



**Department of Education
Charter School Accountability Meeting**

**May 6, 2013
Charter School New Application
Final Meeting**

Pike Creek Charter Middle School

Mr. David Blowman called the meeting to order in the absence of Mary Kate McLaughlin. The Secretary of Education authorized Mr. Blowman to Chair today's meeting. For the purpose of the record introductions were made.

Committee Members

- David Blowman, Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Committee Chair
- Karen Field Rogers, Financial Reform & Resource Management
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Paul Harrell, Director, Public & Private Partnerships
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children
- 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

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

Representatives of the Applicant Group

- Mike Smith, Board President
- Robyn Sheehan, Board Member
- Brooke Balon, Board Member

Mr. Blowman explained that the purpose of today's meeting is to make a final recommendation on the Pike Creek Charter Middle School's application for a new charter. He said the Committee's preliminary recommendation was that the charter application not be approved and the Committee's report required specific responses from the Applicant.

Mr. Blowman said the Committee's discussion today will focus on the criteria that required further clarification from the applicant:

- Education Plan
- Performance Management
- Staffing
- Governance and Management

- Start-up and Operations
- Facilities
- Budget and Finance.

He said at the conclusion of the Committee's discussion, John Carwell will provide next steps.

FOUNDING GROUP AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Mr. Carwell said the applicant had provided a list of priorities that aligned to the mission and vision. He said the response included examples of similar successful school models.

He indicated at the Preliminary Meeting that the proposed school leader had very limited administrative and charter experience. The response to the Preliminary Report indicated that the Applicant has decided to adopt a different administrative model that includes a Head of School and a Director of Curriculum and Instruction. He said the Founding Board has also identified a prospective candidate.

He also noted that the Founding Board had limited charter board experience. He said the response indicates that the Founding Board will utilize resources from the Delaware Charter Schools Network and National Charter School Resource Center as well as add additional board members with needed expertise.

He said there was a concern about the impact that the charter would have on the Red Clay Consolidated School District if the district decided to build another school. He said the response indicated that Red Clay officials confirmed that it had no immediate plans to build a middle school.

Mr. Harrell asked the name of the proposed applicant's head of school. Mr. Carwell replied Glenn Moore.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation was that this criterion is met.

EDUCATION PLAN

Curriculum and Instructional Design. Ms. Hansen said the applicant's response to the resubmitted documentation were for sections a, b, c, l, j, k and m. She said the ELA documentation that was submitted was acceptable. She said that for the unit development, the targets are mostly at the identification level. She said these do not match the rigor of the Common Core State Standards.

She indicated that there was not a range of reading or writing conducive to the grade levels or the NAEP percentages on page 5 of the Common Core State Standards. She said the mathematics response shows that they have displayed an improvement from the response to the previous findings. She will provide more information in the final report.

Student Performance Standards. Ms. McCrae said the applicant has clarified the 75% proficiency requirement in math and ELA. She said there is concern as to why the project requirements for physical education/health and nutrition have been deleted from the chart given that this would align directly with the applicant's mission.

She said a response was not provided for the following requests as published in the preliminary report. Attachment Six included no reference to DCAS proficiency and, while not required as an exit requirement, it was unclear if this was purposefully excluded or an oversight. If the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) scores are not included as a requirement for promotion or retention, future additions of such requirements, if desired, may (or may not) require a charter modification."

How the school will meet high school graduation requirements. Ms. Mazza said the applicant's response outlines how the staff will use the Student Success Plan beginning in 8th grade to develop a six-year transition plan including courses needed for entry into the workforce or post-secondary education, support services necessary to prepare the student to graduate from high school, and active monitoring of progress by a crew member at the end of each trimester.

She said the Applicant also indicated that the students would participate in groups that explore the areas of self-advocacy, responsibility, goal-setting, career exploration, study skills, and organization and that additional strategies aligned with academic success would be implemented on a case-by-case basis to prepare the individual student for transition to high school.

