



**Department of Education
Charter School Accountability Meeting**

**April 23, 2013
Charter School New Application
Final Meeting**

First State Military Academy

Ms. McLaughlin called the meeting to order. For the purpose of the record introductions were made:

Members of the Committee

- Mary Kate McLaughlin, Committee Chair, Chief of Staff
- Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director, Exceptional Children Resources
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts; Charter School Curriculum Review
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network (Non-voting)
- Donna R. Johnson, Executive Director, State Board of Education (Non-voting)

Support to the 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 of the First State Military Academy

- David McGuigan, Board Member
- Dennis Dinger, Board Member
- Rhonda Hill, Innovative Schools

Other

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

Ms. McLaughlin explained the purpose of the meeting - to make a final recommendation on First State Military Academy's application for a new charter. She stated that the Committee's preliminary recommendation was that the charter application not be approved and the Committee's report required specific responses from the applicant.

Ms. McLaughlin said the Committee's discussion would focus on the following criteria that required further clarification from the applicant. At the conclusion of the Committee's discussion John Carwell will provide the next steps.

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

EDUCATION PLAN

Student Performance Standards. Ms. McCrae said the response was adequate and the section is considered met.

School Culture. Mr. Carwell said the reviewer noted some areas in the applicant's response that required minor edits. Details will be provided in the final report. Otherwise, this section is considered met.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students. Ms. Mieczkowski reviewed the applicant's response and concluded that this section is considered met.

Special Populations English Language Learners. Mr. Carwell said the reviewer noted that districts and charters are required by law to notify parents in a language that they understand that their child(ren) have been identified as English language learners. The phrase "to the extent practicable," has been removed from the Title 14 Special Populations section. Additionally, 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. This section is considered met with a condition. Detail will be provided in the Preliminary Report.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment. Ms. Hickey said the revisions to the student recruitment policies and procedures included with the applicant's response have brought those policies and procedures into compliance with the statutory requirements for preferences. This section is considered met.

Student Discipline. Mr. Carwell said this section is considered met based on the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report.

Technology. Ms. Hansen said the reviewer for Technology did consider this section approved. However, she noted that it was unclear how this requirement will be met in either curriculum materials or computer hardware. Based on the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report, she noted the following:

- It appears that these issues will be met through the New Tech Network curriculum and the use of a New Tech School Design Coach.
- The New Tech Network curriculum embodies the use of instructional technology. FSMA has addressed this concern through:
 - The use of a full time coach
 - The integration of technology into the student curriculum
 - The detailed PD plan in Appendix D that indicates a full month of curriculum planning the follow up professional development through PLCs

- The New Tech curriculum should allow students to become technologically literate in preparation for the DCAS or Smarter Balanced assessment.
- The school recognizes this requirement and has noted plans to include the iSAFE curriculum in its curricular plans for students.

This criterion is considered met.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Interim Assessments. Ms. McCrae said this section is considered met based on the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Ms. Hickey said the proposed amended bylaws that are scheduled to be adopted by the applicant's Board on April 16, 2013, addressed most of the concerns listed in the preliminary report. She said the proposed amended bylaws in Article I, Section 8, which lists the bases on which discrimination is prohibited, omits several bases required by state and federal laws. She recommends that the bylaws be further amended to make it clear and that there will not be any discrimination on any applicable law.

This criterion is considered met and that more details will be provided in the final report.

START UP AND OPERATIONS

Start-up Plan. Ms. Hughes said the narrative was detailed but lacked specific and concrete steps to complete tasks identified in Attachment 19. The narrative served more as job descriptions for the staff of Innovative Schools. Additionally, there is a concern regarding the capacity of Innovative Schools to manage the bulk of start-up and ongoing activities during the 2014-15 school year. Some of the activities identified in Attachment 19 occur prior to July 1, 2014. It is not clear how these activities will be funded. Additionally, there appears to be a conflict with the timing of these activities given that newly hired teachers (for the 2014-15 school year) might be finishing out their responsibilities at a different school for the previous school year (2013-14).

Transportation. Mr. Carwell said the reviewer raised a concern about regarding qualifications and time allocations of Innovative Schools to effectively manage the transportation function. The applicant should provide additional clarification regarding Innovative Schools' plan to effectively transition the transportation function after two years to the permanent business manager or the operations manager as it states in the application.

Safety and Security. Mr. Carwell said this section is considered met based on the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report.

Lunch/Breakfast. Mr. Carwell said this section is considered met based on the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report.

This criterion is considered not met pending further clarification.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Ms. Hughes said the State revenue on the budget worksheets do not match the state revenues calculated on the revenue worksheets. There is no explanation for the difference between the two numbers. The budget does not include a counselor in year one nor custodians in years one and two. It is not clear from the budget narrative whether the custodial costs are included on line 43. The information that was calculated in the narrative for line 33 does not match the budget sheet.

The information/calculation provided in the narrative for Line 33 does not match the budget spreadsheet. Which number is correct? Additionally, the narrative notes that \$2,000 has been budgeted for legal fees, which seems very low considering the average billing rate for legal services. The narrative indicates that lines 3-55 on the Federal Funds worksheet were not budgeted at that time. However, the worksheet has amounts for FTEs for years 1-4. How were these amounts calculated?

This criterion is considered not met pending further clarification.

CMO SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Carwell noted that the capacity of Innovative Schools (IS) to support FSMA's educational program is addressed in a meaningful way. IS will partner with national design partner, New Tech. IS will act as the local touch point and leverage the expertise of New Tech to ensure that the school model is replicated with fidelity. However, the time allotment for the CMO Coordinator position is not clear.

Ms. Hughes said a major area of concern is Innovative Schools' capacity to take on a significant portion of the start-up and ongoing activities of the school. If all current charter 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. Additionally, it is not clear how the FSMA board will effectively oversee, monitor and evaluate Innovative Schools.

Ms. Hughes also not a concern regarding the allocation of the "Back Office Support Specialist" position. The response indicates that $\frac{1}{4}$ of a full-time position will be allocated for two schools (essentially $\frac{1}{8}$ of a full-time position per school). This allocation cannot effectively support a charter school given the vast array of duties this position handles.

This criterion is considered not met pending further clarification.

RECOMMENDATION

Ms. McLaughlin said for the purposes of the Final Report her recommendation to the Committee is that the charter application for the First State Military Academy **be approved** subject to the aforementioned conditions. A vote was taken. Ayes: 4; Opposed: 0; Abstentions: 0.

Ms. McLaughlin asked Mr. Carwell to share next steps for upcoming meetings and dates.

Mr. Carwell stated the following next steps.

- Public Hearing will be held on May 7, 2013 at Delaware Department of Education 2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Townsend Building, Dover at 5:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned.