The Making of a Charter School in PA

The Opportunity to Envision the Perfect K-12 School

Tag Words: Charter School; Haycock; Themed School; Low-Performing School

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Summary

Discussed is an America dilemma, a troubled primary and secondary school system, while focusing on the plight of one tiny school -- Haycock Elementary School in Quakertown, PA. With a national average cost to educate each child being $11,036, America still lags behind other developed countries. How do we get children engaged in the learning process? Perhaps specialized pedagogies are the solution. In response, we hope to found a charter and an application will be submitted to the Pennsylvania Board of Education for a charter in the Quakertown Community School District. Included is a short film that chronicles that last social event held at Haycock Elementary, a tri-fold flyer that will be used as a advert for a day of discussion that follows the showing of the award winning film "Waiting for Superman", a blog that will serve as a platform where one may publish thoughts and opinions on the charter.

Video link

Final Stage Ethics Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZgyBI7duXg
The Issue: Public Education in America –could it be better?

Introduction

The world is transforming exponentially. The question in the face of this these changes, is the education system of America lagging behind? Yester-year's "one-size-fits-all" approach to teaching will not work in the information age. The result of a massive shift from a manufacturing economy to a service-based society is demanding change in modern pedagogy. The social institutions of America, i.e. government, health care, education were not created for the "digital-generation". It is a new world whose evolution surpasses even the magnitude of change that occurred during the Industrial Revolution. As America approaches its 300th year, the demographic make-up has evolved along with the essence of schooling. The 21st century has no place for the high school drop-out. Jobs that once made it possible to prosper with a minimal of formal education require a minimum of a high school diploma.

At more than a comparative average cost of $11,036 per pupil per year, we, as a society, should not be afraid to ask what success in education looks like. Today's classroom must be learning-centered, meaning the teachers should be able to use any and all available means of teaching methods to engage even the most challenging students. If there is a minimum standard to which students are expected to perform, the US Department of Education would do well to demand that teachers rise to the occasion. "The best of teacher education programs are being lumped with the worst” (Levine, 2010). The professional development of both the next and the current generation of teachers must change, just as the role of the teacher in a child's life has changed. (CF)

Will merely fixing what and how the teachers teach solve the “failure of our schools in America to educate our youth” problem that we have today? This is the dilemma. It is the child who must understand the importance of an education. It is the child who must want to learn. And how do we instill in the child the idea that K-12 education is his or her building block for what he or she will become? Well, it takes a village. As a village, we must “celebrate the fundamental notion that to be fully educated is a lifelong adventure that only begins with an individual's formal schooling” (Roberts, 2006). The parents, the community, the nation, his or her peers all must perceive education as all important. There seems to be a lack of enthusiasm for education today; that very important aspect community support group is missing.

Most certainly, it is up to the schools to provide the framework in which to learn. The curriculum and the method by which the curriculum is taught is key. Getting each child to connect with what is being taught is key. Student engagement in the learning process is key. We will fail our children if there is a breakdown in any one of these components. Eventually, we want each child to develop a passion for learning, perhaps in a specific field, so that that child will strive to be the best. We need to develop creative thinkers to drive innovation. After all, our children are our engines of tomorrow. (JF)

What to do about Low-Performing Schools:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act written into legislation by former President G. W. Bush includes private management as a means to improve low-performing schools. The act is based on the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual
outcomes in education. The Act requires states to develop assessments in basic skills if those states are to receive federal funding.

In 1991, Christopher Whittle, founder of Whittle Communications and Channel One News service, implemented the Edison Project (renamed Edison Schools, Inc., in 1999). Edison Schools was widely hailed as leader in what was to be considered as a new privatizing trend in managing and educating our youth. Like comprehensive school reform models, Edison incorporates a broad set of services. They offer a curriculum package for each student, enrichment programs for foreign languages and art, tutoring services, progress assessments, extended school day and year and professional development opportunities for staff.

Edison’s approach to managing schools is comprehensive. It distinguishes itself by addressing resources and assistance provided to schools—such as professional development, materials and technology tools. It has standard operating procedures and corporate governance that cover issues such as accountability for academic success, school staffing and facilities operation. The Edison "team" spent several years developing a comprehensive school design that is regarded as exemplary both in education and business design.

