



**Department of Education
Charter School Accountability Meeting**

**January 24, 2013
Charter School New Application
Initial Meeting**

The Delaware MET

Ms. Field Rogers called the meeting to order. She said the Secretary of Education authorized her to Chair today's meeting in Ms. McLaughlin's absence. For the purpose of the record introductions were made:

Attending Committee Members

- Karen Field Rogers, Associate Secretary, Financial Reform & Resource Management
- Jennifer Kline, Esq., Education Associate, Procedural Safeguards & Monitoring
- Deb Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network (non-voting)

Support to the Committee

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

Other

- Leighann Hinkle, OMB

Representatives of Charter School

- Rebecca Van Pelt, Founding Board Vice Chair
- Adriane Anderson-Strange, Founding Board Secretary
- Katherine von Duyke, Founding Board
- Jeffrey Bross, Founding Board
- Richelle Talbert, Founding Board
- Debbie Doordan, Innovative Schools
- Dawn Downes, Innovative Schools
- Donald Liberati, Innovative Schools
- Charles Adler, Big Picture Learning

Ms. Field Rogers stated that the purpose of the meeting is to meet with representatives of the applicant group to clarify issues and information which were submitted as part of their application. She explained that the subsequent meeting (Preliminary Meeting) the school representatives may attend as observers, but may not participate in the Committee's interaction. After the Preliminary meeting the Committee's preliminary recommendation will be issued in a Preliminary Report which will be sent out to the applicant. The applicant will be provided 15 calendar days to respond to the Committee's report and address any concerns.

Additionally, after the Committee reviews the applicant's response to the Preliminary Report the Committee will convene for the Final Meeting make a final recommendation which will be reflected in the Committee's Final Report. After the Final Report is issued, there will be public hearing which will be the final opportunity to influence the decision of the Secretary and State Board of Education.

Question one. Ms. McCrae asked in what ways does this year's application address the concerns that the Charter School Accountability Committee raised during the review of the previous Met application last year.

Ms. Van Pelt said one area they felt was weak was the Board's capacity so they spent a significant amount of time building up their Board to address some of the gaps added significant resources.

Ms. Von Duyke said more attention was focused on the Delaware Content Standards, how they align with the LTIs, and how those two programs would work together. Additionally, the Board looked at the Big Picture model in Delaware at Positive Outcomes and in Rhode Island.

Ms. Downes added that last year the Committee was very concerned about the size of the advisories so they went with a 1:20 teacher:student ratio and tried to keep it as true to Big Picture's original model Delaware Met increased it slightly to one to 1:22 students to add additional capacity. Additionally, more school counselors were added based on concerns the Committee expressed last year. Ms. Downes noted that as a Big Picture Learning School they have access to a network that stretches across the country and internationally and have opportunities to see how it looks in different contexts. She said Delaware Met has spoken with schools in California whose advisories are 1:28 and 1:29 ratios to see how the model is implemented with higher ratios. Delaware Met will continue to develop these kinds of relationships.

Mr. Carwell asked Mr. Adler to explain the changes or improvements he noticed from last year's application to this year's application from Big Picture Learning's perspective.

Mr. Adler said he had just come aboard and was not involved with the previous application so he could not address the question. Ms. Downes said Big Picture Learning's two new school development directors have transitioned to other positions since last year. said the current directors, Carlos Marino Charlie Adler, were not involved with last year's application. Charlie just returned from doing some international work in schools.

Question two. Mr. Carwell asked what specific knowledge, skills, experience or background do you see as essential in the Founding Board for the school.

Ms. Van Pelt said the Board has added significant educational experience. Rochelle has been a school leader for 20 years in Delaware and Ms. Von Duyke has been a strong advocate for schools and has a significant educational experience. Additionally, improvements have been made to the governance structure. Mr. Bross has served on many boards and has governance experience. Ms. Anderson-Strange rallies parents and has been in education reform for the past ten years. The Founding Board has also added expertise in facility management and accounting. The Board will issue an RFP to hire a CMO.

Mr. Bross said since they are not like the school districts of having their board elected, they can make a better selection of their board in terms of their preferences and he thinks they have a

done a good job in their selections so far. He said they still have two more positions to fill in legal and finance that they are interviewing people for and expect to have those filled in the next month. He said they have covered how to run a business enterprise, which it is educationally focused.

Ms. Von Duyke said that she has a Ph.D. in Socio-Cultural Approaches to Education and she is interested in cultural relevant pedagogies and she wants to make sure they have that piece engaged in what they are doing.

Question three. Ms. Janiszewski said on page 3-3 of the application (under the “Performance Management” section) you were asked to explain how the school will measure, monitor, and evaluate academic progress and achievement. She asked how will they use the Charter Performance Framework to measure and evaluate academic progress.

