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# Pennsylvania Department of Education

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
**Department of Education**  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

**Charter Annual Report**  
**Monday, February 14, 2011**  
**(Last Accepted: Monday, February 14, 2011)**

**Entity:** Helen Thackston Charter School  
**Address:** 625 East Philadelphia St.  
York, PA 17403  
**Phone:**  
**Contact Name:** Raymond Bostic

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Summary Data Part I

### Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2009 - 2010

**Name of School:** Helen Thackston Charter School

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** February 2009 - The School District of the City of York

**Length of Charter:** 5 Years    **Opening Date:** August 19,2009

**Grade Level:** 6-8    **Hours of Operation:** 8:45 AM - 3:30 PM

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 100    **Total Instructional Staff:** 16

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 14;1    **Student Waiting List:** 0

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 95.4%

## Summary Data Part II

Enrollment: 209 Per Pupil Subsidy: \$7801.00

### Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native:	0
Asian/Pacific Islander:	0
Black (Non-Hispanic):	86
Hispanic:	99
White (Non-Hispanic):	24
Multicultural:	0

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:  
92

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 36

### Instructional Days and Hours

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (F.Time)	Elem.	Middle.	Sec.	Total
Instructional Days	0	0	0	0	195	0	195
Instructional Hours	0	0	0	0	1316.25	0	1316.25

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Educational Community

Our sister school, Lincoln Charter School, was established nine years ago. That school serves over 700 students in grades K-5 and has enjoyed consistent, significant academic gains. Parent satisfaction with the school, as indicated in annual Harris Surveys, is very high. Based on the high achievement of students and parent satisfaction, the founders were approached by parents and asked to deliver a middle school option which would allow students to continue in their successful environment. The founders have received approximately 303 parent surveys confirming the need for the school.

The Helen Thackston Charter School will serve, not only as a school of choice, but also as a model for the public schools in York City. It will be academically successful with students from the most difficult circumstances. It will offer a large number of unique elements in its core design including longer school day, longer school year, quarterly Student Learning Conferences, a House team organization, a highly integrated curricular theme. This Homeland Security theme offers students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in career areas that will become increasingly important in the future. No local public middle schools in the region offer their students the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge on our curricular theme of Homeland Security.

Helen Thackston Charter School will serve the community of students currently being served by Lincoln Charter School, which is comprised by rich ethnic and demographic diversity. The majority of the students who attend the school are from a minority groups, and we believe this trend will most likely continue at the middle school. Currently at Lincoln Charter School: 91.7% student eligible for free/reduced lunch; 100% students qualify for Title I services; 19% Limited English-proficient students; 12% Special Education; 43.5% Black; 44.3% Hispanic; 11.5% Caucasian; and 0.7% Other.

Helen Thackston Charter School will be an integral part of the surrounding community. The school will open its doors to social services and community organizations, linking service providers with the needs of students and their families. Students will participate in school and community service activities throughout their education at the middle school based on our Homeland Security theme.

## **Mission**

The mission of Helen Thackston Charter School is to provide a challenging, enriching and meaningful curriculum that educates, nurtures, and respects the individual student and the diverse community of learners in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. It is our believe that the ultimate ability of our students to achieve success lied in the commitment of the school and the community working together to create an environment that promotes academic excellence, civic responsibility, character development, leadership, and confidence, as well as a love of and appreciation for learning.

## **Vision**

The vision of Helen Thackston Charter School will build a school where all students are given the opportunity and encouragement to grow, develop, learn and achieve in an environment that calls for them to reach their highest potential.

As a result, the Helen Thackston Charter School will have:

- a challenging curriculum program that is consistent with the pedagogical philosophy of the Charter Board and EdisonLearning with curricular resources, time allocations, and staff development that are aligned with this vision.
- ample professional development, both pre-service training and ongoing training through staff's daily professional development periods.
- use of the EdisonLearning Benchmark Assessment System for reading and math, students and teachers are able to track progress in correlation to PA state standards on a monthly basis.
- a learning environment that aligns the school's code of conduct, discipline policy, and school-wide and classroom routines and procedures with

EdisonLearning's Core Values (wisdom, justice, courage, compassion, hope, respect, responsibility, and integrity) to ensure that students feel safe, respected and capable of meeting the high expectations academically and behaviorally.

- a longer school day and longer school year.
- an annual student achievement plan that guides school behavior, is based on accountability goals, but not limited to, success on PSSA tests, and it monitored and adjusted in response to current data on a monthly basis.
- a curricular theme of Homeland Security that supports and extends the core curriculum to provide students with career exposures, technical knowledge and practical experiences to greatly enhance their academic experience.

## **Shared Values**

At Helen Thackston Charter School, we are committed to providing an exceptional learning experience for our students. We will use the EdisonLearning core curriculum that is rich in literature, math, science and social studies. We embrace the importance of the arts, technology, health and physical education in our students' lives and will integrate these areas successfully into our school day. We believe that learning occurs when students are allowed to make connections through meaningful experiences in all of their subject areas, as well as to the school's community based theme, and that no area of learning has to be sacrificed for another.

We believe that students embrace learning when they are actively engaged in relevant, meaningful and challenging study that promotes academic, social and physical development. Because of this belief, we adopted a distinctive curricular theme for our school that will create tremendous context for our students' learning. The theme focuses on careers and issues related to Homeland Security. Students will develop core skills in reading, mathematics, science and social studies through both the regular curriculum and through integrated units of study, special courses and extra-curricular activities that explore aspects of this theme.

We are committed to helping build character and leadership in our students. Our students are tomorrow's leaders and the fabric of our community. We will foster our students respect, responsibility, pride, confidence, citizenship and honor. We expect our students to set high personal standards and to choose to live by these standards. Our Board of Trustees and faculty will be comprised of experienced, committed and passionate individual who themselves have respect for the teaching and learning process. Our school faculty, principal and staff will demonstrate leadership that is present and effective and model these positive character traits for our students.

## **Academic Standards**

The overall goals of Helen Thackston Charter School are simple, though challenging: to create a learning environment with an unrelenting focus on fostering and sustaining high student academic achievement, and to establish a foundation of learning that prepares students to success in high school and in their postsecondary education.

More specifically, we are focused on the following measurable performance goals:

Academic Performance: The Helen Thackston Charter School will establish a baseline score during the first year of operation of the average number of students scoring proficient at each grade level in Reading and Mathematics, grades 6-8, and Writing and Science, grade 8, on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's accountability system, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Each subsequent year, the school will increase its school-wide average percentage of students scoring proficient by 5%, or a cumulative gain of 25% after five years. In addition, the school will achieve Adequate Yearly Progress no later than the end of the third year of operation.

Student Attendance: Helen Thackston Charter School will establish a first year student attendance target of 90% increasing to 95% by the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation and maintaining that percentage in subsequent years.

Parent Satisfaction: EdisonLearning annually uses the Harris Interactive customer satisfaction survey to assess parent satisfaction with the school and it works with their students. Satisfaction on this survey is rated on a scale of A to F. Eighty percent of the Helen Thackston Charter School parents will rate the school and A or B each year of the school's operation, a rate that is 10% higher than national averages.

Student Grade Promotion: The following will be taken into account when reviewing a student's eligibility for promotion: results on all PSSA tests, attendance, classroom work and internal assessments. Test modification on the Individualized Education Plan and specified criteria for promotion will be taken into account for students with IEPs.

The Helen Thackston Charter School administrative team and staff members, working with EdisonLearning's Educational Support Team, will establish specific academic goals for the school and each grade level in reading, mathematics, science and writing. These goals will be based on performance on the PSSA test results from the previous year(s) and will be the product of detailed analysis of the results so that the particular instructional areas of focus, teaching strategies, and staff development responses are targeted to identified needs and priorities. Further, individual teachers work with the school principal to set individual goals for academic performance based on previous student achievement on PSSA. Teachers in subject areas not-tested in PSSA will nonetheless use the Pennsylvania academic standards in their content area and state provided assessment tools and resources to make sure students are making progress in attaining state learning objectives, as well as setting professional growth goals for themselves each year.

Helen Thackston Charter School will have a multi-leveled response to remediation and intervention needs, as identified by the Benchmark Assessment System, other program assessments and teacher formal and informal assessments. First, the Benchmarks in reading and mathematics will allow teachers to customize instruction in a variety of ways for their classes, focusing on common areas of weaknesses or looking at groups of students within a class with common weakness, or specific needs of an individual student. The immediate and flexible reporting of the Benchmark system allows for each analysis so grouping for differentiated instruction can be done quickly and effectively. Beyond the classroom, The Family and Support Team (FASST) structure provides a systemic way for students whose learning is not progressing as we'd like to get the

added support they need quickly. The FASST process looks at data from a variety of sources, academic, attendance and behavioral, as well as taking recommendations from teachers or parents, to ensure students get assistance as issues appear, not after they have become major problems for the student and the school.

Helen Thackston Charter School will utilize the research-based core curricula of EdisonLearning to provide instruction proven successful in communities around the country, particularly in schools with high-percentages of at-risk students.

Subject Area	Core Curriculum
Mathematics	Prentice Hall <i>Mathematics</i>
English	Holt <i>Elements of Literature</i>
Language Arts	Holt <i>Elements of Language</i>
Science	Prentice Hall <i>Explorer</i>
Social Science	Teacher's Curriculum Institute <i>Geography Alive!</i> <i>History Alive!</i> <i>Mapmakers Toolkit; Timeliner</i>
Homeland Security	School-developed materials
English as a Second Language Learners / ELL	Hampton Brown <i>High Point</i>
Art	Davis Publications <i>Adventures in Art</i>
Music	Pearson Education Making Music
Health / Phys Ed.	McGraw-Hill <i>Health &amp; Wellness</i> Pearson <i>Dynamic Physical Education</i>

The overall non-academic goal of Helen Thackston Charter School is to promote strong character in students through the building of curiosity, leadership, perseverance and concern for others. In addition, we wish for students to embrace EdisonLearning's core values of Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Compassion, Hope, Respect, Responsibility and Integrity in their daily lives inside and outside of school.