Like most large corporations, Edison uses teacher “career ladder” advancement system. Principals have the authority to appoint lead teachers and subject-matter curriculum coordinators. They are not required to abide by union rules in making such appointments. Teachers are employed under one-year contracts that are renewed at the discretion of the principal. Many of the young teachers look favorably on these leadership opportunities even if opportunities do not include substantial pay benefits. They appreciate the chance to assume positions of responsibility (Marsh and Hamilton, 2008).

The plan from the start was to run public schools for less money than school districts could and improve student achievement while generating a profit for its stakeholders. Edison focuses on schools with a long history of academic failure. Generally, Edison Schools buys a "failing business" and rebuilds it. Many schools in Philadelphia have not enjoyed a good reputation as being safe havens of education and, as a result, several of which have been taken over by Edison as “conversion” charter schools.

What is a Charter School? (CF)

Charter schools in the United States are primary or secondary schools that receive public money as well as private donations, but are not subject to some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to other public schools. They are accountable for producing certain results which are set forth in each school's charter or written doctrine that defines the school's means of achieving specific educational goals. Charter schools are open to the public, attended by choice and part of the public education system, but provide an alternative to traditional learning forums by means of a program that develops a better educational continuity (processes and procedures that ensure academic success) by a broader range of teaching staff.

Because charter schools operate with more independence, they are free to structure their curriculum and school environment. Because few charter schools are unionized, they can select and replace teachers and administrative staff without fear of collectively bargained seniority and tenure provisions that hinder such decisions in most public schools. Proponents see charter schools' freedom from regulation as a potential for educational innovation, with the added
benefit of providing a source of competitive motivation that prompts the rest of the public
system. Charters are controversial because after a transition period in which the state provides
subsidies, they receive a tuition payment for each enrolled student paid by students’ home
districts. Very often tuition payments are determined by the average per-pupil expenditure;
therefore, it is not surprising that public school districts are concerned about the revenue losses.

Types of Charter Schools

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/purdon%27s_statutes/7503/charter_sch
oools

Traditional Charter - Traditional Charter - Charter schools are public schools that receive public
as well as private money but are not subject to some of the rules, regulations, and statutes that
apply to other public schools. In exchange the charter must be accountable for producing certain
results.

Regional Charter – A charter school in which the student body is formed by students from
neighboring communities that make up a school district.

Cyber Charter - Students take either real-time (virtual classroom) classes or self-paced classes.

Conversion Charter - Formed within an existing school facility, a conversion charter uses
primarily the existing teaching staff and some or the entire existing curriculum. While there are
several “conversions” in city schools (Philadelphia for example) there are few outside the urban
landscape (one in PA).

Education in the State of Pennsylvania (CF)

The 2010 demographic data for the state of Pennsylvania collected as part of the 2010 census
reports the following: total population 12,702,379 with 22% (2,794,523) ranging between the
ages of 5 to 18. Of that 22%, 1,781,206 children are enrolled in public school across the 67
counties while 197,720 are enrolled in private or non-public schools. There are 147 charter
schools operating in the state of Pennsylvania with 8 new charters set to commence operation in
the Fall of 2011. There are a total of 12 public cyber charter schools in PA (Ryan Miller, 6/11,
The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School). There are 85,142 children enrolled in charter schools
as per the National Charter School and Enrollment Statistics Report of 2010. During the 2006-07
school year, a total for home education students in Pennsylvania was 22,136. This was a decrease
of 276 students, or 1.2%, from the 2005-06 school year for a total of 22,412. There is no more
current statistical data on the number of home-schooled children at this time.

Starting up a Charter School in the State of Pennsylvania (CF)

The charter school applicant(s) must demonstrate that the charter is capable of providing a
comprehensive learning experience to its students. This will require detailed plans for the new
school curriculum, its physical facilities, and management structure as well as information on a
number of technical requirements listed in the statute, including but not limited to: governance
structure; admissions policies; discipline policies; student assessment methods; and criminal history reports.

(CF) There are ten common principles that should form the foundation for all charters:

1. The school should focus on helping young people learn to use their minds.
2. The school's goals should be simple.
3. The school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary.
4. Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent.
5. The governing practical metaphor of the school should be “student-as-worker,” rather than “teacher-as-deliverer of instructional services.”
6. Teaching and learning should be documented and assessed with tools based on student performance of real tasks.
7. The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of un-anxious positive expectation, trust, fairness, generosity, and tolerance.
8. The educators should perceive themselves as generalists and specialists.
9. The ultimate administrative and budget targets should include:
   - substantial time for collective planning by teachers
   - competitive salaries for staff and
   - per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent
10. The school should honor diversity and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school.

