



# Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship (PHCSE)

Strategic Plan 2025–2030

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[phcharter.org](http://phcharter.org)



# Executive Summary

Founded in 2011, Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship (PHCSE) is a public K–8 charter school located in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. PHCSE was designed to ignite the entrepreneurial spirit within every child, integrating business, innovation, and leadership into a rigorous academic curriculum aligned with Pennsylvania Core Standards. Authorized by the Penn Hills School District, PHCSE serves approximately 500 students and holds a charter term running from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2026.

The school's 2025–2030 Strategic Plan builds upon its foundational strengths—an entrepreneurship-based model, a dedicated and diverse staff, and a growing network of community partners—to chart a sustainable and ambitious course for the next five years. Grounded in data from the school's Title I Comprehensive Plan (2024–2027), Charter Renewal, audited financials, and the 2024 S&P Global Ratings review, this plan articulates PHCSE's vision to become a model K–8 school for entrepreneurship education and academic excellence.

## Key Highlights:



**Enrollment:** ~498 students (K–8)



**Demographics:**  
78% Black, 10% White, 7% Multi-racial, 4% Hispanic; 68% Economically Disadvantaged, 17% Special Education



**Authorizer:** Penn Hills School District



**Charter Term:** 2021–2026



**FY24 Revenues:** ~\$7.9M | Expenses: ~\$9.3M



**Capital Investment:** ~\$2–3 million over FY23–FY24 in building improvements and modernization, leading to intentional drawdown of fund balance.



**Bond Rating:** 'BB' (Negative Outlook) by S&P Global Ratings (October 2024), reflecting short-term liquidity compression due to facility investments, with stable long-term outlook contingent on fund balance recovery.



**Mission:** Empower students through entrepreneurship, innovation, and real-world problem solving.

Although PHCSE's recent financial reports show expenses exceeding revenues, this short-term deficit reflects intentional reinvestment in facilities and infrastructure. With major capital projects now complete, the school is poised to restore its fund balance beginning in FY2025–26, positioning itself for long-term fiscal health and stable credit performance.

# Mission, Vision, and Core Values



**Mission:** To provide a rigorous academic program that integrates entrepreneurship principles, empowering students to think creatively, act responsibly, and pursue excellence



**Vision:** Every PHCSE graduate will complete 8th grade prepared for success in high school and beyond—as critical thinkers, problem solvers, and changemakers.