#### Promote Strong Character

Students learn ethical behavior through experience. Students need to feel the support of a safe and nurturing environment; they need to feel respected for who they are and what they can become; they need to understand what responsibility means and to be taught how to succeed at meeting their responsibilities. They need to know they can trust the example of the adults who teach them.

In addition to observing and learning from the behavior of others, students learn by discussing the events and characters from meaningful learning experiences in all subjects. History, literature and current events play an especially important role in helping students grasp the value, as well as the challenge, of pursuing democratic ideals. They also learn from solving problems in peer conferences, class meetings, and in team and group work. They learn by becoming critical readers, thinkers and doers, and by providing service in their classrooms, school and communities.

Our theme of Homeland Security will be a primary mechanism for building character in our students. Students will learn the value of community engagement and development. Students will work with staff and community members in units of study to understand their career opportunities in the health and safety of their community, state and nation.

In other words, character education and community engagement will be infused throughout the curriculum. Whether learning chemistry, economics, or music, students will have opportunities to weigh critical and moral issues and to practice the essentials of good character.

Evidence of success will include:

- Implementation of the Homeland Security theme. Students will have regular opportunities to participate in integrated units of study (called an Intensive), special courses and extra-curricular activities related to the theme. These activities will enhance students' skills and knowledge of the theme and its elements related to them will be available to all students every semester;
- Students can identify and speak to each of the Helen Thackston Charter School's core values; displays related core values, featuring student work, will be visible throughout the school;
- All students at Helen Thackston Charter School will participate in some level of community-service and/or school-service activities during their educational experience at the school. Opportunities will be connected to the Homeland Security curricular theme of the school and will be tailored to students' ages, interests and ability levels.

#### Provide a safe and secure learning community

Helen Thackston Charter School is committed to creating and maintaining a positive learning environment that encourages cooperation, fosters creativity and nurtures students in taking the risks involved in learning. Such an environment is one where students, parents, teacher and administrators model the values inherent in Helen Thackston Charter School's mission and vision and in the EdisonLearning school design. As a result, the learning environment will be safe, orderly and conducive to learning for all members of the community

Evident of success will include:

- A discipline policy and code of conduct aligned with the school's core values and reflective of our high expectations for all students is publicly displayed and referenced;
- Supportive school-wide procedures and routines that facilitate safe and orderly transitions, polite and respectful interactions in the cafeteria and yard, and aid students in monitoring their own behavior are visible and used;

- All adults in the building support a positive learning environment by teaching, reinforcing and modeling responsible, respectful and caring concern in all their interactions with students and each other;
- Data on behavior is collected and used to improve the learning environment by lowering tardy rates, office referrals, suspensions, absenteeism and other behaviors that can impede learning;
- A positive incentive system is established to acknowledge and reward student behavior that lives up to the school code of conduct and its core values.

Establish the Family and Student Support Team (FASST) to ensure that all students succeed at Helen Thackston Charter School

The Family and Student Support Team is a key component of the Helen Thackston Charter School design. The goal of the FASST team is to ensure that every child at Helen Thackston Charter School gets the support he or she needs to succeed. The team will use the data to identify individual students who are in need of additional support and connect students to strategies and resources they may help them. Also, classroom teachers can request support for individuals which may not have surfaced in the collected data. The intent is to be as proactive as possible in responding positively to the needs of our students. The Family and Student Support Team will also determine whether an evaluation for Special Education is warranted in situations where initial interventions have not succeeded.

Evidence of success will include:

- The creation of the FASST team, its regular meetings, and agendas and minutes that document the review of the data and monitoring of actions in response to the data and teacher referrals;
- Improvements in behavior, attendance and academic performance linked to actions recommended by the Family and Student Support Team.

## **Strengths and Challenges**

Strengths:

- Longer school day
- Longer school year
- Students receive 2 fine arts classes each day.
  - Fine Arts classes include: Art, Music, Health/Physical Education, and Homeland Security
- Monthly Benchmark Testing aligned with Pennsylvania State Standards in Reading and Math. Students also take monthly Language Arts benchmarks which are aligned with National Writing Standards
  - Teacher analysis of student strengths and weaknesses monthly
  - Teacher analysis of next steps in curriculum
  - Teacher embedding skills into daily lessons in specific content
  - Teacher embedding skills in Social Studies, Science and Fine Arts
- Monthly celebrations of Achievement, Growth, and Core Values
- Daily co-planning time with content teachers
- Weekly Family and Student Support Team Meetings (FASST) with certified school counselor
- Monthly Professional Development time for teachers
- ESL program - push in and pull out

- Special Education - responsible inclusion and resource room
- Induction Program/Mentor Program for staff members
- Student Learning Contracts (Report Cards) - 99% parent participation for conferences
- Daily "News and Announcements" provided to teachers to share with students during Circle of Peace (Morning Meeting)
- Staff attendance average over 95%
- Monthly informal observations of all instructional staff members
- Two instructional coaches to assist teachers
- All content blocks are scheduled for 85 minutes in English/Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science
- School-wide positive learning environment established with the theme "Peace in Our School, Peace in Our Community, Peace in Our World"

Challenges:

- As a start up charter school, we faced the difficult decision of eliminating positions based on student enrollment at the beginning of the school year.

## **SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

### **Strategic Planning Process**

As we open our doors to the new Helen Thackston Charter School in August of 2009, we have partnered with EdisonLearning to assist us in implementing a rich and challenging strategic plan for our students. This strategic plan focuses on 4 underlying cornerstones of successful schools, 8 EdisonLearning fundamentals and 8 student achievement planning initiatives.

#### **CORNERSTONE #1:**

##### **Recruiting and Developing Top Talent**

Our Charter Board of Trustees, Administrative Team and Staff members work closely with EdisonLearning to recruit top talent from a pool of educational professionals across the country. While we use our own local knowledge, we tap into EdisonLearning's national reach, experience and expertise to find candidates from all over the country. While EdisonLearning works at elbow with us in all recruitment and hiring processes, all decisions regarding personnel at Helen Thackston Charter School ultimately rests with the Board of Trustees.

#### **CORNERSTONE #2:**

##### **Building a Culture of Engagement and Aspiration for Students**

The Board of Trustees works with EdisonLearning to provide an innovative, comprehensive school design that will motivate and engage students through a culture that promotes positive academic and behavioral outcomes. Students are exposed to career and educational options that pique their interests and motivate to explore new ideas and challenges further. We have the theme of Homeland Security and will use this theme to expose students to different professions throughout their middle school years to assist with their choices as they enter high school.

#### **CORNERSTONE #3:**

##### **Providing Demanding Content and Customized Instruction**

Helen Thackston Charter School's instructional model uses a synthesis of the best instructional practices and is supported by curricular choices that match with instructional and teacher support resources to assist teachers in planning, customizing and delivering effective instruction. The approach includes direct instruction, cooperative learning, project-based learning, whole and small-group discussion, and guided discovery and fundamental skill practice. No single method works in all situations, for all subjects, with all students. This synthesized best-practice approach has matched instructional delivery with the expected learning outcomes and equips teachers with a rich instructional toolkit to draw on as they respond to what has worked and what has not worked in their classrooms.

#### **CORNERSTONE #4:**

##### **Driving Instruction Based on Achievement Driven Management**

Helen Thackston Charter School benefits from EdisonLearning's ongoing commitment to providing the very best in achievement management systems across its national network of schools. Our monthly math and reading assessments ensure that teachers and administrators have real time data to track student progress. The Benchmarks also inform teachers of their instructional effectiveness, enabling them to adapt instruction to improve their own mastery.

At Helen Thackston Charter School, we believe that a successful school is marked not only by positive academic results, but by a sense of joy and delight that accompanies the process of learning. We believe that by implementing 8 fundamentals in our school's daily procedures and routines will be successful and all of our students will learn. Armed with these 8 fundamental elements, we set our expectations high, embrace high levels of accountability and create a strategic plan that involves all stakeholders.

##### **FUNDAMENTAL #1 — School is Organized for Every Student's Success**

Helen Thackston Charter School is organized into "Houses," small teams of teachers that offer continuity during the duration of the students' time in our middle school. This organizational structure helps fulfill an effective school concept that encourages teachers to know and be able to provide support for individual students over time. In addition, this structure creates small professional learning communities among the staff, with each House team having a common period daily for professional development so that they can dialogue about their instructional performance and that of their students.

##### **FUNDAMENTAL #2 — A Better Use of Time**

Helen Thackston Charter School students attend school for seven and three quarter hours each day, longer than typical public schools, to allow for the much needed time for the core subjects of literature, mathematics, science and social studies to be taught. This also includes ample time for special subjects, such as art, music, homeland security, physical education and health. In addition our school day includes time for teachers to meet daily in their house teams, as well as having a regular planning period to attend to lesson planning, talking with parents and administration and general instructional preparation.

##### **FUNDAMENTAL #3 — A Rich and Challenging Curriculum**

Our curriculum is built around the following key domains: humanities and the arts, which includes literature, language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, character and ethics centered on core values (Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Compassion, Hope, Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity), physical fitness and health. Performance

standards of achievement have been created for each domain through a newly developed scope and sequence, organized by subject and grade level. All standards and curriculum components are consistent with the requirements of PA State law. The research-based curriculum used at Helen Thackston Charter School is primarily based on EdisonLearning's model, but new Homeland Security Curriculum was chosen by the Board. This Homeland Security Program will expose children to different career opportunities in this field every other day of their middle school career.