Before ever opening a charter school, its organizers must spend a considerable amount of time planning and drafting the charter application and its supporting material. Preparing the application will require input from individuals with skill and experience in education methods, financial management, and school administration. Once the charter school application is prepared, it is submitted to the local school district where the charter school plans to operate. The Charter School Law provides specific time lines for the application process. Careful thought must be given to the amount of time that may be required for approval and how this will affect the target start date for the new charter school. Charter school applications are approved or denied by a majority vote of the chartering district’s school directors. The charter school applicant must demonstrate that it has sustainable support from teachers, parents, other community members and students. Typically, the applicant will attempt to establish this support by gathering signed petitions, letters and written testimonials, pre-enrollments, and preparation of oral testimony for presentation to the local school district. If the local school district denies the application, the applicant has sixty days to gather signatures from two percent of the adults in the community or 1,000 adults, whichever is less. The petition for appeal and the signatures are then presented to the local Court of Common Pleas for a hearing.
My School is Better Than/Different From Your School: Finding a Niche

Coming together for the purpose of creating a “better” school opens the door to extraordinary possibilities. North Central Massachusetts' Parker School opened in September, 1995, after a year of planning by its founders and prospective members. It started out with only 120 students in grades 7 and 8 and today the school enrolls more than 400 students in grades 7-12 and maintains a student/teacher ratio of 10:1. The school has chosen to divide its school into three academic divisions that correlate to two-year middle, intermediate, and upper school programs. At Parker, students are not grouped by grade, nor do they receive grades for their completed work. Each child works with an advisor (and parents) to develop a "personal learning plan" which outlines his or her overall educational objectives for the year. It is expected that the students meet the school's standards. When this happens consistently, the student exhibits his or her work in "public roundtables" where the decision is made to move into the next division of study. This democratic academic achievement review is one important way Parker teachers come to know their students well. Skills development takes time. Students and their teachers work together for longer periods of time than they would in traditional public schools. Students in math, science and technology classes work in two-hour blocks 4x per week plus an hour-long tutorial each week in which to confront challenges and engage in authentic assessments designed to develop skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, and expression. Longer teaching blocks encourage student inquiry, expression and authentic involvement in the learning process.

Focus/Themes of Charter Schools

Charters and many magnet schools may focus on particular areas of study (such as the fine or performing arts, math, science, or technical/vocational education). (CF) Schools that specialize in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) are not a new phenomenon. The creation of specialized institutions of secondary learning has been largely due to economics, politics, and education concerns. America faces an unfortunate truth today in that it suffers from a talent-pool shortfall in the areas of science and math. The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science (America COMPETES) Act was signed into law in August, 2007. The context in which this legislation was establish focused on three critical areas: (1) increasing research investment; (2) strengthening educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics from elementary school through graduate school; and (3) developing an "innovation infrastructure", all of which with a emphasis on the needs of the 21st century. Educators in the STEM fields have long recognized and promoted this agenda (Thomas et al., 2010).

The growing number of STEM high schools led to a formal alignment of similar institutions and the creation of the National Consortium for Specialized Secondary Schools of Mathematics, Science, and Technology (NCSSSMST). Today the NCSSSMST has more than 106 member institutions in 30 states.

(CF) A language/culture themed charter school's curriculum could be based on the language and culture of a specific nation or group of nations and are open to students of all races, creeds and colors. The Hebrew Language Academy Charter School is a public Charter school in Brooklyn, New York, chartered to teach the Hebrew language and aspects of Jewish culture.
Like all public schools, The Hebrew Language Academy does not provide religious instruction neither does it encourage nor prohibit religious devotion. Critics wondered whether it would become a publicly financed religious school posing as a place open to everyone but as its first year comes to a close, classrooms are filled with a broad range of students confident enough to chatter away in Hebrew. Surprisingly, the school has become one of the most racially mixed charter schools. About a third of the 150 students are black and Hispanic (Medina, 2010).

The Freedom to Choose: School choice with great options.

