

Providence Creek Academy Charter School
State of the School
October 2017

Providence Creek Academy Charter School is in good form today. The fiscal, organizational, and academic areas of the school have undergone change since the school opened and can be described as moving in a positive direction. The school has been in existence since 2002 and the student enrollment has grown from 425 students in grades K through 5 to 690 students in grades K through 8 for the FY2017-2018 school year. The school, which was first housed on rented property, is now located on a site which includes three main classroom buildings, an equipment storage building, and athletic fields on approximately forty-five acres of property owned by the school. Throughout this period of development at the school, there have been many changes. PCA's charter was renewed for the next five years in January of 2016.

The Board of Directors has established a Non-profit 501 (C) 3 Educational Foundation to assist with the expansion of the facilities as well as refinancing the school's current debt structure. The Board of Directors, Head of School, and Finance Department are working with several financial organizations to establish the best course of action to ensure that cash flow is positive and school debt is the lowest possible. The refinancing is still in process.

The 2015-2016 Performance Framework for Providence Creek Academy issued on November 15, 2016 was rated "Meets Standard". All areas that were rated met standard.

The Board of Directors has filled teacher vacancies with new teachers and experienced teachers; some have five years or less experience and others have fifteen-plus years. The Board of Directors welcomes all the new staff members and wishes them well.

Enrollment:

PCA enrollment information was completed using the Data Service Center. Electronic applications were completed by parents. The lottery was conducted, and invitations for enrollment were also electronic. There were a total of four hundred forty-three School Choice Applications. One hundred thirty-six students were accepted through the lottery. The September 30 Unit Count Submission was for 690 students, equaling 40.23 teaching units. The Waitlist contained one hundred ninety students as of September 30th. The school enrollment is at 103% of its approved enrollment.

Athletics:

The Athletic Department is moving forward with the Fall Sports Program which includes football, girls' volleyball, boys' and girls' cross country, and cheerleading. The football team is currently 1-0 and is supported by the cheerleading squad. The members of the cross country team are striving to achieve their "personal best," under new Head Coach Stephanie Duke. The volleyball team is currently 1-0 and is looking for a strong year out of their upperclassmen. All of the teams are working to raise funds for the school athletic program. The Fall Sports have just completed their coupon book fundraiser and football is almost set to begin the "Kidnap a Teacher" fundraiser. The Fall Athletics Dance and N.U.T. day were a huge success this year. Overall the student population in the athletic program is increasing. Winter Sports include boys' and girls' basketball, cheer, and competition cheer. Spring Sports include boys' baseball and

girls' softball. All of the teams have a quality coach, and students are improving in their chosen sport. All PCA students participate in Physical Education classes.

The major concern right now is busses. We have had to cancel two volleyball games and now a cross country meet, with the possibility of a football game due to lack of bus drivers. We are hoping to get this situation rectified as soon as possible.

The Arts:

Ballet

One hundred fifteen students are currently enrolled in the dance program. A Parent Observation Week will be held October 23 through October 28. *Nutcracker* rehearsals are well underway. Performances are scheduled for December 9 and 10 with a school performance on December 8. The annual Silent Auction will be held in conjunction with the *Nutcracker* performances. This is the largest Ballet fundraiser for the year.

PCBT was evaluated and was accepted into Regional Dance America/Northeast. Advanced, Apprentice, and Company members attended the National Festival in May 2017 in Phoenix, AZ along with ninety other studios from around the country. This year, PCBT members will be attending and performing at the Regional Festival in Manchester, New Hampshire in May 2018. They will be reevaluated at the Festival to become a Performing Member. In addition to attending the Delaware Dance Festival for the seventh consecutive year, PCBT will also be taking classes and performing at the Philadelphia Youth Dance Fest for the second year in a row. PCBT will also be performing locally at Railroad Days in Clayton and the IDEA Awards. Multiple Guest Choreographers will be coming to PCBT to set original pieces of Choreography. The *Summer Concert*, which involves all levels, will be on June 16th and 17th. The Summer Intensive Program is set for July 2 through August 3rd. As with past Summer Intensives, PCBT plans to offer a wide range of classes featuring numerous Guest Artists and culminating with a Summer Showcase.