#### **FUNDAMENTAL #4- Teaching Methods that Motivate**

The curriculum is a rich and challenging academic program designed to meet high expectations for all students and to support a best-practice pedagogical approach that matches the mode of instruction with the desired outcome and the needs of students. Through on-site professional development, national conferences and newly developed EdisonLearning webinars, teachers receive training in the use of instructional methodologies and strategies that, in addition to motivating students, have been successful in improving the proficiency level of our students. This best practice pedagogy includes various methods of direct instruction, cooperative learning, guided discovery and project-based learning so that our students are offered various teaching methods to cover a broad spectrum of learning styles.

#### **FUNDAMENTAL #5 — Assessment that Provides Accountability**

Student progress is monitored in many ways to help ensure that standards are met. Students participate in EdisonLearning's embedded assessment tools, including its proprietary Benchmark Assessment System, which is a monthly electronic interim assessment in reading, math and language arts, developed to align with the PA state standards, as well as state and local testing programs. EdisonLearning's assessment system is designed to monitor all students in a timely manner, with real-time access to results, and is supported by the school's staff, our report card system, and quarterly conferences with parents/guardians, teachers and students.

#### **FUNDAMENTAL #6 — A Professional Environment for Teachers**

Teachers receive the career development, resources, responsibilities and opportunities that talented professionals deserve. They also work in a positive school culture that encourages respect as individuals and professionals. The Charter Board nurtures its relationship with the school staff by ensuring that they are given the opportunity to showcase their talents at daily house meetings, bi-monthly early dismissal days or nationally at EdisonLearning conferences.

#### **FUNDAMENTAL #7 — Technology for the Information Age**

Every student, teacher and administrator has access to personal technology at Helen Thackston Charter School and all are part of EdisonLearning's national intranet. Each of our teachers receives a laptop computer with an e-mail account and a telephone with voice-mail in his or her classroom. Our school has a computer lab used to support our curriculum and to enhance data-driven instruction.

#### **FUNDAMENTAL #8 — A Partnership with Families**

Teachers hold quarterly Student Learning Conferences with parents/guardians to give them an accurate picture of their children's accomplishments and needs. These conferences are intended to support the student's learning by discussing ways in which the parent and teacher can work together to help the student improve. Student Learning Conferences (SLCs) serve to build shared understandings and goals for the student,

teacher and parent to focus on each quarter. In addition to participating in SLCs, parents have the opportunity to purposefully participate in school governance by attending Board of Trustee meetings each month, participating in Parent Advisory Council meetings and events or volunteering at the school.

To ensure that Helen Thackston Charter School is doing everything possible to advance student achievement to high levels, we will set annual achievement goals and organize our strategies to meet these goals in an annual student achievement plan. This annual student achievement plan will be created by administrators and teachers by September 30, 2009. The Student Achievement Plan will be presented to students, parents, community and board members in October 2009.

The student achievement plan is comprehensive enough to do a very challenging job, yet simple enough to be executed by the entire school organization. The 8 strategies for achievement planning are based on two things: the Helen Thackston Charter School / EdisonLearning school design and sound school planning practice. They depend not just on what's to be done, but also on the who, when and how of accountability. Most importantly, the student achievement plan includes objective ways of measuring successful implementation. It includes how we will know a particular action was done and done with impact. The eight strategies listed ensure that the plan's is comprehensive and that its execution is supported by the school organization.

**FOCUS AREA #1:** Helen Thackston / EdisonLearning Program Implementation

**FOCUS AREA #2:** Test Administration

**FOCUS AREA #3:** Aligning and Embedding Test Expectations

**FOCUS AREA #4:** Data Analysis

**FOCUS AREA #5:** Meeting Individual Needs

**FOCUS AREA #6:** Professional Development

**FOCUS AREA #7:** Monitoring Implementation of the Student Achievement Plan

**FOCUS AREA #8:** Culture of Achievement

Action Strategies	Driver	Timeline	Evidence	Status


Our commitment to the 4 Cornerstones of Success, 8 EdisonLearning Fundamentals, 8 Strategies for Achievement Planning, coupled with the customized goals, mission and vision of the Board of Trustees, positions us to bring Helen Thackston Charter School to higher levels of success. Through the synthesis of proven instructional practices that match pedagogy to the instructional goals of the school and the needs of particular students. Student achievement is at the forefront of our agenda, which necessitates a more intentional focus so that our staff can successfully address the many needs of our students.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Bostic, Raymond	School Operations Manager - Helen Thackston Charter School	Administrator	Charter Board and Principal
Brooks, Rosalind	EdisonLearning - Partnership Company	Other	Charter Board
Jackson, Jamy	Principal - Helen Thackston Charter School	Administrator	Charter Board
Poff, Lena	Teacher / Mentor / Coach - Helen Thackston Charter School	Other	Prinicpal
Rossum, Oscar	Charter Board President - Helen Thackston Charter School	Board Member	Charter Board

### **Goals, Strategies and Activities**

#### **Goal: Growing Great Teachers**

**Description:** 100% of the instructional staff will have credentials as Highly Qualified.

**Strategy:** Interview, hire, train and retain instructional staff members that meet state requirements.

**Description:** Through continuous professional development we provide opportunities for staff members to develop, improve, implement, and refine effective instructional practices.

### **Activity: Induction Program**

**Description:** The state has approved our school on-sight induction program for new teachers. Support is given to them through their first year of teaching through assigning a mentor and having monthly induction meetings. The new teachers also meet with their mentors on a regular basis to problem solve. This program was approved by PDE.

<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Poff, Lena	Start: 8/4/2009 Finish: 4/23/2010	-

#### **Professional Development Activity Information**

<b>Number of Hours Per Session</b>	<b>Total Number of Sessions Per School Year</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Participants Per Year</b>
1.00	19	10

<b>Organization or Institution Name</b>	<b>Type of Provider</b>	<b>Provider's Department of Education Approval Status</b>
Helen Thackston Charter School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Entity</li> </ul>	Approved

<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Research and Best Practices</b>	<b>Designed to Accomplish</b>
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New teachers will participate in an induction program. They will learn strategies for classroom management, building parent partnerships, lesson planning, curriculum training, school wide behavior support, student learning conferences, etc.

Based on state mandated induction program and the needs of our staff.

*For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:*

- Increases the educator's teaching skills based on research on effective practice, with attention given to interventions for struggling students.

*For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:*

- Empowers leaders to create a culture of teaching and learning, with an emphasis on learning.

### **Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

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<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom teachers</li><li>• Other educational specialists</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Middle (grades 6-8)</li></ul>

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<b>Follow-up Activities</b>	<b>Evaluation Methods</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes, with involvement of administrator and/or peers</li><li>• Creating lessons to meet varied student learning styles</li><li>• Peer-to-peer lesson discussions</li></ul>	

**Status:** Complete

## **Goal: Ongoing Professional Development**

**Description:** Professional Development opportunities are provided on a regular basis. These opportunities are based on staff need, data analysis, compliance requirements, and current trends and issues in education.

### **Strategy: Professional Development Opportunities**

**Description:** Opportunities are provided through daily house meetings, early dismissals, and designated professional development days. Other opportunities are provided through EdisonLearning to the Administrative Team, Technology Department, School Operations Manager, Classroom Teachers, and Teacher Coaches.

### **Activity: Fall EdisonLearning Leadership Development Academy (ELDA)**

**Description:** As part of the EdisonLearning Leadership Development Academy program the Fall ELDA is a forum for all Principals to come together for two days of practical sessions focusing on finance, teambuilding and leadership.

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<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Jackson, Jamy	Start: 11/20/2009 Finish: 11/21/2009	\$5,000.00

### **Professional Development Activity Information**

Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
3.00	3	1
Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status
EdisonLearning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company</li> </ul>	Approved

Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
Participants attend sessions focused on finance, teambuilding, and leadership		<p><i>For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides the knowledge and skills to <u>think and plan strategically</u>, ensuring that assessments, curriculum, instruction, staff professional education, teaching materials and interventions for struggling students are aligned to each other as well as to Pennsylvania's academic standards.</li> <li>Provides leaders with the ability to <u>access and use appropriate data</u> to inform decision-making.</li> <li>Empowers leaders to create a <u>culture of teaching and learning</u>, with an emphasis on learning.</li> </ul>

**Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

Role	Grade Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principals / asst. principals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Middle (grades 6-8)</li> </ul>

Follow-up Activities	Evaluation Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes, with involvement of administrator and/or peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant survey</li> </ul>

**Status:** Complete

## Activity: FASST--Family and Student Support Team

**Description:** The School Counselor will meet with content teams of teachers each week to discuss student academic and behavior concerns. The teams will implement strategies to assist the child with meeting his/her goals. Parents and families are involved from the beginning of the process.

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Hershey, Alisa	Start: 9/2/2009 Finish: 5/26/2010	-

### Professional Development Activity Information

Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
0.75	36	25
Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status

Helen Thackston Charter School

- School Entity

Approved

Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
Implement strategies to allow all students to be successful in our middle school setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working as a team</li> <li>• Setting goals</li> <li>• Involving families</li> <li>• Collaborating with outside agencies</li> <li>• Follow-up</li> </ul>		<i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases the educator's <u>teaching skills</u> based on research on effective practice, with attention given to interventions for struggling students.</li> <li>• Empowers educators to work effectively with <u>parents and community partners</u>.</li> </ul>

### Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity

Role	Grade Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teachers</li> <li>• School counselors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle (grades 6-8)</li> </ul>

Follow-up Activities	Evaluation Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant survey</li> <li>• Individual Tracking (Goal Sheets for students)</li> <li>• Individual Progress (Report Cards and Progress Reports)</li> </ul>

Status: Complete

### Activity: Instructional Leadership Conference (ILC)

**Description:** The focus of the ILC is two-fold--to develop new and existing school leaders as well as to create a school wide achievement plan that they can take back to their sites. These participants attend the entire three days of training for achievement planning and implementation.