## Core Values



**Innovation:**  
Encourage curiosity and creative problem-solving.



**Equity:** Ensure that all students have access to quality instruction and enrichment.



**Integrity:**  
Model ethical decision-making in academics and business.



**Community:**  
Cultivate partnerships that extend learning beyond the classroom.

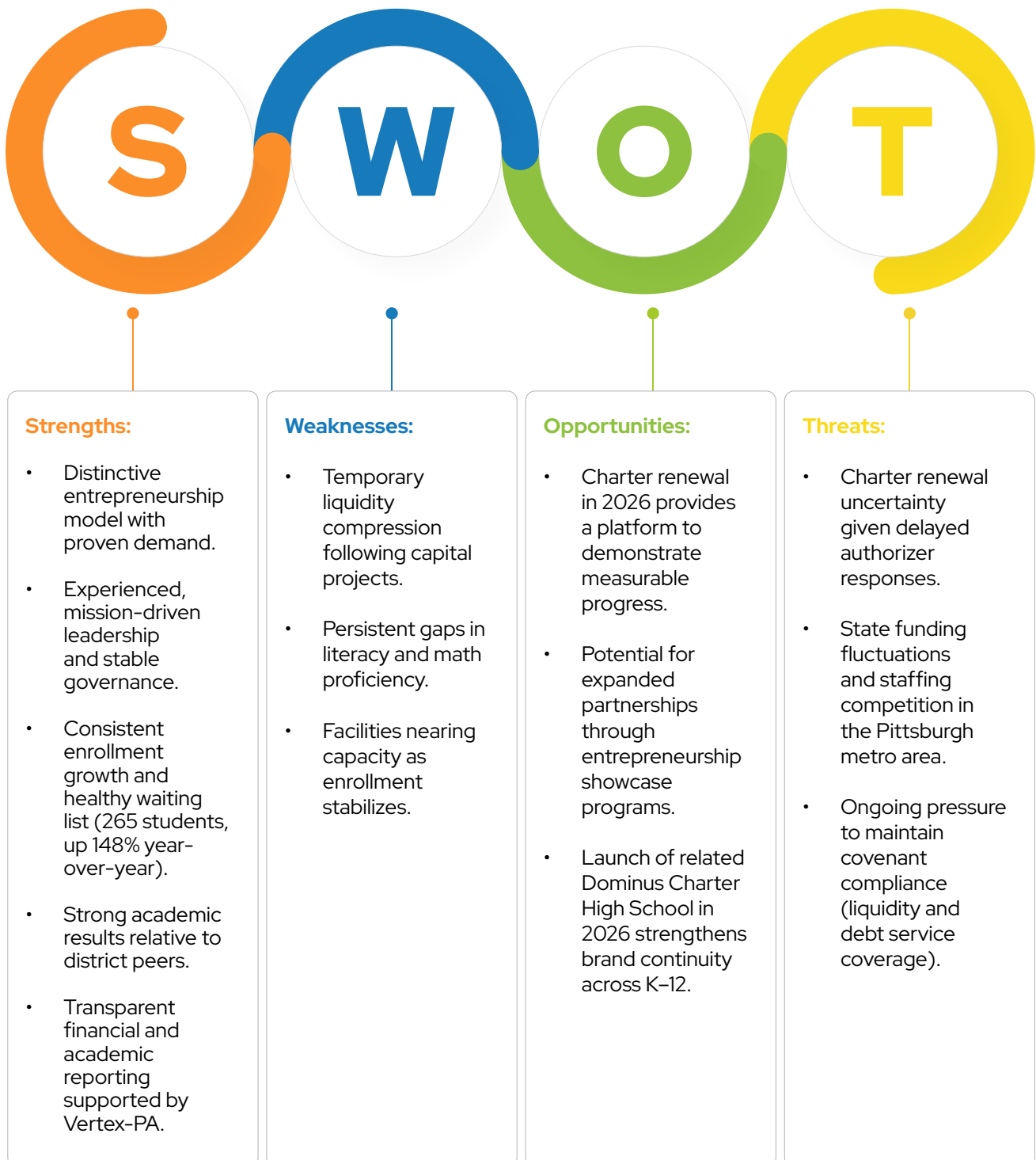


**Growth Mindset:**  
Embrace reflection, effort, and improvement for all learners.



# Context & Environmental Scan

PHCSE operates in a competitive educational landscape, serving families in Penn Hills and surrounding neighborhoods with limited access to high-quality, specialized K–8 options. The region faces economic challenges, but PHCSE’s model provides a unique value proposition that combines academic rigor with entrepreneurial experience.





# Baseline

## Dashboard (2024)

Indicator		2024 Baseline Source
Reading Proficiency	32%	PDE / Future Ready Index
Math Proficiency	27%	PDE / Future Ready Index
Attendance	91%	Title I Comprehensive Plan
Chronic Absenteeism	17%	Annual Report 2024
Staff Retention	84%	Internal HR Data
Operating Margin	-18%	FY24 Audit / 990
Days Cash on Hand	~45 days	S&P Global Ratings (2024)

### Gap Map Summary:



#### Academics:

Below state averages; targeted interventions needed in literacy and math.



**Finance:** Deficits reflect one-time capital investments; the next phase focuses on restoring reserves.



#### Facilities:

Expansion completed; long-term maintenance and optimization next.



#### Governance:

Stable but must remain proactive with authorizer engagement.





## Strategic Pillars, Goals, Actions, and KPIs (2025–2030)

# Annual Milestones (Overview)

### Year

### Key Milestones & Narrative Description

**2025–26**

PHCSE will focus on academic renewal and financial recovery, aligning new curricula in literacy and math while beginning to rebuild its fund balance. The 1:1 technology program will be piloted, and preparations for charter renewal will take center stage. Facilities enhancements will shift into a maintenance and sustainability phase.

**2026–27**

The school will complete its charter renewal cycle, ensuring compliance and demonstrating measurable growth in key performance areas. Financial operations will stabilize, achieving a balanced budget for the first time since major capital improvements. Expanded community partnerships will support enrichment and after-school programming.

**2027–28**

With renewed charter authorization, PHCSE will pivot from stabilization to strategic expansion. Entrepreneurship pathways and business mentorship programs will scale, and the school will achieve its goal of 90 days cash on hand. Academic growth targets will be surpassed in both literacy and math.

