

---

# Pennsylvania Department of Education

---



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:** Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School  
**Address:** 1332 Enterprise Dr  
West Chester, PA 19380

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Summary Data Part I

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

**Name of School:** Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** Renewed July 2007

**Length of Charter:** 5 Years   **Opening Date:** September 2004

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

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 93.79%   **Total Instructional Staff:** 144

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 1/11   **Student Waiting List:** 0

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 96.74%

## Summary Data Part II

Enrollment: 1826 Per Pupil Subsidy: 8536

### Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native:	6
Asian/Pacific Islander:	22
Black (Non-Hispanic):	192
Hispanic:	88
White (Non-Hispanic):	1433
Multicultural:	85

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 47%

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 288

### Instructional Days and Hours

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (F.Time)	Elem.	Middle.	Sec.	Total
Instructional Days	0	0	180	180	180	180	180
Instructional Hours	0	0	990	990	990	990	990

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Educational Community

The legal name of the school is The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School. The address of the school is 1332 Enterprise Drive, West Chester, PA 19380 (previous address was 17 Ravine Road, Frazer, PA 19355). The Federal Employee Identification Number is 35-2225538 (AUN Number 1-24-15-000-4). The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is part of Chester County Intermediate Unit #24. The school was granted a charter by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in January 2004, in accordance with Act 22 of the 1997 Charter School Law, and the school opened on September 13, 2004. A charter renewal application was submitted to the PDE in October 2006, and the charter renewal was granted in July 2007 for a period of five years.

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School serves students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. Kindergarten students must be age five by October 31st of the year they are entering school. The age limit (ceiling) for high school students is 21, the legal age of majority. Special education students are able to attend until the age of 23.

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of business and community leaders as well as educators. Members of the Board are elected by majority vote of the current membership. Board members serve for one-year terms but are eligible for re-election. The Board of Trustees has fiduciary responsibility for the school as well as responsibility for hiring and monitoring the CEO, approving all school policy, and adhering to the requirements of all state and federal law in addition to regulations set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is responsible to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for all compliance measures, including the preparation of an annual report, participation in site visits, and the chartering/re-chartering process.

## **Mission**

The PA Leadership Charter School's purpose is to provide an academically challenging, knowledge-based curriculum, individually designed for each child's needs. PALCS will combine the benefits of a classical basics oriented education with the latest Internet / computer technology and the best teaching and learning education practices. By studying the lives and works of the great leaders in history, PALCS students will develop multi-cultural perspectives and a global awareness. PALCS will prepare students to be informed, responsible citizens with a global mentality who will succeed through mentoring leadership.

## **Vision**

The vision of Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is to provide parents with an option for public education that tailors the educational experience to the unique needs of their child and allows them to receive that experience via the World Wide Web. The PALCS curriculum incorporates different learning styles within a strong academic environment. PALCS teachers are encouraged to develop a flexible curriculum that incorporates state-of-the-art resources to ensure that each student can utilize a learning style that is most effective for him/her.

Each student in grades K-8 receives instruction in music, art and technology as well as basic core requirements to ensure a well-rounded education. Students in grades 9-12 receive instruction in core courses; additionally, high school students are offered the option to participate in music, art, technology and foreign language courses.

Unique and innovative aspects of the school's vision include:

- An Individualized Program of Instruction (IPI) for each student that creates a partnership between the student, parent, and school to provide the best possible learning environment that takes into account the student's unique characteristics
- Live teachers providing instruction in online classrooms that allow students to attend class and do curriculum work wherever they can connect with the World Wide Web
- Fully interactive technology that allows for live classroom instruction, live chat rooms and live individual instruction as well as timely responses to submitted assignments
- Periodic conferences for students to allow them to excel in an area or discipline
- Instruction that provides an opportunity for gifted or highly motivated students to accelerate their learning and allows for special education students to work at a pace conducive to their needs
- Continuous grading of assignments that allows teachers, students, parents and/or Home Facilitators to see an online progress report that tracks individual student progress
- A curriculum that meets or exceeds requirements of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards
- 

## **Shared Values**

The core beliefs and values of the school community are typified by an overarching educational goal to prepare students to be creative, intuitive and analytical leaders with a firm understanding of the forces, leaders and thinking that have shaped world cultures. The curriculum will prepare students to be problem solvers both individually and collaboratively.

The goal of PALCS is to nurture the natural curiosity of children, to instill the joy of learning, and to motivate students to a lifelong fascination with their potential and their world.

Life is education. Aspects of the school are teacher-student-parent driven, where all parties learn together. Life experiences, broad perspective, creativity, discovery and exploration are nurtured and valued.

We believe we must...

- Challenge and expand traditional public school education to provide a place for underserved students
- Provide all students the opportunity to learn in the home in a safe and caring environment
- Meet children where they are, and accelerate, not remediate them
- Communicate that the Internet, integral to everyday life, is a positive, valuable resource to our students and their education
- Create tomorrow's leaders
- Deliver standards-based curriculum through teacher-designed, interactive, quality lessons
- Grow and adapt to changes in the educational field, using the newest technologies and best practices

## **Academic Standards**

All courses designed to meet eligible content are provided with Pennsylvania State Academic Standards that correspond to content areas. Lesson material must meet relevant Pennsylvania State Academic Standards. Professional development training for all faculty in Assessment Anchors assists the teaching staff to further align the course content to relevant standards. Curriculum materials are under constant review by department coordinators to ensure that standards are met.

Academic Standards are measured through assessments that are provided within each course in a combination of free response, multiple-choice and short answer tests, project assignments, and classroom participation. Quarterly assessments are also built into curriculum areas such as Reading. Proficiency is assessed through PSSA testing in Grades 3 through 8 and Grade 11 for Math, Reading, Writing (Grades 5, 8, and 11), and Science (Grades 4, 8, and 11). Local Assessments were delivered using the PLATO system to all students in grades 2-12 on a quarterly basis. Other assessments include Star Reading and Star Math, Compass Test, Prompt and New Prompt, Word Examiner List, and DIBELS Assessment for Benchmark and Progress Monitoring.

Students must receive a minimum of 60 percent to be considered as "passing" a mid- or end-of-year assessment. In order for students to be promoted to the next grade, they cannot fail more than two core courses (math, science, social studies, reading/language arts).

In order to be promoted to the next grade, high school freshman must have at least 5 credits, high school sophomores must have at least 10 credits, and high school juniors must have at least 15 credits. In order to graduate from PALCS, students must have earned at least 21 credits.

## **Strengths and Challenges**

**Overarching program strengths of Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School include:**

- Redefining the cyber school model by focusing on the relational characteristics of current technology, including: incorporating instant, online access, one-on-one instruction and interactive, multi-media classrooms
- The ability for students to work at a time and place convenient to their lifestyles
- The ability to maximize student time by eliminating non-instructional time wasters such as waiting in line for the cafeteria, switching classes and transportation to and from school
- The ability for students to take a subject of particular interest and use inquiry based learning because they are not regulated by inflexible class “periods”
- The ability for students to work at an accelerated pace
- Continuous grading via a web portal that allows students, teachers, and parents to have instant access to the child’s academic progress

---

### **Instructional Delivery Method Strengths, Challenges and Plans for 2010-2011**

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School combines the knowledge of certified teachers with technology that is able to be created to meet the school’s needs. Combining the strengths of the teachers with technology allows PALCS to create an educational system that is limitless.

Partnering with an outside design team, the Moodle Steering Committee continued to oversee the process of creating a tool that met the needs of all of the stakeholders. In doing so, PALCS has created a community within the school to continually improve the technology and the way that it impacts the delivery of instruction to our students. The Moodle Steering Committee has turned its attention to giving the teachers more tools designed to enhance standards based instruction and teacher accountability. Teachers will be able to link educational content to appropriate standards/anchors within the Learning Content Management System (LCMS). This will ensure that taught content aligns with intended content, while also allowing from more consistency with course maps in Learning Focused. The second major project for the Moodle Steering Committee was to increase accountability throughout the system. In order to meet the demands of the new organizational structure, tools for accountability have been put into place for Grade Level Coordinators.

As a school of choice, the challenges that PALCS faces is implementing an instructional delivery method that effectively meets the needs of all the students without the “face” time that is needed for some of the students. Academic Advisors work with these students by helping them to organize their day and keeping them accountable with their work on a daily basis.

For the 2009 — 2010 school year, PALCS had established its first school theme in an attempt to draw stakeholders together. Building upon that success, PALCS has established the theme: Every Child. Every Chance. Every Day. It’s the PALCS way! for the 2010 — 2011 school year in an attempt to draw all stakeholders together. Within in that theme, students will be taught the concepts of a T.E.A.M .(Think. Educate. Achieve. Make a difference) approach to learning. PALCS has redesigned its administrative structure as it embraces the challenge of educating the whole child. Content areas have been reorganized into grade level teams. These teams are composed of a Grade Level Coordinator, grade level teachers, guidance counselors, academic advisors, and resource teachers. The purpose of the redesign is to allow for better communication and collaboration between teachers and content area. This new structure will increase the ability of the school to see the “whole child” which will allow teachers to reinforce content area across the curriculum and allow PALCS to intervene sooner if a student is struggling. The second part of the redesign is to focus more on content by creating Content Area Specialists to work with teachers in a particular content area. We believe that these changes will build on the success that we had this year.

As PALCS has grown, it became apparent that teachers needed to be trained more effectively in its LCMS. PALCS created the following two positions mid year: Learning Content Management System Coordinator and Assistant Learning Content Management System Coordinator with the purpose of providing more training (one on one and group) for teachers.

Also, as PALCS has grown, it became apparent that more attention needed to be paid to growth in educational technology. PALCS has created the position of Coordinator of Educational Technology to serve as the point person to keep PALCS on the “cutting edge.” This person serves as liaison between the academic and IT departments as well as facilitating training and researching new technologies.

## Curriculum Strengths and Challenges

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School has spent a great deal of time and effort in creating an articulated curriculum which is supported by varied assessment types and effective instructional strategies. The well articulated curriculum helps teachers to plan their courses, assuring that standards and assessment anchors are adequately addressed (guaranteed and viable curriculum). Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School needs to emphasize focus on balancing and aligning the taught and assessed curriculum to assure accountability to the curriculum.

Using the Learning Focused "Balanced Achievement" model will help support student achievement by balancing curriculum, instruction, assessments, literacy and acceleration. Content area specialists will be responsible for working closely within the subject areas to balance the intended, taught and assessed curriculum. Goals have been developed based on the Learning Focused Model of Balanced Achievement.

Balanced Achievement Component	Goal(s)	Examples of Evidence
Curriculum	1) Align the curriculum, ensuring that there are no gaps between the intended, taught, and assessed curriculum.	
	2) Focus on short and long term planning.	
	3) Enhance the system of monitoring the curriculum by utilizing Content Area Specialists.	
Instruction	1) Assure that the curriculum is being taught using effective, powerful instructional strategies.	Lesson which:
Literacy	1) Develop an integrated literacy plan across all content areas	Focus on the 7 tested comprehension strategies across the curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main Idea, Sequencing, Compare/Contrast, Fact/Opinion, Cause/Effect, Literacy Elements, Inferences</li> </ul> Target 7 Themes of Literacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Good Readers Think</li> <li>Tools for Thinking- Reading Strategies</li> <li>Developing Vocabulary</li> <li>Holding Thinking to Remember and Reuse</li> <li>Help for Struggling Readers</li> <li>Using Textbooks Effectively</li> <li>Writing to Learn</li> </ul>
	2) Focus on writing across the curriculum.	Target the following types of writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and Understanding</li> <li>Literacy Response and Expression</li> <li>Critical Analysis and Evaluation</li> <li>Social, Personal Interaction</li> </ul>
	3) Focus on Vocabulary Development	Focus on vocabulary development in the content areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Tiers of Vocabulary</li> <li>Tier 1: General Vocabulary</li> <li>Tier 2: Specialized words that often change meaning in different context</li> <li>Tier 3: Technical words that are specific to a certain discipline</li> </ul>

		<p>Use of exemplary vocabulary instructional strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previewing/Accelerating Vocabulary</li> <li>• Word walls</li> <li>• Frayer Models</li> <li>• Concept Maps</li> <li>• Summarize student learning</li> </ul>
Acceleration and Scaffolding	1) Shift focus from remediation to acceleration and previewing through the use of effective Learning Focused strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on vocabulary instruction</li> <li>• 60-70% Acceleration</li> <li>• 30-40% Remediation</li> <li>• Previewing vocabulary</li> <li>• Use of graphic organizers</li> <li>• Breaking tasks into smaller steps</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Scaffolding Techniques</li> <li>• Templates</li> <li>• Guided reading</li> </ul>
Assessments	1) Build common curriculum-based assessments which directly reflect the expectations of the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of common assessments which measure student proficiency of the curriculum.</li> <li>• Instruction aligned in accordance to the curriculum-based assessments.</li> </ul> <p>Identify what students should know.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desired Results (Wiggins and McTighe)</li> </ul> <p>Build the assessments based off the intended curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable Evidence (Wiggins and McTighe)</li> </ul> <p>Build instruction that will give students the tools to be successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan Instruction (Wiggins and McTighe)</li> </ul>
	2) Strengthen teacher-imbedded assessment practices so that assessments inform instruction and drive curriculum changes. Use SAS “fair assessment” system to being to develop common curriculum based assessments in small teams.	<p>Evidence of teacher developed assessments that target:</p> <p>Formative Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment <i>for</i> learning</li> </ul> <p>Authentic Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying Real-Life application</li> </ul> <p>How do you know when Student’s “Get it”</p> <p>Wiggins and McTighe- 6 Facets of Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain</li> <li>• Interpret</li> <li>• Apply</li> <li>• Have Perspective</li> <li>• Empathize</li> <li>• Have Self-Knowledge</li> </ul>

---

### **PALCS Elementary Program Strengths**

The 2009-2010 implementations and advancements within our framework and within curriculum, instruction, and assessment improved the quality of students’ educational experiences.

