
Pennsylvania Department of Education



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

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

Charter School: Pennsylvania Distance Learning CS
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SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

The following is a brief overview of the Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School (PDLCS) including the students the school serves, core beliefs and mission statement, unique aspects, values of the school community and program strengths and needs.

The Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School (PDLCS) is a Pennsylvania public charter school to which any qualified resident of Pennsylvania may apply for admission. Students who elect to attend PDLCS live throughout Pennsylvania. The student body is quite diverse and includes students from a variety of ethnic, cultural, social and economic backgrounds. The grant of this charter was issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on March 16, 2004. The school's charter was renewed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for an addition five (5) years on July 3, 2007.

PDLCS operates comprehensive educational programs for students in grades K-12 using a distance learning format. The Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School offers a comprehensive curriculum dispensed through synchronous as well as asynchronous classes. PDLCS provides accredited courses of study with certified teachers and the latest technology.

PDLCS recently completed the third year of operation and reached a peak enrollment of 932 students. Thirty six (36) students were eligible to graduate in the school's graduation ceremony held on Saturday, June 16, 2007 at State College, Pennsylvania

PDLCS is committed to providing all students who are enrolled with an educational experience that adheres to the following core beliefs.

- The PDELA educational community values its children and the quality of their education.
- High academic achievement is a priority.
- Students, parents and staff need to be challenged to achieve excellence.
- Continuous improvement is essential for all who are part of the PDELA learning community.
- Growth is the result of thoughtful study involving students, parents, staff, and community.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Students, staff, parents, and community members are partners, and all have a personal responsibility in the educational process.

Core Purpose

Mission

The Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School's (PDLCS) mission is to provide a quality educational alternative to parents and students in Pennsylvania through the use of a distance educational model that combines state-of-the-art technology with world class educational curriculum and resources that augment the ability of parents to be actively involved in their child's education by guiding their child along an educational path specifically designed to meet the child's educational needs. Unlike a traditional education environment, students can receive sufficient "time on task" to attain mastery of academic material.

Vision

The central vision of PDLCS is the build a school of academic excellence by developing a rigorous academic program and insisting that our student adhere to a system of academic requirements. We believe that if a student actively participates in our program, they will experience a level of success based on the effort of the student. By establishing high expectations and holding our students, teachers, and staff accountable, we can ensure our students continuous involvement and improvement in the program.

Shared Values

The PDLCS school community believes in the efficacy of the distance learning model. We believe that an authentic educational experience should actively involve the student, teachers and parents. Distance learning is fast becoming the means of choice for continuing adult education as well as the primary means for acquiring undergraduate and graduate degrees. More colleges and universities are instituting or expanding their distance educational offerings. It is our belief that distance learning will be the principal channel for Americans to access educational opportunities to enhance and improve their skills in a global economic environment.

Academic Standards

The PDLCS curriculum is designed to provide students with instruction needed to attain proficiency with Pennsylvania's academic standards. PDLCS provides diverse, research-based curriculum choices to facilitate the varied educational needs of students. These curricula adhere to both Pennsylvania and national academic standards.

In Science and technology, our students study the natural world and facts, principles, theories and laws in the areas of biology, chemistry, physics and earth sciences. Technology is the application of science to enable societal development including food and fiber production, manufacturing, building, transportation and communication. Science and technology share the use of the senses, science processes, inquiry, investigation, analysis and problem solving strategies.

Our students are provided opportunities to understand the components of ecological systems and their interrelationships with social systems and technologies. Our curriculum incorporates the disciplines of resource management, agricultural diversity, government and the impact of human actions on natural systems.

Our history curriculum incorporates the study of human experience including important events; interactions of culture, race and ideas; the nature of prejudice; change and continuity in political systems; effects of technology; importance of global-international perspectives; and the integration of geography, economics and civics studies on major developments in the history of the Commonwealth, the United States and the world.

The PDLCS curriculum also incorporates the study of relationships among people, places and environments, of geographic tools and methods, characteristics of place, concept of region and physical processes.

The PDLCS social studies curriculum includes the study of relationships among people, places and environments, of geographic tools and methods, characteristics of place, concept of region and physical processes. Our students also study how individuals and societies choose to use resources to produce, distribute and consume goods and services. Our students develop knowledge of how economies work, economic reasoning and basic economic concepts, economic decision making, economic systems, the Commonwealth and the United States economy and international trade.

Our students come to appreciate various career options in relationship to their individual interests, aptitudes and skills including the relationship between changes in society, technology, government and economy and their effect on individuals and careers. Our students develop knowledge and skill to seek and retain jobs. Students completing vocational-technical programs, the skills to succeed in the occupation for which they are prepared.

Our school recognizes the importance of the ability to communicate in languages other than English, including the ability to understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics and to develop knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Strengths and Challenges

PDLCS is entering the fourth year of operation. There are areas of the educational operation that have evolved and emerged as strengths and there are areas that have been identified as needing change to improve program effectiveness. Both areas, strengths and needs, have been identified as a result of the review of program data that has been accumulated during the first two years as well as input from critical shareholders.

