Pennsylvania Department of Education

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

Charter Annual Report

Monday, November 10, 2008

Charter School: PA Learners Online Regional Cyber CS
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CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report
Summary Data
2008 - 2009

Name of School: PA Learners Online Regional Cyber CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: September 14, 2006

Length of Charter: 5 years **Opening Date:** September 4, 2001

Grade Level: K - 12 **Hours of Operation:** 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Percentage of Certified Staff: 100 **Total Instructional Staff:** 72

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 15:1 **Student Waiting List:** 0

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 95

Enrollment: 535 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** As per District Reports on PDE 363

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 4
Asian/Pacific Islander: 3
Black (Non-Hispanic): 67
Hispanic: 6
White (Non-Hispanic): 451
Multicultural: 4

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 22.8

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 98

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	180	180	180	180	180
Instructional Hours	0	0	900	900	990	990	3780

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

PA Learners Online Regional Cyber Charter School (PALO) is a public, non-profit, online, web-based charter school managed by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 located in Homestead, Pennsylvania. PALO serves residents of the state of Pennsylvania by providing education to students in grades kindergarten through 12th. Any student between the ages of 5 and 21 may apply for enrollment at the school.

Founded in 2001, PALO continues to be a premier provider of cyber education in the state of Pennsylvania. All courses are created using the PA Standards and all teachers hold a teaching certification. Students enrolled in PALO work from their home using computer equipment issued by the school. Because coursework is offered via the internet, students are able to access their courses any time.

Core Purpose

Mission

The mission of the PA LEARNERS Online Regional Cyber Charter School is to provide depth and breadth of subject matter to all learners through a continuum of lifelong educational options by employing technological applications.

The mission will be accomplished through partnerships with families, schools, and communities in technology rich learning environments that will focus on problem-solving, critical and analytical thinking, team building, collaborative learning skills, and respect for all learners.

Vision

The students, families, and teachers will all be equal, collaborative partners in facilitating the development of lifelong learning skills through a content rich curriculum that is delivered using technology as the tool. This community of learners at PALO will be personally connected via current multimedia. The daily utilization of technology provides educational opportunities previously unavailable. Students graduating from PALO will be prepared to enter the 21st Century workforce or collegiate setting with a skill-set second to none. Students of every learning style and learning rate will be challenged to meet high expectations. The teachers will use innovative methods to ensure the successful assimilation of knowledge for all students.

Shared Values

We believe:

· All students want to learn, are capable of learning, and should share the responsibility for their education within the cyber environment.

· Recognizing and respecting the diversity of all people prepares students for competition within a global society.

· Educators must be knowledgeable and current in their profession, discipline, and pedagogy.

· Learning and technology are cyclical processes that students need to be engaged in throughout their entire lifetime.

· Schools of excellence have effective educational leaders.

· Effective schools are built upon integrity and foster respectful, inclusive, and dynamic environments.

Academic Standards

All courses are aligned with PA Academic Standards according to section 4.12 of 22 Pa. Code. Courses were designed with the PA standards as a framework. In 2004-2005 teachers created curriculum maps which placed the standards into context, in 2005-2006 teachers' lesson plans indicated the timelines for addressing the standards. Course outlines document when the individual standards and anchors are taught. PALO contracted with the Math/Science Collaborative and the Reading Achievement Centers of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit in 2007 to provide a professional audit of our Mathematics, Reading, and Science curricula. Using these audits, the administrative team devised action plans to address the recommendations.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths:	**Challenges:**
· Brand equity —management by AIU3 gives the school credibility · New instructional space allows for scheduling student meetings, teacher trainings, and work space for new hires · Instruction - a proven curriculum and instructional team of PA certified teachers. · Flexibility —allows students to login 24/7 to coursework · Portability — each student is issued a laptop computer that is wireless ready · Strong fund balance may provide the potential to do research and development in the area of technology and curriculum resources · Elementary program and curriculum development	· Geographic constraints and district availability for extra-curricular activities for students and parents · Curriculum tailored to an alternative student population · Accelerated courses are outsourced due to small enrollment · Lesser known school due to market saturation by various cyber school · Server housing facility.
· Communication — building upon the AIU3's communications and web departments to engage in marketing · Capitalizing on the curriculum and teaching staff to build a larger student body · Increased full time teachers improving communication, training, and instruction consistency. · Using technology resources to improve flexibility and portability — ex. Wireless internet · Using the AIU3 to branch out and foster relationships	· Other Cyber Charter — aggressive marketing strategies. · Flexibility leading to at-risk student populations which tend to perform poorly on standardized tests. · Legislative mandates impacting funding or cost of services.

with local school districts · To be able to stay on the cutting edge of educational technology for student success · Continue online professional development to create a community of learners to maximize school and individual effectiveness · Collaborative efforts with AIU e-CADEMY	

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

The PA LEARNERS Online strategic planning process:

- Involves representative stakeholders from the school system's community.
- Includes an analysis of student and stakeholder needs demographics, and current performance levels.
- Identifies a challenging set of goals and measures that focus on enhanced learning for all students.
- Develops a continuous improvement approach that identifies the changes that will be made so that growth in student performance can be documented and replicated.
- Facilitates alignment of school level and strategic improvement plans.
- Provides an assessment system designed to document student performance and growth on student performance goals and operational goals in the system strategic plan.

