
Pennsylvania Department of Education



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 MARKET STREET
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

Charter Annual Report **Tuesday, October 09, 2007**

Charter School: Keystone Education Center CS
Address: 425 South Good Hope Rd.
Greenville, PA 16125-8603
Phone: (724) 588-2511
Contact Name: Mike Gentile

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

The Keystone Education Center Charter School, the Commonwealth's first charter school, serves high-risk students in grades 6 through 12 for over 40 school districts in Western Pennsylvania.

Many of Keystone's students are involved with county-run agencies and over 43% of our 271 students receive special education services.

The school was established to provide educational alternatives that address the needs of a wide variety of students who have difficulty functioning in the traditional public school environment. The intent of the Keystone Education Center Charter School is to afford students the opportunity to gain positive educational experiences, to earn a high school diploma, to develop marketable skills, and to develop the necessary work ethic needed for post high school success. The school will also address the behavioral and emotional needs of each child.

Some of our graduates enter the workforce immediately following graduation, but many will go on to further education at a four year college, trade/technical school, or the Armed Forces. During the 2006-2007 school year, Keystone sent 17% of its population to the Mercer County Career Center for vocational education. In ten years as a charter school, 358 students have graduated from Keystone Education Center Charter School. Many of those students would have been high school dropouts.

Keystone Charter School's founding coalition consists of Reynolds School District, Greenville Area School District, and the Keystone Adolescent Center. Keystone and these two school districts have formed a cooperative partnership.

The core beliefs and values of the school community are that Keystone Education Center Charter School is a second chance for many of our local students. Due to a multitude of reasons, these students are not performing in the "traditional school environment" and Keystone offers them a new beginning. As one local principal put it, Keystone makes the whole education process in the area better because they are able to deal with the student that no one else can, thus giving public school teachers and principals more time to address the students they can reach. Keystone Charter School is also a community site for Adult Basic Education and G.E.D. Classes.

Some of the unique aspects of Keystone Charter School include: small class sizes with teacher assistants available to students; counseling groups including teen parenting, drug/alcohol and mental health services; special after-school programs; parenting classes; opportunity for students to earn credits through work study; and a structured and positive environment with emphasis on accountability. Serving students who often have failed in the traditional classroom and are behind academically, the school's curriculum focuses on basic skills with attention given to life and social skills.

Core Purpose

Mission

The Keystone Education Center was established to provide educational alternatives that address the needs of a wide variety of students who have difficulty functioning in the traditional public school environment. The intent of the Keystone Education Center Charter School is to afford students the opportunity to gain positive educational experiences, to earn a high school diploma, develop marketable skills, and to develop the necessary work ethic needed for post high school success. The school will also address the behavioral and emotional needs of each child.

Vision

The Keystone Education Center Charter School has the vision that every student can demonstrate educational gains while attending the Keystone Education Center Charter School. Our goals for each student are that they attain academic grade level performance and become positive members of society.

Shared Values

The core belief of the Keystone Education Center Charter School is that all students can learn and have the ability to show improvements on their present levels of educational achievement. On average, students enrolled in the Keystone Education Center Charter School are three to four years behind in both reading and math. With the PSSA tests assessing students at actual grade level and not at their instruction level, it is difficult to receive a true assessment of progress being made.

As a school, the importance of education and preparing our students for success is our focal point. However, our students' focal point is dealing with the day to day struggles of life. Being an at-risk student and having to overcome life's obstacles is their primary goal. Our staff has a constant challenge in motivating at-risk students who are three to four years behind academically.

Keystone Education Center Charter School teachers do an outstanding job in making adaptations to meet the needs of our diverse population. Forty-five percent of students are special needs which requires teachers to differentiate their instruction to meet students' needs. Teachers, parents and students believe that Keystone Education Center Charter School is accomplishing what it was meant to achieve and that is meeting the needs of students and families from over forty different school districts in Pennsylvania.

Academic Standards

The Keystone Education Center Charter School has utilized the requirements for academic standards listed in section 4.12 of 22 Pa. Code to develop and implement school wide curriculum. The charter school has used this guideline to design a scope and sequence that is relevant to a spiraled curriculum model to ensure that all areas in section 4.12 of Pa Code 22 are being addressed.