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Jackson, Jamy	Start: 10/15/2009 Finish: 10/17/2009	-

#### Professional Development Activity Information

Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
3.00	5	5
Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status
EdisonLearning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Company</li></ul>	Approved

Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
Participants attend training sessions in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Using data</li><li>Supervision and Evaluation</li></ul>		<p><i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides educators with a variety of classroom-based <u>assessment skills</u> and the skills needed to <u>analyze and use data</u> in instructional decision-making.</li></ul> <p><i>For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides leaders with the ability to <u>access and use appropriate data</u> to inform decision-making.</li><li>Empowers leaders to create a <u>culture of teaching and learning</u>, with an emphasis</li></ul>

on learning.

**Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

Role	Grade Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom teachers</li> <li>Principals / asst. principals</li> <li>Other educational specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Middle (grades 6-8)</li> </ul>

Follow-up Activities	Evaluation Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes, with involvement of administrator and/or peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student PSSA data</li> <li>Standardized student assessment data other than the PSSA</li> <li>Review of written reports summarizing instructional activity</li> </ul>

**Status:** Complete

**Activity: Summer Edison Learning Leadership Development Academy (ELDA)**

**Description:** ELDA is an ambitious program of training and ongoing support for leadership teams and principals. This training serves as a kick-off to a year-round professional development program designed to help strengthen leadership skills.

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Jackson, Jamy	Start: 7/8/2009 Finish: 7/11/2009	\$5,000.00

Professional Development Activity Information		
Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
3.00	7	10
Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status
Helen Thackston Charter School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Entity</li> </ul>	Approved

Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
Participants attend training		<i>For classroom teachers, school</i>

sessions in areas such as:

- Using data
- Student Achievement
- Community Outreach
- Legal Issues
- Supervision and Evaluation
- Specific content (reading and math)

*counselors and education specialists:*

- Provides educators with a variety of classroom-based assessment skills and the skills needed to analyze and use data in instructional decision-making.

*For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:*

- Provides the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, ensuring that assessments, curriculum, instruction, staff professional education, teaching materials and interventions for struggling students are aligned to each other as well as to Pennsylvania's academic standards.
- Provides leaders with the ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making.

#### **Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

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##### **Role**

- Classroom teachers
- Principals / asst. principals
- School counselors

##### **Grade Level**

- Middle (grades 6-8)

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##### **Follow-up Activities**

- Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes, with involvement of administrator and/or peers
- Lesson modeling with mentoring

##### **Evaluation Methods**

- Participant survey

**Status:** Complete

**Activity:** Working with ELL Students

**Description:** Because of the number of students serviced at Helen Thackston Charter School under the ESL guidelines, ongoing professional development is needed to accommodate the needs of students in this subgroup.

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Poff, Lena	Start: 9/3/2009 Finish: 6/1/2010	-

**Professional Development Activity Information**

Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
1.00	9	25
Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status

Helen Thackston Charter School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Entity</li> </ul>	Approved
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Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
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The ESL coordinator attends all meetings through the LIU. These meetings are used as turn around trainings for all staff members to keep updated on regulations and strategies of working with ESL students	Best practices are discussed in the regional meetings through the IU 12. These strategies are given to the staff members and used. The ESL coordinator and administrative team provide feedback through observations.	<p><i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases the educator's <u>teaching skills</u> based on research on effective practice, with attention given to interventions for struggling students.</li> </ul>
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*For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:*

- Provides the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, ensuring that assessments, curriculum, instruction, staff professional education, teaching materials and interventions for struggling students are aligned to each other as well as to Pennsylvania's academic standards.
- Empowers leaders to create a culture of teaching and learning, with an

emphasis on learning.

**Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

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<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Subject Area</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom teachers</li><li>• Principals / asst. principals</li><li>• School counselors</li><li>• Other educational specialists</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Middle (grades 6-8)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading, Writing, Speaking &amp; Listening</li></ul>

**Follow-up Activities**

**Evaluation Methods**

- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes, with involvement of administrator and/or peers</li><li>• Analysis of student work, with administrator and/or peers</li><li>• Creating lessons to meet varied student learning styles</li><li>• Peer-to-peer lesson discussions</li><li>• Lesson modeling with mentoring</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom observation focusing on factors such as planning and preparation, knowledge of content, pedagogy and standards, classroom environment, instructional delivery and professionalism.</li><li>• Standardized student assessment data other than the PSSA</li><li>• Classroom student assessment data</li><li>• Participant survey</li></ul> |
|--|--|

**Status:** Complete

**Activity: Working with Special Education Students**

**Description:** Professional Development is provided throughout the year on compliance through IDEA, accommodations for students with special needs, policies regarding students with special needs, and helping students achieve goals set on IEP.

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<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Atwood, Emily	Start: 9/3/2009 Finish: 6/1/2010	-

**Professional Development Activity Information**

<b>Number of Hours Per Session</b>	<b>Total Number of Sessions Per School Year</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Participants Per Year</b>
1.00	9	25
<b>Organization or Institution Name</b>	<b>Type of Provider</b>	<b>Provider's Department of Education Approval Status</b>
Helen Thackston Charter School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Entity</li> </ul>	Approved

<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Research and Best Practices</b>	<b>Designed to Accomplish</b>
The Special Education Coordinator attends meetings through the LIU to keep updated on regulations and compliance. She then provides turn around training to the Special Education team and staff members as needed. Staff members specifically have training on the policies--Child Find, Confidentiality, and IEE. Staff members are also provided training on Positive Behavior Supports including FBA/BIP and de-escalation strategies.	Best practices and research are outlined by PDE and the federal guidelines under IDEA.	<p><i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases the educator's <u>teaching skills</u> based on research on effective practice, with attention given to interventions for struggling students.</li> </ul> <p><i>For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides the knowledge and skills to <u>think and plan strategically</u>, ensuring that assessments, curriculum, instruction, staff professional education, teaching materials and interventions for struggling students are aligned to each other as well as to Pennsylvania's academic standards.</li> </ul>

### **Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom teachers</li> <li>Principals / asst. principals</li> <li>School counselors</li> <li>Other educational specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Middle (grades 6-8)</li> </ul>

<b>Follow-up Activities</b>	<b>Evaluation Methods</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom observation focusing on factors such as planning and preparation, knowledge of content, pedagogy and standards, classroom</li> </ul>

- with involvement of administrator and/or peers
- Creating lessons to meet varied student learning styles
- environment, instructional delivery and professionalism.
- Standardized student assessment data other than the PSSA
- Classroom student assessment data
- Review of participant lesson plans

**Status:** Complete

## **Goal: Parent Involvement**

**Description:** Increase parent participation and student success at Helen Thackston Charter School.

### **Strategy: Partnerships with Parents**

**Description:** Helen Thackston Charter School emphasizes parent participation in our school. There are many different ways we communication with families on a monthly basis.

### **Activity: Monthly Curriculum Newsletters**

**Description:** Every month, each content team creates and distributes a newsletter describing what was taught the previous month, celebrating achievement and detailing upcoming events.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Poff, Lena	Start: 9/1/2009	-
	Finish: 6/16/2010	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### **Activity: Parent Advisory Committee**

**Description:** Parents are invited to attend monthly Parent Advisory Committee meetings led by the School Counselor. During the meetings, they discuss upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and concerns.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Hershey, Alisa	Start: 9/1/2009	-
	Finish: 6/1/2010	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### ***Activity:* Parent Workshops**

**Description:** Throughout the year, parent workshops are offered on various topics of interest to our school population.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Hershey, Alisa	Start: 9/1/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### ***Activity:* Quarterly Progress Reports**

**Description:** During the mid-point of each quarter, students and families receive a progress report detailing their achievement and progress.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Jackson, Jamy	Start: 8/19/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### ***Activity:* Student Learning Contracts**

**Description:** Every quarter students lead conferences with their families and teachers. They discuss their achievement, progress and goals for the upcoming quarter.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Jackson, Jamy	Start: 8/19/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### **Activity: Weekly Family Letters**

**Description:** Each week, the school distributes a newsletter detailing upcoming events, reminders, notifications and important dates.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Hershey, Alisa	Start: 8/19/2009	-
	Finish: 6/16/2010	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### **Goal: Student Attendance**

**Description:** The student attendance rate at Helen Thackston Middle School will be at or above 95%.

### **Strategy: Compulsory School Attendance Law**

**Description:** Follow the Compulsory School Attendance Laws as set by the state of Pennsylvania

### **Activity: Truancy Intervention Plan**

**Description:** The School Counselor schedules the required meeting with parents, students and administration to create a plan that monitors attendance in order to avoid a citation.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Hershey, Alisa	Start: 8/19/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### **Strategy: Daily Attendance**

**Description:** Attendance is taken daily by teachers during each instructional block.

### **Activity: Infinite Campus**

**Description:** Teachers take daily attendance during each instructional block using our Student Information System, Infinite Campus.

### Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Hershey, Alisa	Start: 8/19/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### **Activity: Parent Contact**

**Description:** When a child is absent, parents are contacted via phone by an office staff member or the school counselor.

### Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Hershey, Alisa	Start: 8/19/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## **Goal: To Meet AYP in Reading and Math for the 2009-2010 school year**

**Description:** Establish proficiency in Reading scores to achieve 63% to meet AYP goals.  
Establish proficiency in Math scores to achieve 56% to meet AYP goals.