PALO has formed this committee to provide structure to the entire Strategic process. This group will oversee the
actions of all other committees and will be responsible for reporting the final results of the process to the School Board.

The Strategic Plan Implementation criteria examine the degree to which the system converts the strategic plan into appropriate action plans for implementation. Also examined are how the action plans relate to the key system performance measures, how the training plan has been adjusted to support the action plans, and how the actions plans support the teaching-learning process.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Cheryl Fogarty	PALO	Board Member	Board
Danielle Franc	PALO	Elementary School Teacher	Faculty
David Martin	PALO	Administrator	Board
Edward Mandell	PALO	Administrator	Administrative Team
Jamie Desrochers	PALO	Special Education Representative	Faculty
Jennifer Beagan	AIU #3	Community Representative	Administrative Team
Katherine Fazio	PALO	Secondary School Teacher	Faculty

Kelly Sherbondy	PALO	Administrator	Administrative Team
Kevin Rump	AIU # 3	Community Representative	Technology Team
Leslie Wright	PALO	Middle School Teacher	Faculty
Michelle Rindt	PALO	Special Education Representative	Faculty
Paul Cindric	PALO	Administrator	Administrative Team
Ruth Campett	PALO	Special Education Representative	Faculty
Stephen Budny	AIU #3	Ed Specialist - Instructional Technology	Technology

Goals, Strategies and Activities

***Goal:* FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE**
Description: Graduate rate will show growth toward meeting the 80% threshold as measured by the July 2008 AYP Report.

***Strategy:* Drop Out Prevention**
Description: Drop Out Prevention
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Academy of Reading and Math	At risk software and tutoring	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
David Martin	Ongoing	$285,000.00

Activity	Description	
Adaptive Release for Differentiated Instruction	Utilization and training in Blackboard to facilitate the content delivery of differentiation.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
David Martin	Ongoing	$12,000.00

***Goal:* MATHEMATICS**
Description: Mathematics test scores will show growth toward meeting the 45% threshold for student proficiency in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

***Strategy:* Professional Development for Data Driven Instruction**
Description: Collaborate with AIU Partners for continuous learning for the staff
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Create Online Blackboard Training Modules		
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
David Martin	Ongoing	$32,500.00

Activity	Description

Implementation of 4 Sight and AIU Trainers		
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
David Martin	Ongoing	$165,000.00

Activity	**Description**	
Professional Development Committee		
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
David Martin	Ongoing	$132,000.00

Goal: **READING**
Description: Reading test scores will show growth toward meeting the 54% threshold for student proficiency in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: **Reading Achievement Center Collaboration**
Description: Reading Achievement Center Collaboration for Professional Development
Activities:

Activity	**Description**	
AIU Reading Achievement Center Coaching		
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Kelly Sherbondy	Ongoing	$117,000.00

Goal: **STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS**
Description: At least 95% of eligible students will participate in required state-wide assessments.

Strategy: **Increased Parental Communication**
Description: Create procedures to engage parents in their children's education.
Activities:

Activity	**Description**	
Alert Now Calling System for Daily Attendance Alerts		
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Stephen Budny	Ongoing	$37,500.00

Goal: **Suport Students as Active Learners Through Technlogy**
Description: Maintain help desk support in a manner that leverages the educational goals of the cyber environment.

Strategy: **Laptop Replacement Cycle**
Description: Investigate an obsolescence and disposal method for equipment which is sensitive to the environment and to data security. Invest in new equipment that will be robust for the equipment lifecycle.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Appeal to Multiple Modalities with Video Recording Room		
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Edward Mandell	Ongoing	$12,500.00

Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has not met AYP.

Charter school has created a School Improvement Plan.

Charter school has submitted and reviewed its School Improvement Plan with the Intermediate Unit designee.

Intermediate Unit designee met with and when meeting occurred:
Two AIU representatives were on the planning team. Dyann Panepinto met with PALO administrators to review suggestions from Rosanne Javorsky's team to the draft plan in October 2007. The suggestions were included in the final version submitted in November 2007.

Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- Statement of Quality Assurance

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

PA LEARNERS Online utilizes a standards-based curriculum that was developed locally by teachers and administrators of the school. The curriculum was designed to ensure that students expand their knowledge and skills in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening and Mathematics. The core curriculum at PALO focuses on reading, writing, language arts, science, social studies, and math. Electives are integrated into the program to provide a complete educational experience, emphasizing problem solving, critical thinking, team building, collaborative learning, and respect.