Ms. Talbert said there is a framework that is built that includes a multitude of different evaluate measures. She said there is benchmarking, student grade level expectations that the students have to meet each year; and there is an alignment of personalized plan that each student has, as well as, student success plans. She said all of these pieces create a framework to be able to provide feedback on the performance of each student from different perspectives and angles that is aligned with the academic progress.

Ms. Downes said for the work of the Charter Management Organization (CMO) will be to present those metrics to the Board on a monthly basis. She said they will create a regular schedule of data dashboard that will be presented. She said as an example; after a round of DCAS assessment it would be an opportunity for the Board to receive a copy of what that assessment looks like. She said they will look at attendance, discipline, and other metrics that are in alignment of the performance framework. She said it is their understanding, pending the approval of the charter application, the Board would then enter into the performance agreement with the DDOE that are based on those performance frameworks. She said that would be where the metrics come from the monthly reporting that would be prepared with the collaboration of the school leader and the CMO to present to the Board.

Ms. Von Duyke said their goal is to fill that out and add to it because they have some of their own performance framework that they will add to that rubric.

Question four. Ms. McCrae said the teacher to student ratio proposed by the applicant is 1:18 for instruction. In addition, she said each teacher is expected to be assigned approximately 20 advisees. She said the Big Picture Learning School model suggests that the advisor to advisee ratio be 1:13 or 1:15. One of the reported weaknesses of the model is the teacher turnover rate due to burnout. She said this is not addressed in the application, though it was discussed last year as a weakness. Does the applicant acknowledge the amount of work and dedication being asked of its teachers, and how does the applicant propose to mitigate the time constraints and stress related issues that will likely arise from such a heavy workload.

Ms. Van Pelt said they just came back from a meeting with Ed Emmett from Positive Outcomes and they actually talked significantly about this and this is one of the key issues that he deals with on a day to day basis. She said one of the things that they will probably find is learning from Ed’s experience that would certainly help inform their board. She said in the beginning Ed had experienced significant issues because he was a transformation school with a different kind of model and he had some turnover issues. She said they are going to recruit specifically for this model and it is going to be a focus for them.

Ms. Von Duyke said they will have a more standardized approach for the LTIs so that it is a bit more streamline. She said it was recommended that they look for a younger generation of teachers who are a bit more energetic with a little less family requirements because the front load of learning this new teaching style is difficult and requires a lot and then it drops significantly. She said it is not like you want to burn out generations of teachers that are young, but the youth helps to propel them to the model.

Mr. Bross said clearly you set your expectation when you recruit and there is a lot expected of these teachers and they do recognize that but they will create that expectation in their search, interview, and hiring process that will deal with some of those issue.

Mr. Adler said the hiring will help guide them, but there are some teachers who are amazing subject teachers that are not meant to be advisors. He said you have the academic rotations as well as the internships that the academic burden are not on the advisors. He said the Big Picture model of 22 students would have all their academics on them while on this model only one aspect of their academic is on them and the rest would be covered in the other rotations which will help with a lot less burn outs.

Mr. Carwell said as a follow up what other schools have you seen that the strategies work more effectively in terms of teacher retention, what worked better with other schools, and other schools you seen that you most definitely don't want to do that.

Mr. Bross said that is a good question. He asked if anyone ever had an opportunity to be in a Big Picture school.

Ms. Van Pelt said a long time ago but being at Positive Outcomes today and prior meetings with Ed before today, he offers a great deal of network relationship with them that they could learn from his mistakes and see what he has done well. She said he is drawing a different population of kids. She said he has a significant special education which is not in their program, but not to say that they wouldn't end up where he is. She said learning from him would absolutely help them in keeping their teachers in their positions; retained and happy.

Mr. Adler said to give the Committee a little background he was an advisor at the school for four years at the original Met School when it first started and he was the principal of that school also. He said if you want to ask any advisory specific questions he lived through it and that was before they had a network and they were just one school of that type. He said there are fifty schools in the area like this one including a Mid Atlantic group that meets regularly so there is support and you are not out there alone.

Mr. Carwell said as a follow up question the Charter Management Organization have developed their own human capital and pipeline and given the fact that the network has 50 schools has it developed its own pipeline with the types of teachers that are best suited for the environment.

Mr. Bross said not only that there is a subset of that pipeline of 20 schools and Ed Emmett's school is one of them and they are very familiar with that. He said that is a fairly good sampling of schools that actually can be more directly connected to the 50 nationwide. He said they have periodical gatherings and networking day to day and they have heard a lot about this network by the other schools besides Positive Outcomes.

Ms. McCrae said in the education plan they discussed the curriculum and mentioned things that they want to look into, and she noticed that in the professional development plan it looked like they have not taken any consideration in the amount of time that those sorts of efforts take especially in the front end of all of this. She said when you consider the amount of work that these teachers will be dealing with you may need to consider this; the Science Coalition specifically with the curriculum they have to do, you are talking about 12 days out of the year. She said these are things that they might need to consider and keep in mind as they move forward.