The following have been identified as areas of strength:

Dr. James Hoover was hired in 2006 to provide structure, guidance and direction to PDLCS. Dr. Hoover has an extensive background in both education and business. His dedicated and competent leadership guided PDLCS through the 2006 — 2007 academic year. It is well documented in educational research that one of the critical elements in the success of an educational organization is an educational leader who is both a visionary and an innovator. Dr. Hoover is both.

PDLCS possesses a talented, dedicated, and academically diverse teaching staff that is willing to expend the extra effort to ensure that its students are successful. Many of our teaching staff has earned certifications in multiple subject areas.

The members of the PDLCS Board of Trustees take an active interest in the school and are dedicated to creating the necessary management policies to ensure the school's success. The leadership credentials of each member the PDLCS Board of Trustees are impeccable. Many members of our Board are business leaders in their communities.

Pennsylvania Distance Learning Cyber School has been placed on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's district improvement list as a result of the most recent PSSA results, which required 54% of all students and subgroups of students to achieve proficiency in reading and 45% of all students and subgroups of students to achieve proficiency in mathematics by 2007. Subgroup size is defined by the Commonwealth as 40. This subgroup size applies at the school level; it also applies at the state level. Therefore, subgroups of less than 40 within a single school are not counted. These same students, however, are counted within the subgroups at the district level, as this includes all district schools. In 2006, the school met only 3 or 11 benchmarks for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In 2007, the school met 19 of 21 benchmarks. The school did not meet the benchmark for graduation rate and did not meet the achievement target for the "white" student subgroup in mathematics.

This year, it is our immediate challenge to ensure that our school meets AYP. As a result of its improvement status, PDLCS was required to develop an improvement plan and to formally adopt that plan for implementation by December 31, 2006. The goals were identified and the plan was implemented in summer of 2006 however due to a change in staffing and the inadequate infrastructure described in the plan it was not written down. The Board approved all of the policies discussed throughout this document and are very aware of the areas in need of improvement. The Board formally approved the plan as of June 12, 2007.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Amy Baird	WHM	Business Representative	James Hoover

James Hoover	PD LCS	Administrator	James Hoover
Rosanne Winter	WHM	Business Representative	James Hoover

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- Statement of Quality Assurance

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

PD LCS makes every effort to enroll students in appropriate grade/skills level courses. When deficiencies occur as **demonstrated by** performance significantly below standards in literacy and mathematics skills, students are placed in classes at or below grade level to assure that basic skills are grasped before moving to the next grade level. PD LCS provides diverse, research-based curriculum choices to facilitate the varied educational needs of students. These curricula adhere to national academic standards.

Grades 1-6 — Student have a choice between Compass Learning (an online-based curriculum that allows immediate evaluation and feedback of submitted tests, quizzes, and projects) or Calvert curriculum (a more traditional, text-based curriculum using a fully integrated approach and featuring lesson plans for the parent-educator). Along with the Compass Learning curriculum, the student's education is supplemented by workbooks and the Singapore mathematics curriculum

Grades 7-8 — Parents may choose the text-based Calvert curriculum or Plato/A Learning online curriculum. With the Calvert approach, all books, tests, teaching materials, and a year's worth of detailed lesson plans arrive at **the student's** door. With the Plato/A Learning curriculums, the student receives online instruction in math, language arts, science, and social studies, supplemented by workbooks and Saxon mathematics curriculum. Offline projects help students synthesize the concepts they learn.

Grades 9-12 — PD LCS offers more than 35 credit hours for high school learners, including all required courses for students to attain a Pennsylvania high school diploma. Various award-winning electronic curriculums are integrated with textbooks, workbooks, and reading materials to provide an overall challenging curriculum. PD LCS offers a diverse, yet challenging distance-learning curriculum to provide students with the opportunity to earn a state of Pennsylvania accredited diploma. The curriculum is provided through online learning, textbooks, and workbooks. The curriculum is available to students seven days a week, 24 hours a day, allowing students to work on their courses any time of the day. Each semester, the student selects between four and seven courses and completes the courses according to a sixteen week plan. When a course is completed, the student selects another course and begins to work on it.

Our technology based curriculum program offer an organizational solution for allowing PD LCS to develop, manage, and distribute curriculum, resources, and best practices for instruction and assessment related to Pennsylvania Academic standards.

Each of our learning technologies permits us to connect our curriculum to state standards and also provide in-depth reporting on how well our students are meeting them. They align a complete database of Internet, textbook, and media resources to Pennsylvania's standards. Our learning technologies also offer a flexible set of tools for instructional and curriculum planning, as well as lesson plan design.

Our online curriculum is based [on current instructional/educational research](#), pedagogically sound instruction, and proven best practices.

The curriculum is organized in a manner that **links** assessment and instruction as part of the on-going instructional process. Consequently, students are placed in the curriculum in a manner that supports student learning and growth and curriculum material is provided at their academic and developmental level. The assessment data is compiled and reviewed constantly to determine student growth and understanding. The student is provided continual instructional support from the parent and teachers. Also, those students with special needs are assigned to a special education teacher who is responsible for the coordination of the child's IEP and Progress Monitoring. Students are also assigned to Title I Reading and Math instructors if they experience either reading or math difficulties and qualify for Title I services.