Departmental Framework:

Within the Elementary Framework there was an integration of electives teachers into the elementary team and integrating curriculum across content areas was highly effective. By utilizing a homeroom structure for K-3, with a team-teaching structure for 4-6, we were able to improve our ability to see the whole child for tracking and planning academic responsibilities, monitoring progress and individualizing as needed. The support of grade level teaming strengthened our program by providing opportunity for collegial curriculum mapping, lesson planning, and decision-making.

Other framework advancements included:

- Maintaining a moderately-sized teacher-student ratio in K-3 has enabled our teachers to reach more effectively into the students' learning environments (homes) - thus improving communication and depth to which we know our students. This allowed us to provide more effective individualization and support
- Designating one Elementary guidance counselor, for K-5, and a second to handle sixth graders and to transition them into middle school improved consistency and continuity for course placement and family communication
- Designating special education teachers' caseloads solely for K-6 children and collaborating with the Title program - through communication logs and monthly Teacher/Title Teacher conferences - were ways that we made better use of our resources
- Utilizing elementary department coordinators to work with families, teachers, and other school personnel was an effective structural support

#### Elementary Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Continuity in the use of curriculum materials, Harcourt for Language Arts, Math, and Social Studies, with Scott-Foresman 1st-6th grades, which has allowed for improved instructional practices
- Dividing 4-6 Language Arts students among three sections based on PSSA Reading scores to allow teachers to address the unique needs of each section separately. Creating sections helped students and teachers alike to reach, teach, and achieve more than in prior years
- Partnering the resource teacher with a regular classroom teacher to co-teach a low section of 4th grade Language Arts as a pilot to reach the lower end of this lower section of students
- Adding PLATO assessments and individualized prescriptions for student learning in Grades 2-6 to make a positive impact on student performance
- Making revisions in our assessment portfolio permitted us to more effectively gather test results for data-based decision-making
- Providing professional development on RtI which allowed our teachers to begin to understand the impact of effective identification, monitoring, and intervention practices
- Continued professional development in Learning-Focused initiatives and resources which has allowed us to target instruction and assessment to essential grade level standards and anchors
- Providing background training in the use of Step-Up to Writing provided a foundation on which we will continue to build an effective writing program
- Report card improvements allowed for teacher comments and alternative grading systems. This allowed us to share developmental progress and benchmark performance of students more clearly than in past years
- Reporting assessment data and communicating individual student progress to parents and students through the utilization of quarterly K-3 addendum report cards, establishing the required routine of teachers making more frequent phone calls to Home Facilitators, and maintaining electronic student portfolios made strong impact on our success
- Our continued use of Weekly Reader K-6 to provide age-appropriate print in the home environment for all K-3 students and for struggling students 4-6 made learning current and raised student engagement. Weekly Readers were supported through integrated course instruction in grades K-6
- Adding a community service theme to our elementary activities program, Book Buddies, and extending it to include all elementary students were effective steps to incorporate a leadership theme
- Adopting a BRIGHT acronym (Be cooperative, Reach for excellence, Improve through goals, Give respect, Have high expectations, Take responsibility) allowed for us to work on consistency when aiming to instill strong leadership qualities in our students. Recognizing Bright students of the month at each grade level was well-received by students, families, and teachers

## **PALCS Elementary Program Plans (2010-2011)**

### Departmental Framework

- Restructuring the elementary program to include K-5
- Creating an Elementary team structure, led by one coordinator, to include Title, ESL, Resource, Academic Advisors, Guidance Counselors, and regular classroom teachers, enabling us to strengthen our planning sessions, to communicate more effectively, and to conduct child study meetings to provide appropriate interventions
- Establishing K-2 and 3-5 professional communities of educators to advance curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Utilizing a homeroom structure for K-2, transitioning from a homeroom to team structure in 3rd, and having a team-teaching structure for 4th and 5th is developmentally appropriate and allows scaffolding of student responsibilities as learners
- Designating teachers as content area representatives for K-2 and 3-5 allowing us to tap into teachers' areas of strengths, to advance our team and to keep us united

### Elementary Curriculum and Instruction

- Adjusting instructional pace and lesson delivery according to assessment data analysis and curriculum maps
- Maintain our newly established practice of placing students into sections for Language Arts 4 and 5
- Progress in mapping Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies curricula in Learning-Focused
- Align local assessments with targeted benchmarks and break down end-of-year grade level benchmark skills to show quarterly growth for progress monitoring in Language Arts and Math
- Administer PLATO testing in Grades 2-6 for Language Arts and Math
- Improve methods of teaching writing, with the implementation of the Step Up to Writing Program
- Target Tier 1 instructional strategies, train teachers in these strategies and use with frequency and consistency. Tier 2 intervention techniques will be implemented within the team structure, using every available resource.

For our Elementary Program Initiatives, we will continue to work as a collaborative team to raise student achievement and increase PSSA scores in Reading and Math by a minimum of 10%. As a result of our program restructuring and RtI program development and implementation, we will be better equipped to track and plan academic instruction and assessment, to monitor progress, to work with families, and to individualize, differentiate, and provide appropriate interventions to embrace the whole child. We will improve techniques of e-teaching by strengthening skills to use available technology resources and opportunities to establish a stronger online cyber learning environment. Lastly we will continue to develop our leadership theme aiming to create independent learners and leaders who as citizens will contribute and function with confidence and competence.

---

### **On-Site Programs' Strengths and Plans for 2009-2010**

In 2009-2010, the Center for Performing and Fine Arts served more than 130 students in specialized programming that centered around music (instrumental music, vocal music, theory and composition), theatre (acting, technical production, creative writing, puppetry), dance (ballet, tap, jazz, modern, Broadway), and fine arts (drawing and painting, ceramics, sculpture, photography).

In 2010-2011, the Center for Performing and Fine Arts will continue to offer educational programming in music, theatre, dance, and fine arts. This will include field trips, visiting artists, and extra-curricular activities such as a Friday Night Café and Movie Nights. The goal of this program continues to be to prepare students for a successful career or avocation in the arts.

Students who attend the University Scholars Program are drawn to its rigorous program, outstanding teaching, and flexibility that provides students with a customized course plan to best meet the students'

individual educational needs. During the 2009-2010 school year, the Program offered two blends for participants to choose from: cyber/virtual and cyber/virtual/onsite. In addition, the Program staff also participated in Professional Development specifically designed around understanding and responding to the needs of gifted learners.

Continuing to develop cyber/virtual instruction with the needs of the Program's participants in mind drives the University Scholars Program's goals for the coming academic year. New goals include a Morning Meeting, intensive leadership training (particularly at the high school level), and courses that blend cyber/virtual learners with onsite learners. Teacher development aimed at cross-curricular planning and other targeted goals will continue. In addition, new courses will be offered to both blends of learners.

---

### **Guidance Department Strengths 2009-2010**

Structure: During the 2009-2010 school year, the Guidance Department at Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School further built upon the expansion that began in the 2007-2008 school year and continued in the 2008-2009 school year. The department welcomed a full-time Middle School Counselor to work with students in grades 6-8. This enabled one counselor to focus solely on the needs of the elementary population and allowed for the unique needs of the middle school population to be met.

Technology: The Guidance Department continued to collaborate with our software developer to streamline the automated transcript program. A part of this enhancement is a class rank calculator ability. We were able to provide students with their class rank using this automated program. This is a real benefit to our students as class rank is a criterion that is often asked for on scholarship and college applications.

Grade level counselors utilized the Adobe Connect program to hold weekly chats for their students. This initiative was particularly successful in the elementary and middle school grade levels. Students attended the chats each week to participate in discussions on various social and study skills topics. This initiative helped to forge the connection that is so vital to a successful rapport between students and their guidance counselor.

Collaboration: Members of the Guidance Department collaborate well with one another and with other departments within the school. Grade level counselors and guidance assistants work closely on tasks such as course selection, contacting students needing academic and/or emotional support, course auditing and disseminating information on college planning. Members of the Guidance Department also serve as representatives on many committees within the school including: the Curriculum Council, the School Health Committee, the Professional Development Committee and the School Improvement Task Force. Having representation on essential school committees provides the department the opportunity to communicate the needs of the students to administrators within the school. It also helps to ensure that the department is aware of all PALCS has to offer our families.

College Planning/Career Education: College planning and career education are areas of focus for the Guidance Department. Representatives from several colleges and universities were invited to come to PALCS to do online chat sessions with students. These chats were recorded and posted in the guidance courses so students have continuous access to them. In addition, several members of the PALCS faculty volunteered to present to our students via Adobe Connect on different careers of which they themselves have been a part. These chats were also recorded so students can view at their leisure. Counselors also include lessons on career education in the guidance courses for students in all grade levels. Guidance counselors co-teach a Career Awareness course which is offered to students in grades 8, 9 and 10.

Professional Development: The Guidance staff is committed to developing as professional educators. The department attended several professional conferences this year to broaden its awareness of the best practices in the field of guidance counseling.

For the first time in the history of PALCS two members of the guidance staff participated in the Induction and Mentoring Program.

### **Challenges/Plans for 2010-2011:**

Technology: Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, students will be able to view their graduation requirement sheet and transcript online. This will ensure that students are fully aware of the number of credits they have attained as they work toward completing all graduation requirements by the end of their senior year. The hope is that giving students access to such information early on will keep high school graduation and post secondary plans at the forefront of their minds.

Admissions: Rolling admission is a challenge for the guidance department. The goal of the Guidance Department is to create unique academic plans which meet the student's individual needs. This becomes difficult given the volume of students who enroll in PALCS throughout the year. Students come to us from a variety of educational backgrounds and have varying academic needs. We have addressed this concern by increasing our course offerings to better be able to meet student needs. We will continue to analyze our course offerings to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students.

College Planning/Career Education: In the past, the Guidance Department has organized trips to local college fairs for students. Unfortunately, many students do not take advantage of these opportunities. Although we will continue to sponsor such trips, the Guidance Department plans to continue the practice of inviting college and university representatives to participate in online chats with our students. We plan to increase the number of chats we offer to one chat per month. This will provide an opportunity to further educate our students about their post-secondary options.

Although each guidance course addresses career education, we plan to enhance these lessons to ensure they are aligned to state standards. Members of the Guidance Department will be attending a workshop in October that will guide us through this process.

Both the 11th and 12th grade counselors will be facilitating a senior seminar entitled The College Experience. This course will walk students through the college application process equipping the student with information on researching college options, the financial aid process, and writing a college admissions essay.

Professional Development: Although members of the guidance staff participated in the Induction and Mentoring Program, there is still a need to adjust components of the program in order to better meet the needs of a guidance counselor. The Director of Guidance will collaborate with the Induction Program Facilitator to achieve this goal.

