



Providence Creek Academy

Charter School

May 4, 2015

Jennifer M. Nagourney, J.D.
Executive Director, Charter School Office
Delaware Department of Education

Dear Ms. Nagourney,

Thank you for the Charter Renewal Report date April 30, 2015. We will take this opportunity to respond to the report.

Academic Performance

Since our last charter renewal in 2010, our school has revised our entire curriculum to align with the Common Core State Standards. While meeting instructional growth targets over the years has been a challenge; in both Math and ELA the percentages of PCA students making sufficient growth are 10 and 11 percentage points higher than the state target of 63%, respectively. This indicates that we are moving in the right direction of preparing students for proficiency.

In the ELA subgroups of Low Socio-Economic and African American, PCA was above the State average. Our work to refine ELA units of instruction to align with the Common Core State Standards is showing signs of success. Math has consistently been a weak area for PCA students. Actions that have been taken to increase proficiency in the 2014-2015 school year include:

- Replacing the former Math Coordinator with a new Math Specialist
- Implementing the Math Specialist working with Tier 3 RTI students to provide further focus on areas of individual need
- Implementing a rigorous Math program (TenMarks) that is aligned to Smarter Balanced
- Increasing Math classroom time for students in grades 7 and 8
- Using Custom Assessments on STAR 360 for progress monitoring to help teachers focus on specific skills that students struggle to master
- Increasing the amount of time the math specialist is in math classrooms

While students are growing each year, PCA has developed and implemented a rigorous plan to close the gap. More students are meeting proficiency yearly; however they are not meeting the rigorous growth targets that are set for them by the state. With the transition to Smarter Balanced in the 2014-2015 school year, PCA is providing more targeted instruction to different

levels of students. An analysis of our class level data shows that typically it is our higher level students that are not meeting their growth goals, especially at the 8th grade math level. We have purchased IMP (Interactive Mathematics Program) for our Algebra students in order to push them higher and provide them with a more rigorous curriculum.

We have strengthened our Tier 2 and Tier 3 RTI process and are including more parent meetings to help provide additional guidance and support at home. We have also added STAR 360 to our current STAR Reading and STAR Math Program. STAR 360 allows us to design short, custom assessments for individual students based upon their specific areas of need. During small group instruction students work on strengthening their areas of weakness and the custom assessments allow teachers to monitor their individual progress toward mastery.

We have also supplemented our curricular resources by adding Ready Common Core ELA to our K-8 ELA classes; and Ready Common Core Math to our 6-8 Math classes. These resources are fully aligned to the Common Core and provide application questions and rich informational text.

Additionally, PCA implemented a Spring Break Academy for 2015. We targeted students from grades 3-8 who were borderline in meeting the standard. Throughout the week students were engaged in authentic hands on learning and performance tasks. Instruction was individualized based upon student assessment data. Over the course of four days, approximately 60 students attended daily, receiving small group instruction in both Reading and Math. Certified teachers delivered lessons designed for identified areas of weakness for those groups with the support of paraprofessionals. The Instructional Support Team provided feedback and support on a daily basis. We are in the data collection process due to Smarter Balanced Assessments occurring at this time. Staff has noted increased confidence and focus from the students who attended the Spring Break Academy.

PCA will continue to implement, evaluate, and adjust our plan as needed, based upon student performance.

Financial Performance

Providence Creek Academy strives every year to control our finances to reflect a solid footing and a responsibility to our students, staff and the taxpayers who fund our education system. The property was purchased in 2008 and a new school was built in 2009. Providence Creek Academy is aware of our debt, however the debt is attributed to the cost of a new school.

Providence Creek Academy has made changes in the Human Resource/Business Department. The position of Director of Finance and Personnel has been eliminated. A new position of Human Resource/Business Manager was created and this position reports directly to the Head of School. A new person was hired to fill this position.

All Financial Policies were reviewed and are enforced. Providence Creek Academy will report any and all questionable transactions or unusual occurrences to the proper State Divisions. Providence Creek Academy will cooperate diligently with the Auditor of Accounts in all matters.

Organizational Performance

During the Fall of 2014, the Board of Directors became aware of internal turmoil within the staff and Board of Directors. The Board of Directors took it upon themselves to rectify any and all situations that affected the successful operation of the school from October 2014 to present. There were two members of the Board that resigned, the Treasurer and the Teacher Member of the Board. The Teacher Member of the Board was quickly replaced and a new Treasurer was appointed. A new organizational chart was implemented and PCA worked with the Delaware Charter School Network to have a consultant advise the Board. The Board searched for a new Head of School, unfortunately, the person who was selected was unable to fill the position at present. An Interim Head of School was selected and currently fills that role.

The Board of Directors underwent Board Training by the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement on January 29, 2015. The Board has a better understanding of its responsibility to the students, parents and staff. In addition, all of the Board Policies have been updated to reflect current structures and positions. The Board of Directors has created a permanent Board Oversight Compliance Committee that will meet on a quarter basis to review policies and procedures and the work that is completed by staff. A Board Report will be submitted to the entire Board during the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting following each quarterly meeting.

Providence Creek Academy Charter School looks forward to the Charter Renewal Process. Please do not hesitate to contact Charles Taylor, Interim Head of School, or myself if you have any questions. Thank you

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Santos". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Amy Santos, President
Board of Directors