The charter school has adopted a standards driven curriculum philosophy and requires educators to develop lessons within the context of an approved curriculum that addresses and assesses the appropriate standards. This has allowed the school to develop programming that encompasses all core academic subjects, elective subjects and transition service opportunities for students upon graduation. This ensures students, parents, educators and school district administration that effective - appropriate programming is taking place in each student's classroom experience.

School administration and educators are constantly using formal and informal assessment data to determine if school wide programming needs to be redeveloped. Ongoing evaluation using a three-tiered model is utilized to determine if the overall school curriculum is appropriate, the individual classroom content/lesson is appropriate and the individual student programming is appropriate to their level for success. If it is determined that changes are needed to ensure an appropriate education program for all students, the charter school will make necessary changes to the curriculum while maintaining the rigor and content required in section 4.12 of Pa Code 22.

Strengths and Challenges

A major area in need of improvement is the school's PSSA test scores. The majority of our at-risk student population scores at the basic and below basic levels. The school has added a Math/Reading lab and Standards-Based Language Arts courses to try to better prepare our students for these assessments. During school year 2002-2003, the school implemented two new reading programs: Wilson Reading and SRA Corrective Reading, which showed positive gains with our students.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

Keystone's strategic planning is an on-going process. Students, parents and teachers all play important roles in our planning process. The Keystone administration team meets monthly and, in January Of 2007, did an action plan to lay out the strategic planning process. School improvement ideas and semester reviews are assessed at the end of each semester. Parent surveys are conducted at the end of each school year and are used in this process.

Each section of the strategic plan is assigned to an administrative team member. Each administrator forms a committee of teachers, aides, parents, board members and community members to be part of the planning process for that particular plan.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Brenda Gregory	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Parent	Administration
Brian Hoffman	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Administrator	Administration
Bryon Boyd	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Other	Teachers
Doug England	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Elementary School Teacher	Teachers
J. Chris Gaub	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Administrator	Administration
Jeff Calvin	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Ed Specialist - Instructional Technology	Administration
Joanna Faber	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Other	Administration
Kendra Gaub	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Special Education Representative	Teachers
Lisa Batt	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Other	Administration
Matt Nelson	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Administrator	Administration
Mike Gentile	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Administrator	Administration
Ron Thompson	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Secondary School Teacher	Teachers
Tim Woge	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Ed Specialist - School Counselor	Administration
Veronica Norcross	Keystone Education Center Charter School	Parent	Administration

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- Statement of Quality Assurance

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

The Keystone Education Center Charter School places great emphasis on creating a curriculum that is academic standard driven as outlined in Chapter 4, while maintaining a scope and sequence that ensures students will experience a spiral designed academic course load. All subject area curriculums are designed so that students can expect the same instructional content that a regular public school would offer their students with regard to the Pennsylvania academic standards and anchors. The design of the curriculum maintains rigor while allowing students of all levels and abilities to have success. Special education students receive the appropriate adaptations and modifications that their individualized education plan affords them in order to maintain the least restrictive environment.

As a school for at-risk children, Keystone has a population where most students are scoring below grade level in core subject areas. Local assessment data also indicates that a large majority of the student population averages a three to four year grade level deficiency in reading and mathematics. To address this issue, transitional classes have been created in all subject areas that are Pennsylvania academic standards based and concept appropriate to actual grade level but follow a highly modified and adaptive teaching methodology allowing struggling students that are not-identified to have success from actual instructional level presentation using a differentiated approach. PSSA Prep classes are utilized to help students that struggle with the format, expected educational level and content of the high stakes assessment. Standards based language arts classes are also designed for all students in attendance. The classes place a high degree of emphasis on the high stakes assessment format in reading, language, writing, listening and mathematics while presenting students with the necessary concepts and applications needed to attain the desired level of proficiency. Keystone also employs a five paragraph writing policy where all attending students are required monthly to complete a high stakes assessment type writing prompt. The prompts are then used to determine the needs of the students and the writing curriculums by administration and department personnel. The charter school also utilizes computer tutorial programs for students that need extra emphasis on the basic skills that have not been acquired in their educational career before attending to Keystone. The emphasis of the above listed curriculums has shown to have a significant increase in our high stakes writing scores and is demonstrating a slight increase in reading and math at this time.

