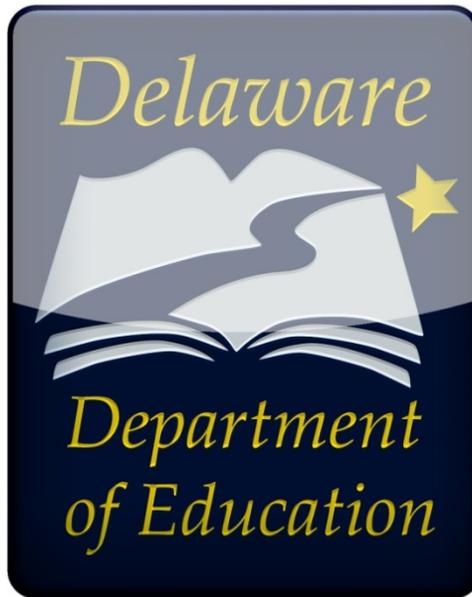


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



DELAWARE MET HIGH SCHOOL

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPLICATION TO OPEN A CHARTER SCHOOL

Opening Date: August 2014

Grades: 9 - 12

Location: New Castle County

Date of Report: 6 May 2013

Background

Name	Delaware Met High School	
Projected Enrollment	Year 1	264(planned), 264 (max), grades 9, 10
	Year 2	396 (planned), 396 (max), grades 9, 10, 11
	Year 3	528 (planned), 528 (max), grades 9 - 12
	Year 4	528 (planned), 528 (max), grades 9 - 12
Mission	To ignite the passions of high school students through the discovery and development of their unique interests; to empower students to develop self-confidence and create their own success through a personalized learning environment and purposeful internships of their choice; and, with the support of advisors and community partners, graduate as confident and capable young adults, prepared to make their mark on the world!	
Vision	To provide each student with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A highly personalized learning experience defined by a Personalized Learning Plan, daily advising, internship mentoring, and rigorous academics based on student interests;• A guiding partnership among students, parents, advisors, mentors, colleagues, and the community that provides a learning context appropriate to student interests;• Learning experiences and hands-on projects that guide learning across all content areas and support depth over breadth;• Opportunities for students to participate in real-world learning through internships and training related to their interests and goals;• A vibrant, flexible learning environment that provides equal access to all students by customizing instruction to address unique student learning styles, abilities, and interests; and,• Graduation with a high school diploma, a post-high school plan, and the skills needed for success throughout college and in real-world careers.	

The Charter School Accountability Committee (Committee) convened on:

- 24 January 2013 for the Initial Meeting
- 7 February 2013 for the Preliminary Meeting.
- 23 April 2013 for the Final Meeting to make a final recommendation based on the school's response to the Committee's preliminary report.

At the Final Meeting, the Committee focused on the following criteria which required further clarification:

- Education Plan
- Performance Management
- Governance and Management
- Start-up and Operations
- Budget and Finance
- Charter Management Organization Supplement

Education Plan

At the Preliminary Meeting, the Committee determined that the following subsections of the Education Plan did not meet the standard. The Committee discussed the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report and noted the following:

Student Performance Standards

- the response met the standard

High School Graduation Requirements

- the response met the standard

School Culture

- the response met the standard

Supplemental Programming

- the response met the standard

Special Populations at At-Risk Students

Students with Disabilities

- the response met the standard

English Language Learners (ELLs)

The Committee noted the following:

- Districts/charters are required by law to notify parents in a language they understand that their child/children have been identified as English Language Learners. The phrase "to the extent practicable," has been removed from the 14 Del. C. Chapter 31. It is a legal obligation of the district/charter to provide notice in a language format that the parents of ELL students can understand – even when it is not "practicable and a translator or translation company/agency must provide the written notice. This section should be amended.
- The Delaware English as a Second Language/Title III program is not the same as the Delaware World Language Initiative and does not use the same language proficiency standards. ACTFL standards are not used in the ESL program. This section must be amended to include this information.
- The Delaware Met must use academic/educational assessment data as provided by a bilingual educational diagnostician familiar with second language acquisition and stages of English language development. Testing for disabilities among English language learners should be completed within the appropriate timeline so that SWD/ELL students are scheduled to receive **both** special education and English Language services. Advisor observations over an extended period of time do not allow for the prompt diagnosis of needs for both special education and English language learners.

