



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

333 MARKET STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333  
[www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us)

December 19, 2007

Dear Superintendent,

Providing for the education of all of Pennsylvania's children is paramount to the success of your community and the state. For those students who must receive their education in a non-traditional setting, such as a partial hospitalization program (PHP), the responsibility on the part of the school district is no different.

Currently, about 11,000 students statewide receive their education as part of a PHP. As you will see in the attached report, every county has some representation of youth in these programs. Students are placed in PHPs from many sources including schools districts, clinicians, families and court orders. In most cases these students are receiving support for emotional or behavioral disorders. In almost 40% of the cases statewide, students are able to receive services and be released from the program within 30 days; however, there are many cases of students remaining enrolled in a PHP for a longer period of time.

In these situations, it is imperative to the future academic success of these students that the school district and PHP provider work together to provide quality education, rehabilitative services and a transition plan for the student.

In all situations, it is the responsibility of the student's resident school district to provide or ensure the provision of education services to a child who is placed in a PHP. School districts are permitted to provide students education through homebound instruction. However, children placed in PHPs may not receive homebound instruction for a period in excess of thirty days. In addition, the school district should ensure that children enrolled in PHPs have access to instruction designed to permit a successful transition back into their school of residence without significant interruption in instruction in core academic subjects.

While educating these students is the responsibility of the school district, the PHP provider is responsible for the overall success of the student's participation in the PHP. The PHP provider will work with the school district to develop an education plan that will include the educational goals for the student while they are enrolled with the PHP as well as a transition plan that will ensure successful reintegration to their traditional school facility.

The department is aware that there are cases of parents enrolling students in a PHP and not notifying the school district. While the departments of Education and Public Welfare as well as the school districts and PHP providers are all working together on this matter, compulsory school

attendance is ultimately the parents' responsibility. In cases where parents do not object, it is the responsibility of the PHP to notify the school district of residence of the transfer.

The enclosed bulletin from the Department of Public Welfare is being shared with the state's 100 PHP providers and their 206 sites so they are aware of their responsibilities. To see a complete list of the PHP providers, visit <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/Services/Programs/MentalHealthSubstanceAbuse/> However, as it is in the best interest of the children you serve, I would encourage you to initiate contact with PHP providers if they have not contacted you. A positive working relationship between your office and the PHP provider will ensure your resident students receive the full complement of education services for which they are entitled.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter or the attached report, I encourage you to participate in a conference call to be held on:

**Wednesday, January 9, 2008**  
**11 a.m. - noon**

I greatly appreciate your hard work to ensure all students within your district have access to a high quality education.

Sincerely,



Diane Castelbuono  
Deputy Secretary, Office of Elementary/Secondary Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Education