Band:

There are currently ninety-one students participating in the band program. Fifty-four of those are Beginners; the remainder of the band students are in the Elementary Advanced and Middle School Bands. When students who had expressed interest in band did not join this year, the band director spoke with parents to verify that it was not an issue of obtaining an instrument. Parents preferring that their students wait another year and parents with concerns about academics remain the two main reasons for changes in expected student participation for the year. Beginners are in their fifth week of lessons, and the students are doing well. All students are preparing for the Winter Concert on December 19th.

In the last three months, PCA has taken a couple of instruments into Music and Arts for several repairs including: a Tuba, Tenor Saxophone, and a French Horn. These repairs will allow students to play the instruments in perfect working condition, without frustration of faulty parts. Mr. Salerni and the band students are extremely grateful to Mrs. Hanson and the entire PCA Administrative Team for allowing us to repair these instruments and for their continued support of our band program.

Art:

Art is off to a great start this Trimester. "Scholastic Art" has been incorporated into the art history component for the students in fifth through eighth grades. Students begin each art class with a warm up, "Sketch This". Realistic drawing from observation allows students to become confident drawers. Students observe a real still life composed of different objects, examine its forms, their positioning, and values, and sketch it. PCA now has a classroom set of "Meet the Artist" books, and the Art teacher has brought in her personal art book collection for the classroom art library.

The Square One Art fundraiser is under way.

Collaboration is a big part of PCA Art activities. Here some examples:

- In the works is collaboration with the Biggs Museum of Art in Dover. Our students will have an opportunity to participate in the extended Junior Docents Program offered by the Biggs Museum. This program offers several components: Research, Creative Expression, and Presentation. Two teachers, Dr. B (Art) and Mr. Z (World Languages), are planning to offer this program to the PCA students in 2nd Trimester.
- Art teacher and Ballet instructor started to exchange ideas on set design for the performance of Nutcracker early December, 2017. Art Electives students will work on creating two pieces for this event.

Percussion Ensemble:

There are twenty-four students in the group this year, and their first performance was at the Charter School Network's IDEA awards. We also performed at the PCA Fall Fest. We are currently looking into a performance at the Wells Fargo Center with the Philadelphia Soul, details will be provided throughout the year on this event.

Chorus:

This year there are approximately seventy 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students enrolled in the Concert Choir. We are currently preparing for our Winter Concert which includes a number of songs performed by the Concert Choir, as well as the Women's Choir, and the Select Choir. The Delaware Junior All State Chorus auditions are approaching and PCA has 9 students auditioning. Also, 14 young ladies will be participating in the 2nd annual DE ACDA Women's Choir event in November.

Elementary Choir:

This choir began its first rehearsals a few weeks ago, and the students are preparing for the Winter Concert. There are approximately fifty students from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade participating. Also, Mrs. Hanson is now on the Board of the DE ACDA (American Choral Directors Association), and is co-chairing the Children's Honor Choir event.

General Music:

Alumni, Joseph Napolitano will be coming down to give a day of sessions about Musical Theater, talking about his work in scene-ography, costuming, and his work with the Broadway Green Alliance. We are also looking into running a bus up to NYC for a day to do work with Joseph, as well as explore the city. Mr. Salerni and Mrs. Hanson are looking into adding

Ukelele's into the curriculum. We are getting pricing, and are going to see how to fit them into general music classes or as a middle school elective.

Drama:

Last year, the PCA drama club put on two amazing performances: *CATS the Musical* and *The Out of Work Actor's Café*. The Out of Work Actor's Café was the first student-directed drama performance. Student's created the story, wrote the scripts, organized the song selections, and created original dance routines. The Out of Work Actor's Café spring production was a great success, and through its success, many more students and parents have shown interest in the program for their students and as volunteers. This year, we have enough interest to create a fully staffed student stage crew and marketing team who will be in charge of making the production go smoothly and helping to market the show to the school and the community. Providence Creek Academy Drama Club is on its way, and the lights are shining brighter than ever!