The on-going assessment process is one of the features of the instruction provided by PDLCS that ensures successful movement through the curriculum.

PDLCS is committed to helping parents and students move through the material at a pace the student has never before experienced. Students are supported by their teachers and provided resources to master their education. Testing and assessment allow all parties to monitor the student's progress and determine the appropriate deadlines needed for the individual student to advance.

Continuous testing takes place in the following ways:

I. Online Curriculum

An initial placement test is administered within each of the four core subject areas. Each student is placed at the proper instructional level based on the results of the test, allowing the parent and supporting teacher to map a specific course for each student. As students move through the curriculum, the curriculum allows the parent and supporting teacher to easily monitor individual progress, using comprehensive, standards-based quizzes and tests.

II. Text-Based Curriculum

For students entering grades 4-8, PDELA and the curriculum's evaluators conduct a thorough evaluation of all new students to ensure proper placement. The curriculum's evaluators examine the student's performance on this test and consider the student's educational history and current needs when making a placement recommendation. However, beginning in the 2007-08 school year, the textbook-based curriculum will begin to be phased out by the school and replaced by the online offerings.

In addition to the comprehensive curricular offerings, highly qualified and certified teachers provide students support and on-line class instruction. The teachers are required to promote higher level thinking using Bloom's taxonomy of higher order thinking and the adaptations suggested by Robert Marzano. Staff development training is provided as well as on-going consultation with teachers throughout the year. The development levels that are included in the adapted model include: Knowledge, Organizing, Applying, Analyzing, Generating, Integrating and Evaluating Information. One example of how teachers promote and support student evaluation of information involves training students to use the writing rubric for the PSSA. Students are trained to evaluate their writing assignments using the rubric and compare their evaluation with the evaluation of the teacher.

All instructional staff are trained to provide instruction to each student that both challenges and supports student mastery of skills and standards. Teachers provide daily support for the students who are assigned to them. The teachers are trained to promote inquiry-based learning strategies when the students experience difficulty with assignments. Also, there are many assignments in

all aspects of the curriculum that promote both in-depth learning using the Thinking Skills Model and Inquiry Based Learning Strategies.

Students are assessed and placed in the curriculum at a developmental level that promotes success. Academic advisors work closely with the education staff to review assessment data and determine the appropriate academic level for student entry. Students progress at an academic level and a pace that supports growth and retention. If students continue to struggle, teachers are required to make a referral to the student support services. Students who struggle are presented at a formal staffing chaired by a certified school psychologist with general education and special education staff present. Intervention strategies are recommended prior to a formal referral to special education.

PDLCS provides a comprehensive special education program as well as Title I support for struggling students in both reading and mathematics. The staff of specialists is available to provide consultation and direct remedial services for all students who experience difficulty with the curriculum.

All teachers are trained to become teachers of reading and writing. Teachers are encouraged to collectively prepare students for the PSSA reading and math assessments at the different grade levels. Also, science and math teachers are responsible for supporting acquisition of math standards that are assessed by the PSSA.

Beginning in the 2007-08, the school will implement writing across the curriculum in order to enhance our student proficiency in written communication.

PDLCS provides an excellent instructional delivery system for students who require active engagement in the learning process. Students are placed in the curriculum at an academic level that is developmentally appropriate and students are able to progress through the curriculum at their own pace. The instructional delivery requires active engagement by the student with support from certified teachers when the student experiences difficulty. All teachers are trained to use research-based instructional techniques to supplement the existing instructional delivery. On-line classes are taught by the highly qualified, certified instructional staff on a weekly basis.

Current pedagogical research strongly supports active engagement and ownership in the instructional process by all students. Teachers participated in staff development training to identify student learning styles and provide instruction that addresses diversity in student learning styles. Active and involved learning experiences are provided for students at all grade levels in all academic content areas. In addition, parents are also actively involved in their child's education which the research suggests is a strong indicator of student success.

A comprehensive Act 48 Professional Development Plan was submitted and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. A copy of the plan is attached. Professional Development for all staff members is encouraged and support at PDLCS through a variety of delivery systems including local staff development, attendance at seminars and conferences, higher education course work, and any responsible provider of training.

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Rigorous Instructional Program
- Rigorous Instructional Program

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELL) are unique to distance learning charter schools. When providing educational programs for ELL, the individual educational needs of the student will be assessed, this may involve the assistance from numerous departments, to determine the most appropriate educational plan for a particular ELL.

The Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School (PDLCS) has three primary goals for the English as a Second Language program:

(A.) To develop student competency in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing of the English language.

(B.) To provide appropriate curriculum and support to enable ESL students to complete high school and to enter post-secondary education and/or the world of work.

(C.) To educate staff in the areas of cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Students and their parents/guardians will complete the application form on www.PDELA.com. Limited English Proficient students will be enrolled upon presentation of a local address and proof of immunization. Academic Advisors will administer the Home Language Survey to every student during orientation.

PDLCS shall define Limited English Proficient (LEP) according to the Improving America's School Act. A LEP student is one who:

(A.) Was not born in the United States of whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant;

or

Is a Native American or Alaska Native who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on such an individual's level of English language proficiency;

or

Is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant;

and

(B.) has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.

