

**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT**

SCHOOL YEAR 2015-2016

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name: The Providence Creek Academy Charter School, Inc.

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Head of School

Date


Amy Santos
Board President

Date

I. Charter School Program

Narrative:

During the charter renewal process Providence Creek Academy Charter School received approval to change its mission statement to the following: *“The mission of PCA is to provide a safe, nurturing, and diverse campus environment allowing our K – 8 students to learn from experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting. Our students are empowered with opportunities to engage in a number of sports, visual and performing arts, creating connections with our community to provide deeper learning experiences.”*

Providence Creek Academy Charter School measures and tracks accomplishment in Academics, Athletics, and The Arts. The school reviews annual test scores, promotion/retention rates, and student growth toward college and career readiness as the measures for Academics. Athletics is measured by participation numbers on the school sports teams, the number of competitive events, and the creation of and student participation in courses that teach healthy lifestyles. The Arts is tracked through the number of students participating in and the expansion of music and other creative arts offerings. Student participation in Arts competitions is also included.

II. Performance Reflection

Please Complete the Questions that Match the Charter School’s Performance Tier.

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
“Meets Standard” overall ratings on all of the following: - 2013-14 and 2014-15 Org Frameworks - 2013-14 and 2014-15 Financial Frameworks	“Meets Standard” overall Ratings on one or more Performance Framework reports during 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years OR Opened in 2014-15 School	At any point during 2014-15 school year: - Renewed with Conditions - Placed on Formal Review - Earned “Falls Far Below Standard” on any Framework Report

- 2013-14 Academic Frameworks	Year, Never on Formal Review	
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Tier 2 Narrative:

What are the school’s academic performance outcomes that will demonstrate student growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness levels as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

In the spring of 2016, the progress of Providence Creek Academy students was assessed using the Smarter ELA/Literacy and Smarter Mathematics tests. The following information is based on the results published in September of 2016:

Number of Students Tested and Percent of Students Proficient for Students in Academy Charter School, 2015-2016

ELA/Literacy

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Percent Proficient
Grade 3	77	74%
Grade 4	72	79%
Grade 5	75	69%
Grade 6	73	74%
Grade 7	73	75%

Mathematics

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Percent Proficient
Grade 3	77	
Grade 4	71	
Grade 5	75	
Grade 6	73	
Grade 7	73	

Based on this data and in conjunction with other school level data (Scholastic Math Inventory, Teacher created tests), PCA has shifted focus on increased student achievement and success to Math and is implementing changes that will increase math scores. These changes include:

- Transitioning to Eureka Math as the core math curriculum in grades K-8 in addition to the Ready Common Core workbooks used last school year. Our previous math resources and curriculum lacked tight alignment to the Common Core State Standards in

mathematics. Teachers often created lessons using resources located on the web or created from published curriculum sources. A recent study (Simplifying Teaching: A Field Experiment with Online "Off-the-Shelf" Lessons as reported in Education Week) demonstrates that high-quality lesson plans implemented with fidelity increases student performance. Eureka Math, also known as Engage NY, has substantial evidence supporting its efficacy (EdReports.org).

- Continued use of Pearson SuccessMaker which provides students with a customized learning path based on their individual needs.
- Use of new benchmark tests (Scholastic Reading Inventory and Scholastic Math Inventory) to better align with the Smarter Balanced test. The new benchmark tests provide a more accurate picture of where students are (especially in Math). The SMI focuses on quantile levels for students, and teachers have learned how to use the quantile score to look for resources by standards that meet each student's instructional quantile level.
- Weekly professional learning communities have been established to meet with grade level teams to support mathematics instruction and student engagement throughout the curriculum.
- Aligning classroom assessments (Eureka Math) to the Common Core State Standards and incorporating more performance tasks into classroom assessments.
- Improving targeted Math resources for RTI.
- Scheduling specific time for each grade level for RTI
- Tier 3 RTI interventions conducted by the Math Specialist
- Continuation of the 90 minutes of Math instruction daily

- Providing targeted Math professional development for teachers to support the effective use of new resources as well as strategies for continued student success.

Smarter Balanced has re-introduced an assessment in Writing; therefore, PCA has added Writing resources to the curriculum to provide students with targeted instruction that aligns to the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced. Over the next five years, PCA would like to add further performance tasks to its assessments and instruction and move toward more project-based learning. When students are engaged in hands-on experiences, they are better able to apply the skills and knowledge that they have learned.