This year Scott Persinger, the seventh grade English teacher at Providence Creek Academy, will be directing the hit Broadway musical *The Lion King* this spring on March 22nd and 23rd at 6 pm, and March 25th at 1 pm. The musical will showcase sixteen amazing student performers, plus an amazing ensemble made of up of talented students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Two of our featured students will be Josiah Patterson as Mufasa/Simba the King/Prince of the Pridelands and Emma VanOrden as Raifiki the looney monkey wise-woman

Buildings and Grounds:

The dedicated staff of the Buildings and Grounds Department has continued to make improvements that include repairing the safety equipment to restoring the grounds that will offer an appeal to our students and families. This work includes the installation of drains in the walking paths, replanting flowers, planting trees and shrubs, painting classrooms and hallways, repairing street lighting, repairing existing security cameras, and application of asphalt patch in the roadways. Additional playground mulch has been added to ensure a safe play area for students. Work for the improvement of the buildings and grounds continue at the time of this report. Other projects are envisioned to keep pace with the demands of supporting the students' education.

Technology:

The technology implementation at the school has been significantly improved over the previous year. The network infrastructure has been redesigned and implemented with increases in bandwidth and redundancies put in place to ensure stability. The Internet connection was also upgraded, increasing available Internet bandwidth ten-fold. Local Area Wi-Fi has been improved, with Wireless Access Points now installed in every classroom and new management software deployed to control the wireless environment. The school's servers were updated and optimized to minimize delays and increase reliability, and a security fence encloses the server/storage room to provide an additional physical point of protection. New HP LaserJet printers have been purchased for the classrooms and office staff, and new copiers have been leased. The school is leasing three new mobile computer carts in addition to the existing units, and is in the process of deploying additional student PCs to the Upper School classrooms. Teacher lap tops are being replaced on an as needed basis. We do have new lap tops in stock.

The school's technology is increasing, and the Administrative Team is very satisfied with outsourcing the maintenance of the technology.

Tech Lab:

Ms. Andrea Grier is our technology teacher. She has been following the PCA technology curriculum sequence and is using the i-SAFE curriculum in the technology program, which is mandated by the state. In addition to the i-SAFE curriculum, she has also used Keyboarding Without Tears and Everfi's Ignition – Digital Literacy & Responsibility online program.

Transportation:

The Transportation Department has fourteen buses that operate on a daily basis and two spare buses that are used when needed. Bus evacuation is scheduled for October 17, 2017, with a rain date of October 18, 2017 and March 6, 2018, with a rain date of March 7, 2018. Materials for annual training were purchased. The materials will be reviewed and a program will be set up to ensure all drivers are trained every year. The four-hour annual training for fiscal year 2018 will be scheduled in the month of January.

Food Service:

The Dining Hall serves breakfast to approximately one hundred fifty and lunch to approximately three hundred fifty students per day. Two hundred and sixty-seven students participate in the reduced /free lunch program. The school does receive income from the Federal Government to supplement the Dining Hall. PCA is in the process of using more "farm to school food." Fruits and vegetables are purchased from local markets and smaller vendors in addition to large vendors. The Dining Hall is also working on more "made from scratch cooking" as a way to improve quality and cost of food served to PCA students. The Food Service Department participates in the Back-pack Program through the Food Bank of Delaware to assist in supplying food for one hundred eighty-two PCA disadvantaged students.

Parent Involvement:

Parents continue to be involved in the school, volunteering in and out of the classroom. They participate in the PTO, serve as chaperones on field trips, and help at school dances and after-school student activities. The time and effort of all parents in support of PCA is appreciated as it positively impacts student success.