The Committee requested the following:

On or before June 28, 2013, submit for review the school's amended policy for serving English Language Learners.

Gifted Students

- the response met the standard

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

- The Committee noted that the draft revised School Admissions Policy and Procedures would, if adopted, bring the policy and procedures into compliance with the statutory requirements for preferences, presuming that “Children residing within the 5-mile radius” means within a 5-mile radius of the school.
- The Committee requested the following:
On or before June 28, 2013, submit for review the school’s amended School Admissions Policy and Procedures and evidence of its adoption by the Board.

Student Discipline

- The Committee noted that the response stated that expulsion procedures were included in attachment 9-E. This document was not attached to the response.
- The Committee requested the following:
On or before June 28, 2013, submit for review the school’s expulsion procedures.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the applicant’s response to the “Education Plan” section met the standard with conditions.

Performance Management

Interim Assessments

- the response met the standard

Measuring and Evaluating Academic Progress

- the response met the standard

Information System to Manage Student Performance

- the response met the standard

The Committee determined that the applicant’s to “Performance Management” section met the standard.

Governance and Management

The Committee noted the following:

- The submitted proposed amended by-laws, scheduled to be adopted by the Delaware Met Board on April 10, 2013, addressed some of the concerns listed in the preliminary report. The adoption by the Board needs to be confirmed.

- The by-laws still do not make it clear that the State Code of Conduct applies to the Directors and Officers. Thus, the Committee recommends that the by-laws be further amended to include such a provision. Additionally, although it was addressed during the Charter School Accountability Committee's preliminary meeting, the following concern did not appear in the preliminary report: "The Delaware Open meetings law does not provide for participation by way of speaker phone, which is currently permitted under Article IV, Section 4.11 of the applicant's by-laws." Participation by speaker phone is still included in the proposed amended by-laws in that section, although section 4.8 does state that the school shall "...otherwise comply with FOIA..." The Committee recommends, for purposes of clarity, that attendance by telephone at Board meetings be eliminated from the by-laws.
- The Committee requested the following:

On or before June 28, 2013, submit amended by-laws in accordance with the Committee's recommendations and evidence of adoption by the Board.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the "Governance and Management" section met the standard with a condition.

Start-Up & Operations

Start-up Plan

The Committee noted the following:

- The response included a more detailed narrative to supplement the original start-up plan. However, the response lacked specific and concrete steps necessary to complete the tasks identified in Attachment 19. The response included job descriptions for staff at the Charter Management Company Innovative Schools.
- A concern regarding the capacity of Innovative Schools to take on the initial start-up (and ongoing) activities. If all current applications are approved, Innovative Schools would be involved in the start-up of four new charter schools for the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, Innovative Schools has also been identified as the back-office vendor for a fifth school that, if approved, would open the same school year.
- The Committee also noted that the start-up activities identified in Attachment 19 occur prior to July 1, 2014 (in May and June). It is not clear how these activities will be funded. Additionally, the Committee questioned the timing of these activities and a potential conflict for any new teachers who are finishing out the 2013-14 school year at another school.
- The Committee requested the following:

On or before May 31, 2013 submit a plan to address items above.

Transportation

The Committee noted the following concerns:

- The capacity of the Charter Management Company to provide assistance with safe transportation planning, execution and its ability to respond to contingencies and emergencies.
- The response cites an incorrect regulation and is not clear. Normally, hub stops are established outside of the district of the school. For those students living outside of the district of the school, it is the responsibility of the parents to transport their children to either the out-of-district hub stops, a point on a regular bus route within the district of the school or to the school.

The Committee concluded that the response did not meet the standard and imposed the following condition:

- **On or before May 31, 2013 submit a plan to address the items above.**

Note: The budget worksheet uses \$830/student as a basis for transportation. The FY13 allowance for transportation is \$908.75/student for charter schools in New Castle County.

