows:

- ELA: 66% to 74% by spring 2016
- ELA: 66% to 90% by spring 2020
- Math: 43% to 53% by spring 2016
- Math: 43% to 73% by spring 2020

These goals were based off of PCA's 2014-2015 Smarter Balanced results, in conjunction with, the Smarter Balanced goals that were presented by the Department of Education in September 2015:

- Increase Statewide ELA Proficiency from 52% to 76% by 2020
- Increase Statewide Math Proficiency from 39% to 69.5% by 2020

Since our last charter renewal in 2010, our school has revised our entire curriculum to align with the Common Core State Standards. Our teachers have worked diligently to create stellar units of instruction that engage students in authentic learning. In ELA our students have consistently scored above the state average. The data above shows that our work to refine units has been successful. There is always room for improvement, therefore this work is continuing in the 2015-2016 school year with changes and improvements to our classroom assessments.

Teachers are working to create more rigorous, application based assessments that require a deeper depth of knowledge. Our teachers are putting the focus on the standard and learning target for the lesson rather than just following what is in the book. It is imperative that the standards drive the instruction.

In order to continue increasing students' depth of knowledge we have enhanced our teacher created curriculum units with supplemental resources that provide rigorous performance tasks and application of knowledge. In the 2014-2015 school year PCA added Ready Common Core Reading to our K-8 ELA classes, these resources are fully aligned to the Common Core and provide application questions and rich informational text at a very high level. We also added the Ready Common Core Math to grades 1-5 in 2015-2016. This resource contains more rigorous application questions, and is used as a supplement in grades 1-5 to the Pearson Envisions that we already use. For writing in the 2015-2016 school year, we added Ready Writing for grades 2-5, Sadlier Grammar for Writing in 6-8 and Handwriting and Keyboarding without Tears for grades K-5 (in grades 3-5 the handwriting will focus on cursive writing). These resources are used in conjunction with our teacher created units of instruction to provide more performance tasks and applications of knowledge. The Ready Writing and Sadlier Grammar for Writing is being used to further strengthen students writing skills. With the shift to Smarter Balanced it is imperative that our students are prepared and able to write relevant essays and writing pieces that incorporate what they have read in a story or explain how they solved a math problem. These resources assist our teachers in actively engaging students in this process.

Over the years we have noticed that the more technology is used, the less focus students have on their penmanship. PCA recognizes that penmanship is an important part of student success, therefore we implemented the Handwriting without Tears resources into our 1st-5th

grade curriculum on a weekly basis. We want our students to be able to read and write cursive and be able to print legibly. This resource incorporates grammar and writing within their penmanship practice providing additional reinforcement in these areas. With the shift to Smarter Balanced students are now required to type their essays on the computer. In 2014-2015 this was a struggle for our students because they are not yet proficient at typing. Although we have incorporated typing into their technology class as a special at the lower grade levels it was not enough for students to be proficient in typing. The Keyboarding without Tears program starts the students in Kindergarten learning basic typing skills and strategies, incorporated into fun games. By utilizing this program instead of a free online program we will be able to track student typing proficiency over the years and set clear benchmarks for students to help them become proficient in typing.

PCA believes the changes that are being implemented will have a positive impact on student achievement and our students will continue to show growth.

What are the school's performance expectations in meeting its organizational responsibilities including, but not limited to, administrative operations, reporting, and legal responsibilities as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

The organizational responsibilities of Providence Creek Academy were restructured in the fall of 2014. The Organizational Chart was modified to assign duties that would fit the requirement for the efficient operation of the school. Board Policies were updated and modified to provide a more rigorous approach to the duties and responsibilities of those assigned management roles. PCA has also made staffing changes, and implemented new employee management policies. These actions address improvements with school governance and reporting and strengthen the checks and balances systems to improve overall school operation.

During the 2014-2015 school year Providence Creek Academy reported concerns regarding its finances to the State Auditor of Accounts and implemented new oversight policies. The Board of Directors also created a Board Oversight Committee that meets on a quarterly basis to ensure all policies and procedures are followed. New policies that were created include an Internal Payroll Policy, which will create a more efficient and effective system to ensure accurate payroll accounting. An Internal Administrative Procedure was developed for Payroll Compliance Authorization which must be signed by the Head of School for each payroll. In addition an Annual Audit Policy has been established to annually conduct a complete review of the school's financial condition.

