
Pennsylvania Department of Education



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Charter Annual Report **Monday, November 10, 2008**

Charter School: Propel CS-Montour
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CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2008 - 2009

Name of School: Propel CS-Montour

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: 1/7/2007

Length of Charter: 5 years **Opening Date:** 8/20/2007

Grade Level: k-6 **Hours of Operation:** 8:30AM - 3:30 PM

Percentage of Certified Staff: 100% **Total Instructional Staff:** 19

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 14:1 **Student Waiting List:** 328(As of July 1)

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 95%

Enrollment: 272 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** 12,259

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1
Asian/Pacific Islander: 1
Black (Non-Hispanic): 90
Hispanic: 0
White (Non-Hispanic): 160
Multicultural: 20

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 58%

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 44

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	188	188	188	0	188
Instructional Hours	0	0	1128	1128	1128	0	1128

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

Organization Description

Propel Charter School — Montour has completed its first year. Propel Montour ended the year with 272 children from 11 different districts. The school implemented the programs described in the charter; children made substantial learning gains; and the school is organizationally and

fiscally healthy. This report reviews the programs the school implemented, describes the children the school served, provides data on the learning that took place, and outlines the goals to be pursued in the coming year.

At year end, 19% of the children at the school had an IEP. The student body was 59% white, 33% African American, 7% multiracial and 1% other. 58% of the students were eligible for free and reduced priced lunches.

The school's mission is to develop academically accomplished young men and women who are poised, curious, and disciplined—upstanding individuals who will be effective members of a community. Propel graduates will be great readers, writers and problem solvers, knowledgeable, confident in themselves, and ready and eager to impact their communities; benefiting themselves, their neighborhoods and our region. The school is a dynamic place where teachers, families, students and community partners work together both in the pursuit of excellence and in the cultivation of curiosity, creativity and collaboration. The school encourages excellence through an intense focus on reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science and through explicit attention to the creation of a caring, nurturing community that provides, in partnership with families, abundant individual support and encouragement. A set of belief statements drawn from the charter serves as touchstones for decision-making at the school.

Propel Charter School — Montour has put in place the unique and powerful program described in the charter. This program includes: 1) Full day Kindergarten and a longer school year and longer instructional day; 2) small class sizes and individual attention; 3) a 2 ½ hour literacy block; 4) a unique core studies program; 5) a unique cultural arts program; and 6) a powerful professional development program.

Implementing this program requires a very strong staff, and the school has that kind of staff. Diane Mooney served as the school's principal, and Dr. Carol Wooten, Chief Academic Officer, actively supported her and the remainder of the school staff. Randall Bartlett served as the Assistant Principal. This highly talented leadership team led a 100% certified and highly qualified staff of 19 teachers. They were assisted by 4 full time instructional aides. The school implemented a professional development program that included in classroom coaching, seminars, workshops at the school, as well as attendance at workshops presented by the AIU, PATTAN, PDE and others.

During the year, Propel used a strong on-going assessment plan for monitoring progress at the school. The plan includes a set of targets based on multiple measures. Students showed growth on math and reading assessments (measured by the 4 Sight, DIBELS, DRA, Corrective Reading and Waterford). Parents were very satisfied with the school, and student attendance was very good.

Core Purpose

Mission

Our mission is to develop academically accomplished young men and women who are poised, curious and disciplined; upstanding individuals who will be effective members of a community. Propel graduates will be great readers, writers and problem solvers, knowledgeable, confident in themselves, ready and eager to impact their communities; benefiting themselves, their neighborhoods and our region.

Vision

We envision dynamic schools where teachers, families, students and community partners work together both in pursuit of excellence and in the cultivation of curiosity, creativity and collaboration. Propel schools encourages excellence through an intense focus on reading,

writing, mathematics, history and science. We pay explicit attention to the creation of a caring, nurturing community that provides, in partnership with families, abundant individual support and encouragement.

Shared Values

We have core beliefs about Academics, Community and Personal Power that anchor our work and serve as touchstones, shaping key decisions in the life of our schools.

On Academics

Leading children to academic accomplishments is a central purpose of our school. We place supreme importance on the development of literacy because reading well is the foundation for further learning. We believe children are able to think deeply and that this intellectual engagement is central to academic accomplishment.

On Community

We believe in the power of a community to lift individuals, and that it is our job to prepare children to build and be part of such communities. We also believe it is our job to lead teachers, parents and community partners, through an open exchange of ideas, to share a sense of responsibility for the success of each child.

On Personal Power

We believe that every child is unique and personally powerful. Pursuing personal passions and participating in the arts, physical activities and community service promote both understanding of the world, and appreciation for individual differences. We see children as active participants in creating their futures and feel it is our job to constantly encourage children to explore and reflect, cultivating knowledge of self and a sense of personal efficacy and power.

Academic Standards

At Propel, we believe strongly in the need for clear expectations. These expectations define what Propel students should know and be able to do. They provide students and their families with clear goals for the hard, focused work that is an integral part of life at a Propel school.

What follows is a list of the major goals that anchor these clear expectations, brief descriptions of what we expect in terms of Academic learning, learning to be effective in a Community, and learning to be Personally Powerful. They emerge from our vision of schooling and are fully aligned with the **Pennsylvania State Academic Standards**. They provide a clear goal for students and constitute a promise to families enrolling children at a Propel school.

Students in Propel Montour's K-6 school program will:

Academics

Demonstrate excellence in core academic disciplines

- a. Read and write well;
- b. Listen skillfully and communicate clearly;

- c. Show a meaningful understanding of mathematics—see relationships and patterns, compute fluently and apply skills and procedures to solve problems;
- d. Show knowledge of historical events and an understanding of historical research, sources, chronology and interpretation;
- e. Show knowledge of scientific principles and an ability to apply methods of scientific inquiry.

(Demonstrations fully aligned with the PA Academic Content Standards — section 412 of 22Pa code)

Community

Develop awareness, understanding, and appreciation of what it means to be part of a community

- a. Work effectively with peers and others to achieve a goal;
- b. Manage time and resources to meet commitments and obligations;
- c. Understand the roles of a leader, a follower, and an individual in a group;
- d. Understand and respect the differences within and among various communities and negotiate differences with others tactfully.

Personal Power

Develop a clear sense of purpose and path and pursue a personal passion

- a. Set goals and reflect accurately on progress toward those goals;
- b. Demonstrate self-discipline and work hard to achieve goals;
- c. Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses;
- d. Demonstrate curiosity about the world and an eagerness to learn and grow;
- e. Appreciate many kinds of positive, personal expression (including the arts, music, language, sports, and hobbies);
- f. Acquire expertise in and passion for at least one.

Strengths and Challenges

Strength and Challenges

Propel Charter School-Montour is using the School Improvement Planning process even though this is its first year to improve upon the areas identified as **Challenges** and to further strengthen the areas identified as **Strengths**. Stakeholders have participated in many ways in creating the plan, and multiple data sources were used to demonstrate results. These data sources include

teacher records and observations, student feedback, parent and teacher surveys, the 4SIGHT, the PSSA, Stanford Achievement Test (Edition 10), G-MADE (math assessment), developmental reading assessments, and local assessments. Multiple data sources are further strengthened by an annual review of the curriculum by the Educational Advisory Committee which is comprised of well-known experts from higher education, educational research organizations, the cultural arts, and the manufacturing and technology sector.

The 2007-2008 school year ended with 293 students in grades K — 6. At the end of Year One **Strengths** and **Challenges** were identified. These areas continue to be used for school improvement planning.

Strengths: Growth in Student Achievement (Academic Achievement), School Climate, Parent Satisfaction, Partnerships, and Teacher Professional Growth.

Challenges: Students who are performing below grade level and implementation of a School Wide Discipline plan.

The following Chart gives a more detailed description of the **Strengths** and the **Challenges** for the 2007-2008 school year and recommended changes for the 2008-2009 school year.

Strengths

Student Achievement (Academics)

<p>Relevant Information</p>	<p>95% of the teachers, 91% of the parents, and 95% of the students say that the school maintains high academic standards (end of year survey).</p> <p>Data showing continuing growth and improvement in academics: PSSA, 4Sight, Stanford Achievement Test (10th Edition), G-MADE (math assessment), Waterford Early Reading Program, Corrective Reading Program, Open Court Reading Program Assessments, TERC Mathematics Assessments, ASSET Science Assessments and local assessments. PSSA and SAT 10 data are included in this report.</p>
<p>Next School Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propel teachers, parents and students will continue to say that the school maintains high academic standards (end of 2008 - 2009 school year survey). • Propel students will show continued growth, striving to make AYP in reading (they made AYP in Math) and moving more students from below basic and basic to proficient and advanced and an increased percentage maintaining or increasing their national or state percentile ranking based upon the data sources listed above.

School Climate

Relevant Information	Students and parents report that children feel physically and emotionally safe at school. Student Attendance averaged 95%. 98% of teachers, 98% of parents and 83% of students say school is safe and secure.
Next School Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A faculty committee on school climate will meet to further strengthen Propel's culture of caring. • Teachers, parents, and students will continue to give the school climate a favorable rating. • The number of students stating that the school is safe and secure will increase.

Parent Satisfaction

Relevant Information	<p>97% of parents give the school an A or B, and a high percentage of parents (98%) and students (85%) agree that teachers really care for them and their child. 95% of parents were actively involved in their child's education.</p> <p>Parents visit the school frequently and volunteer on a regular basis. Many parents attended Literacy and Math Nights. Most parents attend the Celebration of Learning following each Cultural Arts Module. There is a current waiting list of 328 students for K—7.</p>
Next School Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents will be given a list of specific volunteer opportunities, and principals and teachers will work to include more parents in school activities. • Parent workshops will be expanded with a focus on how they can help increase the academic achievement of their children (Math Nights and Literacy Nights for every grade level). • An effort will be made to increase parent participation in the School Council.

Partnerships

Relevant Information	Propel has established Cultural Arts Partnerships with the Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble - Storytelling, Attack Theater, Center for Theater Arts, Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble- Drums, Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble - Yoga, Greensburg American Opera, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Steel Dragon Kung Fu, and Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble Physical Fitness. These organizations provide the artists in residence.
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	<p>Propel's Principals participates in the Principals Academy, and the Chief Academic Officer participates in the Forum for Western PA Superintendents through a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. A partnership with AmeriCorps provides members in the school daily to tutor and mentor students. A partnership with the University of Pittsburgh provides MAT Interns and student teachers in all Propel Schools. A strong afterschool program includes tutoring and enrichment activities.</p>
<p>Next School Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Arts Partnerships will be expanded and some will be funded by grants written and received by Propel's Arts Coordinator. • Pre-service teacher partnerships will be expanded to include Point Park University. • The number of students participating in an after school program will increase.

Teacher Professional Growth

<p>Relevant Information</p>	<p>84% of teachers say that they have adequate professional opportunities to learn about content and instruction.</p> <p>Propel teachers receive far more professional development than those in traditional public or private schools. Teachers work 220 days each year. This includes 190 student days. Teacher training days include: 10 days prior to the start of the school year, 10 days during the school year, 5 days at the end of the school year, and 5 days during the summer. Teachers participate in trainings at the AIU, local colleges and universities, ASSET Science, Inc., PATTAN, local school districts and professional teaching organizations.</p>
<p>Next School Year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership opportunities will be expanded for teachers to conduct on-site and off-site workshops for other teachers. • Teachers will provide workshops and facilitate the work of paraprofessionals and AmeriCorps Members. • Teachers will be encouraged to join and participate in professional organizations (for example: NCTM, NCTE, SCD, AERA etc) Teachers will assume leadership roles in ASSET Science • Lesson Study will be implemented by the Math Coach and Literacy Coach. • Teachers will have leadership opportunities in the After-School Program and in the Propel wide professional development programs. • Percentage of teachers satisfied with their professional opportunities will increase • A differentiated teacher supervision program will be developed through the Education Leadership Initiative at the University of Pittsburgh.

Challenges

Students Performing Below Grade Level

Relevant Information

The school year began with 272 students in grades K through six. Students come from 11 different districts and the incidence of poverty is high, 58%. Although teachers and parents say that the Propel Montour maintains high academic standards, many students enter with substantial academic deficits. The percentage of special needs students is high, 18.9% school wide. Students in grades 3 and 4 performed well, easily making AYP on the PSSA in both reading and math, but students in grades 5 and 6 did not meet AYP.

Next School Year

- Propel Montour will increase the number of students who receive tutoring in reading and math.
- Americorps Members will provide in school tutoring in reading and math, along with homework completion. The focus will be on grades 6 and 7.
- An intervention program will be created to address the academic achievement of students in grades 6 and 7.
- The after school Program will expand its focus on intense tutoring, along with a wide array of enrichment opportunities.

School-Wide Discipline Plan

Relevant Information

Although suspensions are not high (27) discipline and consistent consequences continue to be a concern of administration, faculty, and staff. The over-arching discipline policy is stated in the Student Code of Conduct and Policy Handbook.

Next School Year

- A School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Plan will be implemented. Training for faculty and staff will begin in August of 2008.
- Major and minor infractions will be well defined and consequences will be clear.
- An anti-bullying policy will be revised and approved by the board.
- Professional development seminars will be conducted to address an effective implementation of the SWPBS Plan.

- Principals will focus on full and consistent implementation of the SWPBS Plan.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

Strategic Planning Process

Propel strongly believes in developing annual performance goals based on the mission, vision and beliefs of the school. During the 2007-08 school year, Propel continued to utilize a comprehensive framework of performance indicators developed during the 2004-2005 school year. The indicators cover the broad domains of:

- A. Student performance;
- B. Stakeholder satisfaction;
- C. School Culture; and
- D. Cultural Experiences

The Propel Schools' trustees reviewed and approved the 2007-2008 indicators. The indicators are used to report the school's performance and track longitudinal data.

In order to present a comprehensive view of the performance, multiple indicators are sometimes given around a particular indicator. For example, for math proficiency, included is the required AYP goal. But because this goal only pertains to grade 3 and up, we also included a proficiency measure based on the SAT-10, a test used with all students. This allows the presentation of a more comprehensive measure of performance, but also generates information that is useful for internal planning and instructional improvement.

Note that for the core areas of math and reading, the goals are not just for proficiency but for growth. The schools beliefs revolve around the importance of multiple indicators for success, not just at the percentage of students who reach a benchmark, but at the percentage of students who are improving their skills each year regardless of the starting point.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Diane Mooney	Propel CS	Administrator	Dr. Carol Wooten
Dr .Jane Heiple	Lyceum Group	Other	Jeremy Resnick

Dr. Carol Wooten	Propel CS	Administrator	Jeremy Resnick
Jeremy Resnick	Propel CS	Administrator	Board of Trustees
Mandi Davis	Propel CS	Special Education Representative	Dr. Carol Wooten

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Goal: Operate a successful school in accordance with the charter

Description: Provide a comprehensive framework of performance indicators to track and report school performance(see attached Annual Measurable Goals chart in required documents under data tab)

Strategy: Create a positive school climate

Description: Assure a safe, secure and nurturing environment where all students can learn to their maximum potential

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Collect relevant data based on annual measurable goals	Measures of student attendance, parent involvement, school safety, academic rigor, caring environment and student behavior	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Carol Wooten	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Improve student academic performance

Description: Deliver a rigorous instructional program to enhance student achievement

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Collect relevant data based on annual measurable goals	Measures of student academic proficiency and growth	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Carol Wooten	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Provide cultural experiences for students

Description: Engage external partners to provide daily cultural experiences for all students

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Collect relevant data based on annual measurable goals	Measures of external partner engagement and number of hours per student provided in arts related activities	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Carol Wooten	Ongoing	\$0.00

Strategy: Provide stakeholder satisfaction

Description: A positive affect among all stakeholders

Activities:

Activity	Description
Collect relevant data based on annual measurable goals	Measures of family and faculty satisfaction, re-enrollment and waiting list

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Carol Wooten	Ongoing	\$0.00

Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has not met AYP.

Charter school has not created a School Improvement Plan.

Charter school has not submitted and reviewed its School Improvement Plan with the Intermediate Unit designee.

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

Rigorous Instructional Program

The school’s program is an innovative combination of proven practices. They are described below.

Structure

The school is small (273 students in grades K — 6) and will stay small (<400). Class sizes are small (maximum of 20 in K-4, 25 in 5 and 6). There is more time for instruction because the school day is longer (6 hours of instruction daily) and the school year is longer (189 actual days). We also offer a full-day Kindergarten. Our teachers work 220 days each year, an increase which allows for extensive professional development. This is in addition to the in-classroom coaching and workshops that occur before and after school.

Continuous Assessment to Meet Individual Needs

The heart of high performance and continuous improvement is the regular and persistent review of data and results. Our frequent assessments identify where intervention, support, and enrichment must guide instruction. We assess through: Kindergarten Readiness; the DIBELS Reading Assessment — at least 3 times a year; the DRA — annually for everyone in the primary grades, and more frequently for students not at grade level; Corrective Reading — ongoing assessment for students not at grade level; PSSA — Grades 3 - 8; the Stanford Achievement Test — 10th Edition; and GMade for Grades K - 2 (Fall and Spring) and an ongoing reading leveling based on the 100 Book Challenge program. Most importantly, we make decisions throughout the school year based on this assessment data. For example, during this past year, we moved children up a grade level and had children in multi-grade experiences. We also use flexible grouping in both literacy and math to ensure that children are receiving instruction that is at the appropriate level. Tutoring sessions are scheduled throughout the day, after school, and in the summer program.

Unique 2 to 2.5 Hour Literacy Block

The school uses a developmental, phonics based reading program to build decoding, fluency and comprehension skills. Our students use the highly recommended (NCTE) Open Court Series, which is compatible with our Balanced Literacy Program. We are also implementing the

Waterford Reading Program, a nationally recognized and award-winning program for primary students. Students in grades K-6 have two and a half hours of literacy each day. Reading time is comprised of Phonics and Word Studies and immersion into authentic literature. We use the 100 Book Challenge program to put Leveled Libraries in each classroom (a new and well-researched movement in Reading Instruction) so that we can meet the individual needs of our children. Our Literacy time is broken into: Read Alouds, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Literature Circles, and Guided and Independent Writing.

Strong Math Program

Propel uses a mathematics program that develops the student's ability to use, represent, and explain mathematical concepts — one that emphasizes computational fluency, conceptual understanding and problem solving. Investigations in Data, Number and Space (the TERC program is used for grades K — 6 and Connected Math in grade 6) The selection was based upon recommendations from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Science Foundation. They are very compatible with the other in-depth, inquiry-based programs used in Literacy, Science and Social Studies. Our children also use Every Day Counts to analyze data, see patterns, explore math relationships, and communicate using math terms.

Core Studies for In Depth Learning

Propel students engage in a series of core studies of six weeks in duration. These are intensive, in-depth investigations drawn from the disciplines of social studies and science. Each core study also includes field trips, trade books, investigation, and research. Social Studies Alive is the social studies program for students in grades K — 4. History Alive is the program for grades 5-6. This includes an extensive study of "America's Past" for grade 5- 8. All grades participate in a World Cultures Study the last six weeks of school. This study ends in a culminating event, a World Cultures Fair which is open to family, friends, and the community.

The science component of these studies incorporates the inquiry-based ASSET Science, which is used throughout Allegheny and surrounding counties. Examples of topics are the Kindergarten study of Trees, the first and second grade study of Changes, the third and fourth grade study of Rocks and Minerals, and the middle level study of Populations and Ecosystems. Students complete experiments, study concepts, and read literature relevant to each topic.

The Core Studies have a unique program at the end of each six -week study; a culminating event that is tied to our Celebration of Learning (see below) takes place. Culminating events give students an opportunity to showcase their work and learning in social studies and science at a well-attended parent/community event.

Children can pursue interests that emerge during these Core Studies by participating in after school clubs. For example, we had an after-school Science Club taught by a teacher with extensive experience in science and ecology. Children also had a hands-on math club where they played math games and engaged in various math competitions. There was also a math program provided by the National Actuarial Foundation. Students receive further enrichment through participation in Odyssey of the Mind.

Celebrations of Learning and Our Cultural Arts Modules

Six times a year, a Celebration of Learning showcases student work and accomplishment in both the Cultural Arts module and the science or social studies unit just completed. The Cultural Arts module supplements and supports the ongoing use of creative expression in the classroom and replaces traditional "specials." Residencies of local artists support the work of the Enrichment coordinator. This year, we have completed modules with local artisans, Pennsylvania Shokotan

Karate Club, Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble- Yoga, Attack Theater, Jillian Canastraro - Hip Hop, YMCA Homewood/Brushton, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theater, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble -Dance, Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble -Spoken Word.

Strong Teacher Selection, An Uncommon Professional Development Program

We are able to accomplish these activities through outstanding faculty and staff. Our teachers are certified and highly qualified; most of our teachers have either a graduate degree or are in graduate school. The interview process is rigorous — candidates must present a lesson, complete a collaborative project, critique a lesson, complete a writing sample, and have a personal interview. Teachers are observed frequently by both administrators and supported by the school's Literacy and Math Coaches. The Chief Academic Officer has had experience in Curriculum and Instruction in three local districts, and has been a high school, middle school and elementary principal. She left a superintendent's position to come to Propel, and continues to participate in the Western Pennsylvania Forum for Superintendents. She brings an extensive knowledge base to the academic program in the school.

Intensive Use of Technology

At Propel we value the use of technology in assessing students, maintaining an extensive student data base, and using existing and emerging technologies as tools for enhancing classroom instruction and student learning. Parents have secure web access to their children's grades and attendance. We currently have mobile laptop labs and PC's in each classroom, with the addition of two state-of-the-art PC's in Grades Kindergarten through Two (housing the Waterford Reading Software Program). There are laptops in the special education resource room and the gifted resource room which are equipped with grade appropriate reading and math software. Software such as successmaker and Apangea is used throughout the building. Smart Boards are used throughout the building and a teacher trainer holds a Masters of Smart Board.

Mission Driven School Anchored in Research on Best Practice

Our school is a dynamic place where teachers, families, students and community partners work together. The academic achievement of our children is the central focus. We encourage excellence through an intense focus on reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. The curriculum follows the PA State Standards, and the Literacy Program is also aligned with the New Standards. We are research-based. Our senior instructional staff has completed five years of training with the University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center at the Institute for Learning. Frequent and sometimes daily workshops on the Principles of Learning are a part of life at the school. Teachers receive ongoing training in Clear Expectations and Accountable Talk. We pay close attention to the research on how children learn and the key elements of highly successful schools. Our Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer have visited outstanding public schools locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachment

- Induction and Act 48 Plan

English Language Learners

The school has had no English Language Learners enroll. In the event that a child does enroll an ELL, our plan is to contract with AIU 3 which has an ESL department which both conducts evaluations and provides ongoing services. A copy of the report cover page from the LEP System submissions of ELL data to PDE Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support is attached.

Graduation Requirements

Propel Montour Charter School is a k-8 school therefore graduations requirements do not apply.

Special Education

All Special Education policies and procedures for Propel Charter School Montour are attached.

Propel arranged to meet the needs of those children requiring specialized instruction through a combination of its own staff, contracted staff, and alternative placements.

Special Education - Attachment

- Special Education Policies and Procedures

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Teacher A	.50	Speech and Language Support	Propel - Montour	23	N/A
Teacher B	1	Learning Support	Propel - Montour	4	N/A
Teacher C	1	Learning Support	Propel - Montour	7	N/A
Teacher D	1	Learning Support	Propel - Montour	7	N/A
Teacher E	1	Learning Support	Propel - Montour	9	N/A

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Holy Family Institute	1	Emotional Support	Holy Family Institute - Emsworth Campus	1	N/A
PACE	1	Autism Support	PACE School	1	N/A

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Paraprofessional A	Propel - Montour	1
Paraprofessional B	Propel - Montour	1
Paraprofessional C	Propel - Montour	1
Speech and Language Therapist	Propel - Montour	.50

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Propel CS - Homestead	Special Education Coordinator	.25
AIU 3	School Psychologist	.25
Therapeutic Specialists, Inc.	Occupational Therapy	.10

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
DIBELS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
G-Made	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Developmental Reading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4- Sight	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sat 10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Developmental Reading Assessment	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
4-Sight	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
PSSA	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
PASA	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Sat 10	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment

Data are used both to provide external accountability and to improve the school program. Teachers pay particular attention to data from DIBELS (given 3 times at the primary level), the Developmental Reading Assessment (given multiple times), Waterford Early Reading Program (growth measured on an ongoing basis), GMADE (math assessment) and the Corrective Reading Program (for intermediate students far behind). A standardized individual academic plan was completed for each student this year and used by teachers when planning instruction and conferencing with coaches. The 4-Sight assessment was used to benchmark students progress in meeting state math and reading standards.

Propel Montour exceeded AYP targeted indicators for math. The SAT 10 data showed strong achievement in math in relationship to the number of students at or above the 50th percentile compared to the national norm reference group. In school year 07-08, 59% of the students were at or above the 50th percentile in math.

The Open Court Reading Program also provides ongoing assessments of student work in language arts, including the Writer’s Workshop. The TERC Mathematics Program (*Investigations in Data, Number and Space*) provides ongoing assessments in mathematics, and the ASSET Science Program provides assessments through tests and lab reports. Teachers design written, performance and portfolio assessments in social studies.

Teachers and the Literacy and Math Coach use classroom and individual student observations on a regular basis. Parents are surveyed about their satisfaction with their child’s progress, and student work is displayed daily in the school and through the culminating events and exhibitions that take place every six weeks.

Teachers have broken down the state standards into benchmarks for grades K-6, and they have developed checklists for these benchmarks. Students are grouped and regrouped (flexible

grouping) throughout each trimester based upon their skill level with specific reading and mathematics benchmarks. Group and individual learning centers have been created for students at all skill levels.

Multiple strategies are in place to make certain that students who are at risk of failure and those not making reasonable progress are provided opportunities to help them succeed. Students not succeeding are provided with after-school tutoring in reading and math and there is an after-school homework club. Students reading below grade level participate in the Corrective Reading Program. This is in addition to the two and half-hours of Literacy Block each day. The evidence demonstrating that these strategies are effective can be found in the data included in this report.

The Waterford Early Reading Program (directed at primary students) is also used to help intermediate level students catch up and fill in literacy gaps that are interfering with their academic performance.

Student Assessment - Attachment

- Annual Measurable Goals

Teacher Evaluation

Teacher Evaluation

Research shows that the only factor that consistently impacts students' learning is the teacher. Propel's system for evaluation (and for professional development) takes teachers from where they are to where they want to be. The Teacher Evaluation Plan is built around (1) **Reflection - narrowing the focus to specific objectives, discussing the skills listed in the checklist, and an in-depth discussion of the PDE evaluation form.** This occurs in the pre-conference for each evaluation — one each trimester. (2) **Data Collection - establishing ways the observation/evaluation will reflect on those teaching skills that are mutually understood and agreed upon, and those made known to the teacher at the pre-conference.** At the post-conference the observer/evaluator describes what occurred during the lesson in terms of these skills and shares the written evaluation, checklist scored by a rubric, and the evaluation form provided by PDE.

Teachers are observed formally each trimester. Administrators are in each classroom daily taking multiple snapshots of teaching and learning and providing regular feedback to teachers. All administrators teach lessons throughout the year, modeling strategies and creating reference points for supervision and evaluation.

The PDE Form 426 is the official form used for teacher evaluation two times during the school year.

The administrators are responsible for teacher, coach, and staff (instructional aides and AmeriCorps Members) evaluations. The Literacy Coach is responsible for supervision and evaluation of the Literacy Program. The Math Coach is responsible for supervision and evaluation of the Math Program. The individuals who evaluate teachers and staff are: Dr. Carol Wooten, Chief Academic Officer (PA certified superintendent); Diane Mooney Principal (PA Certified); and Randall Bartlett, Assistant Principal (PA Certified);

Propel Montour and all Propel Schools have an expansive Professional Development Program. Teachers receive 100% more PD than in traditional public schools. They work 220 days a year,

and have 10 days of PD at the start of the school year, 10 days of In-Service during the school year, 5 days of PD at the end of the school year, and are responsible for 5 individual days of PD during the time between school years. Teachers are provided in-house training by the highly skilled literacy and math coaches, administrators, and the Coordinator of Pupil Services. Teachers, coaches, and administrators attend conferences and workshops at local colleges and universities, PATTAN, the AIU, PDE, and at state and national conferences such as the NCTM conferences. Many teachers are enrolled in graduate level courses, and all teachers are trained in the ASSET Science model.

The Chief Academic Officer has received five years of training from the University of Pittsburgh's Learning Research and Development Center. The instructional techniques that are embedded in the mission of propel come from LRDC's Institute for Learning's "Principles of Learning." She is also in the Forum for Western PA Superintendents, where she receives ongoing professional development. Principals participate in the Principals Academy through the University of Pittsburgh. The AIU, PATTAN, and the Annual School Law Symposium at the University of Pittsburgh provide training and workshops in the area of Special Education. This is in addition to local experts who present seminars on differentiated instruction and full inclusion. The Coordinator of Pupil Services is currently enrolled in a doctoral program in special education at the University of Pittsburgh and holds a master's degree in special education from Duquesne University

Teacher Evaluation - Attachment

- Teacher Evaluation Plan

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

Trustee Kariss Jackson resigned. Aleta Richards joined the board as a trustee. There were no other changes in board membership or leadership. Diane Mooney served as the school's principal. Randall Bartlett served as assistant principal.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Paul Anselmo	Secretary
William Axtman	President
Thomas Canfield	N/A
Bernard Carter	Treasurer
Tom Joseph	N/A
Karl Krieger	N/A
Kathleen McCauley	Vice-President
Karen McIntyre	N/A
Sean Moran	N/A
Ronald Porter	N/A
Gregory Spencer	N/A
Frank C. Walker, III	N/A
Michelle Jackson-Washington	N/A
Aleta Williams-Richards	N/A

Professional Development (Governance)

The trustees have many years of experience serving on governing boards of non-profits. The board has retained the firm of Strassburger, McKenna, Gutnick and Potter as legal counsel. Counsel has advised the Board of what it means to serve as a public official—including the requirements of the Sunshine Law. Counsel is present at each voting meeting