(CF) Freedom of school choice is crucial point for charters. It is critical that parents are free to choose the school they think best for their children as education is the gateway to college, careers and life-long learning opportunities. The Pennsylvania Act 22 of 1997 is intended to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, students and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure. The law offers guidelines that describe a method to provide parents and students with a variety of choices in the types of educational opportunities available within the public school system. Charter schools make it possible for families to find and enroll their children in better schools with higher quality. Act 22 Charter School Law

The Service Project: Creating a Charter school in the Quakertown Community School District, Upper Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Making our charter the education of choice

To follow are ideas for what may be perceived as the making of a great school; a school of choice. Being that this is a community public school, the stakeholders (taxpayers, educators, students and their parents, business leaders) all need to be on board to make this a successful place to learn. It is therefore important to invite the community for a public discussion at the “ground level”, so they become involved in making this their school. We have prepared an informational invitation that will be distributed in the community (see trifold brochure/invitation in the appendix). Our plan is to, on the first night, show the documentary “Waiting For Superman” which will be followed up on a subsequent night with a Question (public) and Answer (PA Coalition for Charter Schools) period. Ideas for the specific charter school will be described. Community members expressing interest in the further development of the making of the charter school will be coordinated and put on committees to work within their level of expertise and interest (any lawyers, accountants, engineers, teachers, realtors out there?). We also set up a blog/web site (http://k12qcsdcommunitycharter.wordpress.com) for people to be able to be kept abreast of the progress.

Shut down of a high performing school due to the “economy”

Haycock Elementary is (was) a small suburban school located in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. A recent district school board decision has forced the school to close its doors after 57 years of academic excellence http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43406899. As the parents and staff struggle to accept its fate, they wrestle with the possibility of “converting” the existing public school into
a charter school. The service portion of this classipedia is devoted to ideas relating to developing a charter school – potentially to be housed at Haycock Elementary and chronicles the events necessary for submitting a charter school application to the PA state board of education.

Demographics: Haycock Township

(CF) The 2010 demographic data for Haycock Township collected as part of the 2010 census, reports the following: total population 2,225; under 5 years 80 or 3.6%; 5 to 9 years 116 or 5.2%; 10 to 14 years 164 or 7.4%; 15 to 19 years 128 or 5.8%. The racial makeup of the township was 97.99% White, 0.37% African American, 0.09% Native American, 0.91% Asian, 0.23% Pacific Islander, 0.09% from other races, and 0.32% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 0.27% of the population.

Demographics: Quakertown Community School District (JF)

In addition to Haycock Township, the Quakertown Community School District includes five other municipalities (3 townships and 3 boroughs) which are: Milford Township, Quakertown Borough, Richland Township, Richlandtown Borough and Trumbauersville Borough. The total population of the school district is approximately 30,000 and it serves ~5450 students in its one high school (grades 10-12), one freshman center (grade 9), two middle schools (grades 6-8), and what was seven (now six) elementary schools (half-day K, 1-5). Statistics generated by the school district claim that 61% of the graduating class go on to a 4 year college, 28% to a 2 year institution of higher learning, and 5% go to trade or technical schools.

Location of the Charter (JF)

One possibility is to utilize the now shuttered Haycock Elementary School as the charter school building, at least initially. The building is older and has water and septic problems (which can be fixed), 5 classrooms with a gym/cafeteria, rest rooms with toilets for young people, playground equipment, and very “elementary-like”. So the building is not conducive to a solely high school age student population. Don’t know how many students the building can legally hold (certificate of occupancy?), but know that there have been 130 students in there in the past.

The charter school does not need to be housed in a former school. It can be located anywhere within the district as long as it meets basic health and safety code criteria. Charter schools have been known to operate within a school, in abandoned warehouses and even shopping malls. One school, which started out having ~88 students, leased out footage in a shopping mall and simply leased more space as the student population grew.

Grade levels - K (full day) - grade 12 (JF)

Although elementary school students do fairly well on the state assessment tests, achievement appears to drop precipitously with each increasing grade. This disturbing trend has been observed nationwide. A K-12 charter could be successful in keeping these students engaged
throughout their school years, better preparing them for higher level thinking/innovation and their/our future.

Haycock Elementary was a small suburban school with approximately 120 children and 5 full time teachers. The proposed charter would have children from grades K (full day) through 12. Assuming the maximum student population for that school is 130 students, we could educate approximately 10 students per grade, with 2-3 grades per each of the 5 rooms (a. K-1, b.2-3, c.4-6, d.7-9, e.10-12).

More Educating (JF)
Keep the student/teacher ratio low. Shoot for 10:1, with one head teacher per room and one teacher for every 10 students per grade level. Partner with colleges and Universities and offer student teacher positions to help the teachers. Specialty teachers (art, music, physical education, French, other) should be employed and shared at all grade levels.

Year round: exceed the 180 day min but have regularly scheduled vacations (+/- 2 week winter, spring and summer breaks). Students old enough to be issued work permits would be able to earn class credit in approved work environments – this would be limited however.