Curriculum development is an on-going process at Keystone. Data analysis of state, local and curriculum based assessment, department meetings, teacher, parent and student input are used to determine the needs of curriculum change in order to increase student learning and performance. Instructors at Keystone are required to list standards/anchors that are emphasized and assessed in each lesson as part of their weekly lesson planning. The administration tracks all standards/anchors emphasized and comparatively evaluates local, state and curriculum based assessment results as a means to address areas that require change in overall programming.

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Professional Development
- Teacher Induction

English Language Learners

The Keystone Education Center Charter School has a policy in place for evaluating and educating ELL students that enroll in the school district. Students that enroll complete a home language survey. Once they are thought to be ELL or have previously had ELL services, the student will be assessed using the English Language Proficiency test and a needs assessment will be conducted by the district school psychologist from the assessment data, previous educational records, parent information and student information. The Keystone Education Center Charter School will sub-contract a certified English Language Learner instructor.

English Language Learners - Attachment

- ELL Report

Graduation Requirements

The requirements for graduation shall be the completion of work and studies representing the instructional program assigned to grades 9 — 12. There is only one diploma awarded by this school and no distinctions will be made between various programs of instruction.

The minimum requirements for graduation in the 2004-2005 school year included four (4) units of English, three (3) units of Social Studies, three (3) units of Science, three (3) units of Mathematics, two (2) units of Physical Education/Practical Living, one (1) unit of Computer Literacy, and seven (7) units of electives. A total of twenty-three (23) credits and successful completion of a senior project are required for graduation. In addition, all seniors must pass a senior project course as part of the graduation requirements.

Special Education

The Keystone Education Center Charter School employs an array of instructional strategies and techniques to meet the needs of all students that attend. The district has adopted the belief that special education students have positive academic and social experiences in the regular classroom, thus yielding a successful educational outcome. As a district with approximately 50% of the population receiving special education services based on their IEP, Keystone includes over 95% of the IEP population in the regular classroom with supports. The regular classroom teachers are trained and informed on meeting the diverse populations within each classroom as well as receiving support within their classroom from the special education department.

Differentiated instructional strategies have been a staple throughout the school district and have aided in meeting the needs of our diverse population. Teachers are in-serviced and have open consultation about the strategies that are necessary for student success. In every classroom multiple styles of instruction are presented create a positive, successful and meaningful learning experience for our at-risk population.

The charter school contracts speech and language and occupational therapy services through Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. When the district cannot meet the needs of an enrolled student, an appropriate placement will be located and utilized in order to meet the individual need of the child while providing FAPE. Keystone currently utilizes the Children Center of Mercer County which is an emotional support facility operated by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV and MCAR, a transition employment training facility and program for mental retardation students. Other programs that are utilized by the special needs population are OVR, Job Corp, Armed Services and the Mercer County Career Center.

Special Education - Attachment

- Special Education Policies and Procedures

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Jackson, Jeannine	1.0	Learning Support	KEC	20	Charter School

Student Assessment

Math and English Departments and Administration review results of PSSAs and make appropriate modifications to their curriculums. Writing prompts are given by all teachers on a quarterly basis which has greatly increased writing scores. The local assessment (Terra Nova) is used twice per year as our pre-post based testing. Due to low ability levels, standards based math and language arts curriculum were established.

Students in grades 7 - 11 have Math/Reading Lab, which is a self-paced software program. Students use Apangea Math or Academy of Math and Reading. This class has been proven to be effective in improving academic performance.

Keystone Charter School uses several methods to evaluate whether or not it is fulfilling its mission and meeting its objectives. Self-evaluations, clinical evaluations, family and student satisfaction, as well as team evaluations are in effect on a regular basis to assure that the needs of each student are being met.

Student Assessment - Attachment

- Local Test Data

Teacher Evaluation

a. Keystone uses PDE employee evaluation forms (PDE 426 and 428) to evaluate teacher performance. Main features include:

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Classroom Environment
3. Instructional Delivery
4. Professionalism

b. Individuals responsible for teacher and staff evaluation:

1. Chief Executive Officer
2. Director of Education
3. Director of Special Education
4. Director of Operations

c. Professional development for the evaluators:

1. All have a Bachelor of Science degree in education and at least eight years of experience in the field. All have been employed by the Charter School since its inception (August 1997).