All courses are aligned with and were created using the PA Standards and Anchors to help move students toward proficiency as identified on the PSSA assessments. PALO uses a variety of programs to meet curriculum needs, including online textbooks, the ALEKS program, Compass Learning Odyssey, Centra, Wimba & Wimba voice tools, Reading A-Z, Calvert, Academy of Reading & Math, Study Island, Learning.com, and Explorelearning.com.

The curriculum is organized through a series of planned instruction and assessment tied to the state standards. PALO has utilized Curriculum Designer software to map the curriculum and clearly document Chapter 4 standards. PALO uses PA content standards as benchmarks to measure electronic curriculum. Gaps are identified within the program and additional curriculum is sought to fill the gaps. Curriculum audits were performed this year by the Math & Science Collaborative and the Reading Achievement Centers of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to identify areas of strengths and weakness. Committees are in the process of working with the Math & Science Collaborative and the Reading Achievement Center to rewrite the reading and math curriculum and align it with research based practices. Professional development was delivered to the PALO faculty on how to utilize differentiated instruction, Nettrekker, reading in the content

areas, researched based reading practices, data analysis, collaborative planning, teacher resources and team building.

With the onset of differentiated instruction, there has been an increase of instructional support from special education teachers, reading specialists and math coaches. Through the use of differentiated instruction the developmental and academic needs of students are met.

PALO has implemented the 4Sight assessment tests to gauge student progress four times throughout the year. Faculty was provided in-service trainings for scoring open ended responses using the PSSA rubric as well as how to analyze the data to identify areas of weakness in order to drive their instruction. Students were identified for remediation based on performance level on the 4Sight test. Special education teachers designed and implemented PSSA preparation classes for small groups (of regular and special education students) to remediate math deficits. Remediation programs/courses have also been developed to assist students who are struggling with the content to get the help they need. Students are identified through assessments in their introductory course to participate in these remedial programs.

Monthly departmental meetings are utilized to analyze student performance on classroom assessments as well as 4Sight assessments to increase student achievement. Instructional changes are identified based on data analysis of student performance. PALO uses a system to report underperforming students to online mentor teachers who can increase the one-on-one assistance that students may need. PA LEARNERS Online has promoted in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning by engaging our teachers in professional development in those areas. For the last three years PALO has been involved in the Math-Science Collaborative through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, where our math and science teachers are provided professional development to become teacher leaders to build and promote professional learning communities within the school with a focus on inquiry-based learning. In addition, we have also been involved in the Reading Apprenticeship Model through the Reading Achievement Center to ensure our elementary teachers are using researched based instructional practices over the last three years. The teaching staff uses many different teaching strategies to engage our students from direct instruction, discussions, small group work, project-based, collaborative learning, and learning contracts to meet the individual academic needs of the student. Teachers are using PowerPlanner to write lesson plans to allow for collaborative planning.

Elementary (Grades K-5)

Kindergarten: (450 instructional hours) Students work with teachers using a combination of textbooks and online lessons and assignments. Student curriculum focuses on reading (spelling, vocabulary, and printing), math, science, and social studies (history, geography).

Grades 1-3: (900 instructional hours) Students work with teachers using a combination of textbooks and online lessons and assignments. Student curriculum focuses on language arts (reading, phonics, printing/handwriting instruction, mechanics, and grammar), math, science, and social studies (history, geography). PALO students in grades K-3 work in their daily lessons using Calvert, a series of courses conveniently packaged with textbooks, workbooks, supplies, and lesson manuals. The curriculum engages many different learners and provides enrichment to support both accelerated and remediation students.

Grades 4-5: (900 instructional hours) Students work as a combined class using a combination of online curriculum, real live learning sessions, and offline activities. Assignments and lessons are posted weekly and must be completed within the time limit guidelines. Because the curriculum is available 24/7, it is possible for students to work at their own pace within the time requirements.

PALO Specials for Grade 1-5: Students in grades 1-5 are required to participate in art, music, and physical education classes as mandated by the state of Pennsylvania. These courses are presented using a combination of online and offline activities. Students are required to work in these courses a minimum of one hour weekly.

PALO students in these grades utilize CompassLearningOdyssey, a standards-based curriculum. The core curriculum of reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies helps students develop a strong foundation across core content areas using various learning and instructional strategies.

Centra is real-time, interactive online learning where teachers and students work in highly interactive virtual classes. Centra helps assemble various learning components of online curriculum, textbooks, and offline assignments into one cohesive learning experience.

Middle School (Grades 6-8)

The middle school at PALO exposes students to four main subject areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students are expected to work one hour per school day in each of these four main subjects. Students also have elective courses in art, music, and physical education. Students are required to work approximately one to two hours per week in each of these elective areas. Students enhance their learning through Blackboard, online textbooks, Centra, Microsoft Office products, and computer programs such as Learning.Com, and ALEKS.

