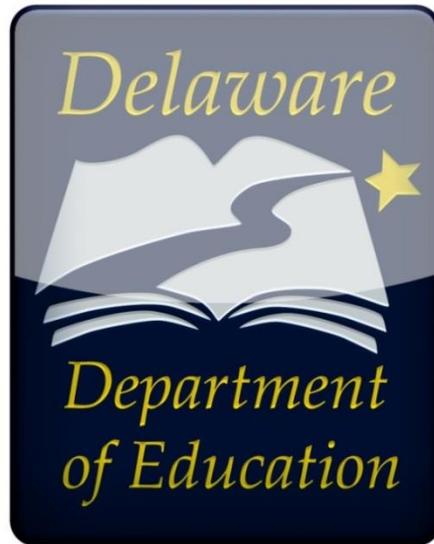


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Freire Charter School

**MAJOR MODIFICATION APPLICATION
FINAL REPORT**

CSAC Final Meeting: February 24, 2015
CSAC Final Report Published: February 27, 2015

By December 31, 2014, Freire Charter School submitted an application for a major modification of its charter.

The following were in attendance at the Final Meeting of the CSAC on February 24, 2015:

Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- David Blowman, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Deputy Secretary of Education, DDOE
- Karen Field Rogers, Associate Secretary, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- Tasha Cannon, Deputy Officer Talent Recruitment, Selection and Strategy, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU), DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Community Member and Former Charter School Leader

Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)

- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Charter Schools Network
- Donna Johnson, Executive Director, Delaware State Board of Education

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Catherine Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Jennifer Nagourney, Executive Director, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management

Representatives of Freire Charter School

- William Porter, Head of School
- Kelly Davenport, CEO, Build the Future
- Tammy Khieu, Head of Administration

Additional Attendees Noted

- Elizabeth Lewis, Office of Management and Budget

Discussion

Mr. Blowman acknowledged that a significant amount of information had been requested at the Initial CSAC meeting, particularly with respect to finances.

The following issues were discussed:

- Whether the nurse will also serve as a receptionist for the school – The school explained that the nurse’s primary role will be to treat the students as a Nurse, but he/she will help with administrative tasks when he/she has down time. However, there will always be coverage at the school’s front door.
- Whether the school has raised \$193,500 of the \$300,000 required for the Longwood Foundation matching grant – The school explained that the \$300,000 has already been raised, but was likely reflected over a two-year period due to the school’s fiscal year end of June 30th. The school received a pledge upfront from the Longwood Foundation and had one year to raise the money, which it did. The Longwood Foundation has provided half of the \$300,000 and will provide the other half at a later date.
- Transportation – The school explained that it still anticipates using DART buses, but will work with the Department as things change. The school has multiple contingency plans, including school vans and potentially purchasing Moyer’s buses. Ms. Massett added that the Delaware Charter Schools Network has also offered for the school to be a part of the transportation consortium.
- Ms. Johnson asked for clarification about the legal authority for the requirement to remove the specific interest enrolment preference. Mr. Porter explained that the requirement came from the terms of the federal CSP grant, and not federal or state law.
- The school’s intended use of the Charter School Program (CSP) grant and clarification regarding the school’s conversation with the United States Department of Education – The school explained that the United States Department of Education maintains that the school’s pledge results in a weighted lottery and is against federal policy, guidance, and/or regulation. The school’s pledge can still be found in the school’s enrollment paperwork. The grant is a three-year grant: \$189,000 in Year 1, \$249,000 in Year 2, and \$249,000 in Year 3. For Year 1, the money will be spent on start-up costs, including a portion on marketing, advertising and recruitment efforts, and another large portion on furniture and fixtures.
- Recruitment progress – The school explained that families just received thick packets last week and are working through them. The school is currently pushing for more applications. The school’s current application count is 150.
- Whether the school has begun to make modifications to the building – The school responded that there has been some demolition work, but that the school itself has not yet made any modifications.
- Whether the use of vans would impact the school’s overall budget – The school explained that it does not yet know who is enrolling. All students that live in the Red Clay School District more than two miles away from the school have a DART bus stop

within a half mile of their residence. Additionally, some requirements that apply to a school bus would not apply where vans carry a low number of students. The school hopes to finalize its transportation plan by late spring, based upon the school's numbers following March 20th. The school believes that it has enough money to cover the cost of vans, if vans are utilized. The school has budgeted anywhere from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and can transport most students by van if necessary.

- Whether the school has plans for crosswalk services – The school responded that Dave Blankenstein, other city leaders, and the transportation firm have been working on ensuring that all crosswalks are in full compliance.
- Where the school stands with respect to the neighborhood association – The school explained that there are two groups. One group is Midtown Brandywine Associates, who the school has not spoken with for many weeks. The school met with another group of nearby business leaders on January 17th. Finally, the school is waiting for the city to get back to it with some alternative ideas based on the feedback the school received from the business leaders. Mr. Blankenstein is on a three-week sabbatical, so the school is waiting on an alternative contact for the City. The school is looking for a way to not enter Midtown Brandywine and also find a better drop-off point. The school is waiting to hear back from the City.

Conclusion

The CSAC voted unanimously to recommend approval of the school's major modification request.

Next Steps:

- The CSAC will provide the school with a Final Report no later than February 27, 2015.
- A second and final public hearing will be held on March 9, 2015, in the 2nd floor auditorium of the Carvel State Office Building, located at 820 North French Street, Wilmington DE.
- The public comment period ends on March 13, 2015.
- The State Board of Education will hold a meeting on March 19, 2015, in the 2nd floor Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building at 401 Federal Street, Dover DE, at which time the Secretary will announce his decision on the application.