### **Strategy: Data Driven Decision Making**

**Description:** A systematic approach for using data to identify areas of concern, create an action plan, and to monitor the effectiveness of implementation. Data Driven Decision Making also includes effectively gathering necessary data and reporting results.

### **Activity: Professional Development**

**Description:** Staff members participate in many professional development opportunities including: using the PSSA rubrics for reading, math, and writing to score student work; analysis of data and developing next steps for instruction; advanced training on implementing the curriculum; embedding skills into all content areas; etc.

<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
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Poff, Lena	Start: 8/4/2009	-
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Finish: 10/15/2009

**Professional Development Activity Information**

<b>Number of Hours Per Session</b>	<b>Total Number of Sessions Per School Year</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Participants Per Year</b>
0.75	36	25
<b>Organization or Institution Name</b>	<b>Type of Provider</b>	<b>Provider's Department of Education Approval Status</b>
Helen Thackston Charter School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Entity</li> </ul>	Approved

<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	<b>Research and Best Practices</b>	<b>Designed to Accomplish</b>
This will be an ongoing professional development topic throughout the 09-10 school year.		<p><i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides educators with a variety of classroom-based <u>assessment skills</u> and the skills needed to <u>analyze and use data</u> in instructional decision-making.</li> </ul> <p><i>For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides leaders with the ability to <u>access and use appropriate data</u> to inform decision-making.</li> </ul>

**Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Subject Area</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom teachers</li> <li>Principals / asst. principals</li> <li>School counselors</li> <li>Other educational specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Middle (grades 6-8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading, Writing, Speaking &amp; Listening</li> <li>Mathematics</li> </ul>

<b>Follow-up Activities</b>	<b>Evaluation Methods</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom observation focusing on factors such as planning and preparation, knowledge of content, pedagogy and standards, classroom environment, instructional delivery and professionalism.</li> <li>Student PSSA data</li> <li>Standardized student assessment data other than the PSSA</li> <li>Classroom student assessment data</li> <li>Review of participant lesson plans</li> </ul>

**Status:** Complete

## Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has met AYP.

## Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- Statement of Quality Assurance

## SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

### Rigorous Instructional Program

The elements listed below demonstrate the educationally-sound program used at Helen Thackston Charter School.

1. **Schools organized for every student's success.** HTCS is organized into "Houses," small teams of teachers with the same content focus. This organizational structure helps fulfill an effective school concept that encourages teachers to know and be able to provide support for individual students. In addition, this structure creates small professional learning communities among the staff, with each House team having a common period for professional development so that they can dialogue about their instructional performance and that of their students.
2. **A better use of time.** Helen Thackston Charter School students attend school for seven and a half hours each day, longer than typical public schools, to allow ample time for the core subjects of literature, mathematics, science and social studies to be taught. This also includes ample time for special subjects, such as art, music, homeland security, physical education and health. In addition our school day includes time for teachers to meet daily in their house teams, as well as having a regular planning period to attend to lesson planning, talking with parents and administration and general instructional preparation.
3. **A rich and challenging curriculum.** Our curriculum is built around the following key domains: humanities and the arts, which includes literature, language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, character and ethics centered on core values (Wisdom, Justice, Courage, Compassion, Hope, Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity), physical fitness and health. All standards and curriculum components are consistent with the requirements of PA State law.

The research-based curriculum used at Helen Thackston Charter School is:

- English/Language Arts      Holt — Elements of Literature
- Math                                 Prentice Hall
- Science                                 Prentice Hall
- Social Studies                         History Alive — Project Based

4. **Teaching methods that motivate.** The curriculum is a rich and challenging academic program designed to meet high expectations for all students and to support a best-practice pedagogical approach that matches the mode of instruction with the desired outcome and the needs of students. Through on-site professional development, national conferences and EdisonLearning webinars, teachers receive training in the use of instructional methodologies and strategies that, in addition to motivating students, have been successful in improving the

proficiency level of our students. This best practice pedagogy includes various methods of direct instruction, flexible grouping, cooperative learning, guided discovery and project-based learning so that our students are offered various teaching methods to cover a broad spectrum of learning styles.

**5. Assessment that provides accountability.** Student progress is monitored in many ways to help ensure that standards are met.

Students participate in EdisonLearning's embedded assessment tools, including its proprietary Benchmark Assessment System, which is a monthly electronic interim assessment in reading and math, aligned with the PA state standards. The system is designed to monitor progress at meeting and exceeding state standards in a timely manner. Teachers analyze data monthly to create plans needed to ensure student success.

Scholastic Reading Inventory is administered quarterly to monitor independent reading comprehension levels of each student at Helen Thackston Charter School.

Curriculum assessments are incorporated as scheduled into individual lesson plans by content. Teachers use this assessment data to monitor student acquisition of PA state standards embedded into learning objectives.

Teacher created assessments are used daily to ensure stated objectives are met in each instructional block. They use many different forms of assessments daily; homework, exit slips, class work, group work, and individual practice to name a few that teachers implement daily into their lessons.

**6. A professional environment for teachers.** Teachers receive the career development, resources, responsibilities and opportunities that talented professionals deserve. They also work in a positive school culture that encourages respect as individuals and professionals. The Board nurtures its relationships with the school staff, supporting teachers as professionals and as teacher-leaders, as well as providing advanced opportunities to showcase their talents as Lead Teachers, Mentors, and Coaches.

**7. Technology for the Information Age.** Every student, teacher and administrator has access to personal technology at Helen Thackston Charter School and all are part of EdisonLearning's national intranet. Each of our teachers receives a laptop computer with an e-mail account and a telephone with voice-mail in his or her classroom. Our school has a computer lab used to support our curriculum and to enhance data-driven instruction.

**8. A partnership with families.** Teachers hold quarterly Student Learning Conferences with parents/guardians to give them an accurate picture of their children's accomplishments and needs. These conferences are intended to support the student's learning by discussing ways in which the parent and teacher can work together to help the student improve. Student Learning Conferences (SLCs) serve to build shared understandings and goals for the student, teacher and parent to focus on each quarter. In addition to participating in SLCs, parents have the opportunity to purposefully participate in school governance by attending Charter Board meetings each month, participating in Parent Advisory Council meetings and events or volunteering at the school.

**9. The advantages of system and scale.** Helen Thackston Charter School is part of the national network of EdisonLearning managed schools, linked by a common purpose and plan—and linked literally through EdisonLearning's technology system. Our school contributes to, and benefits from, EdisonLearning's extensive curriculum and on-going professional-development.

The 4 underlying cornerstones of successful schools include: Recruiting and Developing Top Talent, Building a Culture of Engagement and Aspiration for Students, Providing a Model of Demanding Content and Customized Instruction, and Driving Instruction based on Achievement Driven Management

**Recruiting and Developing Top Talent:** Our Board Personnel and School Recruitment Team work closely with EdisonLearning to recruit, support and retain top talent from a pool of educational professionals across the country. While we use our own local knowledge, we tap into EdisonLearning's national reach, experience and expertise to find candidates from all over the country. While EdisonLearning works at elbow with us in all recruitment and hiring processes, all decisions regarding personnel at Helen Thackston Charter ultimately rests with the Board of Trustees.

**Building a Culture of Engagement and Aspiration for Students:** The Board of Trustees works with EdisonLearning to provide an innovative, comprehensive school design that will motivate and engage students through a culture that promotes positive academic and behavioral outcomes. Our program exposes students to learning experiences and performance-based activities that inspire creative thinking and problem solving. Students are exposed to career and educational options that pique their interests and motivate them to further explore new ideas and challenges.

**Providing a Demanding Content and Customized Instruction:** Helen Thackston's instructional model uses a synthesis of the best instructional practices and is supported by curricular choices that match with instructional and teacher support resources to assist teachers in planning, customizing and delivering effective instruction. The approach includes direct instruction, cooperative learning, project-based learning, whole and small-group discussion, and guided discovery and fundamental skill practice. No single method works in all situations, for all subjects, with all students. This synthesized best-practice approach has matched instructional delivery with the expected learning outcomes and equips teachers with a rich instructional toolkit to draw on as they respond to what has worked and what has not worked in their classrooms.

**Driving Instruction based on Achievement Driven Management:** Helen Thackston Charter School benefits from EdisonLearning's ongoing commitment to providing the very best in achievement management systems across its national network of schools. Our monthly math and reading assessments ensure that teachers and administrators have real time data to track student progress. The Benchmarks also inform teachers of their instructional effectiveness, enabling them to adapt instruction to improve their own mastery.

Our commitment to the 9 fundamentals and 4 Cornerstones of Success, coupled with the customized goals, mission and vision of the Board of Trustees, positions us to bring Helen Thackston Charter School to high levels of success.

## **Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachment**

- Professional Education Plan Approval

## **English Language Learners**

Helen Thackston Charter School services all students who speak a primary language other than English. Our program has built-in opportunities for individualized learning and ensures that students receive personal attention. In our school, we value language and we encourage and support second-language acquisition. Students develop proficient English-language skills through the use of Sheltered Instruction

within their regular curricular classrooms. All students are grouped within heterogeneous grade levels with respect to language background, native language proficiency, and English proficiency. Students with varying language backgrounds are not segregated from one another: they learn with and from one another as often as possible. These students receive the same academic content as those students who are native English speakers.

By pulling information from Home Language Surveys and teacher input, together with students previously included in an ESL program, groups of students are screened for each year's ESL program using the W-APT placement test. Following screening, a schedule is developed to push in with the ELL students during their reading and math instructional blocks. Student's academic progress is tracked through use of standardized tests (PSSA). The WIDA Language Proficiency Test is administered in the months of February/March to measure growth in language proficiency and to provide criterion for transition or exit from the ELL program.