Question five. Ms. Field Rogers said the 80% enrollment budget is showing a lower CMO fee (by more than half) than in the 100% enrollment budget. She said nothing that she read in the Innovative Schools' contract indicates that their fee is enrollment dependent. She asked if they could clarify why this fee was reduced in the contingency budget and what would their contingency plan be if their lease costs exceed their estimates or a renovation is required to make the selected space work.

Ms. Van Pelt addressed the first question and said it was a printing issue where it did not show up. She said the eighty percent barrier they will cover less than half of state funds and the rest will be fundraising amounts where it was cut off the page so it doesn't show it. She said they will give them an updated copy where it will show in detail. She said the second questions if it will exceed their budget they absolutely would have fundraisers and make that up. But she feels confident that they have financial people on the Board that will not let that happen.

Mr. Carwell asked if the CMO fee is not based on enrollment dependent.

Ms. Van Pelt said it is the same thing. She said that is the fee that Innovative Schools put before them and the Board will go out and do a formal RFP process to seek other bids for CMO.

Question six. Mr. Carwell asked what is their target number of Learning Through Interest (LTI) sites for each year and can students switch interest pathways.

Ms. Von Duyke said at present they have 65 letters from businesses who have already expressed their interest. She said they have a more informal interest building every day and their target is 100 for the first year. She said the first year the students are still exploring their interests and they are not necessarily going out on LTIs and certainly not in the beginning of the year and they believe that is a good target and two hundred by the second year. She said the reason why they are shooting for that instead of enrollment capacity is because sometimes multiple students would go to a site and they will not be there constantly throughout the year.

Mr. Bross said remember when they start up they won't have the intensive LTI component so they think that 100 would give them a very large resource. He said they have already talked to and solicited and received confirmation from about 70 and he thinks it is very easy for them to reach 100.

Mr. Adler said there are two resources that you haven't mentioned yet because you can't use them yet and they are parents who will have their connections as well as staff that can provide 5 businesses that they are connected with.

Mr. Carwell said once a student selects an interest pathway how locked in are they could they switch immediately.

Ms. Von Duyke said absolutely because it is about fulfilling their interest and helping them develop their interest.

Question seven. Ms. Hansen asked how will the Personalized Learning Plan align with the Student Success Plan requirement.

Ms. Von Duyke said it fits with the model because they look at those careers. She said that the eighth and ninth grade level students are actually looking at these careers. She said with the different high school models they are developing in Delaware is great because in ninth grade they will have them do the exploration because the students are first and not the school. She said if they choose and say they really know their career pathway is and they want to go to that vo-tech school to do that is how they support that student learning plan.

Ms Hansen said the good news is they are developing the career cruise in middle school and they will have that experience when they come to you.

Ms. Von Dvyke said they will actually bring more knowledge of their personalized learning plan.

Question eight. Ms. Kline said teacher training is mentioned in the section on program and strategies to address student mental, emotional and socio-development needs (2-15). She asked if this training was reflected in the budget.

Ms. Von Duyke said through their partnership with Big Picture Learning and the CMO they believe that it will leverage the professional development opportunities, in addition, to other opportunities that are in the budget. She said the costs are probably in the CMO and the Big Picture Learning lines.

Ms. Kline asked what is the anticipated cost above the cost of instructionally focused professional development.

Ms. Von Duyke said at the moment she doesn't know, but she could certainly find out and get an answer to her.

Mr. Bross said they kind of built in a couple of different lines in trying to pick up the teachers training i.e. the summer program training will be for bringing the teachers on board for the Big Picture Learning model, and they built in money for substitute to cover the cost of teachers for training.

Mr. Adler said the professional development usually takes place during the summer where they will have coaches to work with the teachers. He said also there are conferences that come up that teachers will be attending for training. He said there will be training throughout the year for teachers so they are not overwhelmed during the summer.

Ms. Downes said the special education piece you have the students' IEP and their personal learning plan which is part of the Big Picture Learning model . She said it exist side by side so one does not take the place of the other. She said elements of the personalized learning plans that deal with career goals and pathways will be part of the IEP and will be integrated that way. She said the two documents are not integrated because of the legal ramification of having an IEP and the mandates around that. She said they would definitely draw from their partner Positive Outcomes from this state that is also doing the Big Picture model and have a 70% special education population.

Ms. Kline asked how will they address an issue with a student that require special needs that was not included in their budget and how would they deal with servicing the student.

Mr. Bross said they just discussed this same thing in their Board meeting the previous night and asked Kathy if she could address this question.

