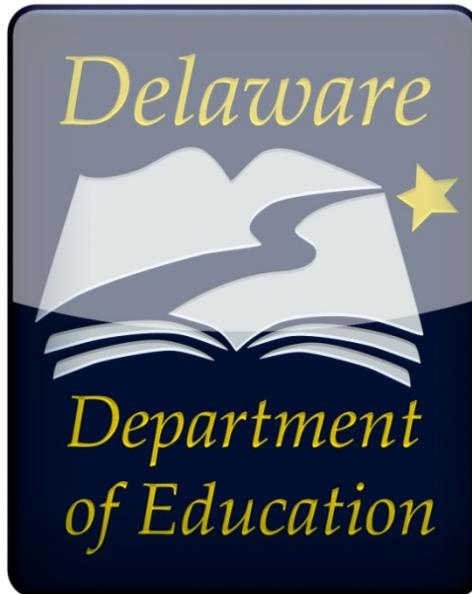


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



THE NEW MAURICE J. MOYER ACADEMY

INITIAL/PRELIMINARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN EXISTING CHARTER

Opening Date: August 2012

Grades: 6 - 12

Location: New Castle County

September 30, 2012 Unit Count: 182

Date of Report: 8 May 2013

Background

Name The New Maurice J. Moyer Academy

Current Enrollment 182

Projected Enrollment The modification request is two-fold: (1) to reduce the school's authorized enrollment (see chart below); and (2) change the instructional program from online instruction to traditional instruction for core academic courses, similar to the middle school program.

Grades	2012-13			2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
	Current	Proposed	Authorized	Proposed	Authorized	Proposed	Authorized	Proposed	Authorized
6	21	30	40	35	60	40	80	45	100
7	29	30	50	32	50	40	75	45	100
8	47	30	75	32	50	40	50	45	100
9	37	30	50	32	75	40	75	45	100
10	20	30	50	32	50	40	75	45	75
11	8	30	50	32	50	33	50	40	75
12	20	20	50	30	50	32	50	40	50
Totals	182*	200	365	225	385	265	455	305	600

* September 30, 2012 Unit Count

Mission The New Maurice J. Moyer Academy's mission is to provide opportunities for students to achieve the highest academic and personal goals. The mission underscores the importance of its research-based curriculum, which offers traditional classroom instruction, K-12 world class technologies, and data-driven instruction while recognizing and meeting the unique, learning differences of each student.

Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (Committee) met with representatives of the New Maurice J. Moyer Academy (Moyer) on 14 March 2013 for the Initial/Preliminary Meeting.

Initial Meeting Discussion

The following is a summary of the salient points from the Initial Meeting in which representatives from Moyer responded to questions from members of the Committee.

The school representatives were asked to explain the innovative features of the charter since the modification shifts the school's educational program for the high school from online instruction to traditional instruction.

The Moyer team responded:

- When the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) contracted K12, Inc. the effectiveness of the online program was questioned. Also, the online courses were vastly unpopular with the students.

- Online courses will continue to be available as electives (e.g. foreign languages) after students complete their core credit requirements. The innovation is that students can select from K12's catalog of four hundred online courses.
- The online teachers are certified.

The school representatives were asked to provide evidence that the K12 curriculum has been effective in traditional schools.

The Moyer team responded:

- K12 runs a variety of schools but most are online virtual schools. K12 runs a school in Chicago that focuses on "second chance" students who receive both online and traditional instruction and it has been effective.

The school representatives were asked to explain how Moyer ensures that students with disabilities receive special education services and if their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are being followed.

The Moyer team responded:

- Moyer's special education teachers and teacher aides provide special education services. Also, they meet on a regular basis with K12's director for special education.
- School psychologists have been contracted to provide special education support as IEP's require.

The school representatives were asked to clarify that the core curriculum used last year was delivered online for the high school and that the current modification request is to move from online instruction to traditional (face-to-face) instruction which is currently being implemented.

The Moyer team responded:

- Students are currently receiving traditional, face-to-face instruction.
- This change was implemented at start of this school year (August 2012), prior to submitting a modification request.