## English Language Learners - Attachment

- 09-10 LEP Report

## Graduation Requirements

Helen Thackston Charter School does not graduate students. During the 2009-2010 school year, Helen Thackston Middle School served students in grades 6 and 7.

## Special Education

Attached you will find the Special Education Policies and Procedures and the Penn Data report

## Special Education - Attachments

- HTCS Special Education Policies
- State Strategic Planning Process - Custom Data Sets

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Alicia Hall	1	Learning Support	Helen Thackston Charter School	36	N/A

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
None	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**

<b>IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual</b>	<b>Title/Service</b>	<b>Amount of Time Per Week</b>
Wellspan Behavioral Health	Certified School Psychologist	1-FTE
LIU 12	Hearing Specialist	1-FTE
Therapy Source	Occupational Therapist	2-FTE
Therapy Source	Physical Therapist	1-FTE

**SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Student Assessment - Primary**

<b>Test/Classification</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Helen Thackston Charter School does not graduate students. During the 2009-2010 school year, Helen Thackston Middle School served students in grades 6 and 7.	No	No	No	No	No	No

**Student Assessment - Secondary**

<b>Test/Classification</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
PSSA	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Reading Benchmarks - EdisonLearning proprietary Assessment System	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Math Benchmarks - EdisonLearning proprietary Assessment System	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Language Arts Benchmarks - EdisonLearning proprietary Assessment System	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Scholastic Reading Inventory	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

**Student Assessment**

All staff members at Helen Thackston Charter School used the EdisonLearning Benchmark Assessment data to drive instruction to increase student achievement. This assessment tool is aligned to the PA state standards and provides a strong correlation with the PSSA results.

At the submission of this report we do not have the released PSSA final results, therefore, we cannot include state data.

We implement the Scholastic Reading Inventory quarterly to all students to measure success in reading comprehension.

Goals for next year will be created after the release of the final state PSSA data.

## **EdisonLearning Benchmark Assessment Tool:**

Monthly benchmark assessments are analyzed by individual ELA and Math teachers and the administration to determine next steps for instruction. Each month, ELA and Math teachers complete an analysis of their individual sections of benchmarks to share with other content and fine arts teachers. Each month, a content team house meeting is devoted to setting goals for individual classrooms and grade level areas of concentration. All data is collected, analyzed, and given to the administration and posted electronically in our school data folder. The ELA and Math teachers create embedding activities that are determined as grade level needs for other staff members to incorporate into their lesson plans. Also, each ELA and Math teacher produces embedding activities for individual class sections and implements them into their daily lesson plans. The administrative team analyzes the school wide data and posts electronically in our school data folder.

At Helen Thackston Charter School we had a data wall with our benchmark data posted. Each student had his or her own note card for ELA and Math. During data dialogue team meetings, the ELA and Math teachers would color code and move individual student's cards to their appropriate level of achievement each month. This wall and monthly meeting was very powerful because it allowed teachers and administrators to really discuss strengths and areas of concentration based on the physical movement of the individual note cards. Administrators would take the information shared at the data dialogue meetings with the ELA and Math teachers to all other teachers during their team meetings. Also, we would review the embedding suggestions from the ELA and Math teachers with the other teachers based on the monthly analysis forms and the data dialogue meetings. All of our team meetings took place in the data room so that our achievement data remained alive throughout the entire school year.

### **Attachments:**

- Achievement Tracker 2009-2010 School Year
- Sample Classroom Analysis Forms Reading and Math
- School-Wide Monthly Data 2009-2010 School Year

## **Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)**

Scholastic Reading Inventory was administered each quarter and analyzed by ELA teachers and the administrative team. This assessment allows us to review independent reading comprehension growth each quarter. Implications for the next quarter were discussed at ELA team meetings to determine grade level, class section, and individual student implementations aligned with the curriculum to embed for the next quarter.

## **Student Achievement Plan**

Our Student Achievement Plan is designed as a framework to remain focused on established goals, strategies, and activities to maintain a positive learning environment with student achievement as the main focus. The plan is divided into eight sections which include: Program Implementation, Data Analysis, Meeting Individual Needs, Monitoring Progress, Professional Development, Test Administration, Culture of Achievement, and Test Embedding Requirements. This provides the framework for the school year. The administrative team monitors the implementation of the Student Achievement Plan throughout the school year. The plan includes the strategies that need to take place; people responsible for the strategy, timeline

of when the implementation needs to be monitored and evidence that will be collected to determine the validity of the strategy.

Attachment:

- 2009-2010 Student Achievement Plan

### **English Language Learners (ELL)**

Helen Thackston Charter School implements various strategies and interventions to assist student success within the school. By using information from home language surveys, classroom teachers' input, and together with students previously included in an ELL program, groups of students are screened for each year's ELL program.

The WIDA ACCESS test is another measure used to identify the English Language Proficiency. This test is given to all ELL students during the months of February and/or March. ELL staff members provided support by pushing into classrooms during reading and math to provide necessary accommodations for acquisition of the English language.

Our ELL students also receive support during their benchmark testing each month using the same accommodations allowed on the PSSA.

### **Family and Student Support Team (FASST)**

Students who are struggling academically or behaviorally are referred to the Family and Student Support Team (FASST). The parent is invited and participates with the team of teachers and other staff members who may have something to offer in this problem solving process. It is a relentless process to find the solution to whatever is standing in the way of the student's success in school. The team identifies the student's strengths as well as the needs and then focuses on a targeted behavior. Once identified, the team then brainstorms ideas of interventions that can be done by the teacher, by others in the school, by the family, and possibly by the community. The agreed upon interventions are implemented for a two-week period. At the end of the two weeks, the team reconvenes to report and evaluate the outcomes. If improvement is noted, the interventions are continued with any modifications necessary, and the student's progress continues to be monitored.

If the interventions of the FASST process do not successfully resolve the problems the student is experiencing, and if the team suspects that the student may be eligible for services under IDEA, we discuss this with the parent or guardian and present the Permission to Evaluate (stating the reason for the referral, the tests to be administered, and the time within which it is to be completed) along with the Procedural Safeguards Notice.

With the parents' permission, our Certified School Psychologist is given the Permission to Evaluate and all relevant data collected through the FASST process. The evaluation is then completed, and an Invitation to Participate in a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting is sent to the parent. The MDT then meets to discuss the findings of the evaluation and, with input from all members of the team (teachers, parents, psychologist, LEA, etc.), the Comprehensive Evaluation Report and Notice of Recommended Educational Placement are completed.

If the student is eligible for Special Education services under IDEA and the team has determined and agreed upon the most appropriate and least restrictive level of intervention for the student to receive FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education), they proceed with the development of the Individualized Education Plan with appropriate, data driven goals and objectives and specially designed instruction to address all areas of need. Most of our special needs students receive

Learning Support within the regular classroom setting with the Support teachers and classroom teachers working collaboratively to meet their needs through Responsible Inclusion. The Special Education teacher meets with the classroom teacher each week to adapt and modify the week's lessons, homework, and tests as needed. When that student's class goes to the Computer Lab to take their Benchmark Assessments, the support teacher is there to again provide support. An example of this would be for a student with a reading disability the support teacher will help with any reading necessary to complete a math assessment. Any adaptations that are provided in the classroom are also supported in the testing situation.

As stated, our school provides "Responsible Inclusion" which recognizes that not every student's needs can be met in the regular classroom alone. A small number of our low incidence students go to the Resource Room for Support in Math.

The FASST process has proven to be very effective in meeting the needs of our students. We implement the FASST process very similar as a Response To Intervention (RTI) by relentlessly incorporating different strategies for students to meet success in the classroom before moving to the evaluation process.

## **Student Assessment - Attachments**

- 09-10 Achievement Data
- Achievement Tracker 2009-2010
- 09-10 Student Achievement Plan
- Benchmark Analysis

## **Teacher Evaluation**

When teachers are selected to work at Helen Thackston Charter School and our partner EdisonLearning, they also choose to accept accountability for student performance and to be active participants in a school transformation process aimed at implementing our school design. This process requires teachers to commit themselves to continuous improvement and to establish a learning environment that is conducive to our school's goals. Accordingly, the teacher and the professional staff performance appraisal process, and PA state PDE 426 or PDE 427 is designed to encourage and support professional growth and promote accountability in education.

The teacher appraisal process consists of the following components:

- Two formal observations by the principal using PDE 426 or PDE 427
- A professional growth plan
- A team professional portfolio
- Monthly informal observations by teacher coaches, principal, or EdisonLearning Support Team
- Ongoing Professional Development

### **Formal Observations**

The principal was responsible for all formal evaluations for the 2009-2010 school year. The PA state PDE 426 or PDE 427 was implemented. All staff members received their first evaluation in November of 2009 and their second evaluation in May of 2010. Each formal evaluation began with a pre-conference, followed by the 60-80 minute observation, and completed with a post-conference. All documentation was shared and placed in individual personnel files.

### **Professional Growth Plan**

The professional growth plan includes specific professional development goals (What do I want to do?), a plan for achieving goals (How do I intend to proceed?), and a self-appraisal or evidence of and reflection of progress (How did I do?).

Attachment:

- Professional Growth Plan 2009-2010

### **Professional Portfolio**

Each house team was expected to collect evidence for a professional portfolio that demonstrated effective work in the classroom, in the school, and in the community which was directly related to the established professional growth plan. These portfolios were working documents that reflected accomplishments and achievements throughout the year and were updated at scheduled monthly team meetings. All professional portfolios were collected and reviewed in May by the administrative team.

### **Informal Observations**

Every staff member received at least one informal observation each month. These informal observations were conducted by school teacher coaches, principal, or EdisonLearning school support team. Each staff member received feedback after informal observations. This feedback could have been done as a conference, a written observation left on the teacher's desk, or an electronic observation. Staff members could request a meeting to discuss information received from any informal observation.