Parent Teacher Organization:

Last year we purchased computers for the upper school, some for the core building and lower school. This year we paid for the 2nd basketball hoop to be installed and replacement parts for the lower school playground. We purchased electric pencil sharpeners for each classroom and one for the teachers' lounge. We also have provided teacher money to start the year off to offset what they spend on classroom supplies. We will hold two Book Fairs this school year, Breakfast with Santa, Quarter Auction, Fall Festival and several movie nights.

Finance:

The Finance Department has remained the same since the changes made in the Spring of 2015. Working at PCA once or twice a month, Mr. William Bentz continues to provide oversight of the school's finances to the Administrative Team, Board of Directors, HR/Finance Manager, and

Administrative Assistant. Policies continue to be revised and other policies have been introduced in order to have a more efficient Finance Department. These changes allow for better checks and balances 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 Oversight Budget Committee meets to review the budget and ensures that the school's financial goals are met. The most recent Audit for FY 2016 has been completed with no findings. The Audit Firm performed an in-depth look at the school's operations and financial controls that are in place, and there were only a couple minor recommendations made regarding the personnel files that were audited. All recommendations will be corrected. The only concern was the impact of GASB 75, which may be a concern as this relates to the employee pension plan.

The School has established an Educational Foundation for the school. The purpose of the Foundation is to raise money for the school. The last Financial Framework Report was received by PCA on November 17, 2016 from the Department of Education. The overall rating was "Does not Meet Standard." The areas that did not meet was the Total Margin, Debt to Asset Ratio, and Cash Flow. The following are responses submitted to the Delaware Department of Education;

Total Margin: In order for Providence Creek Academy to meet the requirement to update our buses for student transportation, the school began to replace buses in 2014. Our reserve dollars were used to purchase four buses which cost \$72,412.00 each in the month of January of 2014 for a total of \$289,648.00. 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.

Debt to Asset Ratio: Providence Creek Academy built a new school on a new campus on forty-four acres in 2009. Our 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 our debt by approximately \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00 per year in annual debt service. This refinancing will assist the school in "Meeting the Standard" for Debt to Asset Ratio in the near future.

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. Reserve available monies 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.

Administrative Team:

The Administrative Team currently consists of a Head of School and Principal. Both are twelve-month employees.

Office Staff:

The current Office Staff consists of the PCA Office Manager and an Assistant. A co-op student also works part-time in the office. The office does an excellent job interacting with PCA students, parents, school staff, and community members.

Teaching Staff:

At the beginning of the school year PCA was in need of a World Culture teacher, Art teacher and 7-8th grade Social Studies Teacher. The World Culture teacher for the 2016-2017 school year had requested to transfer to an elementary class, therefore leaving the World Culture position vacant. All positions mentioned above were filled pretty quickly into the 2017-2018 school year with highly qualified candidates. PCA has forty-one teachers scheduled for four hundred thirty-one classes. Of the forty-one teachers, all are certified, or have all the qualifications needed to be certified and are pending the approval of DOE DEEDs. The school has three contractors: a Speech and Language Therapist, a School Psychologist, and an Occupational Therapist. There are four instructional para-professionals. Additional support staff members include a Reading Specialist, a Math Specialist, a Special Education Service Coordinator, DPAS II Service Coordinator, one full time Nurse, a part-time Interventionist, and a full-time Interventionist.

Mentoring:

The mentoring program consists of all novice teachers (those beginning the school year with 0 – 2 years of experience) and all experienced teachers new to the State of Delaware.

- Year 1 Teachers are paired with an experienced teacher and will fulfill the following requirements:
 - Attend Ten After School PD Sessions
 - Observe an experienced Teacher (typically the mentor)
 - Be observed by the Mentor
 - Submit and follow a Professional Growth Plan
 - Complete the DDOE required ProEthica Course
- Year 2 Teachers are all mentored by the Lead Mentor and will fulfill the following requirements:
 - Attend Ten After School PD Sessions
 - Participate in a Book Study PLC
 - Submit and follow a Professional Growth Plan
 - Observations are decided on an individual teacher basis
- Year 3 Teachers are all mentored by the Lead Mentor and will fulfill the following requirements:
 - Attend Two After School PD Sessions
 - Participate in a self-guided weekly PLC to support each other
 - Submit and follow a Professional Growth Plan
- New-to-Delaware Teachers are all mentored by the Lead Mentor and will fulfill the following requirements:
 - Attend Two After School PD Sessions
 - Participate in a weekly PLC with Year 3 teachers
 - Submit and follow a Professional Growth Plan
 - Complete the DDOE required ProEthica Course

Student Services:

PCA continues to use the changes implemented in the area of student services during 2016-2017. Each area has a service coordinator to address student needs and provide teacher support. The Special Education Coordinator meets weekly with the team in order to stay informed on each area. There are IEPs for Special Education students in grades K through 8. Some of these

students also receive speech services. An evaluation process is in place for other students recommended for speech services and occupational therapy. Some PCA students have 504 Plans. The Interventionist is responsible for all 504 plans. All of these services and plans are reviewed and modified in accordance with student needs.

Student Health:

Over the last few months, the Nurse's Office has implemented the use of technology. The nurses began to use Google Voice as a means to communicate with parents when their child is in the office. While no confidential information is exchanged, a text is sent asking for a phone call to the Nurse's Office. Not many people answer the phone in this day and age. Most everyone uses text.

A Facebook page has also been created to allow the nurse to post important information from the office and offer another means of communication. The Nurse has been able to alert parents of upcoming screenings, letters coming home in folders, and important health topics specific to the school population.

The PCA nurse and school have recently partnered with the Sandy Hook Promise. This foundation was created by the parents of victims from the Sandy Hook School shooting. An assembly on Thursday, October 27 for grades 4-6 will discuss bullying and its effects, as well as the warning signs of potential violent behaviors and how to report these warnings to adults. The nurse continue to address particular student needs, including such special cases as instructing students on the self-administration of insulin.

A monthly newsletter will go home to students from the nurse. This letter will highlight a current and relevant health topic, highlight a student or staff member, offer health trivia to engage families, and communicate any special events within the nurse's office: screenings, school wide initiative like anti-bullying, etc.

The nurse's office has added a shout-out wall. The section of wall that surrounds the inside of the door contains hand-written notes from students who were asked to write down something good about themselves or something that they like about themselves.

"Need 1, Got 1": A compliment sheet is available to students. Compliments are free to take or give from this sheet. Compliments include: You're Helpful, You're A Good Listener, You're Thoughtful, You're Confident, You're Unique. These were added to the office to help create a positive environment and attitude for our students.

Tutoring:

This year the tutoring program will run very similar to last year with a few minor changes. There will still be 3 different sessions which will allow specific targeted instruction to meet the students' needs for that trimester. The sessions have been scheduled for recommendations of students to be due after each trimester's IPR grades are sent home. This will allow parents time to request tutoring prior to the groups being made. The classroom teachers will recommend struggling students, and will provide specific standards based goals for each student. This year students who need Reading tutoring will be grouped by their Guided Reading level rather than by grade. Tutors will keep a folder for each student to document their growth, or

what techniques and lessons were provided, as well as their work samples. There will also be a parent and student contract which clearly defines the expectations for students and parents during the tutoring period. The coordinator will be supervising students from dismissal until tutoring begins at 3:45, and will supervise pick up at the conclusion of tutoring. The coordinator will be rotating to the different groups to provide support, and to ensure that everyone is on task, as well as deal with any negative behaviors that may arise.

Aftercare:

Aftercare is operating efficiently with a solid enrollment and has students on a waiting list. The hours of operation are from 3:30 P.M. until 6:00 P.M. each day school is in session. This year a cap was placed on the number of students who can participate in Aftercare due to the demand and the physical space that was available. There are approximately forty children attending Aftercare each day, and the program is very successful. The program includes five paraprofessionals every day (one lead and four aides) and an Aftercare Coordinator to oversee the program.