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board of Trustees exercises its governance responsibilities and empowers the school administration to manage the school. The board meets periodically where it reviews the school's current financial position, student results as they become available, and future plans for the school; the board also approves hires and departures and contracts and leases as necessary. The board is involved in developing an annual budget, evaluating the executive director, creating a long range plan for the school, and supporting fundraising efforts. The Board has a finance committee, a nominating committee, a fundraising committee, an executive committee, and various ad hoc committees from time to time. Directors serve four year terms, and officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) are elected in June.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachment

- Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

Community and Parent Engagement

Community and Parent Engagement

The Board of Trustees is very supportive of all events and activities that occur at Propel Montour. Propel Schools has instituted a parent tracker to document the attendance of parents throughout the school year. This becomes part of the student's profile on the student management system. The Board of Trustees has supported community and parent engagement in school activities by providing adequate funding in the budget and often by their own attendance at school events and performances. Propel Montour has offered Literacy and Math Nights for parents of children at all grade levels K — 6 several times throughout the school year. Community members are also welcome. These nights include a meal and training on how to assist children in academic achievement activities. They receive materials to take home to use in working with their children.

Propel Montour has an orientation meeting for all parents at the beginning of the school year and two Open House/Conference meetings during the year. Propel Montour is unique in its cultural arts program that is strongly supported by the Board of Trustees. This program provides Artists in Residence all day every day for six weeks at a time (this is in addition to the school's music and art teachers). At the end of each six week artist module there is a Celebration of Learning which includes a student performance and exhibitions of academic content work and music and art work from that six week period. Artist groups include Civic Light Opera , Irish and Classical Theater, Pittsburgh Dance Ensemble, Attack Theater, Spoken Word and the YMCA. Parents, family and community members attend events every six weeks. These are held at the school.

Community members and parents also participate in a School Council that meets every six weeks to discuss school activities. There is always a discussion of ways to expand opportunities for their engagement. This could involve volunteering for book fairs, literacy and math tutoring and programs, facilitating extra curricular activities, or speaking in the classrooms.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

The school received a startup grant from PDE to support the startup of the school. No major fundraising beyond this startup grant is planned.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The school incorporates a comprehensive budget process that encourages the participation of all levels of management. The involvement of all management in the budget process helps to identify any possible shortfalls and allows for corrections during the process. The school also strives to start the school year with an available fund balance. When cash flow becomes tight due to delays in receiving tuition payments from school districts, the school has available a line of credit with Fifth Third Bank.

The school also has a monthly and quarterly financial reporting process that provides senior management with the current financial information.

Accounting System

The school uses the CSIU Technology group accounting system for all budgeting, accounting and reporting. The accounting system is fully integrated with the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Charter Annual Report

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

The school's audit firm is Hosack, Specht, Muetzel & Wood LLP. The last review was June 30, 2007 and a clean opinion was issued by the auditor. School year 2007-2008 was the first year of operations and the 2007-2008 audit is scheduled to be completed during September 2008.

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

- Auditor's Opinion Letter

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 continued to operate in leased space on Bilmar Drive in Pittsburgh, Pa. 15205. The school replaces furnishing and equipment as necessary to accommodate the growth in students.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

The facility on Bilmar Drive is a suitable long term home for the school. Furnishings and equipment will be acquired as needed to accomodate the growth of the school.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Compliance with Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunization Records for Students

Propel Charter School Montour has complied with health and safety requirements (e.g., fire prevention, safety standards, requirements to hold fire drills, and bus evacuation drills), and provides appropriate evidence of maintaining health and immunizations records for students. The Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health .Services will be submitted to PDE. An emergency plan has been developed.

Occupancy of the building as a school was approved by Kennedy Township officials. Firefighters visited with children to discuss fire prevention, and fire drills were held through the year. Escape routes are posted in each classroom and reviewed with children. The school has a certified school nurse to ensure that all required health and immunization records are up to date and stored in a locked and fireproof cabinet. Reports were filed with the Allegheny County Health Department and with the PA Department of Health.

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

- Student Wellness Policy

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

School Insurance Coverage:

Philadelphia Insurance Company
Property, Crime, Inland Marine, General Liability,
Educators Professional Liability, Employee Benefits liability
Philadelphia Insurance Company
Directors & Officers Liability
State Workers Insurance Fund
Workers Compensation Insurance
Highmark-Blue Shield
Group Medical
MetLife
Group Dental
Group Life and Group ST/LT disability
Vision Benefit of America
Group Vision

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachment

- Insurance Declaration

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

This was the first year for propel Montour. The principal is PA certified and has had extensive experience leading both private and public schools. The Asssistant Principal held this position at Propel East during the 0607 school year.

Nineteen teachers began the school year.

A special education teacher was added in January

A fifth grade teacher left in January for a job closer to her home. A long term substitute was hired and replaced in March with a permanent hire.

Four Para professionals remained throughout the school year.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachment

- PDE 414

Student Enrollment

Families choose to enroll their children because they believe our school is right for their child, and children are welcomed regardless of ability or disability, race, religion or national origin. A simple process, described below, ensures that all applicants are treated fairly. Children residing in the school district and children with a sibling already enrolled receive preference provided their applications are completed in a timely manner.