Continuing in 2016-2017 the school strengthened its Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI process and began including more parent meetings to provide additional guidance and support at home. The school is further strengthening the RTI process by scheduling specific times in the day when Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI interventions will occur in each grade. During this time Tier 1 students will engage in enrichment activities, Tier 2 instruction will be given by classroom teachers, and Tier 3 intervention will be conducted by the Reading and Math Specialists.

PCA is utilizing Smarter Balanced resources to target instruction by claim level within regular classroom instruction. Based on subgroup data the lowest performing group overall is students with disabilities. During the 2016-2017 PCA continues the previous year's changes to its student services department to increase classroom level support for students. In addition to the supports these students receive in class they are also provided additional support through RTI.

PCA strives to continue to be above the state average in both ELA and Math, therefore rigorous short term and long term goals have been set for PCA students. With the changes that have been indicated above and continued analysis of data from state assessments, benchmark assessments, and classroom assessments PCA will increase overall school proficiency as follows:

Grade	ELA 2016	ELA 2017	ELA 2020	Math 2016	Math 2017	Math 2020
3	74%	80%	85%	73%	75%	85%
4	79%	80%	85%	66%	75%	85%
5	69%	75%	85%	49%	70%	85%
6	74%	80%	85%	44%	70%	85%
7	75%	80%	85%	59%	70%	85%
8	70%	75%	85%	34%	70%	85%

These goals were developed using PCA’s 2015-2016 Smarter Balanced results in conjunction with the Smarter Balanced goals that were presented by the Department of Education in September 2015:

- Increase Statewide ELA Proficiency from 52% to 76% by 2020
- Increase Statewide Math Proficiency from 39% to 69.5% by 2020

Since PCA’s last charter renewal in 2016, the school has revised its entire curriculum to align with the Common Core State Standards. PCA teachers have worked diligently to create stellar units of instruction that engage students in authentic learning. In ELA PCA students have consistently scored above the state average. The data above shows that the work to refine units has been successful. There is always room for improvement; therefore, this work is continuing in the 2016-2017 school year with changes and improvements to classroom assessments. Teachers are working to create more rigorous, application-based assessments that require a greater depth of knowledge. Instruction places the focus on the standard and

learning target for the lesson rather than just following what is in the book. It is imperative that the standards drive the instruction.

In order to continue increasing students' depth of knowledge, teacher-created curriculum units have been enhanced with supplemental resources that provide rigorous performance tasks and application of knowledge. PCA continues to use Ready Common Core Reading in the K-8 ELA classes; these resources are fully aligned to the Common Core and provide application questions and rich informational text at a very high level. The Ready Common Core Math had been added to grades 1-5 for 2015-2016. This resource contains additional application questions, and is used as a supplement in grades 1-8 to the Eureka Math that was introduced to students this year. For writing in the 2016-2017 school year, Ready Writing is used for grades 2-5, and Sadlier Grammar is used Writing in 6-8. Handwriting and Keyboarding Without Tears is used for grades K-5. In grades 3-5 the handwriting focuses on cursive writing. These resources are used in conjunction with PCA teacher-created units of instruction to provide more performance tasks and applications of knowledge. With the shift in assessments to Smarter Balanced, it is imperative that PCA students are prepared and able to write relevant essays and writing pieces that incorporate what they have read in a story or explain how they solved a math problem. These resources assist PCA teachers in actively engaging students in this process.

Over the years PCA staff members have noticed that the more technology is used, the less focus students have on their penmanship. PCA recognizes that penmanship is an important part of student success; therefore, Handwriting Without Tears resources have been implemented into the 1st-5th grade curriculum on a weekly basis. The goal is for students to be able to read and write cursive and be able to print legibly. This resource incorporates grammar and writing

within penmanship practice providing additional reinforcement in these areas. With the shift to Smarter Balanced assessments, students are now required to type their essays on the computer. In 2014-2015 this task was a struggle for PCA students because they were not yet proficient at typing. Although typing was incorporated into the PCA Special "Technology Class" at the lower grade levels, this was not enough time for students to become proficient in typing. The Keyboarding Without Tears program introduces the students in Kindergarten with learning basic typing skills and strategies incorporated into fun games. By utilizing this program instead of a free online program, PCA will be able to track student typing proficiency over the years and set clear benchmarks for students to help them become proficient in typing.

