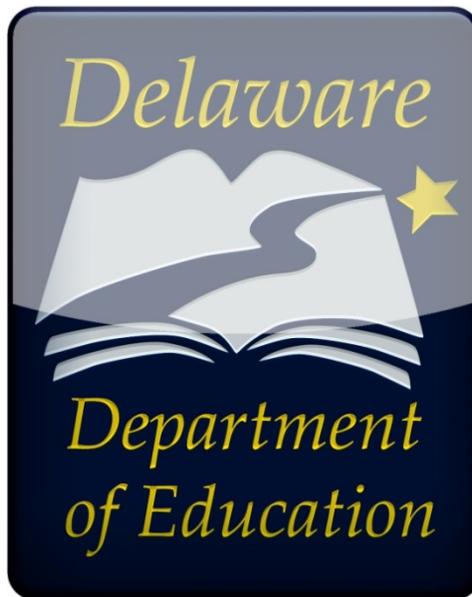


# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**KUUMBA ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN EXISTING CHARTER**

Opening Date: September 2001

Grades: K - 5

Location: New Castle County

September 30, 2012 Unit Count: 340

Date of Report: 23 May 2013

## Background

**Name** Kuumba Academy Charter School

**Current Enrollment** 263

**Projected Enrollment**

Year 1	295	K-6
Year 2	445	K-7
Year 3	644	K-8
Year 4	855	K-8

**Mission** The mission of Kuumba Academy Charter School is to be Delaware's premier arts-integrated charter school with a commitment to provide a rigorous, high quality academic program in an environment that values parents as key partners in the education of their children; honors the individuality and unique learning style of each student; and utilizes the arts as a tool for academic learning.

**Vision** The vision of Kuumba Academy Charter School is that the school will be an exceptional educational community that embraces cultural awareness and empowers students to achieve integrated academic and artistic excellence.

Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (Committee) convened on:

- 11 March 2013 for the Initial/Preliminary Meeting
- 6 May 2013 for the Final Meeting

At the Final Meeting, the Committee reviewed responses to the following approval criteria listed in 14 Del. Code § 512 that were considered as not met at the Preliminary Meeting.

- Criterion Two: Form of Organization
- Criterion Four: Goals for Student Performance
- Criterion Six: Educational Program
- Criterion Eight: Economic Viability
- Criterion Nine: Administrative and Financial Operations
- Criterion Eleven: Student Discipline and Attendance
- Criterion Twelve: Health and Safety

### Criterion Two: Form of Organization

The Committee discussed the responses from KACS relative to the form of organization and noted the following.

- Although the school has not provided a copy of the original certification of incorporation, it has provided a copy of the Certification from the Department of State that such a certificate was filed with that office on December 23, 1998. A copy of the certificate of incorporation referred to in that certification is requested.

- A copy of Amended and Restated By-laws was provided by the school. That revised document, which states it takes effect April 29, 2013, addresses most of the concerns about the previous by-laws raised in the Preliminary Report. Clarification is requested to establish that the school understands that any standing committee of the Board of Directors, including the Executive Committee described in Article VII, Section 2(a) is itself a public body subject the open meetings laws. Additionally, clarification is requested to establish that the amended and restated by-laws as submitted have been adopted by the school's Board of Directors.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Two was met with conditions.***

#### **Criterion Four: Goals for Student Performance**

The Committee discussed the response to the Goals for the Student Performance section of the application and noted the following.

- The response from KACS is extensive and well presented.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Four was met.***

#### **Criterion Six: Educational Program**

The Committee discussed the response to the Education Program section for those content areas that had been deemed as “not met” at the Preliminary Meeting and noted the following.

##### *Curriculum*

##### **English Language Arts**

- The response for writing is nicely aligned. The curriculum includes connections to real world events and experiences as well as providing many opportunities for a range of texts and writing.

##### **World Languages**

- KACS worked with the Education Associate for World Languages in refining the school's Scope and Sequence documents, curriculum, and model units for Spanish. Throughout the process, KACS reached out for clarification and further suggestions and has, as a result, created a standards-based curriculum that will promote student success. The variety of approaches and essential questions suggest that this curriculum can be implemented to meet the needs of a variety of students as well as learning styles.
- In the sample Unit “En la Escuela”, there is a misspelling of Emperador/Emperatriz.

##### **Visual and Performing Arts**

- It is evident from the documents that KACS submitted for review that the school has clearly aligned the curriculum in the visual and performing arts to the school's mission-specific academic goals.

- **Arts Integration**
  - 3.1a. Each year, all students at KACS will participate in at least two expedition showcases that highlight an integration of the arts and academics.
  - 3.1b. Each year, for at least one expedition showcase, all students at KACS will be able to identify the impact of using an art form to enhance learning and will be able to communicate with others the relevance of the arts on lifelong learning.
  - 3.1c. Each year teachers will use arts integration strategies on a weekly basis to enhance their classroom instruction.
  - 3.1d. Each year, teachers will co-teach a unit of instruction with an arts instructor at least four times.
  - The preface before the Scope and Sequence documents clarified the Arts Integration/ Expeditionary Learning model. Adjustments have been made in the instructional plan to better reflect class meetings throughout the year.
  
- **Units of Instruction**
  - The school is commended for putting learning targets in language that students can understand.
  - Throughout the visual art instruction and in arts integration class work, students are provided a rich variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional experiences.
  - Musical theatre is an appropriate vehicle for integrating performing arts and might also include aspects of visual arts and technology as well.

### **Technology**

- KACS will implement the ISTE NETS (International Society for Technology Education/ National Educational Technology Standards) available through [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org). KACS will equip all classrooms with a Smart Board. Additionally, KACS will provide all students in grades K-2 with one desktop computer per every four students. In grades 3-5, laptops will be provided at a ratio of 1:2. In grades 6-8, one laptop will be provided for every student. In grades 3-8, an iPad cart will be provided for every math/science classroom and the carts will be equipped with one iPad per student.
  