Assignments are posted for the week with due dates. Since the assignments are available 24 hours per day, students may set up their daily and weekly schedule as they wish and work at their own pace with the given time requirements.

Language Arts - Students will use the Holt, Rinehart, and Winston online textbook to develop their knowledge in:

- reading, analyzing, and interpreting short stories, essays, and poetry from different genres in the online textbook
- writing different types of paragraphs and essays; such as narrative, persuasive, and informative developing comprehension skills and grammar skills
- vocabulary development
- learning about literary devices and applying the devices to their own writing
- discussion with peers via use of the discussion board (asynchronous learning)
- discussion with peers via Centra (synchronous learning)
- novel studies

Math - Students will use the Holt, Rinehart, and Winston online textbook to develop their knowledge in:

- Whole Numbers and Decimals
- Fractions and Mixed Numbers
- Ratio, Proportion, and Percents
- Estimation
- Integers
- Rational and Real Numbers
- Exponents
- Problem Solving
- Estimation
- Geometry

- Graphing
- Algebraic Equations

Science - Students use the Holt, Rinehart, and Winston online textbook to develop their knowledge in:

- Weather Patterns and Climate
- Structure and Function of Cells and Organ Systems
- Properties of Matter
- Heredity
- Energy Transfer
- Force and Motion
- Light and Sound
- Composition and Structure of the Universe
- Structure, Processes, and History of the Earth
- Atomic Matter of Nature

Social Studies - Students will use the Holt, Rinehart, and Winston online textbook to develop their knowledge in:

- Learning About Our World
- Continents, Countries, and their Customs, Traditions, History
- Different Worlds Meet
- Colonial Settlement and Times
- Creating a Nation
- Civil War and Reconstruction
- The Birth of Modern America
- Imperialism and Progressivism
- Boom and Bust
- Global Struggles
- A Changing Society

Art - Students will use website exploration, hands-on activities, and discussion with peers (via discussion board) to explore:

- Elements of Design
- Principles of Design
- Art History
- Art Criticism
- Aesthetics

A gallery of student work is on display in the course's discussion board.

Music - Students will use website exploration, hands-on activities, and discussion with peers (via discussion board) to explore:

- The Language of Music
- Basic Elements of Music
- The Six Periods of Music History

- Instruments in the Orchestra
- Great Composers and Their Music
- Musical Theater in the 20th Century
- Popular Music Today
- Music of the World

Physical Education - Students will complete activities including recording and analyzing their experiences and results, researching various sports and writing outlines describing each sport, learning physical education vocabulary, and researching the major muscles in the human body.

High School (Grades 9-12)

All PALO students must complete 23 credits to graduate, which includes four credits in each of the main content areas: Math, Science, English, and Social Studies. In addition, students must earn one-half credit in health and two credits (.5 credit in each of 4 years) in physical education. Seniors are required to complete a senior project to earn graduate status. The remaining credits will be composed of elective courses. Students need to complete approximately six credits per year by working approximately 5½ to 6 hours daily, 5 days per week. PALO provides students with 24/7 access to Blackboard, Aleks, and online textbooks. In addition, PALO uses Centra to provide real-time learning situations, enabling teachers and students to interact, assists in the tutoring of students, and allows for further explanation of concepts and ideas presented in the course material.

Curriculum Options

Whether a student wishes to pursue college, trade school, or full time employment after high school, it is the responsibility of the student and parent to work collaboratively with the student placement facilitator for their specific grade level to decide upon the right course of study to take at PALO.

Juniors may request enrollment at the Vocational Technical School serving their area, but application must be made through PA Learners Online. Student selection will be determined by criteria approved by the PALO Board of trustees.Advanced Placement courses are available for qualifying juniors and seniors. Advanced placement courses are college-level classes. Students who enroll in these classes will have the opportunity to take an advanced Placement Examination. The AP Testing Service **recommends** a QPA of 3.5 for students electing AP courses. Students who score 3, 4 or 5 on the AP Exam may apply for reimbursement of the exam fee.