Students who are identified as LEP shall be regularly assessed in their content area courses and in their ESL courses. Types of assessments will include, but are not limited to: curriculum-based assessment, informal discussion, the LAS Links test of English proficiency, and participation in state and national standardized testing. Students are eligible for a one time exemption from the PSSA test based on guidelines published yearly by the PDE.

The Pennsylvania Distance Learning Charter School (PDLCS) provides a Free and Appropriate Public Education to all students identified as having a disability under IDEIA 2004, by providing special education by following the guidelines in Special Education Services and Programs State Board of Education Regulations Chapter 14.

Graduation Requirements

The PDLCS encourages parents to monitor their child's progress toward meeting graduation requirements. Also, academic advisors track each assigned student to measure the student's progress. To graduate, students must complete the following required credits:

Health — ½ credit
 Fine Arts (Art, Music) - 1 credit
 Physical Education — 1 credit
 Language Arts — 4 credits
 Social Studies — 4 credits
 Math — 3 credits
 Science — 3 credits (Biology is required)
 Electives — 5 ½ credits
 Graduation Project is required

Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, seniors must have demonstrated proficiency in reading and math on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) or alternative assessment.

Special Education

The Pennsylvania Department of Education completed its audit of PDLCS's Special Education program during the 2006 — 2007 school year. The program was deemed to be in compliance with all state and federal mandates. Attached is a copy of relevant special education policies and procedures. The Special Education audit team reviewed and approved all relevant special education policies and procedures. The letter from the PDE indicating the auditor's findings is attached.

Special Education - Attachment

- Special Education

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Melissa Harrison Love	1.00	Learning Support	Sewickley, PA	42	N/A
Maria Delima	1.00	Learning Support	Sewickley, PA	38	N/A
George Miklas	1.00	Learning Support	Sewickley, PA	22	N/A

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	N/A

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
N/A	N/A	0

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization,	Title/Service	Amount of Time
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or Individual		Per Week
Psychological Services Incorporated	Psychological Evaluation Services	
Club Z	Tutoring	
Sylvan Learning Centers	Tutoring	

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
Scantron Performance Series - Reading	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scantron Performance Series - Mathematics	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scantron Performance Series - Language Arts	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scantron Performance Series - Science	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA - Reading	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA - Mathematics	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA - Writing	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Locally developed and commercial test	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Scantron Performance Series - Reading	Yes						
Scantron Performance Series - Mathematics	Yes						
Scantron Performance Series - Language Arts	Yes						
Scantron Performance Series - Science	Yes						
PSSA - Reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PSSA - Mathematics	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PSSA - Writing	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Student Assessment

PD LCS utilizes the Scantron Performance Series and the school's local assessment to identify students performing below expectation and prescribe instructional interventions to remediate academic deficiencies. Students are tested in the fall in the areas of reading, mathematics, science, and language arts. The test uses computer adaptive technology and is delivered online to students. Students are assessed in the Fall and Spring. The results are compared to determine academic growth in each of the four core subjects.

The data shows that students achieve significant academic growth in mathematics, science, and language arts. Although students achieved growth in reading, it was not determined to be

significant since it did not exceed the standard error.

In 2006, PDLCS students did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress and met only three (3) of eleven (11) AYP targets. In 2007, although the school did not meet AYP, student met all AYP targets with the exception of graduation rate and mathematics achievement in one (1) subgroup.

Student Assessment - Attachments

- Student Assessment

- Student Assessment

Teacher Evaluation

PDLCS uses the state mandated teacher evaluation format and procedures. The critical features of teacher evaluation are included in each form. The appropriate teacher evaluation form for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE 426, PDE 426A, PDE 427, PDE 427A, PDE 428 or PDE 428A) is used to document teacher effectiveness. The critical aspect of evaluation involves a review of student performance and student growth for all students assigned to a teacher.

Dr. James Hoover, CEO, is solely responsible for teacher evaluation. Dr. Hoover possesses Pennsylvania Administrative certification as well as a District Superintendent Letter of Eligibility. Dr. Hoover also conducts all staff evaluation with the assistance of the operations manager.

Dr. Hoover attends professional development offered through the intermediate unit and PATTAN. Dr. Hoover has thirteen (13) years experience as a building administrator in Pennsylvania public schools.

Teacher Evaluation - Attachment

- Teacher Evaluation

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

Several members of the Board of Trustees are founding members. All of the Members of the Board have a passion for education, as well as a strong concern for the youth of Pennsylvania, and their right to choose a quality education. On April, 2007, Mr. Deno DeCiantis resigned his seat on the PDLCS Board of Trustees in order to pursue his personal educational goals.

All other Board Members and Advisors remain active participants in the governance of the school.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
John Marous	President
William Donahue	Board Secretary
Phillip Keys	Board member

Thomas W. Dillenburg	Board member
Deno DeCiantis	Board member

Professional Development (Governance)

The Board of Trustees has access to training opportunities through their own Board Portal. The Board Portal provides information regarding governance and corporate documents, including meeting minutes, agendas, calendars, as well as links to websites such as Board Source, Center for Education Reform, State and Federal Departments of Education and others providing information on Charter Schools, Board governance, upcoming events and recent developments. The website also offers a Board Training Videos, such as “Board Member Basics.” As this is the School’s second year of operation, the Board of Trustees will be discussing additional training opportunities at their annual organizational meeting.