- Kuumba reached out to DCET regarding the writing of a technology plan to further their eRATE filing. In prior consultation with DTI regarding Kuumba's potential for filing for additional eRATE funding, DTI indicated that Kuumba's poverty rate made them an excellent candidate for obtaining additional funding for eRATE Priority 2 services, such as internal connections and basic maintenance on internal connections. It should be noted, however, that filing for these services is optional and is at the discretion of the charter school/LEA. Kuumba may have neither the manpower nor the desire to undertake this process. Should Kuumba determine that they would like to proceed with this process, the leadership is to contact Wendy Modzelewski at DCET (Delaware Center for Educational Technology).

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Six was met.***

### **Criterion Eight: Economic Viability**

The Committee discussed the response to the Economic Viability section of the application noted the following.

- The school's original submission included budget worksheets that contained inconsistencies and discrepancies. The revised submission addressed the issues identified in the original submission and provided additional clarification on revenue and expenditure estimates.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Eight was met.***

### **Criterion Nine: Administrative and Financial Operations**

The Committee discussed the response to the Administrative and Financial Operations section of the application for those areas deemed as “not met” at the Preliminary Meeting and noted the following.

#### *Criteria and Timeline for Hiring Staff*

*Kuumba Academy Charter School has submitted:*

- a well thought out hiring calendar and timeline.
- plans to collect data regarding staff plans early in the school year, thus allowing enough time to develop hiring plans for teachers/staff that plan to leave or enough time to retain top talent that may be planning to leave.
- plans to move to a competency-based selection model and will pull best practices/models from The New Teacher Project’s hiring tool box, which is a valuable resource.
- plans to begin advertising in February, which is at least a month sooner than most schools/districts and will allow them access to a deeper teacher pool.
- plans to remedy the previously noted failure to set monthly hiring goals. Attaching a goal to hires per month will keep the overall goal front and center; allow for a bench mark; keep the recruitment/selection team accountable; and will drive recruitment efforts. Moving forward, KACS should consider naming specific hiring goals for each month.

#### *Incorporation of the Delaware Performance Appraisal System into Staff Evaluations*

- KACS demonstrates a clear, high-level understanding of the DPAS-II process. DOE has monitored the charter’s implementation of DPAS-II through ERS, site visit, and ongoing trainings/sessions. The charter has been in-compliance to-date.
- KACS outlines a process for differentiating performance and how it will handle data re: differential performance (i.e. improvement planning, goal-setting & monitoring, feedback, etc.)
- KACS demonstrates a commitment of implementing DPAS-II while maintaining a vested interest in ensuring staff continues to grow in implementing the Expeditionary Learning (EL) model and stays up to date in a skills set that is aligned with the EL design

### *Admissions Preferences and Selection Process*

- The revisions to the school's request and narrative address the concerns raised in the Preliminary Report. The stated preference for siblings of students enrolled at the school is in compliance with the statute.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Nine was met.***

### **Criterion Eleven: Student Discipline and Attendance**

The Committee discussed the response to the Student Discipline and Attendance section of the application for those areas deemed as “not met” at the Preliminary Meeting (subsections [b] description of how discipline will be handled with special education students and [d] description of the plan to ensure compliance with 14 Del. Code, § 4112, regarding the reporting of school crimes) and noted the following.

- The school's responses satisfactorily address the concerns cited in the Preliminary Report.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Eleven was met.***

### **Criterion Twelve: Health and Safety**

The Committee discussed the response to the School Transportation and compliance with the National School Lunch Program requirements and noted the following.

#### *School Transportation*

- The school stated that it will provide transportation for students meeting the eligibility criteria in 14 Del. Administrative Code 1105. Students who reside in the same district as the school will receive the same level of transportation service that would be provided by their school district. Hub points may be established for students who reside outside of the district in which the school is located.

#### *Providing Meals to Student and Compliance with the Free/Reduced Lunch Program*

- Kuumba participates in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast Program through the Department of Education. A new Nutrition Manager recently took over the self-preparation operations. The school has willingly accepted training and technical assistance from the DOE School Nutrition staff and its contractor to ensure compliance with the new USDA meal pattern and all program requirements.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Twelve was met.***

## Summary and Recommendations

Criterion	Charter School Accountability Committee's Recommendations
(2) Form of Organization	<b>Met with Conditions</b>
(4) Goals for Student Performance	<b>Met</b>
(6) Educational Program	<b>Met</b>
(8) Economic Viability	<b>Met</b>
(9) Administrative and Financial Operations	<b>Met</b>
(11) School Discipline and Attendance	<b>Met</b>
(11) Health and Safety	<b>Met</b>

The Charter School Accountability Committee recommended that the charter school modification application for Kuumba Academy Charter School **be approved with conditions** for Criterion Two.

## **Appendix A**

### **List of Attendees Final Meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee**

**6 May 2013**

#### **Application to Modify an Existing Charter**

##### **Members of the Committee**

- David Blowman, Deputy Secretary of Education; Committee Chair
- Karen Field Rogers, Manager, Financial Reform and Resource Management
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- Paul Harrell, Director of Public and Private Partnerships
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network (Non-voting)
- Donna R. Johnson, Executive Director, State Board of Education (Non-voting)

##### **Staff to the Committee**

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

##### **Representatives from Kuumba Academy Charter School**

- Raye Jones Avery, Founding Board Member
- Sally Maldonado, Head of School
- Tamara Price Cobb, Assistant Principal
- Lynne Howard, Expansion Director
- Michelle Lambert, Accountant
- Dawn Downes, Innovative Schools