The following are one-credit, year-long major courses in each of the content areas:

Math

- Integrated I & II
- Business Math
- Modified Algebra A&B
- Algebra I
- Algebra II
- Geometry
- Pre-Calculus
- Calculus

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Earth Science
- Environmental Science
- Physical Science
- Physics

English

- English I
- English II
- American Literature
- World Literature

Social Studies

- Civics
- American History
- World Civilizations
- Geography

The following are one-half credit, semester-length electives in each of the content areas:

English

- Study Skills
- Creative Writing

Science

- Science Inquiry
- Astronomy

Social Studies

- Psychology
- PA History
- Career Planning
- Sociology

Math

- Math Strategies
- Men in Math
- Women in Math
- Senior Math
- Accounting

Required Electives

- Health
- Physical Education

Additional Electives

- Art Exploration
- Art Appreciation
- Music
- Spanish I, II & III
- French I, II & III
- HTML Web Design
- Computer Programming
- Personal and Family Living
- Introduction to Technology

AP courses are also offered in a number of subjects —offerings depends on student request or need

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachment

- Quality of School Design

English Language Learners

PA LEARNERS Online currently does not have any ELL students. However, we are prepared to accept ELL students and have relationships established with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit in order to provide any services which are outside of our current capabilities. PA LEARNERS Online provides an equal educational opportunity for all students, as described in Attachment A, our 3044 narrative.

If PA LEARNERS Online should recieve ELL students, the following protocol will be followed:

1. The ESL program at PA LEARNERS Online was developed to insure equal educational opportunities for all students in a culturally integrated online learning environment. The program's goal is to develop a competency of the basic skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students will be provided educational experiences that will help prepare them to pursue higher education and/or the world of work.

2. Mandatory orientation sessions are held prior to enrollment. This includes completion of the Home Language Survey and an individual interview with each parent to assess the child's and the parent's needs.

3. PA LEARNERS Online (PALO) screen ESL students at the elementary level through registration, referrals, home Language Surveys, and reviews of student records. Secondary students are screened through registration, office involvement including review of student records and teacher referrals. The referral is forwarded to the Coordinator of Special Services and an assessment is completed to determine the student's specific needs. The ESL teacher, the regular education teacher, parents and others as needed are familiarized with this information and develop strategies that are individually appropriate for that specific child to make meaningful progress in his/her program. The percentage of time for instruction is based on the recommendations given through the assessment process and the team.

4. The English as a Second Language Program provides the students with English instruction as designated through the assessment process. The program type is designed to meet the needs of the student through asynchronous or synchronous individual or small group online learning opportunities including discussion boards, online chats, and voice-streamed lessons.

5. Extra curricular activities are encouraged and available through the child's district of residence.

6. The ESL teacher reports progress to the parents and supervisor on a regular basis and makes adjustments as needed on the appropriateness of the program for the student. All students are eligible to participate and utilize pupil personnel services including counseling. All students must meet education requirements as established by State and Federal mandates to receive special education services.

7. The ESL teacher collaborates with the student's classroom teachers to provide support and give suggestions on modifications, adaptations or strategies that may help the student with assignments and tests. Staff will receive staff development as per the ACT 48 plan.

8. A parent advisory group is being created to involve parents in program planning and procedures for resolving complaints. The forum will be an online town meeting for the 20+ parents who have volunteered for this activity.

9. The program is evaluated by reviewing the student's progress, language proficiency, and increased independence in the academic areas provided in the regular classroom. The appropriateness of the program is then reviewed by all participants and adjusted accordingly.

English Language Learners - Attachment

- Quality of School Design

Graduation Requirements

PALO requires 4 credits each in English, Science, Social Studies and Math, two credits in physical education, and one credit in health. Students can choose among electives to reach the 23 credits required for graduation. Our graduation requirements include a culminating project and exceed the requirements of Chapter 4.

A student, who is an eligible special education student, may graduate by meeting the individual requirements as defined in his or her Individualized Education Program. In each such case, the IEP team will determine if a student has met the graduation requirements, as defined in that individual's IEP.

Special Education

Special Education Services at PA LEARNERS Online Regional Cyber Charter School.

PALO provides a continuum of Special Education services to our students. When a student enters PALO with an IEP, we meet with the parents to determine how the student's goals can be addressed and how specially designed instruction will be provided in a "cyber" setting.

We have the ability to provide related services through licensed, approved providers for speech, OT/PT and hearing services.

We follow child-find guidelines and screen students that are referred through their parents or teachers for the possibility of an educational disability. Depending on the outcome of the screening meeting, we can offer research-based instruction to students to determine educational benefit, or we may decide to have the student assessed formally by a school psychologist to determine whether an educational disability is present and whether specially designed instruction is needed.

Special Education - Attachments

- IST Procedure
- Procedure for Conducting a Multidisciplinary Evaluation
- Procedure for enrolling and reenrolling sped students
- Procedure for Progress Monitoring and Reporting
- Procedure for Writing an IEP
- Responding to Students at Risk for Dropping Out
- Procedure for Conducting a Screening Meeting
- Transition Program Procedures
- Transition Program Process

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Jamie Desrochers	1.00	Elementary, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	10	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Elizabeth Habbyshaw	1.00	High School Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support and Math Support	PA Learners Online	22	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Amy Repko	1.00	High School Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support and Social Studies	PA Learners Online	22	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Lynn Sieger	1.00	7-8 Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	19	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Tina Beer-Tolkacevic	.50	High School Math - Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	22	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Michelle Rust	.25	High School Social Studies - Learning,	PA Learners Online	35	Each student is supported by a full-time special