**2028–29**

The focus will turn to leadership development and long-term organizational capacity. Phase I of additional facility upgrades (innovation labs, flexible learning spaces) will begin. Staff retention will exceed 90%, reflecting a culture of professional excellence.

**2029–30**

The final year of this plan will emphasize evaluation and sustainability. PHCSE will commission an external review to measure impact, assess long-term viability, and guide development of the 2030–2035 roadmap. The school will sustain full enrollment, positive fund balance growth, and evidence of continuous improvement.



# Financial Projection

## Summary (FY2025–FY2030)

PHCSE's financial trajectory reflects the completion of its major capital improvement phase and the beginning of a period of responsible fiscal rebuilding. The 2024 S&P bond review cited the school's liquidity position as narrow but stable and confirmed expectations for a modest surplus in FY2025. The plan's financial model assumes conservative growth in revenues and spending discipline to rebuild reserves and maintain strong covenant compliance.

Year	Revenue	Expenses	Net Income	Cash on Hand	Key Notes
FY25	\$8.1M	\$9.0M	-\$0.9M	45 days	Final phase of capital-related expenses; intentional short-term deficit as fund balance rebuilding begins.
FY26	\$8.5M	\$8.8M	-\$0.3M	60 days	Initial stabilization with cost containment and enrollment growth.
FY27	\$9.0M	\$9.0M	\$0.0M	75 days	Balanced operations achieved; reserve policy formalized.
FY28	\$9.4M	\$9.2M	+\$0.2M	90 days	Continued fund balance growth and strong audit compliance.
FY29	\$9.8M	\$9.4M	+\$0.4M	95 days	Sustainable surplus enabling strategic investment.
FY30	\$10.2M	\$9.6M	+\$0.6M	100 days	Fully restored reserves and readiness for next growth cycle.

### Assumptions:

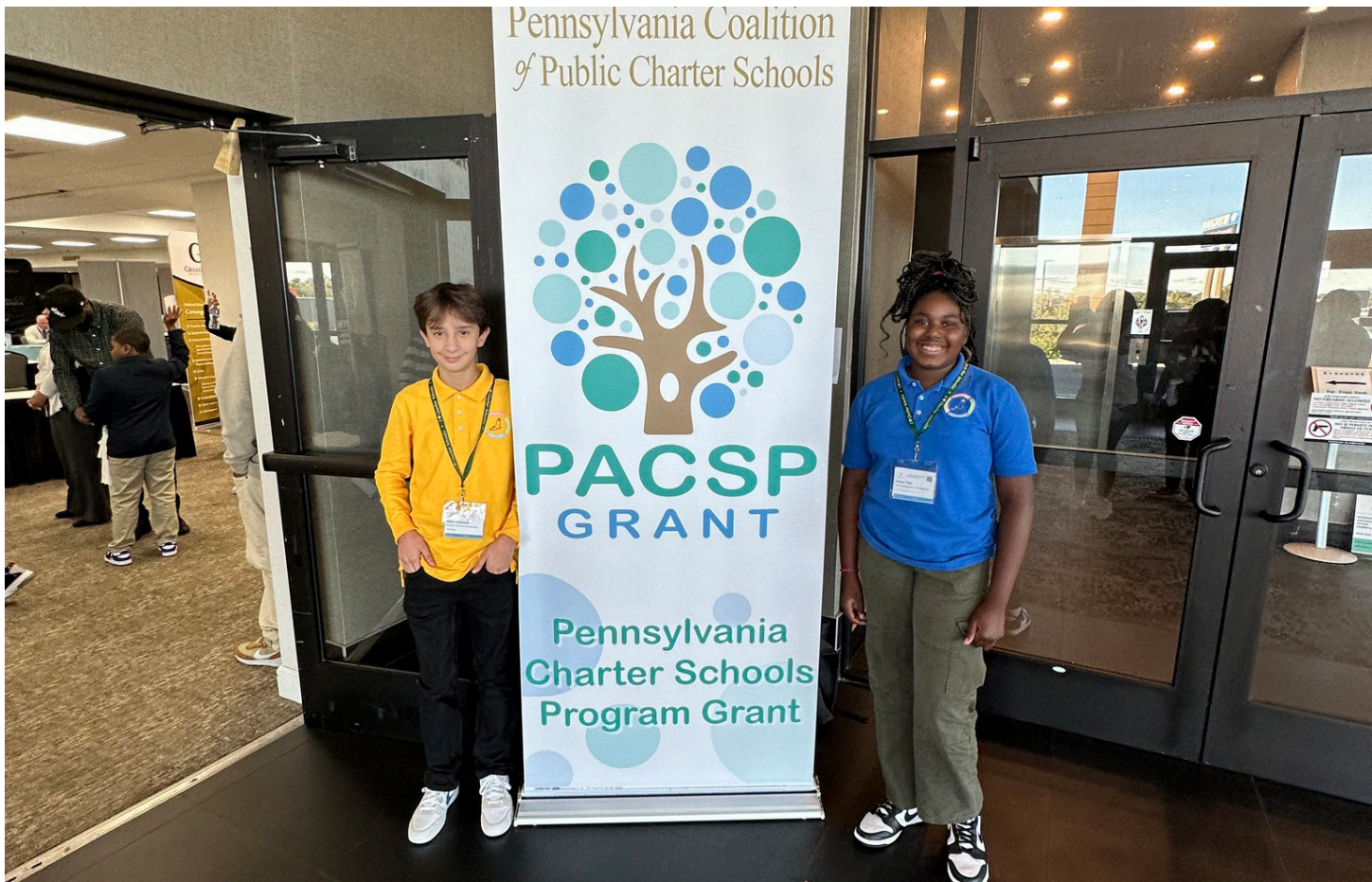
- 01 2% annual enrollment growth; stable per-pupil funding.
- 02 3% annual revenue growth; 2% cost containment through staffing efficiency.
- 03 No additional capital debt planned through 2030.
- 04 Adherence to bond covenants ( $\geq 45$  days' cash,  $\geq 1.1x$  debt service coverage).