She said in addition, although the applicant indicates that a meeting will be held with the required staff to review and discuss a child's IEP, Student Success Plan and progress, compliance with IDEA, the IEP process, and special education services, supports, accommodations, and modifications, it is unclear in relation to transition planning for students with disabilities ages 14 – 21. She said this would include, but is not limited to, post-high school goals, activities and services to reach the student's goals, measurable annual goals/benchmarks, and collaboration with outside agencies.

Student Success Plans. Ms. Janiszewski said the information regarding the development of student success plans and the use of the State's online Student Success Plan platform was provided.

College/Career Readiness. Ms. Janiszewski said the response includes activities to build interest and awareness in college and careers. What is still needed is how the applicant will provide the academic foundation to prepare students for success in high school and beyond.

High School Graduation Requirements. Ms. Janiszewski said the response adequately meets the subcriterion.

School Calendar and Schedule. Ms. Hansen said the Applicant provided an updated school calendar that was color-coded to reflect professional development, PCCMS Community Meetings, Professional Learning Communities as well as instructional days, interim assessments, and school holidays.

School Culture. Mr. Carwell said the Reviewer noted the following minor edits to the bullying policy for being in compliance with the law. The first statement in section III. A (bullying definition), should have the period deleted after the word "property." Also, a semicolon and the word "or" need to be added after the word "property." Section V. B. b. and c. reference the reader back to section IV but should reference the reader back to section VI. Section VI. B. 3 should be cited as 14 Del C. §4123A; Section XII. A. This change also ought to be made: from "202(f) of this title" to "14 Del. C. § 202(f)". He said this will clarify the title being referenced.

Supplemental Programming. Ms. Hansen said the applicant states that all students will be required to participate in after school activities Monday through Thursday. She said therefore, that transportation will be provided at the conclusion of after school activities, which is the end of the day for all students. She said it should be noted that the instructional day concludes at 2:25; however, the school day does not conclude until 3:40 for all students. She said transportation will be provided on Fridays at 2:25pm after the instructional day.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students. Mr. Carwell said the Applicant does not intend to target at-risk student populations.

English Language Learners (ELLs). It would not be possible to screen for English language proficiency without administering a Home Language Survey and diagnostic screener. This is a Federal requirement. He said the initial diagnostic test to determine English language proficiency is not the same as the annual ACCESS test. The W-APT is the assessment that is given to students within the first 25 days of enrollment, not the ACCESS.

The test is not merely "re-administered;" these are two separate instruments and both are required. The application does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements.

He said the screening for migrant students is done by using the Migrant Agricultural Work Survey which should be included in the student registration packet. E-School only lists the students who are potential migrant students; it does not contain the list of identifying migrant students.

He said the applicant refers potential students to the SEA (State Education Agency) and DDOE conducts the migrant interviews and enrolls the student into the migrant program and the SEA notifies them of the migrant status.

Also, the application does not indicate that services will be provided to all ELLs. **All** ELLs must be served with ELL services until they reach a Tier C Level 5.0 on the WIDA ACCESS test and can be exited from the ELL program. He said the teachers and/or contracted staff that provide services to ELL students must be ESL certified and provide research-based instruction.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment. Mr. Carwell said the Applicant did not provide a detailed recruitment/marketing plan. He said the Recruitment/Marketing Plan in the response to the cited concerns was satisfactory. In addition, the enrollment preferences outlined in Attachment 8 did not mirror the Delaware statute and the bylaws.

Ms. Hickey said the Enrollment Preferences in Attachment 8 have been revised and partially meet the statutory requirements. The five-mile radius preference is presumed to mean within 5 miles of the school.

There is still a stated preference for "Founding Board children." The allowable preference is for children of the school's founders, as that is defined by the Founding Board as noted in 14 DE Admin Code 275.8.1.1. By statute, children of a school's founders cannot constitute more than 5% of the total student population.

When the founding Board of Directors sets standards for determining founders, anyone whose sole significant contribution to the school was monetary may not be included. Clarification is needed about how founders are identified by the Applicant and what standards have the founding Board of Directors established to determine who the founders are.