LEAP (Learning Enrichment After-School Program):

The LEAP program will be held this Fall from the week of October 17th through the week of December 12th. Each class is \$40 and runs from 3:45 PM until 4:45 PM on the assigned days (Mondays and/or Thursdays). This year there will only be one program offered: Lacrosse (Girl's Rules)

Basic skills and rules for the girls game of lacrosse. Each student will be required to bring their own mouth guard, stick, goggles or helmet. Boys are allowed, but they will be playing girl's rules. Grades 4-8

School Climate and Safety:

A full-time Interventionist and a part-time Interventionist provide support for teachers and students to assist in handling student discipline behaviors and conflicts. The Code of Conduct is utilized to ensure students and teachers have a resource to determine what behaviors should be documented as a conduct referral and/or a classroom issue. Teachers participated in professional development training on school policies and procedures in our student code of conduct.

The Interventionist is in the process of scheduling the "Choice Road" for the Upper School students. The nurse and the interventionist work as a team to support students who need assistance and who are referred by a staff member. Student needs may include school supplies, school uniforms, or emotional support.

The part-time Interventionist is responsible for the In-School Suspension Program three days per week. The purpose of the In-School Suspension Program is to provide a consequence for inappropriate behaviors. This is an alternative to Out-of-school Suspension.

The school continues to implement the Code of Conduct for infractions that occur on the bus. PCA also promotes "service learning" as a means to incorporate student learning with service to the PCA community. Throughout the year opportunities are provided for parents to join in a partnership with the school for "service learning", field trips, and other student activities. The interventionist is working on creating a school newspaper to share information about events,

promote positive student behavior and is enlisting students to be “reporters” to encourage positive relationships between staff and students.

Instruction:

During the summer, Professional Development was provided to staff members who teach Math and/or Reading. Last year Eureka Math was introduced and this year Scholastic Guided Reading and Writing by Design were implemented as part of our advancement towards improvement in Curriculum and Instruction for our students and staff. As part of the Guided Reading we have all new reading curriculum for K-8. The Reading Specialist and the Math Specialist presented during the summer Professional Development Days and continue to provide support in the classrooms with instructional staff as well as PLCs during Team Meeting Days. Both the Reading and Math Specialist provide direct support to our teachers after school when requested. The main goal is to improve instruction delivery to our students.

Assessment:

In the spring of 2017, 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 2017:

Number of Students Tested and Percent of Students Proficient for Students in Providence Creek Academy Charter School, 2016-2017

ELA/Literacy

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Percent Proficient
Grade 3	77	61%
Grade 4	77	62%
Grade 5	75	80%
Grade 6	73	55%
Grade 7	71	65%
Grade 8	69	59%

Mathematics

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Percent Proficient
Grade 3	77	58%
Grade 4	77	44%
Grade 5	75	56%
Grade 6	73	45%
Grade 7	71	66%
Grade 8	69	45%

Based on this data and in conjunction with other school level data, PCA continues to focus on increased student achievement and success in Math and is implementing changes that will help increase math scores. These changes include:

- Continue implementation of Eureka Math as the core math curriculum in grades K-8.
- Continued use of Scholastic Reading Inventory as a benchmark tests to better align with the Smarter Balanced test.
- Use Eureka and Mobymax as benchmark for Math. These align with Smarter Balance.
- Weekly professional learning communities meet with grade level teams to support mathematics and reading instruction, as well as student engagement throughout the curriculum.
- Aligning classroom assessments to the Common Core State Standards and incorporating more performance tasks into classroom assessments.
- Continued improvement of targeted Math and Reading resources for RTI.

Smarter Balanced has added back an assessment in Writing; therefore, PCA has added Writing by Design curricular resources 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.

Conclusion:

Overall, Providence Creek Academy has made and continues to make tremendous gains in the entire operation of the school. Student academic performance and parent involvement are increasing with each year. The instructional staff is solid, professional, and experienced. The PCA leadership team is caring and professional, and the support staff is well-versed and full of pride. Everyone involved at Providence Creek Academy Charter School can take pride in being part of the PCA TEAM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles E. Taylor
Head of School