		Emotional and Gifted Support			education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Deborah Schaeffer	.25	Middle School - Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	16	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Amy Odorczyk	.50	Middle School - Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	18	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Jodi Vollero	.50	High School English - Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	21	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Erika Holmes	.50	High School Science - Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	20	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Bethany Romeo	.50	K-8 Reading- Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	35	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Emily Bowser	.75	High School Learning, Emotional (Intensive Needs)	PA Learners Online	7	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Katee Baum	.50	High School Social Studies, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	22	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher

Joe Yurcho	1.0	High School Science-Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	22	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
MiChelle Rindt	1.0	igh School English-Learning, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	22	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher
Sara Weinheimer	.50	Elementary, Emotional and Gifted Support	PA Learners Online	8	Each student is supported by a full-time special education teacher and a part-time special education teacher

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Stingray Consulting & Management Services, Inc.	As Needed	Speech/Language Support	Student's Home	8	Speech/Language Support as needed
Crossroads Speech & Hearing, Inc.	As Needed	Speech/Language Support	Student's Home	1	Speech/Language Support as needed
Pediatric Therapy Specialists, Inc.	As Needed	Speech/Language, OT & PT Support	Student's Home	0	Speech/Language, OT & PT Support as needed
Therapy Source, Inc.	As Needed	Speech/Language Support	Student's Home	6	Speech/Language Support as needed
Therapeutic Specialists	As Needed	Speech/Language Support	Student's Home	0	Speech/Language Support as needed
Claire Vatz Agency	As Needed	Speech/Language Support	Student's Home	8	Speech/Language Support as needed

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Lisa Kellick Special Education Supervisor	PA LEARNERS Online	1.0
Sharon Rice School Nurse	PALO Central Office	.20
Maria Korn School Social Worker	PALO Central Office	.20

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3	School Psychologist	As Needed
Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3	Assisted Technology Support	As Needed
Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3	Physical Therapy	As Needed
Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3	Speech/Language Therapy	As Needed
Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3	Social Work Services	1 day/week
Allegheny Intermediate Unit #3	Functional Visual Assessment	As Needed
Intermediate Unit #5	School Psychologist	As Needed
Intermediate Unit #9	School Psychologist	As Needed
Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit #19	Hearing Support	90 min/ week
Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit #19	School Psychologist	As Needed
Intermediate Unit #28	Physical Therapy	As Needed

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA Math/Reading	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA Writing	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
PSSA Science	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
4 Sight	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA-Math/Reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PSSA Writing	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
PSSA Science	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
4 Sight (Local)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Student Assessment

State Assessments

To accommodate challenges posed by our geographically diverse student population, remote testing sites for the Writing, Mathematics/Reading, and Science PSSA tests were expanded. These testing sites were proctored by PALO teachers in remote areas across the state of Pennsylvania. The expansion of these remote testing sites helped the school meet its requirements for student participation as mandated by the state.

Training in active proctoring was also required of all teachers. The training focused on specific techniques to be utilized to identify off-task students and redirect them towards completion of their

tests. Teachers were instructed on how to enhance student motivation utilizing speech and proximity. Proctors utilized this information to create more conducive environments for testing. These trainings increased the amount of students completing assessments and helped the school meet its requirement for student participation as mandated by the state.

Local Assessments

4Sight

The 4Sight tests were administered four times during the school year to students in grades 3-11. The information was used both to gauge current student achievement as well as a form of preparation for taking the state assessment. The Reading Achievement Center was contracted to provide training with the faculty on how to interpret and utilize 4Sight scores to plan for instruction.

Academy of Math/Academy of Reading

These online programs were utilized as a supplement to Mathematics and Reading instruction for students needing additional training in the foundational skills of each discipline. School-wide goals for achievement in each area were set and met during the school year. This information was used to inform instruction as well as serve as a benchmark for student performance.

Student Assessment - Attachments

- Local Assessment Math
- Local Assessment Reading

Teacher Evaluation

PALO's Teacher Evaluation Plan uses the PDE 426 and 428 PDE forms. Data collection centers around a sources of evidence document which informs the evaluation. Teachers' input into the evaluation is sought by the accumulation of evidence in a portfolio/folder for discussion with the administrators who also collect data from the courses electronically. A new evaluation form for part-time staff was developed in 2006-2007 using the 426 and the work of Charlotte Danielson as the framework.

Dr. Mandell, Dr. Sherbondy, and Mr. Cindric are AIU administrators assigned full-time to PALO, and they complete the teacher observation. They consult with Dr. Martin who signs off as the chief administrator.

Professional development is offered regularly at the AIU, and all PALO administrators completed training called Lead to Succeed, a workshop for evaluation and progressive improvement planning. Special Education workshops are offered and regularly attended at the AIU, PALO has a representative who attend the Special Education updates offered regularly at the AIU.