Teacher Evaluation - Attachment

- Teacher Evaluation

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

There were no changes in leadership during the 2006-2007 school year.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
-----------------	-----------------

Mr. James Gentile	President, Keystone Adolescent Center, Inc.
Dr. Patricia Homer	Superintendent Greenville Area School District
Mr. Maddox Stokes	Superintendent Reynolds School District
Mrs. Veronica Norcross	Parent Representative
Dr. Frank Stratiff	Community Member

Professional Development (Governance)

Two board members hold a Doctor of Education degree.

One board member has a Master of Education degree.

Two board members are currently superintendents in local districts.

At least one board member attends the state charter school conference each year.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The school is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive Officer with the Board of Directors serving in an advisory role.

Bi-monthly meetings are held with the Board.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachments

- Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule 2007-2008
- Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule 2006-2007

Community and Parent Engagement

Keystone Education Center Charter School encourages parental involvement in the school. Open houses are held annually. Parents and community members are welcome at all times. The school also held a clothing drive, art show, and choral concerts; all were open to the public. During the Spring of 2007, Keystone offered Family Technology Night for eight weeks. Families who completed all eight sessions received a free digital camera. Special education parent information trainings are offered during the entire school year.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

None.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

Our policy is to always have enough unreserved fund balance to carry us through the summer payroll, and also to budget a fund balance for any unexpected expenditures and adverse fluctuation in enrollment.

Accounting System

Governmental Fund Accounting is our accounting system, which utilizes the Full Accrual Basis of Accounting like all other L.E.A.s. Our chart of accounts follows the Pennsylvania State Public School Chart of Accounts exactly. When a new account is needed, the State Manual is used to classify that account. The MIU IV accounting system, Smart Finance, is utilized which is used by most school districts in the three-county area. Our audit/financial statements were conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and was in conformity with these principles.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Revenues, Expenditures and Fund Balances

Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting From the Audit

Black, Bashor & Porsch (the same auditors as Greenville and Reynolds) audited the school in August 2006 and are currently starting the 2006-2007 audit. There were no findings from any audits and they are still impressed with our bookkeeping.

Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting From the Audit - Attachments

- Auditor's Report - section 1
- Auditor's Report - section 2
- Auditor's Report - section 3
- Auditor's Report - section 4
- Auditor's Report - section 5
- Auditor's Report - section 6

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

The Charter School has not been audited since last year's report.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Acquisition of Facilities, Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment During the Last Fiscal Year

Any large item (furniture or equipment) before purchase is brought to the Board of Trustees for approval of acquisition. New computers were purchased to upgrade our Middle School Computer Lab.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

When funding is available, we would like to add a wing at the High School to educate more students. In our school plan, the maintenance and upkeep of the building is always a high priority, as is maintaining technology.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunizations Records for Students

The Keystone Charter School has established a continuous quality improvement plan to ensure the health and safety of the students. A Safety Committee has been established to review and upgrade evacuation and disaster plans as well as other safety issues. Every effort is made to comply with regulations and practice drills are held on a regular basis. The Safety Committee has attended several conferences this year to keep current on Health and Safety Precautions.

The school health program uses a computer system to assist with tracking of student immunization and health records. Student health records are to be reviewed before the student is officially enrolled in school. If a student's school health record is not available, a physical is required to ensure that the student is free of communicable diseases. Parents and guardians are notified of incomplete or missing health records. A concerted effort is made to comply with all state immunization regulations. Students who are not in compliance with the regulations are reported to the school administrator and exclusion measures are taken when appropriate. An annual report is made to the Department of Health by October 15 on the status of all students' immunizations. The Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services report for 2005-2006 has been submitted and is on file at the Charter School as well as the Department of Health. The report for 2006-2007 is due September 30, 2007 and is currently being worked on.

Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunizations Records for Students - Attachments

- Evidence of Submission for Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services
- Wellness Policy

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

Group Life Insurance (Highmark Life), Group Health Insurances (Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield), Auto Insurance (Granite State Insurance Company), Worker Compensation (Westfield Insurance Company), General and Professional Liability (Hartford Insurance Company), Bond Insurance (F&D Company), Errors/Omission Insurance - directors and officers - (Hartford Insurance Company).