The Board of Trustees schedule regular quarterly meetings held in the School’s office and acts via an affirmative vote from the majority of its serving Members.

The Board of Trustees ensures that all meetings are conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Law, Public Officials Act, and further complies with all applicable federal, state and local regulation, in addition to the terms and conditions set forth in its Charter Contract. The Board of Trustees utilizes the services and counsel of independent legal representation, financial advisor, Administrator of the School, and White Hat Management to ensure compliance and knowledge of requirements.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board of Trustees is the highest policy-making authority and approves all policies and oversees the operations of the School. The Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day operations to the Administrator of the School through Dr. James Hoover, Administrator. The Board of Trustees utilizes legal counsel and management services to ensure compliance with the Charter School Contract, as well as local, state and federal requirements.

Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, Dr. James Hoover, the Administrator maintains a positive working relationship with PDE and White Hat Management. Dr. Hoover further assures the strict adherence to the Charter Contract, as well as all applicable reporting requirements.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachment

- Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

Community and Parent Engagement

The Board of Trustees is actively involved in the community and as students enroll from a particular area, local community leaders and educational and social organizations are contacted in an attempt to further enhance the program.

The Board of Trustees directs and oversees efforts of White Hat Management and the school’s Administrator to ensure that the parents are completely involved in their child’s education. Parental input comes through multiple channels including phone calls, personal visits or the student portal that is an open channel of communication with the School. All parent input is received, evaluated and included into the program to the extent that it adheres to the School’s mission, standards, educational program and is in the best interest of the School. In addition, parents are able to participate in Director’s meetings and electronic surveys in an effort to

communicate their thoughts and comments regarding the school, its performance and accountability.

School Community

It is the intent of the Board of Directors to be actively involved in the communities from which it will attract students. Since this is a statewide project, activism most likely will not be as localized as it would be in a traditional brick and mortar school setting. However, as students enroll from a particular area, local community leaders and educational and social organizations will be contacted in an attempt to further enhance our program so that it may evolve to more effectively serve the communities we serve. As a matter of fact, the program being proposed in this application has been through much iteration which have been the result of parental and community feedback to a prior version operated in Ohio. A direct illustration of this community involvement is that this community involvement process is the exact process by which the YMCA became affiliated with the educational program and began providing much needed physical education to our students. We believe that the same process and results will be obtained in Pennsylvania.

As with most educational endeavors for children, active parental involvement is a major element and can dramatically affect the possibility for success. Our School empowers parents to take an active role in the education of their children by allowing the parent to (a) direct the educational path of the child, (b) select the curriculum and educational delivery model employed to educate their child and (c) to directly assist in the delivery of that education.

This plea for parent involvement is contained in the School's mission which is "to fully educate and develop the children of Pennsylvania by utilizing an educational model that combines state-of-the-art technology with world class educational resources and **enhance the ability of parents to be thoroughly involved in their child's education by directing the child along an educational path selected by the parent** which is specifically designed for that child's needs, desires and aptitudes allowing that child to flourish and develop sooner than he/she would if he/she had to follow a pre-prescribed educational plan developed for an entire class of students which may not be appropriate for that student individually."

In addition to the parental involvement in the direction and delivery of the student's educational plan described above, parent input will not only be encouraged, but requested. Parental input may come through a variety of sources, such as phone calls, personal visits or more commonly through our 24 hour a day, 7 day per week student portal which serves not just as the student's access point to the PDLCS program but also as an around the clock way to communicate with the School. All parent input will be received, evaluated and included into the program to the extent that it adheres to the School's mission, educational program and is in the best interest of our students. In addition the Parent may always avail himself/herself of the Parent/Student Complaint Policy and Procedure.

Any parent, guardian, or adult student may file a complaint regarding a violation of School policies, regulations, rules, or procedures or federal, state, or local law to the Governing Authority of the Pennsylvania Distance and Electronic Learning Academy Charter School (PDELA) by filing the same with their Director. To file a complaint with the Director, the parent (or adult student) shall deliver the written complaint containing (1) the student's and parent's name (anonymous complaints will not be processed), (2) the signature of the complainant, (3) the complainant's name and phone number, (4) the specific violation of School policy, regulation, rule, and procedures, and/or federal, state, or local law. The complaint may be delivered in person or by U.S. Mail, properly addressed to the School, c/o the Director.

Upon a filing of any complaint, the School will do the following:

1. Date-stamp the complaint upon receipt;
2. Notify the President of the Board of Directors and the attorney for the Board of Directors;
3. Send a letter of acknowledgement to the complainant within 7-10 business days. The letter should address the general procedures that will be followed;
4. Conduct an investigation as directed by the President of the Board of Directors. This process may include, but not be limited to the following:
5. Collaborating with other offices, employees, and personnel within the School;
6. Conducting a telephone or personal interview and/or conference(s) with complainant and other necessary parties; and/or
7. Sending written correspondence.