Safety and Security

- the response met the standard

Lunch/Breakfast

The Committee noted the following:

- Delaware Met acknowledged that they must have a current Food Establishment Permit and they will follow the NSLP procurement process to secure a vendor.
- Delaware Met must contact Aimee Beam, Program Manager for School Nutrition, at 302-735-4060 during the planning year if they plan to participate in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast Program. Contact during the planning year is essential so that they can receive proper training and complete the application and procurement processes.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the “Start-Up Operations” section met the standard with conditions.

Budget and Finance

The Committee noted the following:

- The budget narrative includes information about cafeteria funding (Line 23); however, no amounts appear on any of the budget worksheets.
- The amounts in line 35 include funding for legal fees at \$2,000 per year. This amount seems very low considering the average billing rate for legal services.

- The narrative provided for lines 40 and 41 seem to be inconsistent with the amounts in the budget worksheet. Both amounts are said to be based on square footage, yet the amounts vary from year to year (which would indicate a change in the square footage) and the calculations do not match the narrative.
- Line 34 includes costs for maintenance contracts to clean/maintain the building. What are these amounts based on (quotes, industry standards, etc.)?
- There are no funds budgeted in Year 4 for Line 51 which includes expenses for enrollment and recruitment.
- The budget narrative references Lines 61-63; however, those lines do not appear on any of the budget worksheets that were submitted. Where are these funds accounted for?
- The Federal Funds worksheet is incomplete.
- The Planning Year (Year 0) expenses total \$281,170 and the sole source of revenue is foundation funds. The applicant must provide proof that these funds have been secured and a contingency plan if fundraising efforts fall short.

Thus, the Committee requested that:

On or before May 31, 2013, provide clarification regarding the items listed above.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the “Budget and Finance” section did not meet the standard.

Charter Management Company Supplement

The Committee noted the following:

- The capacity of Innovative Schools (IS) to support Delaware Met’s educational program is addressed in a meaningful way. IS will partner with national design partner, Big Picture Learning. IS will act as the local touch point and leverage the expertise of Big Picture Learning to ensure that the school model is replicated with fidelity. The time allotment for the CMO Coordinator position is not clear.
- The major area of concern is Innovative School’s capacity to take on a significant portion of the start-up and ongoing activities of the school. If all current applications are approved, Innovative Schools would be involved in the start-up of four schools for the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, Innovative Schools has been identified as the back-office vendor for a fifth school that, if approved, would be opening in the same school year.
- It is not clear how the Delaware Met Board will effectively oversee, monitor and evaluate the Innovative Schools.
- There is a concern regarding the allocation of the “Back Office Support Specialist” position. The response indicates that ¼ of a full-time position will be allocated for two schools (essentially 1/8 of a full-time position per school). This allocation cannot effectively support a charter school given the vast array of duties this position handles.

The Committee requested that:

- ***On or before May 31, 2013, provide clarification regarding the items listed above.***

The Accountability Committee concluded that the “Charter Management Company” section did not meet the standard.

Summary and Recommendations

Application Sections	Charter School Accountability Committee’s Recommendations
(1) Founding Group and School	Met
(2) Education Plan	Met with conditions
(3) Performance Management	Met
(4) Staffing	Met
(5) Governance and Management	Met with a condition
(6) Parent and Community Involvement	Met
(7) Start-up and Operations	Met with conditions
(8) Facilities	Met with conditions
(9) Budget and Finance	Not Met
(10) Charter Management Company & Highly Successful Charter School Operator Supplement	Not Met

The Charter School Accountability Committee recommends to the Secretary of Education that the application for the Delaware Met High School be approved.

Appendix A

List of Attendees

Preliminary Meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee

Delaware Met High School

23 April 2013

Members of the Committee

- Paul Harrell, Director of Public and Private Partnerships, Interim Chairperson
- Karen Field Rogers, Associate Secretary, Financial Reform & Resource Management
- Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director, Exceptional Children Resources
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts; Charter School Curriculum Review
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network (Non-voting)

Staff to Committee

- Catherine T. Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- John Carwell, Director, Charter School Office
- Patricia Bigelow, Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Chantel Janiszewski, Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Finance Charter School
- Sheila Kay-Lawrence, Administrative Secretary, Charter School Office

Representatives from Delaware Met High School

- Dawn Downes, Director of Teaching and Learning, Innovative Schools

Additional Attendees

- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Curriculum Access & Differentiation of Instruction