Time of day, longer day: Start later in am (8:30am), end later in pm (4:30 pm) with after school program.

Developing a Mission Statement for the new charter (JF)
Mission: In order to succeed in an innovation-powered global economy in a world that is combating climate change, environmental degradation and food, water and energy crisis’s, the nation will need to elevate our educational focus in science, technology, engineering and math as it relates to global sustainability. Use the STEM formula (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) as it applies to living on a sustainable earth. One proposed solution to the national shortage of STEM graduates is the creation of schools with a STEM focus at the K-12 level (Atkinson et al., 2007). Focus on analytic thinking. Instill creativity. Require solid 3R’s.

This would be the first school in the nation that focuses on global sustainability with a science, technology, engineering and math concentration, but not to exclude the arts and humanities at the K-12 level.

A quality school lies in a strong child and family-centered pedagogy that recognizes education as a "process of living" and school life as "real and vital" to our children and families. Teachers must be committed to educational excellence for all students. Our EARTH Community Charter will be committed to providing every child an outstanding education by blending science, technology, engineering and math while specifically addressing issues of global sustainability using time proven and innovative teaching practices in a safe and caring environment. It strives to meet the needs of a diverse student population by providing the skills and tools necessary to reach beyond state mandated academic standards. With the support of dedicated staff, parents and the community, Our Earth Community Charter will continue to have fostered a sense of fellowship. Our mission is to maximize the achievement of each student and empower them to become leaders of the world.
In developing a school, there is value in examining other schools mission statements and operating procedures. Portions below were from a successful K-12 charter in NC.

Our EARTH “Community Charter School strives to build a community where long-term relationships between students, teachers and parents enhance the learning process. We aim to create an environment where each student is known well by his or her teachers and peers, and is encouraged and challenged as an individual.”

Our EARTH Community Charter “intends to promote a strong sense of personal responsibility in each student that will help prepare him or her for high school graduation, for college and university education, and for life. As students progress from kindergarten (full day) through 12th grade, we will strive to enable each student to maximize his or her own potential through an academic program which becomes gradually more rigorous and in which each student is supported and challenged as an individual”.

Our EARTH Community Charter School “will utilize a unique blend of principles built on the three programs of academic study that make up the curriculum: the PA Standard Course of Study (Grades 1-12), the Core Knowledge Program (Grades 1-8) and the Advanced Placement Program (Grades 9-12). In kindergarten and in the elementary grades (1-4), the focus is on instilling self-esteem, teaching appropriate social skills and building core knowledge of fundamental facts and concepts across all subjects of the curriculum. In the middle school (5 – 8), our students learn to utilize that knowledge by mastering the core communication and analytical skills of reading, writing and basic math. The emphasis across the board is on mastering the fundamental knowledge and skills shared by educated individuals in our society - thereby providing a common basis for understanding and communication, as well as a foundation for developing the unique abilities and ideas of the individual student. The high school grades (9-12) build upon knowledge and skills learned in the elementary and middle schools. The student’s focus shifts to practicing advanced analytical thinking, and effective communication in all subjects of the curriculum. Students are inspired to explore the relevance and connectivity of the material they have learned, and encouraged to pursue independent inquiries and projects. The high school curriculum is intended to prepare students to be critical thinkers, to succeed in advanced academic study, to be responsible citizens, and to pursue life-long learning”.

“Students learn best when they:

- are in small classes;
- feel safe in a nurturing environment;
- are known well and respected by their teachers and peers;
- are challenged by high expectations;
- receive assignments and homework that are challenging, relevant, and in an appropriate amount for the age of the student; and,
- are encouraged to pursue a healthy range of activities outside the classroom.

Teachers teach best when they:
are empowered and trusted;
- are respected and supported throughout the school community;
- have the opportunity to influence the curriculum;
- know and respect their students;
- communicate and partner with parents; and,
- are free to explore different teaching methodologies.

Parents support the education and development of students best when they:
- share the school’s mission to promote emotional and physical health, develop stellar character and instill the highest interpersonal values;
- support the pursuit of academic excellence and ensure that their student arrives at school each day fit and ready to learn;
- communicate regularly and respectfully with their student and their student’s teachers;
- seek to resolve any school problems by working respectfully with teachers and administrators with the goal of maintaining the school’s appropriate authority with students; and,
- have the opportunity to participate in school activities, influence school policies, and be active partners in the Our EARTH community”.