The CEO will keep an investigation log and inform the President of the Board of Directors of the investigation process and findings; and

The investigation will be based on fact and findings specific to the allegation(s) stated in the complaint. The reason for the decision will be outlined in the letter of findings.

The Board of Directors will issue a letter to the Complainant of:

Compliance — Findings were unsubstantiated and School has complied; or

Non-Compliance — Noting the area(s) of non-compliance, recommending possible changes/technical assistance and requesting that the School respond to Complainant with a corrective action(s) plan letter within 10-15 business days.

All documentation of the Complaint, findings, and any corrective action(s) plan must be placed in the appropriately marked complaint file for closure.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

PD LCS did not engage in any major fund-raising activities during this annual report period.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The school has signed a management agreement with White Hat Management to perform all functions necessary to operate the school on a daily basis with the exception of employment. In exchange for these services, the School pays White Hat a management fee. Included in the management agreement between the parties is an indemnification provision that protects the school from being liable for any losses associated with the school operations. White Hat bears all the risk in the relationship. Out of the funding the School receives, it retains a small percentage of funds before paying its management fee that is more than sufficient to meet its own expenses,

Accounting System

The School uses Peachtree Accounting software as its accounting system. The system has been customized to use the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts. The School also regularly produces GAAP basis statements for the use by the Board of Directors. These same requirements will be used to complete the Annual Financial Report, annual audit, and required budgetary documents.

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

Malin, Berquist & Company, LLP
Date of Last Audit: FYE June 30, 2006
Unqualified Opinion
No findings

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

- Section VI. Financial Responsibilities - Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and any findings Resulting From the Audit

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

None.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The School contracts with WHDL of Pennsylvania, LLC to manage the daily operations of the school. WHDL, as part its obligations under the management agreement with the School takes on the responsibility for providing all facilities, furniture, fixtures and equipment. Thus the School is not directly involved in the procurement of these items. All these services, as well as other things are provided in exchange for one comprehensive management fee.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

2. Describe future facility plans and other capital needs for the length of the charter and how these items have been integrated into strategic plan of the charter school.

The cyber charter school's assessment is that the current leased administrative office space is expected to be adequate to serve the needs of the charter school for the coming year. There are no significant expected capital outlays required for facilities for the coming year as well. The charter school will continue to monitor its facility needs and will act accordingly should those needs change.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Health Requirements:

In order for a student to be admitted into PDLCS, parents must submit satisfactory evidence that immunizations against Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Tetanus, Poliomyelitis, Rubeola, Rubella, and Hepatitis have been or are in the process of being completed, or must file a certificate of exemption. Immunizations required by the State Department of Health are demanded by the school.

At the point of Enrollment students/parents/guardians are required to provide **Proof of Current Immunizations** as required and outlined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Health, or a signed and dated **Waiver of Immunization Form** advising PDLCS that they object to immunizations for religious reasons or medical reasons. If the parent/guardian indicates on the waiver form that they do not vaccinate their student, documentation from a physician is requested to certify that vaccinations for the child in question are contraindicated and not recommended.

If the parent/guardian submits a current Immunization Record for the student, the Enrollment Counselor assigned to the student verifies that all required vaccinations based on the student's age (current grade level entry) have been administered. If they have not, the student's enrollment is not processed further and the parent/guardian is contacted. The Enrollment Counselor advises which vaccinations PDLCS does not have record of. The parent/guardian is asked to send updated records if the vaccinations have been given, **or** if the vaccinations not documented on the submitted record have not been administered, the parent/guardian is advised that their student will be provisionally enrolled with the following stipulations if updated records are not obtained by the start of the school year:

“Any student in kindergarten through 12th grade may be admitted to school provisionally if evidence of at least one dose of each required antigen (i.e., measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, varicella, hepatitis B) is given. The parent(s) plan for completion of the required immunizations shall be submitted to the school and reviewed every 60 days. All subsequent immunizations shall be entered on the Certificate of Immunization or into the computer database program. All immunization requirements shall be completed within eight months of entrance to school. If the requirements are not met, the school administrator shall undertake suspension procedures.”

These provisional Enrollments are tracked on an excel spreadsheet to ensure that the required follow up is completed monthly.

2. Provide a complete list of current school insurance coverage policies and programs including health and general liability.

Copies of current school insurance coverage policies and programs are included.

3. In preparation for the new Wellness Policy requirements from the Federal Government, and for the new Chapter 12 requirements now in the State Law (both effective 7/1/06), please provide a brief description of how the charter school is preparing to meet the new deadlines. (website is provided in outline of Annual Report)

PDELA Health Records Improvement Plan

2006 - 2007 proved that we did not have the needed information in our Enrollment Files for PDELA student. "In order to improve our processes, the newly formed partnership "Admissions/Records" was tasked with the acquisition of Immunization Records (Admissions) and the tracking of said immunization (Records). This process proved essential for State Reporting of Health Data. However, the Admission/Records team was given this task AFTER the fall 2006 students had already been admitted to the school." The first students to be asked to provide the immunization data were the Mid-Year 2006 students.