Student Discipline. Mr. Carwell said that under "Dismissible Offenses" in the code of conduct, the reference to H.B. 322 to 14 Del Code §4112 was updated. He said however, the "Suspendible Offenses" also needs to be updated.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation for this criterion is *not met*.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Mission-specific educational goals. Ms. Hansen said the applicant included appropriate quantitative and qualitative measures in its revised response to the mission-specific educational goals criterion.

Ms. McCrae said in this section the applicant does provide an explanation for some performance management requirements, but also leaves some questions unanswered for the readers

Ms. Johnson said most of the answers that were responses to the questions were simply metrics for the Academic Framework and not mission specific goals. She wanted the applicant to be able to identify the difference between the two.

DCAS expectations for at-risk students. This criterion is not applicable. The applicant does not propose to serve at-risk students.

Mission-Specific organizational Goals. Mr. Carwell said the response included mission-specific organizational goals that reflect the mission of the school.

Student performance levels and academic needs. Ms. Janiszewski said the response was adequate and considered met.

Interim Assessments. Ms. McCrae said the response about describing the alignment and development of internal assessments, provides a very simplified description of a complex process that will require intensive management and interaction; however, it does describe an appropriate overview.

Measuring and evaluating academic progress. Ms. McCrae said the response provided by the Applicant was sufficient to answer the clarifying questions posed in the Preliminary Report.

Information system to manage student performance. Ms. McCrae said the response provided by the Applicant was sufficient to answer the clarifying questions posed in the Preliminary Report.

Training and support for teachers in data use. Ms. McCrae said the Applicant adequately answered all questions posed in the Preliminary Report. However, there remain several concerns with regard to the collective responses of subsections 6, 7 and 8 of the Performance Management Section of this application.

Each section provides an adequate response to the questions posed in the Preliminary Report and as such is considered "MET." However, each section lists the head of school as the primary source of organization for planning, implementing, managing and providing ongoing sustainability of the programming. The workload implied by these claims is immense, especially with regard to the day-to-day functions of the school and other responsibilities inherent to the head of school position.

Ms. McCrae said that in order for this section to be considered fully met, a condition is warranted that the applicant provide a more detailed contingency plan in the event that the head of school is unable to shoulder the immense workload indicated in this application. While it is stated that additional staffing will be expected to take on several responsibilities as of year 5 and beyond, it is prudent to plan for capacity building prior to the year five projection.

Corrective actions if the school falls short of student goals. Not applicable.

Ms. McCrae's recommendation is that this criterion is met with clarifications.

STAFFING

Staff Structure. Mr. Carwell said the Reviewer indicated that the organizational chart clearly defines roles and responsibilities. The Personnel Handbook clearly outlines expectations, evaluation processes, and progressive discipline as well as procedures for staff dismissal. There is also a clearly outlined interview/selection process with pre-defined competencies as well as discussion about the possibility of using an outside vendor to help initially establish a human capital plan.

Staffing Plans, Management, and Evaluation. Mr. Carwell said the Reviewer noted the staffing plan for hiring aligns to the educational plan and mission. He said an outstanding question is how the Charter will measure meeting the vision/mission against the staffing plan on an on-going basis. He said the compensation package and salary budget is complete and competitive with surrounding districts.

In addition, the plan indicates the raising salaries to the Red Clay salary schedule by the third or fourth year of operation. He said hiring both a Head of School and a Director of Curriculum and Instruction is a positive move for school operations and establishing an instructional leader. He said the professional development plan aligns with the state's Common Core initiative and the continuation of Professional Learning Communities to examine and analyze data.

A retention strategy is absent from the plan. Based on the evaluations, how will the charter school incentive teachers and administrators to stay? The plan indicates that DPAS II will be used to evaluate teachers and administrators. More specifics are needed to describe how DPAS II will be used in an overall plan.

The response does not include an outline/plan for exiting teachers/administrators based on progressive discipline or for ineffective performance. The staffing plan does not include a timeline with specifically defined steps. It is very general and a good start; however, it needs to be fleshed out in more detail. The recruitment strategy should include participation in job fairs in Delaware and in surrounding states.

