

CAMPUS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

"Commitment to Excellence"

350 Pear Street, Dover, Delaware 19904

Phone: (302) 736-0403 Fax: (302) 736-5330

www.campuscommunityschool.com

Dr. Catherine Balsley, Head of School

Leroy Travers, Principal Heidi Greene, Director of Curriculum

May 14, 2015

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

Dear Ms. Nagourney,

Thank you for the Campus Community School's Charter School Renewal Report date April 30, 2015. We would like to take this opportunity to respond to the report in an effort to provide clarification with respect to several issues raised within the report.

Since our last charter renewal in 2010, our school has faced many significant challenges impacting academic performance as measured by the Performance Framework including, (1) the loss of the free school facility at Wesley College providing for the elementary school program which has impacted our financial decision-making relative to organization, staffing and the purchase of instructional resources; (2) elimination of our high school program, relocation of our elementary school, and reorganization of our grades of instruction by adding kindergarten to provide for a K-8 articulated school program; (3) establishment of a standards-based common core culture for teaching and learning; (4) significant demographic changes in the student population.

These challenges led to bold and positive changes by the Board of Directors, witnessed by dramatic academic gains in the 2013-2014 school year. These changes included:

- Changes to administrative leadership and school organization. The high school program was phased out (2013); kindergarten was added (2013); appointment of an interim Head of School (summer 2013) and subsequent appointment of a new Head of School (January 2014); appointment of a new principal (August 2013); reappointment of a director for curriculum, instruction and assessment;
- Extensive board development activities including recruitment expansion to increase the diversity of membership and training and consultant sessions with the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA);
- Involvement in the Common Ground for the Common Core DOE initiative;
- Realignment of budget priorities to focus on the purchase of much needed mathematics and literacy instructional materials;
- Collaboration and partnership with multiple community-based organizations such as Communities in Schools and the Delaware Food Bank to address the multiplicity of health and human service needs of an ever growing homeless/low-income/living in poverty student population.

These actions have led to CCS, within a very short time, trending in a very positive direction, especially in the area of academic performance.

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Academic Performance

In 2013-2014 school year CCS received an overall rating of "Meets Standard" for the first time of this current charter. As reported in the Charter School Renewal Report, in 2013-2014 school year, CCS has made significant gains in academic performance and student growth in both math and reading. We believe the factors that contributed to this dramatic growth include adopting a results-driven system for school improvement including a renewed school-wide focus on data-driven instruction and a continuous cycle of improvement, focused/targeted professional development within small learning communities, bi-weekly classroom observations with immediate feedback, increased academic rigor, curriculum refinement, the adoption of curricular and instructional resources aligned to common core standards, and increased use of mentors, tutors and volunteers.

However, we would like to point out several facts that can be better understood with a refined or deeper analysis of the performance data as reported in the Charter School Renewal Report.

The report rightly pointed out that CCS has failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four straight years. In the 2013-2014 school year CCS missed only ONE indicator to making AYP, that being the high school graduation rate. Campus Community School did not have a high school population in the 2013-2014 school year. Further, according to DOE, in the 2015 school year all schools will maintain the same AYP status as 2014 school year because of the transition to the new assessment system. We believe this to be an unfair reporting measure of our progress. Additionally, it was reported that student proficiency in ELA is below the state average. 68.4% of CCS students were proficient, compared to the State average of 70.2% and Capital School District 68%. Our grade 8 students scored 83% up from 65% the previous year and well above state average.

Overall, our school has seen positive growth for all students. We also recognize that students of low income/high poverty and African American students are not improving their academic performance as quickly as their classmates and we have implemented strategies in the 2014-15 school year to address these inequalities of performance to close the existing achievement gap.

Financial Performance

Campus Community School strives to ensure our financial stability. During the current charter period, Campus restructured our bond agreement and renovated our current building without incurring any additional debit. Although, both of these actions reduced our cash on hand, we are now in the process of rebuilding our cash. In addition, each year we have been audited by an outside qualified accounting firm, including a single audit for at least the last 4 years, with no findings.

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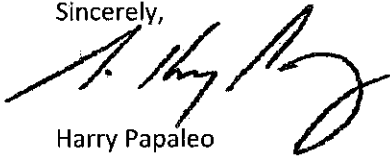
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Organizational Performance

In the 2013-2014 school year Campus Community School did not meet the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) percentage. We started the year with a highly qualified teacher for middle school mathematics but this teacher subsequently left in the fall. We had an existing staff member who was familiar with both the curriculum and the students and we made a decision to reassign this staff person to teach for the remainder of the year. The staff person was non-HQT. In 2014-15 CCS hired a middle school teacher who was working towards HQT credentialing.

Campus Community School looks forward to working with the staff of the Charter School Office throughout this renewal process. Please do not hesitate to contact Head of School, Dr. Catherine Balsley, or myself if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Harry Papaleo

Campus Community School

President, Board of Directors