---

### **Student Assistance Program (SAP) Strengths and Challenges**

- Our SAP team maintained visually appealing and frequently utilized links in our school's portal to provide information to students, parents, faculty, and staff related to our school's program
- Our SAP team established and maintained bi-weekly team meetings (90 minutes in length). In addition, our team has five standing subcommittees that met as needed to attend to SAP related concerns and responsibilities
- Our SAP team has processed 41 student referrals during the 2009-2010 school year. This number is significantly lower than in years past due to our new teenage parenting/pregnancy team, TAPP. TAPP coordinators receive and process referrals from teachers, parents and students. If a barrier to learning is present as well, TAPP coordinators will make a SAP referral
- Our school met or exceeded compliance expectations by holding seven and one half hours of school-wide in-servicing for all faculty and staff. All new teachers were trained on the SAP process and SAP guidelines
- Our SAP team developed and distributed a monthly school newsletter
- SAP members participated in a three hour team maintenance meeting with Tina George from the CARON Foundation

### **SAP plans for 2010-2011**

- Regularly scheduled bi-weekly meetings will continue to be held at our West Chester, PA office. All SAP members are required to attend. Guidelines for SAP best practice will be followed and monitored

- Our SAP sub-committees will continue to meet as needed
- Teacher orientation will include SAP in-servicing. All new faculty and staff will receive SAP orientation training at the start of the school year
- Opportunities for faculty/staff in-servicing will continue to be provided for all school employees that have contact with students (teachers, administration, student services, IT)
- Students and Home Facilitators (parents/guardians) will be able to make SAP referrals online or hard copy
- Contact and communication will continue with state and regional SAP representatives
- Our SAP will continue to address the needs of students who are parenting or expecting a child through our branch out program, TAPP (support group for teen parents)
- SAP personnel will be formally trained in support group facilitation as needed
- At least one SAP support group (stress management) will be developed and implemented during the 2010-2011 school year
- Creative approaches to addressing SAP needs in a cyber environment will continue to be developed and shared (with other schools upon request) to meet the needs of our school family and the needs of other cyber school students in PA
- SAP Team records and related administrative records and reports will be maintained and organized.
- Additional training will be offered to interested teachers pending funding availability and team needs

---

### **Student Academic System of Support and Intervention (SASSI) Strengths, Challenges and Plan for 2010-2011**

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School provides the SASSI program for students who are not succeeding academically. Year 2009-2010 was the fifth year of the program.

Students can enter the SASSI program either upon enrollment, if they are determined to be at-risk academically, or at review periods, which occur at mid-quarter and end-of-quarter. Students who are failing one or more core courses are automatically entered into the SAAP program and are notified electronically and through postal mail. The first step is Academic Assistance, where students must submit a weekly time log to their advisors. Advisors were required during 2008-2009 to contact each student at least weekly, either by phone, email or Moodle Message. In addition, students were enrolled in the grade-level specific Academic Assistance course in Moodle, and advisors provided through that course information about study skills, how to contact teachers, and how to get help outside of the course. The second step is Intensive Academic Assistance. If students continue to fail after being in AA for one review period, then they are moved to Intensive Academic Assistance, and are required to communicate with their advisors daily. The IAA Moodle course provides more helps for students, and advisors are also available to do extensive training with the students on study tactics and Moodle navigation. If students show little or no progress after being in IAA for one review period, they can be withdrawn for Academic Truancy.

The SASSI program faces many challenges, including apathy from students and parents. However, with the revised department this year, the advisors were able to reach out to more students and saw 60% fewer withdrawals for Academic Truancy. Advisors contacted students at all hours through Moodle Message, and were able to meet students when and how they were used to being contacted. As a result, the program helped over 900 students during the year, but only 250 were recommended to remain in the program at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

Plans for 2010-2011 for the SASSI program include:

- Increased communication with guidance, IT, and teachers
- More frequent phone conversation with parents and students
- Providing Moodle training for parents and students

Student LifeOrientations — Linking Students and TeachersOrientations — Linking Students and TeachersMoodle Student Information System (MSIS) DevelopmentDue to the transient nature of

many of our students and the ever changing needs for doing our PIMS reporting, we needed to improve the readability of the Enrollment Tab in MSIS. The enhancements to this tab will allow us to see an enrollment summary in a more organized manner. This has also given us the opportunity to revisit the overall student enrollment process and workflow. We have been able to make changes to create optimal workflow and support PIMS.

---

### **Extended Year Program**

PALCS offers an Extended Year Program to seniors who are not finished with their graduation requirements at the end of their senior year. This is an effort to increase our graduation rate and to prevent students from dropping out of high school. Students were permitted to complete up to 4 courses during a 9-week period in the summer. PALCS teachers oversaw the program, and 44 students completed their graduation requirements before the start of school year. Another 454 underclassmen worked on making up course credits during the summer.

The option for completing coursework during the Extended Year Program was pointed out to many students who were ready to give up mid-year 2009-2010 enabling us to decrease our dropout population dramatically.

The Extended Year Program was again offered during summer 2010 to both seniors and underclassmen who are behind in their progress to graduation. Currently there are 633 students working on completing coursework this summer.

---

### **Homework Help**

Many PALCS students were having difficulty with their coursework outside of traditional school hours, and in 2007 PALCS recognized the need to provide some off-hours tutoring for students at all grade levels. Homework Help is provided online help to students through our Adobe Connect classrooms. Teachers were on-call for drop-in help Monday-Thursday from 6-8 p.m. and Sunday from 7-9 p.m. We expanded Homework Help this year to include a Middle School and a Writing Center room.

PALCS plans to bring back Homework Help for the 2010-2011 school year.

---

### **Strengths/Challenges — Student Services 2009-2010**

Retention Advisor: The position of Retention Advisor was created within the Student Services Department to assist with the administrative responsibility of communicating with our withdrawing families. Our initiative centered on fact finding as to why families chose to leave PALCS. This was accomplished through a phone interview and exit survey. We have been able to identify root causes of student withdrawal and make improvements to instruction or service based on real student need. In some cases we were able to reverse a family's decision to withdraw.

PALCS Extremely Exciting Program in School (PEEPS): This very successful pilot has now become a permanent program. It has grown from being a resource for new students to a place within our school's website where all students and parents can interact, gain confidence in navigating Moodle, participate in chat, meet each other and get advice on being a cyber student or facilitator. It is all done through the vehicle of games and age appropriate activities. PEEPS has surpassed its original goal of creating community at PALCS. It has increased in popularity amongst students, parents and staff.

Bridge to Success: Created to support the at risk population entering the school, our Bridge to Success Program was piloted in the 2009-2010 school year. Student success is more likely when there is a smooth transition into the cyber environment. Student Services, Guidance, Academic Advisors and Special

Education personnel collaborate on each of these student's programs. They are designed individually to meet each student's needs. Their academic history, family situation and technical abilities are evaluated and determine the details of their training and support.

Adopt-A-Family: A student or family may be identified by teachers or staff as having a unique need. This program was developed by Student Services to provide support and encouragement to that family. This need might be health, educational, financial or emotional. Besides the traditional support structure within the school, these families also receive regular contact from Student Services. Staff members, with the guidance of the instructional community, help to trouble shoot, build confidence and provide that relational bridge to students and their facilitators.

Orientations - Linking Students and Teachers: In the 2009-2010 school year, teachers of Kindergarten through 8th grade began to participate in new family orientations. Teachers provide grade specific information to students and facilitators. In the cyber environment, where many students never meet their teachers, it is beneficial for the student to make that connection with his/her teacher.

This has been a very successful program. We recognize that this needs to be expanded to include the 9th through 12th grades as well.

Action Team: Student Services joined the retention initiative of the academic community by providing follow up and support for issues that were identified by teachers as being critical to resolve. The emphasis was on giving excellent customer service to our families and help to keep any issue from becoming a reason for a student to withdraw.

#### Student Information System:

- Moodle Student Information System (MSIS) Development: Due to the transient nature of many of our students and the ever changing needs for doing our PIMS reporting, we needed to improve the readability of the Enrollment Tab in MSIS. The enhancements to this tab will allow us to see an enrollment summary in a more organized manner. This has also given us the opportunity to revisit the overall student enrollment process and workflow. We have been able to make changes to create optimal workflow and support PIMS.
- Continued enhancements to the database have allowed PALCS to store and retrieves tudent data needed for PIMS reporting.
- Uploading archived data to our current student information system has been delayed because of issues with the data as it was stored in our former student information system. The data exists at PALCS, but currently is not part of MSIS. This is a challenge for thosewho need to process that data. The project of migrating that data to MSIS is currently in the testing phase. The project should be complete in the 2010-2011 school year.

Records Management: Student Services successfully reduced storage issues by transferring records of withdrawn students to our Pittsburgh office. The Pittsburgh staff has developed a system of best practices for storing and disseminating those records.

Education and Training: Student Services increased the opportunity for training of staff. Staff participated in off site workshops and webinars on topics such as PSSA, PIMS and PAMSecure IDs. Some staff members sharpened technical skills by participating in seminars in Excel and Moodle.

Our goal of creating a job description for every staff member of Student Services is complete. Each staff member participated in the development of his/her job description and outlined competencies for all job responsibilities.

#### **Student Services Plans 2010-2011**

Student Life

- Increase options for orientation and support for at risk students at the point of entry. Design orientation practices that individualize the focus for specific student need.
- Create orientation model that better suits the University Scholars Program participants. Collaborate with USP staff on a plan that will envelop both PALCS and USP policies.
- Regional Area Activity - Student Services will assign a staff-member to further develop the six regions of the state, and increase frequency of parent-led activities in those regions. The staff member will help to train volunteer parents on how to plan, implement and run activities. Our initial goal is to facilitate a "back-to-school" picnic in each of the regions in the fall, and then at least one activity in each region, every month during the 2010-2011 school year.
- Develop improved resource system for students and parents to retrieve school information. Create an "Information Center", an organized site where parents and students can find Moodle help, school forms, and news about socialization opportunities, school policies, contact information and more. Plan for routine updating.
- Pilot a "Test the Technology Week". The goal is to be sure that all student's instructional equipment is set up and operating properly on the first day of school. Since instruction is largely delivered through a computer, it is very important that the computer and all peripherals are in good operating order at the start of school. The event will include a check list of items parents and students need to test, HelpDesk support for any issues a family may encounter, chats that would provide training on a variety of related topics.
- Implement use of training video produced in the Pittsburgh office. The video's topic is life as a cyber student and parent.

#### Student Information Center and Record Management

- Further develop the reporting tools found in Moodle Student Information System (MSIS). Continue PIMS Enhancements to align with requirements set by the PDE and complete the migration of data from PALCS former database to MSIS.
- Develop a more efficient and less labor intensive process for collecting updated directory and demographic information from students and parents. Create more user friendly forms and an internal process that is less problematic.

#### General

- Explore ways to better utilize the Pittsburgh regional Student Services office to support initiatives of the main office in West Chester.
- Provide opportunities for technical and soft skills training and education for Student Services personnel.

---

Our School Improvement Plan for 2009-2010 was instituted and provided the school a number of gains. The school will continue to build on our success in 2010-2011 through this year's School Improvement Plan, and focus on the continuing to improve the following key areas that have been identified as needing improvement:

- Ensuring that all stakeholders in the school understand and are committed to the school's mission and vision
- Aligning the school curriculum to state standards, focusing on Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content
- Aligning classroom assessments to the Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content
- Collecting formative and summative data to inform our decisions with regard to our curriculum and its impact on our students' proficiency levels, and with particular emphasis on at-risk students and their unique needs
- Raising students' proficiency levels in both Reading and Math
- Raising the proficiency levels of all sub-groups of students, with added attention to Special Education and Black subgroups
- Enrollment and Retention plans for students

## SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

### Strategic Planning Process

#### Strategic Planning Process

A School Improvement Plan was drafted by the Executive Committee of the Strategic Planning and School Improvement Task Force and was presented to the Task Force in August. This Plan formed the nucleus of a 2009-2010 work plan for the PALCS Strategic Planning and School Improvement Task Force.

The School Improvement Plan continued to focus on seven key initiatives from 2008-2009:

- Special Education Proficiency
- Math Proficiency
- Reading Proficiency
- Graduation Rate
- Student Mobility, Enrollment and Retention
- Collaborative Leadership
- Instructional Design

In addition to these seven initiatives, a new initiative was added for 2009-2010:

- PSSA Participation

The Strategic Planning and School Improvement Task Force met regularly throughout the year, and continually evaluated the implementation of the initiatives.

The Executive Committee of the Strategic Planning and School Improvement Task Force will draft a 2010-2011 School Improvement Plan based on data that is forthcoming from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

### Strategic Planning Committee

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Allen, Mark	Director of Performing Arts	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force
Aungst, Sarah	Learning Content Management System Supervisor	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force
Dunne, Mary Ann	Controller	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force
Fell, Carolyn	Director of Marketing	Other	Executive Committee/Task Force
Ferris, Jane	Director of University Scholars	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force

Harper, Chip	Associate Director of Academics	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force
Harris, Valerie	Coordinator of Induction, Coordinator of Elementary	Elementary School Teacher	Executive Committee/Task Force
Keefe, Erin	Coordinator for School Improvement	Secondary School Teacher	Associate Director of Academics
McGinty, Shavaun	Director of Guidance	Ed Specialist - School Counselor	Executive Committee/Task Force
Murphy, Amy	Coordinator of Special Education	Special Education Representative	Executive Committee/Task Force
Murray, Kelly	Curriculum Coordinator	Regular Education Teacher	Executive Committee/Task Force
Murray, Regina	Coordinator for School Improvement	Secondary School Teacher	Executive Committee/Task Force
Rockelman, Steve	Director of Federal Programs	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force
Rodden, Lynn	Director of Western Regional Office and Parent Liasison	Parent	Executive Committee/Task Force
Russom, John	HelpDesk Manager	Ed Specialist - Instructional Technology	Executive Committee/Task Force
Slider, Mark	Middle School Subject Area Coordinator	Middle School Teacher	Executive Committee/Task Force
Weisbach, Debby	Director of Student Services	Administrator	Executive Committee/Task Force

## Goals, Strategies and Activities

### **Goal: FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE (for districts and schools that graduate seniors)**

**Description:** Graduate rate will meet an 80% threshold and/or show growth.

#### **Strategy: Educate students on importance of staying in school**

**Description:** This should be done through regular classrooms, guidance and in discussions with the Dropout Intervention Specialist.