The *Power of Teaching* is an informal observation tool that our school implemented throughout the school year. This tool focuses on teacher behaviors during instruction to ensure academic success for students. This concept moves instruction from "what" is being taught to "how" it is being taught. The observation tool is comprised of six power sources and broken down into two categories:

1. Focusing and Engaging Minds
  - a. Cognitive Connections for Learning and Teaching
  - b. Pacing and Productivity for Learning, Transitions
  - c. Processes and Endings for Learning
2. Managing Learners for Learning
  - a. On-task Learning
  - b. Differentiated Teaching to Accelerate Learning
  - c. Aligned Expectations to Macro-Organization

This tool is designed to enter observation data electronically. It provides us with important data related to ineffective and effective instruction. This data is then used to stimulate professional discussion and promote professional development.

All informal observations conducted were not part of the evaluation process, but rather a method to promote collegiality and the opportunity to share best practices. As a result of these monthly informal observations, the school was able to create effective professional development for staff members to enhance their instructional pedagogy.

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

Professional development was an integral element of Helen Thackston Charter School and the EdisonLearning design. Opportunities for professional development are provided by the management company throughout the year to ensure that the school was supported in their work, with the ultimate goal being student achievement. The following is a list of professional development opportunities in which particular staff members participated throughout the 2009-2010 school year:

Date: July 7-11, 2009

Conference: Edison Leadership Development Academy

Location: Las Vegas, Nevada

Attending: Principal, Teacher Coaches, Lead Teachers, School Counselor

Topics: Leadership and Innovation: The Keys to our Success

Date: October 14-16, 2009  
Conference: Instructional Leadership Conference  
Location: Anaheim, California  
Attending: Principal and Four Staff Members  
Topics: Data Teams, Data Analysis

Date: November 18-21, 2009  
Conference: Edison Leadership Development Academy  
Location: Charleston, South Carolina  
Attending: Principal  
Topics: Leadership and Innovation: The Key to our Success

Date: July 6-11, 2010  
Conference: Edison Leadership Development Academy  
Location: San Diego, California  
Attending: Principal, Teacher Coach and Two Staff Members  
Topic: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships

Date: July 26-29, 2010  
Conference: Teaching Academy  
Location: New Orleans, Louisiana  
Attending: Seven Staff Members  
Topics: Content Instructional Delivery

## **Teacher Evaluation - Attachments**

- Teacher Appraisal/Professional Growth Plan Form
- Professional Education Plan Approval
- 09-10 Professional Development Plan
- Teacher Evaluation

## **SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Leadership Changes**

This was Helen Tackston Charter School's first year of operation and there are no leadership changes to report.

### **Board of Trustees**

<u>Name of Trustee</u>	<u>Office (if any)</u>
Mr. Oscar Rossum Sr	President
Joanne Borders	Vice-President
Mr. Gregg Ford	Board Member
Mrs. Dorothy Sweeney	Board Member
Dr. Julia Harris	Board Member
Nancy Melendez	Board Member
Raymundo Barajas	Board Member
Stephanie Brown	Board Member

Dawn Cataia	Board Member
Daniel Fennick	Board Attorney
Mrs. JoAnn Brown	Board Secretary
Mr. Gary Hollenbaugh	Board Treasurer

## **Professional Development (Governance)**

The Charter Board of Trustees is a member of the PA Coalition of Charter Schools.

All training in the area of governance, including the Sunshine Law, has been provided by Daniel Fennick, Esq. and Edisonlearning. Members of the Charter Board of Trustees attended a training retreat this year at Edisonlearning headquarters in New York. This training was held May 21-23, 10. Sessions centered on services provided to Helen Thackston Charter School by Edisonlearning as the management company. One session was devoted to the roles and responsibilities of the Charter Board of Trustees, from a legal standpoint.

The board solicitor, Daniel Fennick shares with the board his interpretation of legal issues and their obligations and duties as board members as topics arise. He is always available to board members and welcomes their calls and inquiries.

## **Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School**

The Administration of the Helen Thackston Charter School works with the Administration of the School District of the City of York. The Helen Thackston Charter School also works with the business office of the School District of the City of York for enrollment and billing issues, as well as issues related to buildings and grounds. Food services are contracted through the School District of the City of York. The minutes of the monthly meetings of the Helen Thackston Charter Board of Trustees are forwarded to the District. The relationship between the Helen Thackston Charter School and the School District of the City of York is a good working relationship. The School District of the City of York has now publicly recognized that Helen Thackston Charter School as a partner in the education of the children of York City.

## **Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachment**

- HTCS Board Meeting Dates FY10

## **Community and Parent Engagement**

The Charter Board of Trustees continues to support the community and parents of the Helen Thackston Charter School in a variety of ways. The Charter Board of Trustees has supported the family events at the school through attendance at various events. The Charter Board holds open public meetings, which allows for public discussion and comments. The Charter Board of Trustees serves as an active voice for our school and community by listening to concerns and sharing the mission of the school. The Charter Board of Trustees also supports the quarterly student learning conference nights in which parents review their child's progress and have an opportunity to dialogue with the teacher, set quarterly goals and learn more about the curriculum. They continue to support the school's efforts to reach out to the community. The Charter Board of Trustees successfully opened Helen Thackston Charter School for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>

grade for its first year of operation and continues to develop the relationship between our sister school, Lincoln Charter School.

The school conducted monthly Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings to allow parents to have a voice in the daily operations, school events, and community outreach. All suggestions from our school PAC were shared with Charter Board Members at their public meetings. All parents were invited to attend the scheduled monthly meeting through our weekly school newsletter.

Parent Surveys were distributed at the beginning of the year for suggestions on workshop topics to be conducted throughout the year. After collecting the surveys, we held workshops by Planned Parenthood and the Literacy Council. We also held informational meetings to prepare students and families for the PSSA.

Together with our partner, EdisonLearning, we distributed Harris Survey, an anonymous parent survey, in the spring. The feedback we receive is used to gauge satisfaction with our school and will be used to make improvements, as necessary.

Community Service is very important to our school vision; therefore, we partnered with two day care centers in the city, visited a local retirement home, and our choir performed at various locations throughout the year. Also, we held fundraisers during Veterans Day to benefit an area VA Hospital and in the winter to help the victims of the Hurricane in Haiti. Finally, we wanted to share our school vision with the community, so our students traveled throughout York City to distribute information about our school and talk to community members when available.

Our vision is an open door policy which allows any parents or community members to visit our school when it is convenient for them. We hosted a meet and greet for students, parents, and community members the two days before we opened our doors for instruction. Also, we scheduled a week-long open house for the community in May to display what we accomplished throughout the school year. Finally, anytime a state or local community member visits our school, we provide a school tour. Many of our school tours were conducted by students because we believe our students are the driving force at Helen Thackston Charter School.

To keep parents informed of upcoming events at Helen Thackston Charter School send home a weekly letter each Tuesday. This written form of communication allowed parents to expect information on a specific day to ensure that they knew exactly what was happening at the school. Also, content teachers provided monthly newsletters about curricular happenings which again were sent home on Tuesdays.

As a start-up school during the 2009-2010 school year, the Board of Trustees and School Personnel made a relentless effort to engage our community in the development of our school as referenced in this section of our annual report.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Major fund-raising activities**

Helen Thackston Charter School had one major fund-raiser for the 2009-2010 school year. We held a Corby's pizza sale in the spring. These funds are used to support students and staff activities.

Helen Thackston had several opportunities to raise funds for charity organizations this year. Dress-down days were utilized as a means to raise money for cancer, through the Mini-

Relay for Life. Students and staff also raised money through dress-down days for Helen Thackston School.

Once again, a Corby's Pizza fundraiser is planned for the 2010-2011 school year.

## **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

EdisonLearning works with our Board and Principal to ensure that the operating budget includes allowances for non-anticipated expenses or events. To ensure fiscal responsibility, the School Operations Manager coordinates with a financial analyst at EdisonLearning HQ to monitor the school's budget and support the school. Conference calls are held each month to assess the budget against actual expenses and to track spending trends that might mitigate a balanced budget.

Helen Thackston Charter School is operated and managed by EdisonLearning, Inc. Through a joint management agreement, the contract specifies that significant shortfalls and/or other emergencies be allocated within the corporate operations of Edison. If costs exceed the funds remitted, Edison uses its own funds to cover excess costs.

## **Accounting System**

EdisonLearning manages the HelenThackston Charter School's operating accounting systems on an accrual basis through Lawson Accounting Software which is managed by the on site School Operations Manager. EdisonLearning has developed a conversion system, which maps and exports the financial and budgeting information into the Pennsylvania format. This in turn is then uploaded or delivered to the appropriate agency.

## **Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances**

### **Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment**

- Preliminary Statement of Revenue and Expenditures 09-10

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

This was Helen Thackston Charter School's first year of operation.

As of the filing deadline for this Annual Report, the 2009-2010 Audit has not been completed. The tentative date for completing the Audit is the week-ending of September 30th.

This will allow the charter board to review, approve, and submit the 2009-2010 audit in a timely manner. Seligman, Friedman and Company, P.C. will be completing our audit for the 2009-2010 school

year.

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

- Audit documentation

## **Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report**

This is Helen Thackston Charter School's first year of operation, therefore we have no citations to report on

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

Helen Thackston Charter School did not acquire a facility this year, the school currently leases a building at 625 East Philadelphia street in York, PA.

Because this was the schools first year of operation all required technology and curriculum was purchased this year.

### **Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs**

Helen Thackston Charter School will be looking to build a brand new building for the 2011 - 2012 school.