Teacher Evaluation - Attachment

- Teacher Evaluation

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

One change occurred at the level of Board of Trustees with Dr. Alex Meta retiring and Dr. Lawrence C. Korchnak added.

One administrative change occurred with Mr. John Sovich, Director of Admissions, took an administrative position in a district. The position was restructured to Supervisor of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction and Mr. Paul Cindric was hired.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Dr. Cheryl Fogarty	President/Chair
Dr. Gabrielle Ziccarelli	Member
Dr. Lawrence Korchnak	Member
Dr. Thomas Knight	Member
Dr. Anthony Skender	Member
Mr. Mark W. King	Secretary
Dr. Donna K. Milanovich	Member
Dr. Donald A. Lee	Vice Chair
Dr. Elaine Brown	Member
Dr. John DiSanti	Member
Dr. Roslynne Wilson	Member

Professional Development (Governance)

In May 2008 a workshop was provided by the CEO, Assistant Treasurer and Solicitor covering mission/vision, governance documents, Act 22, Sunshine Laws, the Public Officials Act, business practices and Board ethics. . The Solicitor attends the PALO Board meetings and shares updates as he deems appropriate.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board maintains a working relationship with PDE by following the updates that are also available to them as school superintendents. The Board supports Dr. Martin and other PALO Administrators in attending updates and training sessions at PDE, PATTAN, and the AIU.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachment

- Coordination of Governance

Community and Parent Engagement

PA Learners Online Regional Cyber Charter School created many opportunities to foster and increase the amount and quality of Parent/Community involvement throughout the 2007/08 SY. The PALO administration and the Board is open to direct communication from families and community members. Parents have contacted Board members directly upon occasion and regularly speak with administrators, teachers, and staff. PALO also has orientations and open house sessions, in addition to email, on-site meetings, and phone communications in order to keep parents engaged. PALO invites parents to attend class with their children and to monitor their children's work in real-time to support their children. Over 700 family members attended the 2008 PALO graduation ceremony.

Parent Information Nights/Open Houses:

We had an overwhelming response to Curriculum Night in October with 90 students (and 167 parents) attending. 96 % of those completing the survey rated Curriculum Night as Helpful or A Positive Activity.

For PALO's first ever Transition Night, 17 students attended — 11 special education and 6 regular education. 3 students presented about the different career paths they have chosen: Armed Forces; College and Training for a Career through a Real Estate Internship.

We had theme-based Open Houses:

- What Parents Need to Know About Cyber School
- Cyber Safety
- Financial Aid
- PSSA Information
- Parent-Student Roles in Cyber School
- PSSA Student/Parent Social Activity

Parent/Teacher Conference Nights:

January 30th and 31st

- 525 parental contacts

April 23rd

- 1177 parent contacts
- 95% rated the conference as helpful

Star Student Certificates:

So far, 1496 certificates have been mailed to students for attendance and academic achievement since implemented.

Restructuring Plan School Support Team:

A parent of a student participated on the team.

Automated Parent Contact:

Alert Now has been utilized to inform parents of upcoming events, and other school-wide information. This includes daily calls to absent students.

Consistent system for logging parent contacts:

The Pentamation student information system used for PIMS reports, progress reporting, phone logs, automated attendance calls, and child accounting, and ease of communication. All staff and guidance utilize this system.

More frequent Progress Reporting:

A mid-9 weeks' marking period progress report was issued to each parent quarterly this year.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

No major fund-raising activities were performed this year and no major fund-raising activities are planned in the next school year.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The PALO School Board will be approving budgeted reserve accounts this school year for unforeseen emergencies, shortfalls, and/or delays in receiving monies. Dollar amounts are to be determined based upon the financial history of the school's operating expenditures.

The projected unreserved fund balance is estimated to be approximately $2,350,000. At this time, the PALO School Board is reviewing policies in order to maintain fiscal solvency.

Accounting System

The PALO charter school follows the PA State Chart of Accounts for PA Public Schools and PDE reports utilizing GAAP for budgeting, accounting and reporting.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances

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

Maher Duessel, Certified Public Accountants

Three Gateway Center-Six West

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Audit Report Completed: December 17, 2007

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

- Insurance Summary

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

PALO has had no findings on any State Audit Report.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

During the 2007-2008 school year PA LEARNERS also made changes to the facilities and resources in the school. PALO moved into new space in January 2008, which increased the leased instructional space within the Allegheny Intermediate Unit from 16 instruction work stations to 28 instructional work stations. This was in part due to the increase in full time teachers, but also showed the increase focus on instruction within the school. PALO also added an instructional video room for teachers to be able to do instruction and collaboration via video and other media. In addition to the physical space, PALO also purchased 9 new blade servers and moved from the basic Blackboard Learning System to the full Academic suite which significantly upgraded our technology infrastructure. PALO purchased 200 laptop computers in February 2008 through Dell Computers according to the PEPPM contract.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

No facilities, furniture, or fixtures are planned for the lenght of the charter. External support location(s) are under discussion.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

PALO has a representative on the AIU Safety Committee which plans events to promote safety, completes emergency drills for staff, and creates plans, policies, and procedures. A school nurse maintains health and immunization records.