#### **Activity: Continue to move all potential drop-out calls through retention specialist.**

**Description:** Students will speak with retention specialist about graduation options.

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



6.00	Year 1	100
<b>Organization or Institution Name</b>	<b>Type of Provider</b>	<b>Provider's Department of Education Approval Status</b>

PDE

- Association

Approved

**Knowledge and Skills**

**Research and Best Practices**

**Designed to Accomplish**

Teachers will learn how to incorporate Math Anchors into their lessons.

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

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

Role	Grade Level	Subject Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom teachers</li> <li>• Principals / asst. principals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle (grades 6-8)</li> <li>• Elementary (grades 2-5)</li> <li>• High school (grades 9-12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics</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>• Peer-to-peer lesson discussions</li> <li>• Lesson modeling with mentoring</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant survey</li> <li>• Review of participant lesson plans</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**Status:** Complete

# Goal: Professional Development

**Description:** Professional Development must be aligned with school policies and goals.

## Strategy: Learning Focused

**Description:** • Educate teachers on teaching strategies connected to the 3P's (Purpose, Plan and Process) in correlation with learning focused to created dynamic lessons for student achievement.

## Activity: Learning Focused Training

**Description:**

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Keefe, Erin	Start: 6/2/2008 Finish: 12/31/9999	-

### Professional Development Activity Information

Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
-----------------------------	--	---

25.00	10	110
-------	----	-----

Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status
----------------------------------	------------------	--

Learning Focused	• Company	Approved
------------------	-----------	----------

Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
----------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate teachers on teaching strategies connected to the 3P's (Purpose, Plan and Process) in correlation with learning focused to created dynamic lessons for student achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate teachers on teaching strategies connected to the 3P's (Purpose, Plan and Process) in correlation with learning focused to created dynamic lessons for student achievement.</li> </ul>	<p><i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhances the educator's <u>content knowledge</u> in the area of the educator's certification or assignment.</li> <li>• Increases the educator's <u>teaching skills</u> based on research on effective practice, with attention given to</li> </ul>
--	--	--

interventions for struggling students.

### **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>• Other educational specialists</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early childhood (preK-grade 3)</li><li>• Middle (grades 6-8)</li><li>• Elementary (grades 2-5)</li><li>• High school (grades 9-12)</li></ul>

### **Follow-up Activities**

---

<b>Evaluation Methods</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student PSSA data</li><li>• Participant survey</li><li>• Review of participant lesson plans</li></ul>

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

### **Activity: Training**

**Description:**

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

---

Keefe, Erin	Start: 1/1/2008	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

## **Goal: READING**

**Description:** At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

### **Strategy: Literacy Coach will supporting Reading Initiatives**

**Description:** Design and facilitate a PSSA Reading course for grade 11 (.5 credit) Provide support for teachers to develop PSSA style assessments in courses Provide monthly update to task force on progress of department Develop Local Reading assessments for 9-12 (4x/year)

**Activity: Integrating the Reading Anchors and PSSA-style testing in your course everyday**

**Description:** Integrating the Reading Anchors and PSSA-style testing in your course everyday

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Keefe, Erin	Start: 9/28/2007	-
	Finish: 9/28/2007	

**Status:** Complete

## **Goal: Special Education Proficiency**

**Description:** Special Education students will increase proficiency on the PSSA.

**Strategy: Incorporate an integrated approach to teaching Special Education students**

**Description:**

**Activity: Special Education Department must provide ongoing Professional Development to Regular Education teachers on how to provide accommodations in the cyber environment.**

**Description:** Survey teachers and pinpoint weaknesses; provide training to fill in gaps.

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Keefe, Erin	Start: 7/31/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

**Activity: Special Education teachers must design an action plan to interact and integrate special ed. strategies and tools into the regular ed. Classroom**

**Description:**

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Keefe, Erin	Start: 8/1/2007	-
	Finish: 9/30/2007	

**Status:** Complete

**Activity:** Special Education teachers need to compile individual student IEP accommodations and distribute to appropriate teachers and keep files updated throughout year.

**Description:**

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Keefe, Erin	Start: 1/1/2008	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** Complete

**Activity:** Survey the teachers on what they need to effectively serve their special education students

**Description:**

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Keefe, Erin	Start: 8/1/2007	-
	Finish: 8/31/2007	

**Status:** Complete

**Strategy:** Use in-house math and reading placement tests aligned to current curriculum to place students in on-grade level but leveled to their ability to raise proficiency.

**Description:**

**Activity:** Assess student ability levels in Math and Reading and place students on appropriate grade level with remediation tools in place.

**Description:** For school year 2009-2010, will be done using PLATO.

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Keefe, Erin	Start: 7/31/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

## Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has not met AYP.

Charter school has created a School Improvement Plan.

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

**Intermediate Unit designee met with and when meeting occurred:**

Marjorie Graeff  
November 17, 2010

## Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- 2009 Statement of Quality Assurance

## SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

### Rigorous Instructional Program

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School has developed a rigorous instructional program that utilizes a combination of textbook and online components. The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School is committed to an educational design that meets or exceeds statewide content standards. These standards are used not only to develop curriculum that follows a scope and sequence, but also to measure the success of the curriculum in meeting state standards. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School works with the Learning Focused School Model to increase student achievement.

The Learning Focused model has been developed by Dr. Max Thompson. Dr. Thompson developed the Learning Focused Schools model based on his experience as an Executive Director of School Improvement, and twenty years experience as a Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the Appalachian State University in North Carolina. The Learning Focused Schools Model is an approach to school improvement that focuses on student achievement through balanced achievement. Balanced achievement is defined by program developers as the point at which all students are on or above grade levels in all areas. The Learning Focused Model identifies that leadership and the power curriculum are the keystone components to balanced achievement. The power curriculum must be supported by research based instruction, comprehensive literacy, acceleration and scaffolding, and efficient use of assessments.

Teachers prioritize state standards and assessment anchors, and develop curriculum maps for each topic of instruction within their course. Curriculum maps, or “student learning maps,” identify key concepts of the topic and the lessons’ essential questions to drive instruction. The curriculum maps act as a guideline for the teacher’s instruction, assuring that instruction is aligned with state standards and assessment anchors. The goal of developing curriculum using the Learning Focused Model is to produce measurable student achievement, while preserving instructional integrity and creativity. Developed and orchestrated by

teachers, the student learning map provides an expectation of student learning for each topic in a course, and facilitates the development of assessments. The scope and sequence, a by-product of the curriculum mapping process, assures vertical articulation, and makes horizontal articulation plausible.

PALCS partners with more than 20 professional online curriculum companies to create an educational program for students that is dynamic, flexible, and designed to meet the needs of different learning styles. The curriculum utilized during the 2009-2010 academic year included:

**Book Publishers**

Pearson Education  
 Prentice Hall  
 Pearson Learning  
 Scott Foresman  
 AGS Globe  
 McDougal Littell  
 Houghton Mifflin  
 Powerglide  
 McGraw Hill  
 Glencoe  
 Hampton Brown  
 Holt  
 Thomson Learning  
 Wiley and Sons  
 DK Publishing  
 William Sadlier-Oxford  
 Publisher's Group West  
 Teacher Created Materials

**Online Providers**

Adobe - Adobe Connect  
 ALEKS  
 Animation Factory  
 Learning Pages  
 BrainPop  
 Compass Learning  
 Facts on File  
 Holt  
 EasyTech - Learning.com  
 NetLibrary  
 MyAccess!  
 Performance Pathways -TechPaths  
 PLATO  
 Prentice Hall  
 Study Island  
 TumbleBooks  
 Turnitin  
 Typing Master

Curriculum was chosen based on whether or not it was aligned with Pennsylvania state standards. New instructional resources must be proposed and submitted to the curriculum council for approval, prior to adoption. All textbooks adopted support the curriculum, as oppose to drive the curriculum. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School has developed a Curriculum Cycle and process to research and adopt new textbooks and resources. This cycle is based on a three-year rotation to assure that current resources area utilized. Content areas research multiple resources with the guidance of a Textbook Evaluation Workbook, and develop proposals. The proposals are brought to the Curriculum Council for review. The Curriculum Council reviews the proposals and makes a recommendation to the administrative team.

PA Leadership Curriculum Cycle

	Evaluate Current Resources	Research, Pilot & Propose New Resources	Adoption/Imple
Electives	Begin March 1, 2009	2009-2010	2010-2011 Sch
Foreign Language		Proposals presented by April 16, 2010	
Physical Education			
Social Studies			

Math	Begin March 1, 2010	2010-2011  Proposals presented by April 15, 2011	2011-2012 Sch
ESL			
Leadership			
Special Education			
Other			
English/LA	Begin March 1, 2011	2011-2012  Proposals presented by April 16, 2012	2012-2013 Sch
Science			
Technology			
Business			

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School maintains accurate documentation to meet the requirements of Chapter 4.12 of Pennsylvania School Code. Courses are developed and aligned with grade appropriate state standards and assessment anchors. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School strives to assure that the intended curriculum is taught and assessed. The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's curriculum is articulated to assure that the planned instruction exposes students to the appropriate sequencing of standards and assessment anchors. Records of instructed assessment anchors and state standards are maintained using the Learning Focused Tool Box.

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School aligns curriculum, instruction, and assessments to state standards and assessment anchors in the content areas of: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Civics and Government, Economics, Family Consumer Science, Environmental and Ecology, Health Safety and Physical Education, Arts and Humanities and Career Education and Work.

Courses are developed based on the prioritization of grade-appropriate standards and assessment anchors. The PDE Standards Align System (SAS) will also be used to support and guide curriculum decisions, and to build fair assessments. Instruction of the state standards and assessment anchors is designed to prepare students for proficiency. Teachers develop differentiated assessments to evaluate student understanding of the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to focus on accelerating student achievement by previewing content, but will provide remediation for students who do not meet standards. Title 1, ESL and Special Education also faculty provides support for students who do not meet standard requirements. Working with the Learning Focused Software, mapped courses are analyzed to assure proper vertical articulation. Topic level assessments allow teachers to monitor student understanding, and adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate various forms of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of our diverse learners. Working with the Learning Focused Software, mapped courses are analyzed to assure proper vertical articulation. Topic level assessments allow teachers to monitor student understanding, and adjust instruction accordingly. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate various forms of differentiated instruction to meet the needs of our diverse learners.

Teachers have been trained on the use of scaffolding strategies and are encouraged to use methods of scaffolding to increase the retention and student understanding. As a Learning Focused Strategy, teachers are encouraged to incorporate acceleration methods within their classes. Acceleration focuses on vocabulary development and shifts methods of remediation to methods of accelerating students by previewing content.

Teachers are encouraged to include a variety of teaching strategies to engage our diverse learners. Teachers have been trained on the Learning Focused Model, which includes strategies such as scaffolding, accelerating, activating strategies, summarizing strategies, and differentiated instruction. All lessons are required to be presented to students using the 3-P model. This model states that all lessons must include a purpose, process, and produce. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School Faculty has been provided a copy of the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL) standards and guidelines. Teachers use a variety of mediums to deliver these strategies and engage the learners. Such mediums may, to name a few, include the use of Power Points, audio recordings, videos and web quests.

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's curriculum is based on the foundations of essential questions, which promotes in-depth and inquiry based teaching and learning. Essential questions direct high teacher expectations of student learning and increases student achievement through the understanding of said expectations. The use of Learning Focused strategies, such as graphic organizers, help promote student retention, as opposed to memorization. The use of graphic organizers is identified by the developers of Learning Focused to "develop thinking routines."

Essential questions are identified as an acquisition or extended/refined thinking question. Teachers are encouraged to weave acquisition lessons with extended thinking lessons to insure that students learn the content to greater depths. Extended thinking lessons require students to use higher level thinking skills such as critical thinking and concept synthesis. Culminating activities are authentic assessments which ask

students to demonstrate their understanding of the content by applying it. The use of graphic organizers and the authentic assessments found in culminating activities are supported by the latest brain-based research and have been proven to increase student achievement.