## **SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

The Helen Thackston Charter School follows all guidelines set forth by state with regards to fire drills, crisis intervention, severe weather conditions, and health records. We have had our health records examined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health on a regular basis. We also have members of the Pennsylvania Department of Health present during our kindergarten registration each year to examine and administer immunizations. The local fire department monitors frequency and implementation of fire drills.

The Helen Thackston Charter School is a named insured under Edison's commercial general liability insurance with limits of \$1,000,000. The same applies to educator's legal liability insurance with limits of \$2,000,000. Workman's compensation is provided to all school employees through Edison's policy. All fulltime school employees are offered health and medical insurance through coverage in kind to that provided by the local school district.

The Helen Thackston School has developed a wellness plan that brings together the entire school community through a strong and consistent fitness/health curriculum, community outreach,

promoting high nutritional standards, and positive reinforcement that moves away from food as the reward.

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

- Wellness Plan

## **Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs**

The Helen Thackston Charter School follows all guidelines set forth by state with regards to fire drills, crisis intervention, severe weather conditions, and health records. We have had our health records examined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health on a regular basis. We also have members of the Pennsylvania Department of Health present during our kindergarten registration each year to examine and administer immunizations. The local fire department monitors frequency and implementation of fire drills.

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The Helen Thackston School has developed a wellness plan that brings together the entire school community through a strong and consistent fitness/health curriculum, community outreach, promoting high nutritional standards, and positive reinforcement that moves away from food as the reward.

## **Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachment**

- Insurance Coverage

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

### **Quality of Teaching and Other Staff**

The instructional staff at Helen Thackston Charter School consists of 16 teachers:

- 3 English/Language Arts teachers
- 3 Math teachers
- 2 Science teachers
- 2 Social Studies teachers
- 1 Special Education Teacher
- 1 Physical Education / Health Teacher
- 1 Art Teacher
- 1 Music Teacher
- 1 Homeland Security Teacher (Social Studies Certified)
- 1 Teacher Coach

The percentage of instructional certified staff is 100%.

We had 2 instructional staff members not returning for 2010-2011:

- 1 moving out of state
- 1 not interested in returning

Annual instructional staff turnover is 8%.

Other Staff Members consists of 8 staff members.

- 2 Cafeteria Aides
- 1 School Counselor
- 1 School Operations Manager
- 1 Office Manager
- 1 School Operations Assistant
- 1 School Nurse
- 1 Principal

We have 1 non-instructional staff member not returning for 2010-2011:

- 1 cafeteria aide not invited to return

Annual other staff turnover is 12.5%

Overall staff attendance is 95.33%

## Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachment

- 09-10 PDE-414

## Student Enrollment

Helen Thackston Charter School is a tuition free, public charter school serving grades 6 and 7. In the fall, we will be serving grades 6, 7 and 8. All students, no matter what school district they reside in, can enroll and there is no entry examination required. For students residing in the York City School District, we offer free public transportation for students living more than 6 blocks away from our school. Students' residing outside of the York City School District, transportation is provided by their residing school district. We service students who require learning support and English as a second language, but we do not service students requiring emotional support. All enrollment documentation must be completed along with proof of residence, a valid birth certificate and immunization records that are in compliance with state regulations, before a student is fully enrolled. We enroll on a first come, first serve basis. Once we have reached our maximum number of students, potential students will be placed on a waiting list. As spaces are made available, a lottery will be put into play to decide the order that students are accepted.

### STUDENTS WHO INITIALLY ENROLLED

118 — 6<sup>th</sup> grades

52 — 7<sup>th</sup> graders

### STUDENTS WHO DROPPED

16 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders

14 — 7<sup>th</sup> graders

1 — 6<sup>th</sup> grader transferred to New Hope Academy

1 — 7<sup>th</sup> grader transferred to New Hope Academy

1 — 7<sup>th</sup> grader transferred to Edgar Fahs Smith MS

3 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders transferred to Hannah Penn MS

1 — 7<sup>th</sup> grader transferred to Hannah Penn MS

1 — 6<sup>th</sup> grader transferred to Logos Academy

2 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders transferred to Central School District

2 - 7<sup>th</sup> graders transferred to Central School District  
1 — 6<sup>th</sup> grader transferred to Northeastern School District  
6 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders transferred out of state  
9 — 7<sup>th</sup> graders transferred out of state  
2 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders whereabouts are unknown

#### STUDENTS WHO WERE ADDED

21 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders  
18 — 7<sup>th</sup> graders

#### STUDENTS WHO WILL BE RETURNING IN SEPTEMBER

123 — 6<sup>th</sup> graders  
56 — 7<sup>th</sup> graders

#### STUDENTS WHO WERE REQUIRED TO LEAVE

1 — 6<sup>th</sup> grader (Homebound Instruction)

The 2009 — 2010 school year, marked our first year in service. Throughout the year we maintained a consistent enrollment number of 193 students. We serviced far more 6<sup>th</sup> graders than 7<sup>th</sup> graders. The majority of our 6<sup>th</sup> grade students transferred from our sister school, Lincoln Charter School, which gave us an advantage on 6<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment. For the most part, all of our 6<sup>th</sup> graders are rolling over to 7<sup>th</sup> grade this fall. We are also getting several 5<sup>th</sup> graders entering into 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall, from Lincoln Charter. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders entering into 8<sup>th</sup> grade this fall is still pretty low. We did maintain almost all of them; however, this was a small enrollment number to begin with. As the word is getting out that we are here, we are increasing in enrollment. We lost very few students due to parents not being satisfied with our educational program. There were only three cases where the parent felt that we were not the right school for them. The majority of students who left the school moved out of state. The students that we lost within York City had a lot to do with siblings at another location or the need for special instruction that we could not accommodate. Overall, our students and parents appreciate having a choice when it comes to their child's educational needs and fully support Helen Thackston Charter School.

There are currently no supporting documents selected for this section.

## **Transportation**

Helen Thackston Charter School does not have a transportation program. Our students either walk to school, are transported by their parents or if they live outside our chartering district the students home district supplies transportation as per Charter law.

## **Food Service Program**

York City School District provides our food service program. Breakfast is offered on a daily basis for students. Helen Thackston Charter School does participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. In 2009-2010, 93% of our students qualified for the FRL Program.

## **Student Conduct**

Our discipline policy is progressive and attempts to bring about corrective change in the behaviors of the student, not just to impose consequences. Our major goal is to affect positive change in student behaviors and to eliminate or reduce inappropriate student behavior through

understanding and through counseling of the student as to appropriate actions that could be taken by the student.

Helen Thackston Charter School motto is;  
Peace in Our School, Peace in Our Community, Peace in Our World

Helen Thackston Charter School Code of Conduct:

- P**articipate in all activities
- E**ngage myself in all classes
- A**ct with a positive attitude
- C**reate new opportunities for myself
- E**xceed in all my endeavors

The first line of discipline is not the office, but rather the classroom itself. Students are to be given a teacher redirection, "Peace Spot" reflection time in the classroom, and the opportunity to work in a "Peace Partner" nearby content teacher's room prior to referral to the office for disciplinary actions. Parent contacts are also made to build the parent-teacher relationship and help facilitate the student getting on track and making positive decisions.

Student disciplinary infractions are classified as Level I, Level II or Level III. Consequences to the student are determined based upon the severity, frequency and student's ability to comprehend his actions and the affect his actions have on the learning environment and his classmates. If a student's actions result in a hearing by the Charter Board of Trustees, all due process procedures are in place and are followed under the guidance of the Board Solicitor.

During the 2009-2010 school year, 19 students made up the 45 total suspensions for our first year of operation. We had 1 student expulsion for the 2009-2010 school year for bringing a weapon to school. Grade level teams met monthly to analyze discipline data and worked to establish plans to support those students who needed individualized plans, positive incentives and/or case managers.

## **Student Conduct - Attachment**

- Handbook

## **Signature Page**

## Assurance for the Operation of Charter School Services and Programs

**School Year: 2010**

The Helen Thackston Charter School within Lincoln IU 12 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**  
**2009 - 2010 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete**

**YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Assurance for Compliance with the Public Official & Employee Ethics Act**

The original Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (the "Ethics Act") was amended and reenacted in 1989 by Act 9 of 1989 and in 1998 by Act 93 of 1998. (See Act 9 of 1989, 65 P.S. §401, *et seq.* and Act 93 of 1998, Chapter 11, 65 Pa.c.s. §1101 *et seq.*) The Act provides that public office is a public trust and that any effort to realize personal financial gain through public office is a violation of that trust. The Act was passed to strengthen the faith and confidence of the people of the Commonwealth in their government. The Act established the State Ethics Commission to administer and enforce the provisions of the Act and to provide guidance regarding the standards established by the Act.

The Helen Thackston Charter School assures that it will comply with the requirements of the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (the "Ethics Act") and with the policies, regulations and procedures of the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission. Additional information about the "Ethics Act" is available on the Ethics Commission's website at:  
<http://www.ethics.state.pa.us/ethics/site/>

**The assurance must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Trustees President of the charter school.**

*Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.*

**Name:** Jamy Jackson    **Title:** Principal/CAO  
**Phone:** 717 846-6160    **Fax:** 717 848-2856  
**E-mail:** jamy.jackson@thackston.edisonlearning.com

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name:** Oscar Rossum    **Title:** Board President  
**Phone:** 717 846-6160    **Fax:** 717 848-2856  
**E-mail:** oscrossum@gmail.com

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

*Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.*

**Name:** Raymond Bostic    **Title:** School Operations Manager  
**Phone:** 717 846-6160    **Fax:** 717 848-2856  
**E-mail:** lee.bostic@lincoln.edisonlearning.com

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

### **Signature Page - Attachment**

- 09-10 Signature page