2007 - 2008 has seen the following improvements:

- * Admissions now require updated immunization records for students entering grades K and 1

- * Admissions now require updated dental screenings for student entering grades 1 and 2

- * Records has created a database that documents immunizations, vision, dental and hearing screenings (with dates)

- * The database also has the ability to document height and weight of each student (with dates)

- * A process is in place for entering the data from the Enrollment Folder to the Vital Statistics Database to ensure that data for ALL active students is collected and ready for state reporting

2007 - 2008 Improvements in process:

- * The height and weight will be collected and documented for all active students (per Laura Yost, this can be given by the parents / guardian without a physicians signature)

- * The Vital Statistics Database will be enhanced with an automatic calculation that will convert inches to centimeters, pounds to kilograms and will then calculate the BMI for each student.

- * Each student's BMI will be charted by the PDELA Records Processor. Should the student's BMI be out of "normal" range, the school nurse will be contacted to plot the chart as well. If it is determined that the student is in an unhealthy BMI range, a
In order to ensure that students have opportunities to engage in physical activity and are exposed

to healthy lifestyle habits, PDLCS has formed a partnership with several YMCAs around the state to assist students in these locations to receive physical education instruction, at no out-of-pocket cost to the parent. Students need only contact your local Y or Y Branch to see if they are participating in this program. If parents choose to have their child participate in this program, the child may participate in up to two YMCA programs during the Winter/Spring semester. Parents may download a voucher from the school's website.

PDLCS is in the process of developing a health and wellness policy that is consistent with the needs and constraints of a distance learning environment.

PDLCS offers comprehensive and practical instruction in Health. Our health curriculum extensively examines lifestyle choices. In the course, ***Nutrition and Fitness***. The list of topics includes:

Tobacco Products & Alcohol

Stress

Diet & Exercise

Mental & Physical Health

Disease & Disabilities

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

- Section II. Strategic Improvement Planning - Statement of Quality Assurance
- Section III. Quality of School Design - Special Education
- Section III. Quality of School Design - Rigorous Instruction
- Section IV. Accountability - Student Assessment
- Section IV. Accountability - Teacher Evaluation
- Section V. Governance - Coordination of Governance and School Management
- Section VIII. Compliance with Health & Safety Requirements & Maintenance of Health & Immun. Records for Students
- Section IX. Administrative - Quality Teaching
- Section IX. Administrative - Student Conduct

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

See attachment for Section VIII Health and Safety Responsibilities - Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

During the 2006-07 school year, PDLCS employed a total staff of 24 full-time employees. In addition, the school retained consultants and related service providers as necessary. During the school year, seven (7) employees resigned and were replaced. Of the six (6) professional staff members that resigned, (5) accepted positions in area public or charter schools. Two (2) staff member resigned due to the relocation of their spouse.

To date, all full-time staff are scheduled to return for the 2007 — 2008 school year. In January, 2007, the Board of Trustees enacted a Knowledge and Skill based salary plan in order to attract and maintain quality teachers as well as attract teachers in high demand certification areas. The plan was implemented on July 1, 2007, and provides regionally competitive salaries to the teaching staff based on their certification areas, academic preparation, and professional credentials.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- Quality of Teaching and Other Staff
- Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

Student Enrollment

Student Enrollment:

PDLCS will not charge tuition to parents or students.

PDLCS will be in full compliance with open enrollment regulations and withdrawal requirements specified by the Academy's Charter and Pennsylvania law.

PDLCS will comply with all state and federal laws.

PDLCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, gender, disability or ethnic origin in the enrollment and/or the administration of its educational program or activities.

When demand exceeds places available (as determined in the sole discretion of the School's Board of Directors), admissions will be determined by a lottery of all applicants in a given category, except that returning students and their siblings will be given priority over new students. After the lottery is completed, those students not selected for enrollment will be placed on a waiting list in order of their random selection. Students, whose application for enrollment is received after the Lottery is completed, shall be placed on the waiting list and admitted on a first-come, first serve basis as long as the last date for enrollment in the Academy has not passed.

No lottery was used this year in the Admissions process.

APPLICATION - REGISTRATION - ENROLLMENT

The Application Form represents the first step in a multi-step process. By completing, signing and submitting the Application Form, along with the associated Enrollment forms, the parent or guardian expresses a desire to have his/ her child attend the Academy. The submission of the Application Form and associated Enrollment Forms begins the Registration process. It does not

mean the child will be enrolled in the Academy. As part of the Registration process, the parent or guardian will submit copies of the student's:

- ?Birth Certificate
- ?Current Immunization Record
- ?Private Physician Medical Form (or proof of current required physical examination)
- Private Dental Form (or proof of current dental examinations)
- ?Proof of Residence
- ?Proof of Internet Connection
- ?Court Documentation of Custody (if applicable)
- ?Copy of most recent Report Card (for K-8 students), OR High School Transcript (for 9-12 students)
- Copy of current special education records (IEP and/or ER)

After signing and faxing these forms back to the Enrollment Department, the parent or guardian will be contacted by a PDLCS Representative and will work with the PDLCS staff member to determine which curriculum would best suit the student(s). After all of the Registration steps are complete, the student is enrolled when all of the remaining steps have been completed:

- Attendance of a mandatory training, at a location to be specified by PDLCS;
- ?The PDLCS curriculum is received by the student;
- The PDLCS computer and printer are delivered and installed at the student's home;
- ?The parent and student accounts are determined to be properly connected to the PDLCS network.