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

The school had a total of 27 teachers for the 2006-2007 school year. Two teachers left during the school year. Keystone does not have much staff turnover. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the professional staff hold appropriate state certification.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- Evidence of Submission for Elementary and Secondary Professional Personnel Report
- PDE-414

Student Enrollment

At-risk students who are struggling with academic, emotional/behavioral problems and/or truancy are accepted into the School. Students enroll on a first-come/first serve basis. After the Greenville and Reynolds School Districts' needs have been met, all available seats are open to the other districts. Once capacity has been reached, a waiting list and lottery system are in effect. Students

placed on the waiting list are given a number and when a seat becomes available, a number is drawn and that student's family is called. Keystone Charter School ended the 2006-2007 school year with 271 students.

Transportation

Cooperating school districts provide transportation to and from the Charter School. For students outside the ten mile radius, transportation is by bid proposal, provided by the Charter School. Reimbursement to Charter Schools still has not been added to the law (Act 22 of 1997). Keystone has contracts with three outside bus companies for student transportation.

Food Service Program

The School follows the National School Lunch Program and was audited by the Pennsylvania Department of Education during the 2003-2004 school year. There were no problems. A nutritionally balanced lunch is served to the students daily. Breakfasts and lunches are provided and prepared by the Reynolds Area School District and are transported to the Charter School. The school does participate in the free and reduced lunch program. Breakfast is free to **all** students.

Student Conduct

Our policy is to provide students with a safe learning environment. Discipline and self-discipline are an integral part of each child's educational program and is one of the most meaningful experiences in school.

There were no suspensions or expulsions during the 2006-2007 school year.

Student Conduct - Attachment

- Discipline Policies

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

Name of School: Keystone Education Center CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: August 1997, March 2002, and July 2007

Length of Charter: 5 years **Opening Date:** August 1997

Grade Level: 6 - 12 **Hours of Operation:** 8:00 am - 2:22 pm

Percentage of Certified Staff: 84% **Total Instructional Staff:** 35

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 11:1 **Student Waiting List:** 52

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 95%

Enrollment: 271 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Varies by District

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 0

Asian/Pacific Islander: 1

Black (Non-Hispanic): 40

Hispanic: 0

White (Non-Hispanic): 230

Multicultural: 0

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 72%

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 101

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	0	180	180	180	180
Instructional Hours	0	0	0	990	990	1013	997

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2007

The Keystone Education Center CS within Midwestern IU 4 assures that the charter school will comply with the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 711 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE. The charter school assures:

1. There are a full range of services, programs and alternative placements available for placement and implementation of the special education programs in the charter school.
2. The charter school has adopted a "child find" system to locate, identify and evaluate children who are thought to be a child with a disability eligible for special education residing within the charter school's jurisdiction. "Child find" data is collected, maintained, and used in decision-making. Child find process and procedures are evaluated for effectiveness. The charter school implements mechanisms to disseminate child find information to the public, organizations, agencies, and individuals on at least an annual basis.
3. The charter school has adopted policies and procedures that assure that students with disabilities are included in general education programs and extracurricular and non-academic programs and activities to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with an Individualized Education Program.
4. The charter school will comply with the PA Department of Education annual report requirements including special education information.
5. The charter school follows the state and federal guidelines for participation of students with disabilities in state and charter school-wide assessments including the determination of participation, the need for accommodations, and the methods of assessing students for whom regular assessment is not appropriate.
6. The charter school assures the Pennsylvania Department of Education that funds received through participation in the medical assistance reimbursement program, ACCESS, will be used to enhance or expand the current level of services and programs provided to students with disabilities in this local education agency.

This assurance must be signed by the Board President and the Chief Executive Officer for the charter school to operate services and programs.

Board President

Date

Chief Executive Officer

Date

2007 - 2008 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools

Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete

YES _____ **NO** _____

SIGNATURE PAGE

Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.

Name Mike Gentile

Title Mr.

Phone 724-588-2511

Fax 724-588-2545

E-mail mike_gentile@keystone.k12.pa.us

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

Identify the charter school's President of the Board of Trustees.

Name James Gentile

Title Mr.

Phone 724-588-2520

Fax 724-588-6408

E-mail not available

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name John Christopher Gaub

Title Mr.

Phone 724-588-2511

Fax 724-588-2545

E-mail chris_gaub@keystone.k12.pa.us

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date