The school representatives were asked to explain their professional development plan to help teachers successfully transition from the online model to the traditional model.

The Moyer team responded:

- Last year, most of the teachers had to be trained for the online model. This year, new teachers were hired who already had training in traditional instruction.
- Moyer currently works with Innovative Schools which is providing project-based learning as a conceptual framework to deliver instruction. Professional development has focused on writing lesson designs based on project-based learning. Teachers did not need extensive professional development around this transition because the newly hired teachers were not on staff when the online curriculum was in use. Project-based learning is being implemented school-wide.
- Teachers will continue to be trained on the effective use of data and meet the students' needs based on the data.

The school representatives were asked to explain the extent to which there is a consistent, school-wide instructional framework.

The Moyer team responded:

- Moyer has a data coach who has been working with the school since the beginning of the school year.
- Moyer is in the process of implementing the Common Core State Standards and is following a professional development schedule to align with state requirements.

The school representatives were asked to explain how the instructional framework in the middle school is different from the high school and describe the steps taken to transition students to the new model.

The Moyer team responded:

- Moyer uses a standards-based curriculum with certain components of the lessons that are expected regardless of the grade. Components of the lessons are similar but the content is different.
- Very little was done to transition students and orient parents to the traditional model. The students had a difficult transition with the online model. Thus, the assumption was that students would transition easily to traditional instruction since the online program was so unpopular.

The school representatives were asked to explain any differences between instructional resources for the online model versus the traditional model and to what extent teachers and students are using the interactive whiteboards.

The Moyer team responded:

- The K12 online curriculum has thousands of packaged lessons for students to work on at their own pace. Teachers continue to have access to these lessons. However, they are delivered through interactive whiteboards.
- The principal does classroom walkthroughs and has observed students and teachers using the whiteboards. Students are using the whiteboards but not optimally.

The school representatives were asked to explain any professional development to promote high-level use of the interactive whiteboards.

The Moyer team responded:

- Professional development has been limited.

The school representatives were asked to explain the key differences between the online and traditional approaches and whether the content of the curriculum has changed.

The Moyer team responded:

- The content is the same but the delivery is different. Last year, the online instruction was self-paced. This year, teachers drive the pace of instruction and teach students at their levels.

The school representatives were asked to explain why Moyer's curriculum is not aligned to Delaware Standards. The Committee noted that Moyer's 2011-12 DCAS performance was very low and students have shown negative growth.

The Moyer team responded:

- DCAS performance is a serious concern.
- A few weeks ago, school representatives met with Ms. McLaughlin and Mr. Carwell and one of their mandates was to align curriculum to the standards.
- Ms. Hansen was engaged for technical assistance and she provided an historical context for all efforts to align curricula over the past two years. Some work had been completed by previous K12 staff that current staff were not aware of.

The school representatives were asked to identify the point person who will lead the work to align Moyer's curriculum and explain how teachers will be engaged in the process.

The Moyer team responded:

- There were a number of people at K12 who previously worked on the curriculum but their work cannot be located.
- Over the past two years there has been tremendous turnover. Last year, the school had mostly first-year teachers except for special education and physical education. This year, one teacher was replaced due to relocation.
- The work ahead is steep.

The school representatives were asked to confirm that the State's foreign language requirements are reflected in Moyer's graduation requirements.

The Moyer team responded:

- Their understanding is that Delaware requires two years of foreign language and Moyer requires three years to reflect college requirements but they need to confirm.

The school representatives were asked to explain what they have done to support teacher involvement in science coalition trainings since Moyer's science scores last year were at zero percent proficient.

The Moyer team responded:

- There have been scheduling conflicts and staff were not able to attend the trainings this year. It has been a burden to get teachers to the trainings.

The school representatives were asked to describe the school's contingency plans if the school fails to meet its proposed 2013-14 enrollment target of 225. (Note: All charter schools are required to meet 80% of authorized enrollment by April 1st. Thus, Moyer would need to enroll 180 students by April 1st.) As of March 13, 2013, DDOE's Unit Count system showed that Moyer had 161 students (72%) enrolled for next year. The Committee also noted that the school has lost 21 students since September and has not registered any new 6th grade students for next year.