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School uses a number of instructional strategies to engage student in the learning process. Teachers are required to develop lessons providing purpose, process, and product (3-P model).

The purpose is found at the beginning of every lesson. Providing a purpose statement guides students and home facilitators, and helps to develop an understanding of why they are completing the lesson, and what they should be learning.

The purpose includes:

- Objectives, essential questions, goals, or a purpose statement. This purpose statement should
  1. provide focus for the student, home facilitator, and the teacher.
  2. communicate to the student what they are expected to learn and identify expectations.
  3. be measurable and attainable.
  4. provide focus for assessments; or “Product.”
  
- State Standards and Assessment Anchors alignment

The process is the steps that the teachers use to deliver and teach the content. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of instructional strategies to help support our diverse learners. The goal of providing differentiated instructional strategies is to provide all students with an equally engaging learning activity. Teachers are expected to merge direct instruction with active learning. Teachers are encouraged to develop student-centered learning opportunities, as opposed to teacher-centered. Teachers imbed active learning activities through the use of online activities, simulations, and virtual lab experiences.

The product of a lesson is directly linked to the lesson objective. The product should inform teachers whether or not students understood the content so that they can adjust their instruction as needed. This process follows the model of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe’s Backward Design. We begin by establishing desired results (purpose). The acceptable evidence is then developed (product). Since the purpose and product is connected, the instructional strategies (process) are developed to provide the students with the tools that they will need. Teachers are encouraged to use formative assessments to gather data to make informed decisions about curriculum and instruction.

## **Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments**

- Induction Plan
- Professional Development Plan

## **English Language Learners**

### **English Language Learners**

Children whose first language is a language other than English are identified using the Home Language Survey. The HLS is sent to each family for each child enrolled in PALCS. Students whose preferred home language is a language other than English are placed on a Preferred Home Language Other Than English or “PHLOTE” list. These students are then scheduled for the Wida Access Placement Test or WAPT. If possible the WAPT is given during the student’s enrollment appointment. If this is not possible the ESL teacher or the ESL program director travel to a location that is convenient to the student/family being assessed. Usually, the assessment is administered at a public library within a short distance from the home. In either case the WAPT is always administered within the first 30 days of school or within the first 15 days of school after initial enrollment if the child enrolls after the first day of school. A description of the ESL program at PALCS follows:

## **English as a Second Language Program Description**

### *Definition of an English Language Learner:*

A student whose native language is a language other than English and/or comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant.

A student whose English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing causes difficulties that hinder the opportunity to learn successfully in the courses where English language is the dominant mode of communication.

### **Goals of the Program:**

- Create a well-defined sequential ESL program for English language learners that will encourage and facilitate the language acquisition necessary for them to achieve success and meet or exceed the Pennsylvania academic standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Assist all students in content areas while they are learning English, so these students can remain at grade level or make progress towards grade level competency in content areas.
- Mainstream students into regular curricula as soon as they can successfully learn like native English speakers.
- Periodically evaluate the progress of ELLs through assessments, teacher feedback and classroom performance.
- Monitor the progress of ELLs after exiting the ESL program to determine if additional alternative language instruction is needed and to provide content area remediation when necessary.

### **Student Identification:**

#### Step 1 — Home Language Survey

PALCS will determine the English language proficiency level for any student whose primary language is a language other than English (PHLOTE).

#### Step 2 — Language Proficiency Assessment

The Wida Access Placement Test is given to determine a level of English proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing.

#### Step 3 — Level of Service

According to their language proficiency needs, students will receive ESL instruction, support services, or will be monitored for academic difficulties.

### **ESL Courses:**

ESL courses take the place of the regular English course for all ELLs who earn score between Level 1-4 on the WIDA K-12 English language proficiency standards as assessed using the Wida Access Placement Test and/or the Wida English Language Proficiency Assessment.

ESL courses have been designed to address each proficiency level using curriculum support materials provided by Hampton Brown called Avenues (K-6) and High Point (7-12). These courses were created and adapted to the PA Leadership Charter School format and course descriptions. The courses are delivered via the PALCS portal, Moodle. Lessons for each course and unit have been written and are implemented on a daily basis.

### **ESL Support Services:**

Support Services to those students who qualify for ESL. The support services include:

- Weekly contact with student and home facilitator
- Office hours to ask for help
- Open Chat for live conversations, homework help, etc.
- Live in-person individual and small group tutoring sessions at local libraries

### **Assessment of English Language Growth**

Summative assessments include PSSA, Access for ELLs© and local assessments.

Formative assessments include formal and informal classroom assessments such as DIBELS, Baseline/End-of-Year Reading/Math Assessment, and writing samples. These are given only when it is appropriate to do so based upon a student's English language proficiency.

#### **Exit Criteria**

Score of BASIC on the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Score of PROFICIENT on the Pennsylvania Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing on the annual state-required WIDA Access for ESLs®. The PROFICIENT or BRIDGING score is based on the total results of all the language skills.

#### **Curriculum and Instruction**

ELLs assessed at Level 1 (Entering), Level 2 (Beginning) and Level 3 (Developing) English language proficiencies will receive ESL instruction to replace their language arts/English instruction. Each student will be enrolled in a full-year course focusing on oral language development (listening and speaking) and on literacy development (reading and writing).

ELLs assessed at Level 4 (Expanding) English language proficiencies will be enrolled in a full-year course integrating oral language and literacy development instruction. The ELLs will also receive ESL support services in the form of topic-specific chat rooms, support homerooms. This course will focus on concepts and skills that are essential for increased proficiency in the English language and retention of skills already learned.

ELLs assessed at Level 5 (Bridging) English language proficiency will be monitored on a weekly basis for progress, academic success and/or academic difficulties in regular English, Math and content area courses.

Exited students will be monitored on a regular basis for 2 years post exit. Difficulties will be discussed by the PALCS ESL Committee which includes the Director of ESL, ESL teachers, regular teachers, parent(s) and other appropriate personnel. The possibility exists that exited ESL students will be placed back into the program for reinforcement, closer support opportunities and English language instruction. A decision to place a student back into the ESL program will be made on an as needed basis. If appropriate, ELLs will not be "re-exited" into Monitor status until the start of the next marking period.

#### **Pennsylvania Language Proficiency Standards for English Language Learners\***

Level 1: Entering

Level 2: Beginning — Students are able to produce and understand general language that is related to the content areas. They will use phrases and short sentences.

Level 3: Developing — Students are able to produce and use some general and specific language of the content areas. They will use expanded sentences orally and in written paragraphs.

Level 4: Expanding — Students will use specific and some technical language of the content areas. They will use a variety of sentence lengths of varying complexity orally and in multiple related paragraphs.

Level 5: Bridging — Students will use the technical language of the content areas and a variety of sentence lengths of varying complexity orally and in written form (including, stories, essays, and reports).

\*Taken from page 7, Figure 1, of the WIDA Manual, Performance definitions for the WIDA K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards.

#### **Communication with Parents**

PALCS makes every effort to communicate with the parents of ELLs in their preferred home language. Spanish is the native language of the majority of our ELLs. TransAct and Iverson translation services are currently in use for translating written correspondence. AT&T Language Links provides on-demand over the phone interpreting services. The enrollment packet, NCLB notification letters, ESL program documents, student/parent orientation documents and other important documents have been translated into Spanish and are used when appropriate. Several bilingual staff members serve as interpreters for meetings and phone calls.

#### **Professional Development**

Training in all aspects of the ESL program and working with ELLs and families are provided during the year for all faculty and staff.

## **English Language Learners - Attachments**

- ESL 5-Year Plan
- LEP Report 2009-2010

## **Graduation Requirements**

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School requires all students to successfully complete the following:

4 credits of English

3 credits of Mathematics\*

3 credits of Science\*

3 credits of Social Studies\*

1 credit of Health/Safety/Physical Education

1 credit of Technology

1 credit of Arts and Humanities Electives

4 credits of additional electives

Successful completion of Senior Seminar or equivalent (.25 credit)

Total minimum required credits for graduation: 20.25\*

\* For the Class of 2012, graduation requirements increase to 20.75 with the addition of .5 credit of Economics (Social Studies). Among these requirements is also that one of the Mathematics credits must be Algebra, and one of the Science credits must be Biology.

All course assessments are aligned to state standards. The Senior Seminar fulfills the Culminating Project requirement.

## **Special Education**

Upon enrolling at PALCS, a new IEP is created for each student that is relevant to our unique learning environment. Each special education student is assigned to appropriate courses while taking into consideration the student's grade level and ability level. Each student is also assigned to a special education teacher upon enrolling. The special education teacher is responsible for providing resource level learning support to each student on their caseload.

As required by law, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School first uses an inclusion approach to educating special education students. Special education students are enrolled in regular education courses but will receive modifications and adaptations to their curriculum as needed. The modifications and adaptations are determined by the IEP team and are carried out by the resource room teacher assigned to the student. In accordance with our School Improvement Plan, all regular education teachers must keep a binder of all of their students' accommodations sheets from the students' IEPs at their desks and refer to it when creating and modifying lessons.

There are times when a student may be functioning too far below grade level to be placed in regular education classes, even with modifications and adaptations to their curriculum. In these instances, a student is placed in remedial courses taught by a licensed and highly qualified special education teacher. These students are held to the same standards as their regular education peers, but the information is presented to them in a modified, simplified manner.

In addition to students who are placed in PALCS' remedial courses, there are a few Life Skills students who are served at The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School. These students are enrolled into our Life Skills reading and math courses, Edmark Reading and KinderMath. A designated special education teacher is assigned to work with this population of students to meet with each of the Life Skills students on a daily basis in the multi-media room to work on the Life Skills curriculum being offered.

PALCS has recently implemented a full-scale transition program into the special education course offerings. All students ages 14 and above are enrolled in this course and are required to work through various stages of the program until they graduate from high school. This course provides an opportunity for all of our transition aged students to develop the skills necessary to move into adult life. They learn and develop the skills needed to research different careers they may be interested in, apply to college, write a resume, and fill out work applications to name a few. In addition, the students develop and maintain a personal portfolio throughout the courses to refer to as needed. The track each student follows throughout this program varies depending on what their transition goals entail. Some students will be getting the resources in place that are needed to live independently after high school while other students are learning about how to apply for financial aid in order to be able to attend college.

For related services, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School contracts with several different therapy companies across the state of Pennsylvania. Speech, occupational, and physical therapy are almost always provided to the student in their home. In some instances the student travels to a therapy building. If this is the case, PALCS reimburses their parents for travel time and mileage.

If a student is in need of an evaluation or a reevaluation, PALCS will schedule an appointment with one of the several psychological service companies to complete the evaluation. PALCS adheres to all guidelines set forth by Chapter 711 regulations.

## Special Education - Attachments

- Attachment E: Special Education Policies and Procedures
- Attachment F: Penn Data Report

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Collet, Caroline	1.0	Learning Support	Cyber	16	Learning Support/Life Skills Support (K-12)
Conroy, Jennifer	1.0	Learning Support	Cyber	23	Learning Support
Cummings, Erin	1.0	Learning Support	Cyber	24	Learning Support



## Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Writing Assessment Prompts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Imagination Station (Reading)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
STAR Early Literacy	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
STAR Reading	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Informal Benchmark Inventory (Reading)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
San Diego Vocabulary Test	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harcourt C-B Benchmark Language Arts Test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gentry's Spelling Test	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Compass Learning S-B Assessment (Reading/Math)	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
PLATO Local Standards-Based Assessment (Reading/Math)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PLATO Local Anchors-Based Assessment (Reading/Math)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
STAR Math	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C-B Benchmark Math Test	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Open-Ended Response Assessment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harcourt C-B Inventory and Culminating	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Harcourt Curriculum-Based Theme Test	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

## Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PASA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
PLATO Benchmark Assessment Reading	Yes						
PLATO Benchmark Assessment Math	Yes						
PLATO Benchmark Assessment Writing	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

## Student Assessment

a) Based on State and Local assessment data, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School has shown increased performance in some areas.

Students in grades 2-11 participated in an end-of year standards-based, local assessment to determine their proficiency levels in Reading and Math. Students in Grades 2-8 scored met or exceeded the state threshold in Reading (63%) and Math (64%). Students in Grade 9 performed above the state threshold in Reading with 75.4% performing at the Proficient or Advanced level. In Math, 43.7% of the 9th grade students performed at the Proficient or Advanced level. Students in Grade 10 performed above the state threshold in Reading with 76.4% performing at the Proficient or Advanced level. In Math, 47% of the 10th grade students performed at the Proficient or Advanced level. Students in Grade 11 performed above the state threshold in Reading with 67.6% performing at the Proficient or Advanced level. In Math, 34.4% of the 11th grade students performed at the Proficient or Advanced level.