PCA believes that the changes that are being implemented will have a positive impact on student achievement and that students will continue to show growth.

What are the school's performance expectations in meeting its organizational responsibilities including, but not limited to, administrative operations, reporting, and legal responsibilities as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

The Organizational Framework Report for Providence Creek Academy for the reporting period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 was rated "Meets Standard" in all areas.

This rating was a change from the previous year in which 5 out of 13 areas were rated "Does Not Meet Standard." During the past school year policies and procedures were put in place to ensure that each area that did not meet standard was addressed in detail. As part of the ongoing oversight, the Board of Directors created an Oversight Committee that meets quarterly to review procedures and policies in each department. The committee ensures compliance to all policies and procedures. The Board of Directors continues to work with the Administrative Team to evolve procedures and policies that will ensure success as the school

continues to fulfill its mission for the students that attend PCA.

What are the school's financial performance expectations that will demonstrate viability and sustainability as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

The Finance Department of Providence Creek Academy was reorganized in the spring of 2015. Some policies have been revised and other policies have been introduced in order to have a more efficient Finance Department. These changes allow for a better check and balance system and fewer mistakes. The staff members in the Finance Department have completed all training requirements as of the date of this report. Each month the Citizens' Budget Oversight Committee meets to review the budget and ensures that the school's financial goals are met. Response to the SY 2015 to SY 2016 Financial Framework Draft Report concerning the areas that were highlighted in pink or red follows:

Sustainability Indicators:

2a. Total margin: In order for Providence Creek Academy to meet the requirement to update the busses for student transportation, the school began to replace busses in 2014. Reserve dollars were used to purchase four busses which cost \$72,412.00 each in the month of January of 2014 for a total of \$289,648.00. In July of 2014, PCA used additional reserve dollar to purchase another four busses for a total of \$285,388.00. In August of 2015, PCA again used reserve dollars to purchase four more busses for a total of \$286,148.00. Other needed improvements related to transportation and safety resulted in an additional use of \$62,412.39 of reserve funds. Since January of 2014, PCA has spent a total of \$923,596.39 on necessary mandated replacement of busses as well as other transportation and safety improvements. The total spending reflects safety improvements as well as facility improvements to bring the campus up-to-date for our students and staff. The spending of our reserve provides a negative

effect on Total Margin. If the reserves had not been spent; PCA would have received a “Meets Standard” rating in this area.

2b. Debt to Asset Ratio: Providence Creek Academy built a new school on a new campus on forty-four acres in 2009. The Debt to Asset Ratio will likely never change for the upcoming years; however, PCA is in the process of refinancing this debt which will lower the PCA debt by approximately \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00 per year in annual debt service. This refinancing will assist the school in “Meets Standard” rating for Debt to Asset Ratio in the near future.

2c. Cash Flow: As stated in the response to 2a. Total Margin, PCA has used reserve monies to improve the facilities and the transportation for its students. In total PCA has spent \$923,596.39 in improvements. The reserves are well over \$2,000,000.00 to satisfy the Fund Balance requirement as well as monies for unexpected expenses. PCA does not anticipate any additional monies to be spent in the near future, thus allowing for a steady climb in monies that will be set aside for the purpose of increasing the reserve funds.

PCA believes that the school has provided a reasonable explanation for the ratings “Does Not Meet Standard” and “Falls Far Below Standard.” PCA strives to maintain its financial feasibility with prudent policies and procedures in place and looks forward to continuing its financial stability in the future.

Overall, the financial system of Providence Creek Academy Charter School is sound and will be strengthened through continuous evaluation of the needs of PCA students which determines the use of funds to meet those needs. The school has and will continue to provide experiences to its students in Academics, Athletics, and the Arts. The school provides classroom experiences in these areas as well as tutoring, special assemblies to students, field trips, and

other afterschool activities. The school also has three contractors: a School Psychologist, an Occupational Therapist, and a Speech Therapist. One behavioral and four instructional paraprofessionals also work with PCA students. Additional support staff members include a Special Education Service Coordinator, a 504/DPAS II Service Coordinator, two Nurses, and an Interventionist. The school provides a full-service Dining Hall for students and teachers. Assessment regarding improvements of the school's facilities, programs, instructional materials, and staffing is a process that involves the collaborative effort of students, parents, teachers, support staff, maintenance staff, the Administration, and the Board of Directors of Providence Creek Academy, all of whom believe in and continue to work toward the success of the school's students.