### Financial Goals:

- 01 Restore fund balance to pre-2023 levels by FY2030.
- 02 Maintain positive annual net margins beginning FY2027.
- 03 Achieve S&P outlook revision to Stable by FY2026 through liquidity recovery.

## Risks & Mitigations

Risk	Description	Mitigation Strategy
Enrollment Volatility	As a single-site charter, enrollment changes directly affect revenues.	Strengthen Family Ambassador Program, diversify marketing, and monitor enrollment pipeline quarterly.
Liquidity Constraints	Cash reserves were intentionally drawn down for capital investments, testing liquidity covenants.	Implement phased reserve rebuilding (60 days by FY26; 90 by FY28); monitor monthly cash flow.
Charter Renewal (2026)	Renewal uncertainty due to delayed authorizer responses.	Maintain compliance, publish progress reports, and engage authorizer quarterly.
Staffing Challenges	Competitive labor market may hinder teacher recruitment and retention.	Build grow-your-own teacher pipelines and expand leadership development.
Debt Covenants	Minimum 45 days' cash and 1.1x coverage required.	Maintain monthly reporting and avoid new debt until FY28.
Economic Shifts	Funding formula volatility and inflationary pressures.	Diversify grants and build financial buffer via multi-year reserve policy.





# Communications & Accountability Plan

PHCSE's commitment to transparency and stakeholder engagement is central to sustaining community trust and meeting accountability expectations.



**Quarterly Performance Dashboards:** Publicly share data on literacy, math, attendance, and finance trends, accompanied by narrative explanations.



**Annual Financial & Impact Report:** Combine audit data, S&P bond updates, and performance highlights for board and authorizer reporting.



**Stakeholder Engagement Forums:** Host biannual "State of the School" updates for families and community partners.



**Authorizer Relations:** Maintain open, documented communication with Penn Hills School District; submit midterm renewal progress packet (2025–26).



**Community Storytelling:** Share student entrepreneurship and success stories via social and local media.



**Governance Transparency:** Continue publishing all board minutes, audits, and budgets online.

## Accountability Milestones:

01

Launch redesigned dashboard (Q4 2025).

02

Publish Annual Report + Charter Renewal Brief (Q3 2026).

03

Host Community Impact Forum (Q4 2027).

04

Conduct External Strategic Evaluation & 2030 Report (Q2 2030).



# Conclusion

The PHCSE 2025–2030 Strategic Plan outlines a path from reinvestment and renewal toward stability and sustainable growth. With its capital projects complete, renewed focus on academic outcomes, and disciplined financial stewardship, PHCSE is positioned to achieve long-term excellence and regain a stable fiscal outlook by mid-decade.