### Reflection of Improved Performance

### *Mathematics Report*

PSSA Math: Comparing results from 2009 to 2010, data reflects improved performance in every tested grade level, 3rd-6th. Improving across 3rd-6th grades from 49.78% Proficient and Advanced to 61.27% Proficient and Advanced - an improvement of 11.49%. Grade 3 showed solid growth improving scores by 18.58% over last year, with 72.58% Proficient/Advanced. Grade 4 showed the greatest gain improving scores by 20.73% over last year, with 68.42% Proficient/Advanced. Grade 5 improved scores by 2.5% over last year, with 45% Proficient/Advanced. Grade 6 made a 4.12% gain, with 59.06% Proficient/Advanced.

PLATO Math Local Assessment: Comparing Fall to Spring Standards-Based Assessment results, student performance reflected growth in Grades 2 through 6, with Proficient and Advanced 60.50% in the Fall to 88.40% in the Spring. PLATO scores were higher than PSSA scores. Harcourt Math: Using beginning and end of year curriculum-based assessments, data also reflects growth across grades 1 through 6. This 8% growth average ranged from 2% to 18%. STAR Math is a First Grade administered test. Using percentile rank, 60% of students at 50th percentile or above increased by 27% (Fall to Spring).

### *Reading Report*

PSSA Reading — Grades 3-6: Comparing 2009 to 2010, gains were made in grades 3, 5, and 6 with increased performances of 7.13%, 1.87%, and 6.43% respectively. Grade 4 scored lower than last year by 3.7%. PLATO Reading — Standards-Based Local Assessment: Students end of year assessment percentages for Proficient and Advanced students at grade 2 — 88%, grade 3 — 85%, grade 4- 82%, grade 5 — 77%, and grade 6 — 64%. Growth was indicated from Fall to Spring scores in grades 2, 3, 4, and 5. Sixth grade student scores decreased 5%.

San Diego Vocabulary Test — Grades 4-6: This screener showed that 66% of 4th graders, 73% of 5thth graders were on or above their end of year reading level. This data is skewed due to a large percentage of students (who were not tested 4th-12%, 5th-19%, and 6th-38%). STAR Early Literacy - Grades K-1: Designating students as emergent, transitional, or probable readers, STAR Early Literacy assessment reflected 71% of Kindergarten students as Transitional and Probable readers, while 67% of First graders placed as Transitional and Probable readers at end of year testing. Imagination Station Assessment - Grades K-1: Identifying students' risk factors of low risk, some risk, or high risk, Imagination Station testing results reported: Kindergarten students as 69% low risk, 11% some risk, and 0% high risk and First Graders as 64 % low risk, 15% some risk, and 8% high risk. Benchmark Reading Inventories given to students from Kindergarten through 3rd grades indicated that 58% were reading on or above benchmark level, 32% below benchmark level, and 10% were not tested.

### **How do these results influence the development of new or revised annual measurable goals and targets?**

The test results were analyzed and discussed, which resulted in the year-end development of action plans to improve student performance in reading and math for the 2010-2011 school year. Teacher input and involvement in the analysis and planning process were invaluable to generate teacher commitment and motivation in the construction of our action plan goals and targets.

Overall, we had substantial gain in PSSA scores over last year in both reading and math which shows us that our initiatives made a positive impact. We also see a lower performance from our 4th graders heading into fifth grade. This tells fifth grade teachers that there level of intensity for intervention and remediation is at the red flag level as we start the new school year. We also saw greater participation in PSSA testing, but lower participation in other required local assessments. This identified need to improve testing participation plays a role in revising targets and setting goals.

In Math, we see a great need to have improved methods of assessment and tools for progress monitoring. To provide the correct instructional interventions, we need to have more detail in our measures of competencies than we presently have in place. We will differentiate and remediate by being deliberate and purposeful with instruction to fill in gaps and strengthen weaker strands and math concepts. In Reading, we see a discrepancy in scores depending on the type of assessment. But seeing the assessment portfolio as a whole, the students are showing stable growth. We set targets to focus on differentiation and intervention through establishing an RTI program to make the best use of our supplemental resources as well as to accelerate reading growth for our slightly and significantly below readers.

### **Targets:**

Accelerate below level math and reading students through an RtI framework to properly identify, move students in and out of Tiers, and provide essential and effective interventions.

Target Tier 1 strategies as interventions for all students, and Tier 2 strategies to differentiate instruction in grades K-3 through guided reading and individualized online math and reading programs, and level students in grades 4-5 to meet the unique needs of all students and increase student achievement.

Improve our overall assessment participation rate, improve the authenticity of assessments, adopt a progress monitoring assessment tool, such as DOMA, and utilize PLATO testing consistently in Grades 2-6 to gather standards and anchor-based performance data.

Increase student achievement by striving to develop independent learners, by educating students and families of the aspects of E-learning, and by improving the quality of online teaching techniques to engage and reach students.

### **Annual Measurable Goals:**

To increase Proficient and Advanced scores on the PSSA in Reading, Writing, Math, and Science for students in Grades 3-5 by 5-10%.

To raise the number of students who reach or succeed grade level reading benchmarks, as measured through benchmark reading inventories and students placing at Tier 1 in Imagination Station ISIP assessment for Grades K-5 and placing as proficient and advanced in PLATO Reading and Math.

If locally developed assessments are used, discuss how they are used and what impact they have on the curriculum, student improvement, and decision-making.

Locally developed tests are used predominantly as progress monitoring tools to track growth, identify needs, and provide data to make more effective instructional decisions. K curriculum-based Quarterly Math and Reading Assessments, K-6 Writing Samples of various genres, Open Ended Response assessment in Math, and teacher made curriculum-based unit and chapter tests are examples of locally Developed Tests for K-5. Overall, our locally developed assessments are used as a way to communicate and dialogue with our Home Facilitators and students as to what strengths and needs the students have and as to whether or not they are working at grade level.

Kindergarten tests are locally created largely due to the lack of available assessments for the Kindergarten level. The main use of the quarterly assessments is to identify which students are on target, developing, needing improvement, or exceeding benchmarks, and who are in need of alternative strategies or interventions to build a strong foundation of academic skills to ensure future success.

The Open-Ended Response Math assessments will be given at the beginning, middle and end of year in 10-11 in order to improve student performance with open-ended response items. Directly teaching strategies and techniques for answering open-ended math questions and assess open-ended response items, scoring with an approved rubric, has been identified as an area for improvement.

Writing sample prompts are locally selected and presented in a PSSA—style format, as a test prep technique. It allows students to become familiar and more comfortable with not only the page format, but also with the genre specific grading rubrics. We will assign writing samples three times at beginning, middle, and end of year for progress monitoring purposes.

The above assessments make a significant impact on decision-making regarding curriculum and student improvement. Progress monitoring tools, benchmarks assessors, and checking for mastery of standards throughout the year is invaluable as it directs teachers to focus instruction more effectively, meet students' needs to elicit growth, and to serve as a basis for evaluating our curriculum — the gaps in skill development and comprehension as well as the depth and breadth of content knowledge.

Additional Assessment Instruments for Measuring Student Progress listed below are used for teacher-initiated Title referral documentation, decision-making with regard to curriculum and student achievement, to monitor progress, and in general to report on achievement of students in our elementary program.

No single set of assessments or instruments functions independently of other sets or data collected from authentic or alternative assessment techniques, but rather functions as a part of a portfolio of performance. PSSA, STAR Reading and Math, Harcourt assessments, Imagination Station, our locally developed assessments, and the instruments listed above constitute our components of our K-6 assessment package. This assessment package supports our student achievement plan.

### **Additional Assessment Instruments for Measuring Student Progress**

In addition to monitoring student reading levels with Imagination Station quarterly, we use Reading A-Z passages and scoring rubrics to give teacher-administered informal reading inventories to all K-3 students three to four times a year, assessing reading competency based on quarterly benchmarks levels.

San Diego Vocabulary Test is used as a screener to indicate probable instructional, frustration, or independent reading levels are for 4-6 students. It is given one-on one by the teacher twice a year. Gentry's Developmental Spelling Test is administered and scored for progress monitoring purposes three times a year in grades one and two. It supports instructional decision-making for individual student needs and provides a closer look at students' phonological development.

Online administration and electronically scored assessments include:

- San Diego Vocabulary Test is used as a screener to indicate probable instructional, frustration, or independent reading levels are for 4-6 students.
- Renaissance Place - STAR Reading, STAR Math, and STAR Early Literacy are computer adaptive, web-based screening tools and progress monitoring tools used K-6.
- K Compass Learning Odyssey — standards-based/web-based assessments constructed from question bank and targeting standards of our choice for Baseline and End of Year assessments as well as for PSSA prep. Compass Baseline and End of Year tests are also used as one of our Title program criteria for qualification.
- K-1 Imagination Station — web-based progress monitoring assessment and interactive teaching tool for Literacy Skill development for progress-monitoring and individualizing instruction. This will extend for K-8th grade next year and will be our progress monitoring tool for Rtl.
- 1st-6th Pearson — Online curriculum-based Science assessment system that reports mastery level of specific content area questions for individual student and class performance.

Assessments listed above are used for teacher-initiated Title referral documentation, for decision-making with regard to curriculum and student achievement, to monitor progress, and in general to report on achievement of students in our elementary program.

No single set of assessments or instruments functions independently of other sets or data collected from authentic or alternative assessment techniques, but rather functions as a part of a portfolio of performance. PSSA, STAR Reading and Math, Harcourt assessments, IStation, our locally developed assessments, and the instruments listed above constitute our components of our K-6 assessment package. This package supports our student achievement plan.

### **Our Student Achievement Plan consists of five main components:**

1. Providing appropriate placement, curriculum and lessons. For K-3, this includes differentiating for above and below level students and supporting the development of readers through guided reading instruction at instructional reading levels. For grades 4-5, students are leveled into different sections based on PSSA scores to address students' unique needs by ability level.
2. Providing on-going communication and interaction with Home Facilitators and students for input and feedback — including but not limited to phone calls, office hours, instant messaging, PALCSmail (e-mail system), surveys, field trips and gatherings to build rapport and student self-esteem (meet-and-greets, open houses, back-to-school nights, etc.)
3. Teacher-conducted instruction through Adobe Connect, our online classroom. These classroom experiences are for regular instruction, enrichment opportunities, re-teaching, as well as for teacher observation and alternative

assessments, such as presenting a living history project with video and audio capabilities, and for developing speaking and listening skills student—to-student and student-to-teacher.

4. Record-keeping and individual student performance portfolios which are maintained electronically and include Moodle report cards, addendum report cards with teacher comments, progress reports, samples of student work, assessment results, and a means to keep notes and documentation in a central location.

5. RtI framework and strategies for the team to create intervention plans for struggling students — including but not limited to Title 1, ESL, Special Education, Guidance, and Academic Assistance, and regular classroom teachers.

**b) Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School has numerous strategies and interventions at both the elementary and secondary levels to address students who are at-risk of failure or who are not making progress.**

K-6 Orientation screening assessments in Language Arts and Math allow us to gather information about new students to effectively determine course placement. Collaboration between Student Services, Guidance, and the Academic Team provides an effective process for student placement decisions to place them into our elementary program.

In Language Arts, we provide guided reading lessons and readers at instructional levels, monitor skill development and adjust tasks based on student developmental levels, such as with writing assignments. For some students we place them off grade level for their Language Arts placement; this option is especially effective for Kinders and First graders who do not have the foundation of skills or the exposure to schooling prior to attending our school. They can succeed, gain essential knowledge and skills and experience success.

We also have the collaborative efforts of Title, ESL and Special Education teachers to work more directly with struggling students. Guidance and academic advisors support students and families to make the transition to cyber school a solid one.

In Math we use a variety of techniques to present alternative algorithms for problem-solving and a multitude of technology resources for closing gaps and strengthening comprehension of content. We offer live chat sessions to work directly with students, and also provide the option of placing students off grade level, depending on needs.

For Social Studies and Science, we have audio texts and leveled readers available to support a below-level reader's comprehension of content. We use alternative assessment techniques and a variety of assignments to stimulate interest and to reach those who learn and express themselves best through various modalities. Strategies such as the use of graphic organizers, the Fraayer Model, and teaching with Essential Questions and rubrics for grading student work supports struggling students.

Our instructional design is consistent across subjects and grade levels for students ease of learning. The K-3 basic design is based on linking learning, then to engage and educate (guided instruction and differentiation), provide active learning (independent work) and reflection (review), and connecting learning to what's coming next, with 4-6 providing purpose, process, and product.

We have Academic Advisors who work closely with students who are failing. See more under SAAP Student Academic Assistance Program. We have support services, such as Title 1 services and Summer Success Programs, ESL services, and Special Education monitors to modify, adapt, and to collaborate with the regular classroom teacher. Setting standards-based IEP goals is an example of strategy.

We maintain a small class size at the K-6 level to provide opportunity for frequent interaction and monitoring of our 'lower school' students' needs. Our teachers at times work with students who are able to come to our offices for individual tutoring sessions. We schedule IST-type meetings to address specific student needs and to see the whole picture. This allows for effective planning and decision-making.

**Evidence Demonstrating Effectiveness of Interventions**

The attached aggregated data spreadsheet shows student growth and achievement as a result of the steps for intervention.

Electronic student portfolios of performance and assessment results provide a clear method for tracking growth and for progress monitoring purposes.

Record-keeping shows a decrease in the number of elementary students placed in our Student Academic Assistance program, likewise the decreased number of retention candidates, and an increase in student retention and recruitment.

Parent feedback on the growth that their children have made since partaking in our school serves as another indicator of program effectiveness.

## **Student Assessment - Attachment**

- Attachment G: Local Assessment Data

## **Teacher Evaluation**

A) The main features of Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's Teacher Evaluation Plan for 2009-2010 included evaluating teachers on an ongoing basis informally and formally by the Subject Area Coordinators, through a process called TDEF (Teacher Development and Evaluation Framework), which was created in-house (see below).

Teachers were vetted through an extensive interview process that was directed by the Associate Director of Academics but includes a number of administrative team members (Subject Area Coordinators, CEO, Chief Academic Administrator, Business Manager, etc.).

Additionally, the Associate Director of Academics and Subject Area Coordinators had the ability to view all of a teacher's communication with students and parents, as well as grading, comments, and lessons. This was done if a concern about instruction came up during the year.

During the 09-10 school year, PALCS continued to use TDEF for teacher evaluation. This framework adapts the Charlotte Danielson model for teacher evaluation (as found in PDE Forms 426, 427, and 428) in order to match the demands of teaching in the cyber environment in general and at PALCS in particular. In this tool, the art of teaching is viewed through four domains, each broken out into three components, to create an overarching framework for thinking about virtual teaching:

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Domain 2: The Learning Environment

Domain 3: Instruction

Domain 4: Professional Responsibility

TDEF includes "positive indicators" to help evaluators to know what specific teacher behaviors to look for, as well as designated skills and strategies needed for success in each domain. Although TDEF does provide a structure for evaluation, including four performance levels, it is designed also to function as a framework for development, helping teacher focus on particular areas for self-directed professional growth.

Over the course of the year, Subject Area Coordinators met regularly with individual teachers, the majority of whom were headquartered in the same office space as the administrative staff and team leadership. The year began with each teacher completing a self-review in all twelve TDEF components and targeting 3-5 components for growth. Then in the fall semester, the spring semester, and then again at the end of the year, Subject Area Coordinators conducted one-on-one meetings with their department members in order to review performance and set goals for further growth. At each of these stopping points, the teacher used the TDEF Workbook to document reflections on his or her progress thus far. The Coordinator, in turn, used the Targeted Component Review Form to give the teacher feedback. For the year-end

meeting, the Subject Area Coordinator also filled out a TDEF Summary form that included both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the teacher's performance through the year. These Summary forms were then reviewed and signed by the Associate Director of Academics and the Chief Academic Administrator. Teachers who wished to appeal their evaluation were given the opportunity to schedule meetings with the Associate Director of Academics, the Chief Academic Administrator, or both.

B) A number of people are responsible for teacher and staff evaluation. Our Associate Director of Academics has administrative certification. The Associate Director of Academics is responsible for ensuring that all teachers are properly reviewed by their Subject Area Coordinators. Overseeing the Associate Director of Academics is the Chief Academic Administrator, who has served, in the past, as both principal and superintendent of schools. The Director of Student Services is responsible for evaluation of Student Services staff, and the CEO is responsible for evaluation of all administrative staff.

C) Professional development for evaluators, particularly in the areas of special education and instructional techniques that are unique to the mission of the charter school.

Teachers received professional development opportunities on a weekly (or at least monthly) basis and participated in mandatory in-service trainings several times over the course of the year.

New teachers were required to complete an extensive five-day orientation. New teachers were given training on educational software, the use of online resources, policies and procedures, methods to make instruction effective in the online environment, and induction.

## **Teacher Evaluation - Attachment**

- Teacher Evaluation Plan

## **SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Leadership Changes**

During the 2009-2010 school year, no changes were made in the membership of the Board of Directors.

The position of Chief Academic Administrator was eliminated due to a resignation, and the responsibilities of the academic program are now administered by the Associate Director of Academics.

### **Board of Trustees**

<u>Name of Trustee</u>	<u>Office (if any)</u>
William Middleton	President
Donald L. Drain	Secretary
Gwenne Alexander	Treasurer
David Conboy	member

## **Professional Development (Governance)**

Professional development for the governing body of the school included ongoing communication and consultation with the Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools (PCCS) and PALCS solicitor Andrew Lehr, Esq.

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

The Board of Directors is responsible for hiring, providing overall direction, and evaluating the Chief Executive Officer, who in turn manages the daily operation of the school. The CEO is evaluated by the Board on an annual basis.

In monthly Executive Sessions and at monthly Board meetings, comprehensive financial reports are presented for review; these reports are prepared by an independent accounting firm. Additionally, the Board commissions an annual financial audit by an independent accounting firm. Student enrollment and child accounting reports are presented to the Board, along with program reports submitted by each department within the school.

Additionally, PALCS continued to be visited by members of the state House of Representatives, county and local officials.

All Board Meetings are held at 1332 Enterprise Drive, West Chester. The Executive Session begins at 5 p.m. and the Public Session begins at 6 p.m.

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

- 10-11 Board Meeting Schedule

## **Community and Parent Engagement**

During 2009-2010, the Board of Directors supported opportunities for community and parent engagement in school activities through a highly visible website ([www.palcs.org](http://www.palcs.org)).

The organization has on staff a parent liaison to serve as a tangible link to parents and families. The parent liaison works closely with the Student Services and academic departments, as well as the Strategic Planning and School Improvement Task Force, to help identify ways to improve the delivery of educational and support services.

PALCS continues to have six Regional Area Community Coordinators to organize field trips and activities for families throughout the state.

In May 2010, PALCS sponsored an Open House. Parents across the state were encouraged to attend or participate live via the web. Three members of the Board of Directors were present to meet with parents and students and answer questions.

As of January 2009, all Board meetings are broadcast live via the Internet, and a summary of all minutes are posted on the website. Time at the end of each Board meeting is set aside for live questions and comments from families of students.

Under the direction of the Director of Student Programs, weekly chat sessions were held for parents on Wednesday evenings. Parents were given key informational updates during these sessions, and they were encouraged to ask questions and voice opinions on various topics.

Additionally, a Virtual Bulletin Board continues to post community and school-sponsored activities held in local regions throughout the state, in order to enhance opportunities for face-to-face interaction between students and families.

Special events such as the first course selection evening, annual original murder mystery comedy play (written expressly for PALCS students) helped to build a sense of community. A Spring Fling week during April encouraged students, families, and teachers to participate together in daily activities such as scavenger hunts, dress-up day, funny hat day, Hippie day, and Hawaiian day. School picnics were held in September and June in Eastern and Western Pennsylvania; all picnics were extremely well attended.

The 2010 Graduation ceremony was held in Lancaster and attended by more than a 1,100 family members and friends, as well as 254 graduating seniors. The special guest and keynote speaker was U.S. Congressman Joseph Pitts.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

There were no major fund-raising activities for the 2009-2010 school year.

There are no major fund-raising activities planned for the 2010-2011 school year at this time.

### **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

PALCS budgets for emergencies, shortfalls or delays in receiving state or federal monies by keeping billing to school districts current and communicating to vendors that there may be delays in payment due to funding delays and by leasing computers and office equipment. The Board has developed policies that govern Business Operations, Internal Controls, Business Policies and Procedures, Petty Cash and Investments. Each month a financial report is presented to the Board of Directors by an independent accountant that details the current financial status.

### **Accounting System**

PALCS budgets for emergencies, shortfalls or delays in receiving state or federal monies by keeping billing to school districts current and communicating to vendors that there may be delays in payment due to funding delays and by leasing computers and office equipment. The Board has developed policies that govern Business Operations, Internal Controls, Business Policies and Procedures, Petty Cash and Investments. Each month a financial report is presented to the Board of Directors by an independent accountant that details the current financial status.

## **Accounting System**

The school uses the QuickBooks Accounting System. It follows these guidelines in the practices of accounting:



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

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

- 2010 Preliminary Statement of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances
- Signature Page

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

The accounting firm of Siegal and Drossner, PC conducted an Independent Audit for year ended June 30, 2009.

The audit team has been in and is working on a draft of an audit for school year 09-10, and will be complete in the fall. Preliminary statements of financial information can be found in the Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances sheet.

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

- Auditor's Report 2009

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

We have not had a state audit, so there are no citations and follow-up actions.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

In July 2009, our office in Western Pennsylvania moved to a larger facility outside of Pittsburgh in Harmorville. The larger space currently houses administration, faculty and staff, and accommodates student orientations, technology training, shipping of equipment, and other school-related activities.

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

Due to the increase in student population and staff in Eastern Pennsylvania, including students attending the University Scholars program, the Long-Range Building Plan Committee investigated options for a larger facility that will house the gifted academic program, elementary and middle school faculty and support personnel. The agreement is nearing completion for a location close to our headquarters, and the move is planned prior to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

Long-term capital needs include an expanded technology infrastructure, enhancements to facilitate cyber instructional delivery, webcasting opportunities, and opportunities for community outreach.

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

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

The Director of Facilities conducts six fire drills per school year.

During the 2009-2010 school year, PALCS has made changes in our school environments in hopes of improving the health of our students, staff and families. Our Coordinated School Health Programs' WILD Committee, **Wellness In Life Decisions**, has promoted many school sponsored activities to assist our school community to make healthy choices for themselves. We have offered weight management clinics, on-site zumba, yoga classes and chair massages for interested employees. We have an exercise room on-site for employee use with instructions available from a certified personal trainer. WILD also assisted with a health fair and provided weekly health tips for families and staff by email.

Our Health Services department has posted health information and PA mandated health requirements, information and forms on our school website for easy access by our cyber school community. In an effort to obtain required health information, health screenings are performed during each new student orientation and requested from each returning student by mail. When necessary, PALCS staff travels to accommodate the needs of families in an effort to obtain health information. All data is entered into a computer health database that has secured, limited access meeting HIPAA requirements.

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

- 09-10 Immunizations
- 09-10 Student Wellness Policy

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

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School maintains the following insurance coverage policies and programs:

- The Hartford
- Commercial General Liability
- Automobile Liability (Scheduled, Hired & Non-Owned)

- Excess/Umbrella Liability
- Workers Compensation and Employers' Liability  
Business Personal Property
- Lexington Insurance Co
- Sexual Misconduct Liability Insurance
- American International Companies
- E&O, D&O, EPLI

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

- insurance verifications

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

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

Total professional staff for Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School for school year 2010-2011 was 156, an increase from 2009-2010 of 23 professional staff member positions (17.9%) Of those 156 staff members, 21 were new (13.46%).

Of the new professional staff members, 22 were with the school the whole year (96%).

From the 2009-2010 school year, 96% of the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School professional staff member were retained for the 2010-2011 school year. Teachers choose to remain at Pennsylvania Leadership because of their desire to teach in an innovative environment and the impact that they have on their students. PALCS believes in collaboration amongst the staff and offers opportunities for each teacher to have a voice in the daily operations of the school through different committees or other means. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's commitment to excellence and innovation continues to allow the teachers more opportunities to improve their teaching while discovering different approaches due to the availability of technology. Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School also works with teachers by offering flexibility as far as the start and end of their work day as well as opportunities to work from home if needed.

Reasons that teachers that have chosen not to come back range from a desire to work in a physical classroom with students to working from home instead of a physical building.

Out of the professional staff members who did not return, seven resigned to seek other opportunities and one was not retained by PALCS.

As evidence of submission for elementary and secondary professional personnel report, since this report has been retired by the PDE, we have included our Accuracy Certification Statements from PIMS to verify that we submitted our staff profiles.

## Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- Replacement: PIMS Professional Staff Report
- 09-10 PDE 414

## Student Enrollment

A) Student Enrollment policies and procedures follow all applicable PDE requirements and state law. The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School board recognizes that all resident children in Pennsylvania qualify for admission to Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School as follows:

As a charter school, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School shall not discriminate in its admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual ability, or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a person with a disability, proficiency in the English language or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district.

As a charter school, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School may limit admission to a particular grade level, a targeted population group composed of at-risk students, or areas of concentration of the school such as mathematics, science or the arts.

As a charter school, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School may establish reasonable criteria to evaluate prospective students as outlined in the school's charter.