In order to maintain a student's enrollment, the guardian must:

- Assure that a working phone line and Internet connection are maintained at the location where the student is being educated at all times;
- ?Inform the PDLCS Enrollment Office of any and all parent or student address and phone number changes as soon as possible.
- ?Adhere to all I-PACT requirements, as detailed on page 11 of this handbook.

RE-ENROLLMENT

All students must be re-enrolled each school year to continue schooling at the Academy: students are not automatically re-enrolled from school year to school year.

Parents of re-enrolling students will be required to fill out, print, sign, and return all required re-enrollment documentation and forms before curriculum will be sent for the new school year. (Please note: Siblings who have not previously attended PDLCS cannot be added through the Re-Enrollment process: they must be enrolled through the New Enrollment Process outlined above.) The required re-enrollment forms and documentation are:

- ?Re-enrollment Form
- ?I-PACT Agreement
- ?Parent/ Student Handbook Form
- ?Authorization for Release of Information Form
- ?Current Immunization Record
- ?Private Physician Medical Form (or proof of current required physical examination)
- ?Private Dental Form (or proof of current dental examinations)
- ?Current Proof of Residence

- Court Documentation of Custody (if applicable)

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE:

The Admissions Policy of PDLCS is in compliance with State Regulations in the following manner:

PDLCS requires proof of birth.

PDLCS requires proof of residency.

PDLCS requires that students entering Kindergarten be at least 5 years of age which is within the compulsory attendance law for the state of Pennsylvania.

PDLCS requires that students reside in the state of Pennsylvania

PDLCS requires that students provide proof of previous public or private grade report or of homeschooling.

PDLCS requires proof of current immunizations.

PDLCS requires proof of Physical and Dental Examinations at appropriate grade levels.

PDLCS requires Parent Registration statement, which verifies/denies any history of school violence or drug or alcohol abuse,

PDLCS Enrollment History 2006-2007

09/05/2006 Enrollment- 253

06/23/2007 Enrollment — 668

Total Enrolled 06/06 School Year — 921

Total Students Withdrawn — 475

Total Expected Reenrollment - 446

WITHDRAWALS AND REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

Truancy — 60

IPact - 34

Graduates- 29

Dual Enroll — 19

Social Interaction — 77

PDLCS not a good fit — 60

Circumstances of life — 57

Do Not Reenroll - 32

Curriculum Issues — 12

Technical Issues — 4

Staff Issues — 6

ENROLLMENT TRENDS/HISTORICAL DATA

Count date Enrollment — EOY Enrollment

2004-2005

10/02/2004 — 198

06/23/05 — 307

Increase - 109

2005-2006

10/02/2005 — 565

06/23/2006 — 623

Increase - 58

2006-2007

10/02/2006 — 605

06/23/2007 — 504

Enrollment **Decrease** — **101**

Transportation

Since we are a cyber charter school, PDLCS provides no transportation service to students.

Food Service Program

Since we are a cyber charter school, PDLCS provides no food service program to students.

Student Conduct

The PDLCS Board of Trustees has authorized reasonable and necessary rules governing the conduct of students in school. The board has adopted a code of student conduct that includes

policies governing student discipline and a listing of students' rights and responsibilities. This conduct code is published and distributed to students and parents or guardians through the student/parent handbook and the school's website. Copies of the Code of Conduct are also available upon request.

The Board of Trustees has defined and published the types of offenses that would lead to exclusion from school. Exclusion from school may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

- A suspension is exclusion from school for a period of from 1 to 10 consecutive school days.
- Expulsions are exclusion from school by the governing board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls.
- Expulsions require a prior formal hearing.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that an education is a statutory right, and students shall be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In any case involving a possible expulsion, a formal hearing is required. The parent may appeal the decision of the CEO directly to the PDLCS Board of Trustees.

Student Conduct - Attachment

- Student Conduct

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

Name of School: Pennsylvania Distance Learning CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: March 16, 2004

Length of Charter: 3 Yrs. (2004-2007) **Opening Date:** June 1, 2004

Grade Level: K-12 **Hours of Operation:** 8 am to 5 pm

Percentage of Certified Staff: 100% **Total Instructional Staff:** 18

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 20 **Student Waiting List:** 0

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 81.3%

Enrollment: 888 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** \$6188.00

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 7

Asian/Pacific Islander: 2

Black (Non-Hispanic): 100

Hispanic: 15

White (Non-Hispanic): 220

Multicultural: 7

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: N/A

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 103 students received special services for 06-07

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	900-990

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2007

The Pennsylvania Distance Learning CS within Capital Area IU 15 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 James Hoover

Title Dr.

Phone (888) 997-3352

Fax (724) 933-7655

E-mail james.hoover@pdela.com

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

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

Name John Marous

Title Mr.

Phone (888) 997-3352

Fax (724) 933-7655

E-mail n/a

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name James Hoover

Title Dr.

Phone (888) 997-3352

Fax (724) 933-7655

E-mail james.hoover@pdela.com

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date