During the past twelve months the Board of Directors of Providence Creek Academy has been reconstituted. Board members have received rigorous training in the total responsibilities of the entire Board. In addition, during the late summer of 2015 the Board of Directors, the Administrative Team, and selected teaching staff held a retreat to establish a new Mission and Vision Statement that will ensure continuous growth and analysis of the future of the school. The proposed Mission and Vision Statements are awaiting approval as part of the charter renewal process.

Regarding staff credentialing requirements, all novice teachers have begun the mentoring requirements for the school year. Each of the two teachers in Year One of the mentoring program has a mentor for this school year. Six teachers are in Year Two of the program and are participating in a book study on Classroom Assessment for Learning. Five teachers are in Year Three and are working on professional development plans for their continuing licenses.

The outcome of the above actions is the increased efficiency of the total operation of the school as well as placing into policy methods to ensure stability of procedures, specific

descriptions of the responsibilities of personnel, and defined educational outcomes that will allow for the growth of all children who attend Providence Creek Academy Charter School. This process has allowed the school to reflect on its past, understand its weaknesses, build on its strengths, and implement corrective action to prevent any reoccurrence of failure by following processes with fidelity.

What are the school's financial performance expectations that will demonstrate viability and sustainability as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

The Finance Department of Providence Creek Academy was reorganized in the spring of 2015. Some policies have been revised and other policies have been introduced in order to have a more efficient Finance Department. These changes allow for a better check and balance system and fewer mistakes. The staff members in the Finance Department have completed all training requirements as of the date of this report. Each month the Citizens' Budget Oversight Committee meets to review the budget and ensures that the school's financial goals are met.

The Financial Framework Report was received on October 21, 2015 from the Department of Education. The overall rating was "Meets Standard." The only area that did not meet the standard was the "Debt to Asset Ratio". The school has been in a payment agreement for the three school buildings since the school year 2010-11; therefore, this framework evaluative measure has remained at a level that does not meet the standard since that time. The building debt is larger than the school income and listed assets. These figures will change as the debt for the buildings is reduced.

Providence Creek Academy Charter School continues to demonstrate its financial strength, viability, and sustainability in supporting its students. Since the fall of 2014, the Building and Grounds Department of the school has made many improvements from repairing the safety

equipment, to restoring the grounds that will offer an appeal to students and families. This work includes the installation of drains in the walking paths, replanting flowers, planting trees and shrubs, painting classrooms and hallways, repairing street lighting, repairing existing security cameras, installing new security cameras, and application of asphalt patch in the roadways. The old playground mulch has been replaced with new rubber mulch and provides a much safer play area. Work on the improvement of the buildings and grounds is continuing throughout the year. The school is currently soliciting bids for additional balcony seating in the auditorium and is outlining a potential soccer field.

In addition, PCA owns its transportation company and over the last three years has replaced thirteen buses due to mileage and age requirements. While this has prevented a larger than normal carry-over surplus for the past year, PCA expects to increase the carry-over money with this current school year. The Transportation Department has fourteen buses that operate on a daily basis and two spare buses that are used when needed. There are eighteen available drivers for the fleet. A Bus Evacuation drill was held in October as part of the Safety Program. The drivers also undergo medical training as part of their Emergency Medical Training.

The technology for the school has been improved since the 2014-2015 school year. The WIFI access points have been increased along with the installation of updates on all machines. The school's server has been updated, a security fence now encloses the server/storage room, new printers have been purchased for the staff, and new copiers have been leased. The school is in the process of leasing three new computer carts and replacing deteriorating Smart Boards with Dell Interactive Boards. These new boards cost less and are larger. The Administration is very satisfied with outsourcing the maintenance of the technology of the school.

Overall, the financial system of Providence Creek Academy Charter School is sound and will be strengthened through continuous evaluation of the needs of PCA students which determines the use of funds to meet those needs. The school has and will continue to provide experience to its students in Academics, Athletics, and the Arts. The school provides classroom experiences in these areas as well as tutoring, special assemblies to students, field trips, and other afterschool activities. The school also has two contractors, a School Psychologist and an Occupational Therapist. There are one behavioral and four instructional para-professionals who work with PCA students. Additional support staff members include a Special Education Service Coordinator, a 504/DPAS II Service Coordinator, Speech Therapist/RtI Service Coordinator, two Nurses, and an Interventionist. The school provides a full-service Dining Hall for students and teachers. Assessment regarding improvements of the school's facilities, programs, instructional materials, and staffing is a process that involves the collaborative effort of students, parents, teachers, support staff, maintenance staff, the Administration, and the Board of Directors of Providence Creek Academy, all of whom believe in and continue to work toward the success of the school's students.