Professional Development. Ms. Janiszewski said the Applicant has provided a more detailed professional development plan with a timeline. However, the applicant includes participation in DDOE's Common Ground for the Common Core initiative in summer 2013 and summer 2014. The Common Core initiative kicked off in March and ends May 2014. She said to participate in this initiative, a guiding team of teachers, instructional specialists, and administrators was required, and Pike Creek is not yet an established school.

She said the measurable outcomes for professional development have been provided at the school level. However, no measurable outcomes for students have been provided.

Ms. Janiszewski's recommendation is that this criterion is met with a condition to provide measurable outcomes for students.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Mr. Carwell said the Applicant's response to the Preliminary Report was satisfactory.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation is that this criterion is met.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Mr. Carwell said the Applicant's response to the Preliminary Report was satisfactory.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation is that this criterion is met.

Ms. McLaughlin asked if any Committee member had any more discussion in this section.

START UP AND OPERATIONS

Start-up Plan. Ms. Hughes said the Applicant provided a detailed narrative outlining the tasks that need to be completed. The narrative included the various steps to be taken to ensure completion and she considers this section met.

Transportation. Mr. Carwell said the Reviewer noted the transportation eligibility criteria in 14 DE Admin Code 1105 cannot be modified by a charter school or school district. He said it is not clear where the school intends to place HUBS and what level of transportation service would be provided to students living in the same district as the school. HUBS may be placed outside of the district where the school is located for those students who live outside of that district. He said because it is unclear, he needs clarification in order for this subsection to be considered met.

Safety and Security. Mr. Carwell said the reviewer noted the response to be considered met.

Lunch/Breakfast. Mr. Carwell said the Reviewer considers this section to be met.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation for this criterion is not met with conditions.

FACILITIES

Mr. Carwell said the Reviewer said the information provided was satisfactory and considers this criterion to be considered met.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation for this criterion is met.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Ms. Hughes said the revised budget worksheets show a Prior Year Carryover amount of \$900,000 in Year 0 (State and Local Revenue). It is unclear where this amount comes from as the school would not be entitled to any State or Local funds in Year 0. She said "Prior Year Carryover" amounts in subsequent years do not match the ending balance from the previous year. There is no explanation of why the amounts do not match. The narrative

provided simply states that “Carryover funds from prior fiscal year budgets and ‘Other Funds’ ” were brought forward.

The revised budget information submitted did not include worksheets for Federal or Other Funds; thus, it is unclear how these numbers were calculated. She said that if Prior Year Carryover amounts are excluded from the budget worksheets, the school will have a deficit of nearly \$20,000 in Year 1.

She said the response to the Preliminary Report indicates that the Applicant will seek grant funds from private foundations. If this is the source of the Year 0 funding, how would the timing of these grants work in relation to the timeline submitted for Year 0 activities? Have any grant funds been secured to date? The Applicant states that there have been discussions with lenders regarding loan options if grant funds are not secured. Have any budgets been prepared with estimated loan payments if this option is selected? It does not appear that this scenario was included in any of the budgets submitted.

Ms. Hughes’s recommendation for this criterion is not met.

Mr. Carwell did a recap of the sections that were not met.

(2) Education Plan

- Technology Plan
- Student Performance Standards
- School Culture
- Supplemental Programming
- English Language Learners (ELL)
- Student Recruitment and Enrollment (Enrollment Preferences)
- Student Discipline

(3) Performance Management

- Training and Support for Teachers in Data Use

(4) Staffing

- Professional Development (looking for more detail information around student outcomes and ongoing student support)

(7) Start-up and Operations

- Transportation

(9) Budget and Finance

RECOMMENDATION

For purposes of the Final Report, Mr. Blowman’s recommendation to the Committee is that Pike Creek Charter Middle School’s application **not be approved**. A vote was taken. Five ayes; none opposed, and one abstention.

Mr. Blowman asked John Carwell to share next steps for upcoming meetings and dates.

Mr. Carwell stated the following next steps.

- The Public Hearing is scheduled for June 4, 2013, at 5:00 PM in the second floor Cabinet Room at the Department of Education, Dover, DE 19901.

Meeting adjourned.