Ms. Von Duyke said there are a couple of pieces about this; 1) the parents are a big part of this school model and their support and feedback on their child. She said one of the things the parents would have to ask themselves is this the right school for my child because there are students that require a more intensive need that the school may not be able to provide for the student; 2) on the other hand some of these students are very frustrated in the environments that they are in and when they get into a Big Picture model school it may be the right thing for them. She gave an example of a student that she spent 45 minutes with that came into the school as a violent student and now she does not have any issues any more. She said the LTI internship with these students does not always need to be scaled back. She said a lot of times public institutions and nonprofits welcome these students because they surprise everyone of what they can do. She said it is a little bit of them accommodating and stretching that student and having a realistic conversation with the parent about what the school is about and what their child may need; 3) funding does come depending upon the needs of the student and the school will have to accommodate them. She said it is hard to discuss what the population of their students will be until they are enrolled in their school.

Ms. Kline said that at the state level they need to be clear with the school of their expectations that they do not tell students with disabilities that this is the program that we have and might not fit your needs so why don't you look here or there.

Mr. Bross said that they understand they are a public school and the door is open to all students and they clearly understand that.

Mr. Carwell asked if \$5,000 in year one does not appear to be sufficient for everything listed including Restorative Justice training.

Mr. Bross said that the best answer would be for them to show them a more in-depth definition. He said a lot of the cost is in the CMO and Big Picture model fees that are being paid and he would like it to be separated for them so that they can see it better.

Mr. Liberate said they will have the report separated and will forward it to them.

Question nine. Ms. Hansen said on page 3-1 they were asked to describe the anticipated performance levels and academic needs of the students they intend to serve. She asked what the percentage of students do they anticipate will require remediation. She asked will the students require intensive remediation and have their LTI internships scaled back.

Ms. Von Duyke said at this point they are looking at 12.5% special needs but those figures could change and Mr. Emmett said those figures were a surprise to him and depending on the year different groups of parents talk with their friends and you could end up with a whole population and that can shift and that was a good heads up for them. She said in terms of the gifted program, she did meet two gifted students' one in Rhode Island and the other one Positive Outcomes. She said the student from Rhode Island was the computer IT person for the school and his LTI project could not be evaluated by his advisor because it was a secret. She said all of the evaluations were between him and the mentor and at some point you may have a

student that is so gifted in an area that they might have to tell you what the evaluation may be. She said you might have to tap into the University for some expertise to promote that student. She said that is part of the model and it is built in.

Ms. Downes said that Adrienne has a son that is attending Gateway and she has been in conversation with those parents.

Ms. Strange said yes those parents are very interested in their model, they have done two presentations there and a lot of students at that school will fit well in their model. She said when they went to speak with them; they were ready to fill out the application that night. She said they told them that they had to wait and let their hands be in the Charter School Accountability Committee hands and they will refer them to the Committee for any future things. She said that at Gateway, the teachers there are teaching the students' project based learning, because they are incorporating their science, math, and English language arts around projects that her son is learning now.

Ms. Hansen said that in the application Khan Academy is mentioned and what strategies will be used to meet their needs.

Ms. Von Duyke said the Khan Academy ties in with the LTI and the reason is what seems to be boring in the world of mathematics all of a sudden becomes important to a student because now they see finance is a big part of this. She said before they might not know how to do percent, so now it becomes very interesting through Khan Academy, in which they can pull up that area and start working on that. She said then they may say my division skills are not doing so well, so I cannot do percent, so now the student becomes interested. She said if you look at Khan Academy there are two parts to it; the video library, the testing and assessment, and the score keeping that the student can sign in under the teacher's name and the teacher can see how all the students are doing. She said that is one way for the students to become interested in math. She said the other piece is they know about the Delaware Content Standards and they know they have to meet that. She said the piece that the teacher would tie in with Khan Academy and the math would be that Khan Academy is great with the learning techniques and maybe not on the conceptual parts and you still going to have those conceptual conversations with the students. She said if you can tie that in with the LTI, and it is not always possible, but if you can in some way touch that student's life that would be the job of the advisor. She said another thing about Khan Academy it could act as a flip school so that the student could replay he video tapes as many times as they need to.

Mr. Carwell asked if there was a cost to the school for Khan Academy.

Ms. Von Duyke said it cost nothing.

Question ten. Ms. Field Rogers said professional development appears to be comprehensive and tied to the mission but the budget does not appear sufficient to support the travel costs. She asked if they could explain their assumptions.

Ms. Van Pelt said that it will be provided with details from the CMO project budget they will provide them at a later date.

Ms. Field Rogers asked John Carwell to share next steps.

Mr. Carwell stated the following next steps.

- Preliminary Meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2013 at 1:00 PM
- Final Meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2013 at 10:00 AM
- Public Hearing is TBA

Mr. Cross thanked the Committee and asked for their favorable consideration for their Charter Application to be accepted.

Meeting adjourned.