A lottery is held in December for spaces that may be open in the following year. At the lottery, an ordered list is created. Applications received after the lottery deadline are placed at the end of the list in the order received.

When space becomes available, an offer of admission will be made. In order to accept the offer, families must: 1) visit the school and talk with school staff so that the family can make an informed decision that this is the right place for the child; 2) complete an enrollment form; 3) provide a transcript of grades showing that the child has completed the previous grade or, in the case of Kindergarten, provide a birth certificate showing the child is old enough to enter school; 4) provide evidence of required immunizations; 5) complete a record release form (except for Kindergarten); and 6) provide proof of age (for Kindergarten).

Procedures:

1. We encourage families to visit the school and talk with designated staff to make sure the school is right for their child.
2. Complete a one page application form. A separate application must be completed for each child who is applying for admission.
3. Deliver the completed application. Applications will be accepted beginning October 1 for the following school year.
4. In order to receive sibling preference and in order to be eligible for the lottery, applications must be received by November 30. You will receive a receipt with a number for the lottery. Each family will receive only one number so that sibling applicants are drawn together.

5. In mid-December, we will conduct a lottery. Only applications submitted by the November 30 deadline will be eligible for the December 15th lottery.

6. At the lottery, siblings of current students will be drawn first. Then applications from families residing in the chartering school district(s) will be drawn. Finally, other eligible applications will then be drawn. An ordered list will be created at each grade level.

7. When we are sure that a space will be available in a particular grade, offers of admission will be made from the ordered list. Parents will have two weeks from the offer of admission to complete the enrollment process or forfeit their space.

8. Applications received after the lottery deadline are placed on the appropriate grade's list in the order received.

The school offers a full day Kindergarten program. Children must be five years old on September 1 to enter Kindergarten. Children must have completed Kindergarten or be six years old on September 1 to enter First grade.

Enrollment during the school year was remarkably stable. The following table summarizes enrollment during the year:

Grade	Enrollment 8/20/2007	Withdraws	Enrolled	Enrollment 6/13/2008
K	37	0	2	39
1	38	2	4	40
2	34	1	5	38
3	38	0	2	40
4	37	3	4	38
5	38	1	3	40
6	34	2	5	37
Total	256	9	25	272

Of those who did leave, 2 withdrew when families moved to communities too far away to allow attendance, 5 withdrew because they were not satisfied. 1 withdrew because of transportation issues beyond the school's control, and 1 transferred to another Propel school. Propel did not expel any children; all withdrawals were voluntary.

Transportation

Propel Charter School Montour does not arrange transportation to and from school. Transportation is provided by the home districts that provide bussing, and they have been cooperative in arranging transportation.

Food Service Program

The school does participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. 58% of children qualify for free or reduced priced meals. The school contracts with the Pittsburgh Public Schools to provide meals.

Student Conduct

Discipline is an integral part of teaching and learning. Children must develop good work habits and attitudes if they are to be successful students and become successful members of the larger community.

A complete Student Handbook, including a Code of Student Conduct is attached. A positive school-wide behavior support plan is used so that expectations are clear and so that minor issues are handled consistently and fairly. Because one of the goals of the school is to promote constructive and respectful behavior, the procedures and consequences described in this Code of Conduct are designed to modify unacceptable behavior, not to punish.

The principal of the school has the responsibility for investigating serious or repetitive behavior incidents. Following the investigation, the principal has the authority to assign a variety of consequences including both in-school and out of school suspensions. Before assigning an out-of-school suspension longer than three days, the principal will conduct an informal hearing to which the parent and student will be invited. After such an informal hearing, a student may be suspended from school for up to ten days.

If the principal believes an exclusion from school of greater than ten days is warranted, the matter will be referred to the board of Trustees. Following a formal hearing in front of a committee of the Board or a Hearing Officer, the Trustees will make a final adjudication. There were no students referred to the board for expulsion hearings during the 2007-2008 school year.

Incidents involving students with disabilities will be handled in accordance with Federal law and regulations. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2005), exclusions of more than 10 consecutive school days or of more than 15 days in a school year when they constitute a "pattern" are changes of placement and require an IEP team meeting before the exclusion can occur. Any exclusion of a child with mental retardation is considered a change in placement. Where behavior triggers a change in placement, a "manifestation determination" will be conducted to determine if the child's behavior is caused by a disability. Children with disabilities will not be disciplined for behaviors that are manifestations of their disabilities. All policies conform to Chapter 12 regulations.

16 students were involved in 27 out of school suspension incidents. There were no expulsions.

Student Conduct - Attachment

- Student Conduct

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2008

The Propel CS-Montour 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
2008 - 2009 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools

Date

Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete

YES _____ **NO** _____

SIGNATURE PAGE

Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.

Name Jeremy Resnick

Title Mr.

Phone 412-325-7305

Fax 412-325-7309

E-mail jresnick@propelschools.org

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

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

Name William Axtman

Title Mr.

Phone 412-325-7305

Fax 412-325-7309

E-mail waxtman@klng.com

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name Mandi Davis

Title Ms.

Phone 412-325-7305

Fax 412-325-7309

E-mail mdavis@propelschools.org

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date

Signature Page

Signature Page - Attachment

- Signature Page