If more students apply to Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School than the number of attendance slots available in the school, then students must be selected on a random basis from a pool of qualified applicants meeting the established eligibility criteria and submitting an application by the deadline established by the charter school. However, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School may give preference in enrollment to a child of a parent who has actively participated in the development of the charter school and to siblings of students presently enrolled in the charter school. First preference shall be given to students who reside in the chartering school districts.

The Board of Trustees of PALCS authorizes the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School as follows:

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School will utilize an open enrollment plan to encourage all parents to consider enrolling their children. Any child who is qualified under the laws of Pennsylvania for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School.

Applications for student slots must be submitted by a deadline that will be established and made known by Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School.

Kindergarten is offered. Students who wish to enroll must turn 5 years old by October 31 of their enrollment year.

If more students submit applications than can be accommodated by the school's capacity -class, grade, or building - a lottery will be held to enroll students on a specified date that will be made known to all applicants and their families.

All students whose enrollment forms were filed by the enrollment deadline will be separated by grade and entered into a lottery. A drawing of names will then be held by grade until all open slots in each grade level are filled, with preference given first to students who reside in the chartering school districts.

A waiting list will be maintained in order drawn by lot, if needed, for the admission of students at a grade level should space become available during the school year. Students whose applications are received after the deadline will be placed on the waiting list in the order that their applications are received. Preference will be given first to students who reside in the chartering school districts.

In the 2008-2009 school year, the lottery system was used for enrolling 11th graders. The lottery was established because the class had exceeded capacity. The lottery system was posted on PALCS public website. Upon submission of enrollment forms, families were notified of the lottery and with their permission, added to a waiting list. When space became available in the class, a drawing from the names on the waiting list was held. Families were notified. Families of students who were not drawn in the lottery were updated and given the opportunity to remain on the waiting list if desired.

Students are allowed to withdraw from the charter school at any time, upon written notice by the child's parent or guardian and upon evidence of arrangements at an admitting school. The district of residence will be notified by the school when a student withdraws.

No tests will be administered to students in order to determine eligibility for admission.

Students who have been expelled from school because their behavior reflected concerns for their personal safety or for the safety of others will be reviewed individually and enrollment decisions will be made in full compliance with Pennsylvania law and with the State Board of Education regulations.

<b>2009-2010 School Year</b>				
<b>GRADE LEVEL</b>	<b>ENROLLED as of 9/8/2009</b>	<b>ADDED after 9/8/2009 but before 6/10/2010</b>	<b>DROPPED between 9/8/2009 and 6/10/2010</b>	<b>ENDING ENROLLMENT 2009-2010</b>
K5F	37	21	13	45
1	52	28	10	70
2	49	28	14	63
3	52	29	16	65
4	55	26	19	62
5	95	46	17	124
6	115	49	31	133
7	149	91	42	198
8	181	97	49	229
9	243	35	64	214
10	321	41	79	283
11	322	51	108	265

12	266	17	254	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1937</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>1780</b>

The number of students who completed the 2008 - 2009 school year who are currently enrolled to return for the 2008 - 2009 school year is 1780.

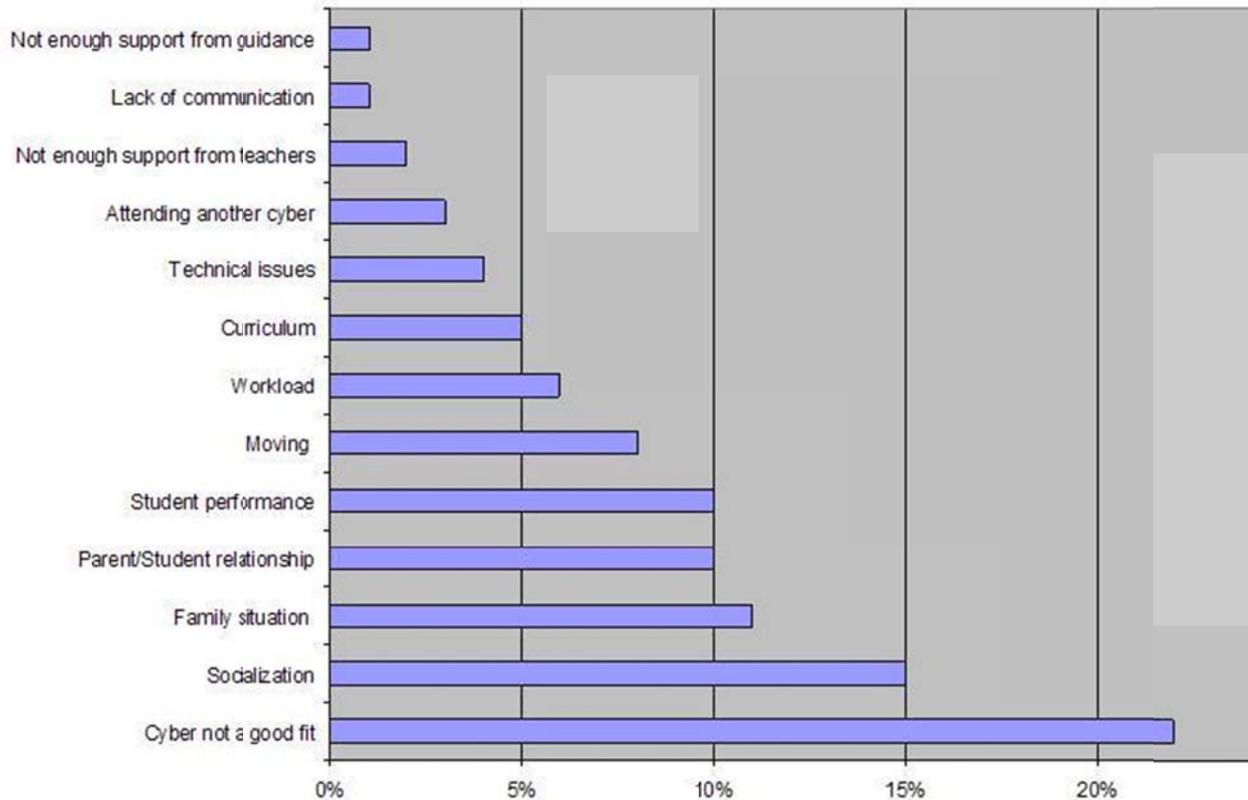
Number of Students Required to Leave PALCS:

- 122 Withdrawn for reasons of Academic Truancy
- 49 Withdrawn for Truancy
- 0 Students were Expelled
- 545 Students left Voluntarily

B) Looking at our enrollment numbers during 2008-2009, one can see that enrollment decreased by 8% this year. Although PALCS had a projected enrollment of 2300 at the end of the school year, the year ended with 520 fewer students than that number.

Of the students who left the school, 17% were withdrawn due to academic truancy and 9% were withdrawn for truancy. The remaining 74% of students chose to leave of their own accord. Reasons for leaving are varied. The chart below shows the reasons given by students who withdrew during the 2009-2010 school year. The information was gathered by a Student Services Representative at withdrawal during a phone exit interview. This was the second year an exit interview process was instituted across the board for all students who indicated they wanted to leave the school.

### Reasons for PALCS Withdrawal 2009-2010



PALCS recognizes that cyber schooling is not for every student and family, and many of our withdrawals (60%) are because this type of schooling was not a good fit for the students. This accounts for four of the reasons shown above - "Cyber Not a Good Fit," "Socialization," "Family situation," and "Parent/Student relationship."

The most frequent reason why students left us during 2009-2010 was "Cyber not a good fit." The majority of PALCS students come from a traditional, brick and mortar environment. Not all students and families are prepared for the challenges of cyber education. Although PALCS provides intensive orientation for new families to try to ease the transition to cyber school, this type of schooling is not for all families. This also relates to "Socialization" and "Parent/Student relationship." The lack of socialization with their peers and the increased amount of time spent in the home with parents can impact cyber students. For some families, dealing with these challenges and they choose to return to the traditional classroom.

A reason for why students and families were leaving PALCS that increased dramatically this year was "Family Situation Changed." The economy impacted many of our families, and parents who were able to stay home with their children and serve as Home Facilitators now had to return to the workforce, and their children had to return to brick and mortar schooling.



When one looks at the chart Previous/Future Schooling 2009-2010, one can see that the majority of students who withdrew during 2009-2010 came to us from a public brick and mortar school (75%) so had no experience with cyber schooling previous to PALCS. After leaving PALCS, only 9% of students plan on going to another cyber charter school, indicating that the fit with the cyber environment was the issue, not necessarily the fit with PALCS.

There are many reasons for withdrawals that PALCS can address as a school. These include "Student Performance," "Workload," "Curriculum," "Technical Issues," "Not enough support from teachers," "Lack of Communication" and "Not enough support from guidance." All of these responses were forwarded to our School Improvement Task Force Sub-Committee for Enrollment and Retention, and the conversation for how to reduce the instances of students and families leaving us for these reasons is ongoing.

Some reasons for withdrawal are outside our control, however. Those include "Family situation," "Parent/Student relationship," and "Moving."

## **Student Enrollment - Attachment**

- 09-10 Enrollment Policies and Procedures

## **Transportation**

Since PALCS is a cyber charter school, no transportation is provided.

## **Food Service Program**

As a cyber charter school, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School does not have a food service program.

## **Student Conduct**

A) Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's expectations for student behavior and discipline are comprehensive. These policies include an Honor Code and Students Rights and Responsibilities, Disciplinary Records, Special Education Students and Acceptable Use of Technology. In addition, the school has definite Rules of Conduct, a description of Level I and Level II Offenses, and Approved Corrective Action for those offenses.

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School has high expectations for all students. In order for students to reach his/her potential, the school environment should be safe, orderly, and encourage the fullest possible educational development of each student. PALCS will not tolerate any actions from the student that in any way interferes with the delivery of educational services, jeopardizes the health, safety, and well being of any member of the school family, or threaten the integrity and stability of the school itself.

Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's rules of conduct and discipline policy defines the types of offenses that would lead to exclusion from the school and are published for teachers, students, and families per PA Code § 12.6 in the PALCS Parent and Student Handbook.

Offenses are broken into 2 types: Level I and Level II. All offenses for Level I and Level II are listed in the PALCS Parent and Student Handbook per PS § 12.6 with descriptions of conduct violations and approved actions for both Level I and Level II offenses.

If a student commits a level I or II offense that warrants a suspension or expulsion, the following steps are taken:

- Parents are notified in writing of the suspensions and reasons for suspension, and are given an opportunity to respond unless the health, safety or welfare of the school community is threatened per PA Code § 12.6(ii, iii).
- If the suspension exceeds 3 school days, the student and the parent shall be given the opportunity for an informal hearing per PA Code § 12.6(iv).

- The following are due process requirements for an informal hearing as regulated by per PA Code § 12.8(c,1,2,I,ii,iii,iv,v).
- Notification of the reasons for the suspension shall be given in writing to the parents or guardian and to the student;
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing shall be given;
- A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing;
- A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his own behalf; and
- The district shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first 5 days of the suspension.

If a student's actions result in expulsion from PA Leadership Charter School, a hearing must be held before the governing board per PA Code § 12.8(b) and a majority vote of the entire school board is required to expel a student.

The following are due process requirements for an informal hearing as regulated by per PA Code § 12.8(b, 1 et. all).

- Notification of the charges shall be sent to the student's parents or guardian by certified mail;
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the hearing must be given;
- The hearing shall be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing;
- The student has the right to be represented by counsel;
- The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses;
- The student has the right to request that any such witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined;
- The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his own behalf;
- A record must be kept of the hearing, either by a stenographer or by tape recorder.
- The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy of the transcript; and
- The proceeding must be held with all reasonable speed.

Where the student disagrees with the results of the formal hearing, recourse is available in the appropriate court of the Commonwealth. If it is alleged that a constitutional issue is involved, the student may file a claim for relief in the appropriate Federal district court.

B) The number of students suspended this year was 1 and there were no expulsions.

## **Student Conduct - Attachment**

- 09-10 Discipline Policy

## **Signature Page**

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

### **School Year: 2010**

The Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School within Chester County IU 24 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 Pennsylvania Leadership 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:** James Hanak   **Title:** CEO  
**Phone:** 610-701-3333   **Fax:** 610-701-3339  
**E-mail:** jhanak@palcs.org

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name:** William Middleton   **Title:** President of Board of Trustees  
**Phone:** 610-430-3497   **Fax:** none  
**E-mail:** bmiddle623@aol.com

---

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

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

**Name:** Amy Murphy   **Title:** Special Education Coordinator  
**Phone:** 610-701-3333   **Fax:** 610-701-3339  
**E-mail:** amurphy@palcs.org

---

*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

**Signature Page - Attachment**

- Assurance for the Operation of Charter School Services and Programs 2010