Name: Our Earth Community Charter

E - educational excellence with a strong environmental focus
A - academics, the arts
R - strong 3R base
T - Technology, science, engineering and math
H - Home/family and community involvement

Regarding “admission to” if charter has a specific mission:
Charter schools are public entities and admission is usually by lottery. However, if “a charter school has a specific mission or focus that addresses a specific population listed in the law as “at risk student,” specific grade levels or curricula areas such as mathematics, science or the arts. These charter schools may limit admission and develop reasonable criteria to evaluate prospective students” (such as an entrance exam and/or an interview, lottery). “The information related to the evaluation process for prospective students must be outlined in the Charter application submitted to the local school district.”
Regarding Extracurricular Activities

Instead of an organized athletic program, in place would be a strong daily physical education program. Students interested in athletics could take advantage of community-based athletic programs. Students are allowed to participate in home district programs. Typically however, practice and especially scheduled games often start early in the day (leaving school sometimes as early as 12-1pm) interrupting the school day. This is a conflict of interest with education – especially if we are proposing a longer day to increase the time spent learning.

“The Charter School Law requires a charter school student’s school district of residence to allow the student to participate in the school district’s extracurricular activities if the student is able to fulfill the requirements of participation and the charter school does not provide the same extracurricular activity.” “Charter school students must be given an equal opportunity to compete for “spaces” in extracurricular activities. School districts are not required to provide transportation for a charter school student to or from the extracurricular activity. There may be additional requirements that the district of residence and charter school need to consider if the student participating or seeking to participate in extracurricular activities is a student with a disability.” “The resident school district may charge the charter school for charter student participation in extracurricular activities, since these costs were part of the per-pupil payment that is paid to charter schools. This fee is on a “cost basis”, with the resident school district neither losing nor making money, as determined by the school district using the expenses of each activity, including coach or director, uniforms, transportation and miscellaneous costs.”

Completing the Charter School Application

An individual who works for the PA Coalition of Charter Schools (pacharters.org) said that “so many charter applications are rejected due to an error in the application”. Therefore, it is important to study successful charter school applications. The plan is to utilize a few of these applications that were approved and that are similar to our mission (K-12, STEM) as a template to ensure success. The PA charter application can be found here: Charter Application
References


Links

Charter schools in PA
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/charter_schools/7356

Charter school regulations
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/charter_school_regulations/7359

Rules and Regulations
http://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol38/38-26/1245.html

Types of Charter Schools
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/purdon%27s_statutes/7503/charter_schools

Newspaper article on the closing of Haycock Elementary
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43406899
Appendices

Invitation to speaking event:

July 7, 2011
Movie showing: Waiting for Superman

6:30 pm, Quakertown High School Auditorium
Waiting for Superman. This award winning documentary analyzes the failures of American public education by following several students through the educational system.

July 7, 2011
Charter School Q & A
Presentation by PA Coalition for Charter Schools
Proposal for a OCSD K-12 Community Charter
Julia M. Fagan, Ph.D.

What is a Charter School?
- Independent, public school
- Created and operated under a charter from local school board
- Established by teachers, parents, community members
- Operates independently from host district structure
- Intended to be cooperative with local district

What is the intent?
- Improve pupil learning
- Increase learning opportunities
- Encourage innovative methods
- Create opportunities for teachers to control curriculum
- Provide parents with expanded school choice
- Hold schools accountable for meeting goals

Our Earth Community Charter
- Educational excellence with a strong environmental focus
- A - academics, the arts
- R - strong Jr. Base
- T - Technology, science, engineering and math
- H - Home/Family and community involvement

Mission: In order to succeed in an innovation-powered global economy in a world that is combating climate change, environmental degradation and food, water and energy crises the nation will need to elevate our educational focus in science, technology, engineering and math as it relates to global sustainability.

Use the STEM formula (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) as it applies to living on a sustainable earth. Focus on analytic thinking. Inculcate creativity. Require solid Jr. Base.

Name: Our Earth Community Charter
Grades K (full day) – 12
Focus: Science & Technology, Jr. Base, environment/sustainability
Curriculum: Integrated project/experiential-based learning, rigorous college prep
Cost: None (public school)
Location: Shuttered Haycock Elementary or public bldg
Enrollment: 150 (initially)
10 students per grade, with 2-3 grades per each of the 5 rooms (2-K, 3-1, 3-3, 4-6, 5-12)
Charter School Type: Traditional (not regional, cyber or conversion)
Opening: Sept 2012