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

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

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

Keystone HMO

Davis Vision

Blue Shield Dental

Employment Practices Liability Insurance-Markel Insurance Company

Property and Liability Coverages-Philadelphia Insurance Company

State Worker's Compensation Insurance Coverage

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachments

- Insurance Policy Summary
- Auditor's Report

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

For the 2007-2008 school year, the professional staff of PA LEARNERS Online consists of 89 professional employees. This includes 44 full-time teachers, 32 part-time adjunct faculty, 3 guidance counselors, 1 attendance officer, and a part-time social worker and school nurse. This represents the switch that was made from a majority part time teaching staff (73 part time/23 Full time) to a majority of Full time teachers. This switch allowed for an increased focus on instruction through data analysis and planning. The staff was engaged in monthly department meetings which revolved around looking at student work and achievement. These meetings also increased the amount of collaboration among the staff around student achievement.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- Quality Teaching
- Quality Teaching

Student Enrollment

The PA LEARNERS Online enrollment procedures and policies are as follows. The enrollment process consists of four phases: Investigation, Consultation, Application, and Orientation. Steps one and three require the student to have a live Internet access and submit forms electronically via the main website. Students who do not own a personal computer may access our site at their local public library or even from a friend or family members home computer system. The student must compete all phases of the enrollment process to be considered officially enrolled in PA LEARNERS Online. All policies and procedures reflect compliance with state law. We now have an open enrollment process that affords all students that chance to attend our cyber school. We do not place ceilings or caps on enrollment and students may apply for enrollment at any point in the academic school year.

The age requirement for kindergarten students is that they must have reached age 5 by September 1st in reference to the start of the new school year.

2007-2008	**K-1 Enrollment**
Kindergarten	**1**
First Grade	**3**
Total	**4**
Population Percentage	**>1%**

Enrollment history for the 2007-2008 school year is as follows;

YEAR	**MONTH**	**TOTAL**	**K-8**	**9-12**

2007	SEPTEMBER	545	110	435
2007	OCTOBER	100	15	85
2007	NOVEMBER	51	11	40
2007	DECEMBER	48	6	42
2008	JANUARY	28	10	18
2008	FEBRUARY	41	5	36
2008	MARCH	73	24	49
2008	APRIL	29	9	20
2008	MAY			
	TOTALS	**915**	**190**	**725**

The enrollment trend for PALO has reflected a slight decline in number of students enrolled but a 3% increase in students remaining in the program. Currently, 366 students have indicated that they will be enrolling in PALO for the 2008-2009 school year. We completed the 2007-2008 school year with 614 students. We enrolled a total of 915 students and processed 245 withdraws. Out of the 245 withdraws 220 students returned to a public school district. There were 5 students who went to a home school environment. We had 0 expulsions and our current retention data indicates that we have a 75% retention rate for the upcoming school year. Our population is weighted toward secondary students with 67% of our students are in grades 10, 11, and 12. We graduated 97 students which was 15.8% of our total school population. The school is within the enrollment criteria and estimated enrollment as determined by the charter.

Transportation

The school has no transportation program and has contracted with a private company through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit for special education student transportation when needed.

Food Service Program

As a cyber school, no food service program is offered.

Student Conduct

PA LEARNERS Online's discipline code of conduct and student expectations of behavior are published on our website. It outlines the general and specific guidelines of student expectations. Parents and students sign the PALO Code of Conduct, stating that they have read and intend to follow all guidelines. Our discipline code of conduct and student expectations of behavior were recently updated and comply with Chapters 12 and 13. The due process procedures are also discussed in Attachment.

Student Conduct - Attachment

- Student Conduct

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2008

The PA Learners Online Regional Cyber CS within Allegheny IU 3 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**

2008 - 2009 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 David Martin
Title CEO, Principal
Phone 412-394-5796 **Fax** 412-394-4604
E-mail david.martin@aiu3.net

_____ _____
Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

Identify the charter school's President of the Board of Trustees.
Name Cheryl Fogarty
Title Board President
Phone 412-394-5779 **Fax** 412-394-4604
E-mail cheryl.fogarty@aiu3.net

_____ _____
Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.
Name Lisa Kellick
Title Special Education Supervisor
Phone 412-394-5875 **Fax** 412-394-4604
E-mail lisa.kellick@aiu3.net

_____ _____
Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date

Signature Page

Signature Page - Attachments

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