The Moyer team responded:

- A contingency budget has not been created. The current budget is based on current enrollment.
- An enrollment manager was hired last week who will coordinate a number of recruitment activities (regular open houses, school tours, radio ads, billboards, outreach to feeder schools.). Last summer, 30-40 students were enrolled between June and August.
- The staff will pray and work hard to meet the 80% April 1st benchmark. They are confident that they will reach 225 students by September.

- It has been difficult to reverse the negative culture of the school.

The school representatives were asked to explain the deficit on the FY14 modification budget dated March 6, 2013. The school does not appear to be economically viable based on 225 students and looks worse if enrollment falls below target. In addition, there appears to be several discrepancies which require clarification. For example, the FY13 budget shows a \$398,831 surplus. After subtracting summer pay (\$307,000), a balance of \$91,831 is remaining but only \$40,275 is rolling over to FY14 which shows a \$45,758 deficit. In addition, there is no management fee listed for FY15.

The Moyer team responded:

- The FY14 deficit is covered by the contingency.
- A lot of costs should have been billed to Title I but were not.
- If there is a deficit, K12 will not receive its \$40,275 management fee.

The school representatives were asked to explain how K12 defines "Program Revenue" in the services agreement when calculating its fees (see excerpts below). Does "Program Revenue" include state, local and federal funds? Also, the services agreement states that K12 will reduce management fees to balance the budget but this does not align with 14 Del. Code 512 (14) which states that no management fees will be paid at all.

- *6.1 Program Management Fee. Ten percent (10%) of the Program Revenue for New Moyer Academy will be paid to K12 for Program Management Services as outlined in Section 2.2 and Exhibit A.*
- *6.2 Technology Fee. Five percent (5%) of the Program Revenue for the New Moyer Academy shall be allocated for the Technology Services described in Section 2.2 herein and in Exhibit A.*

The Moyer team responded:

- Program revenue does not include federal funds.
- Moyer has been in the red for the last two years which has required approximately \$1.4 million from K12 to balance the budget. K12 would cover any future deficits. If there is a surplus, K12 expects the school to pay the management fees.

The school representatives were asked to confirm that K12 will provide the various positions listed on page 11 of the services agreement (e.g. educational and program management personnel, administrative, facility and student support staff). The positions listed in the budget do not appear to align with the services agreement. In addition, the budget does not list the total costs to run the school. The services agreement provides additional information but the budget should provide the full picture.

The Moyer team responded:

- Once student enrollment reaches 225 Moyer will have enough students to earn a principal unit and receive state funding for this position. Currently, K12 funds the principal position.
- The additional staff provided by K12 are not listed in the budget because Moyer's budget is based on state, local and federal revenue.

The school representatives were asked to provide an update on the status of the lease since current lease expires on June 30, 2013. It was not clear how the lease estimate (\$25,000) was

determined without a new lease.

The Moyer team responded:

- The Moyer Board is negotiating the lease. In addition, the Board is attempting to purchase the building.

The school representatives were asked to explain why they anticipated an increase in federal funds from \$22,000 to \$222,000. A \$200,000 increase does not seem realistic since schools were told to expect a five to ten percent decrease in federal funding due to sequestration. Also, the budget lists this funding across four years.

The Moyer team responded:

- The section needs to be reviewed for accuracy. Moyer's Focus School grant is included.
- The Focus School Grant is a three-year grant. The budget is incorrect and should only list Focus School funding over three years.

The school representatives were asked to explain how the proposed modification aligns with Moyer's Focus School Plan.

The Moyer team responded:

- The Moyer Board wants a small, intimate learning environment. The proposed modification to decrease enrollment from 600 to 300 helps achieve this goal. As long as the school is financially viable a smaller environment is preferred.
- The Board wants high performing teachers.
- The high school students rejected the online instructional program for core courses.
- This year, students performed better on DCAS in the first half of this school year than they did for the entire year last year. If this trajectory continues, it will confirm the effectiveness of the smaller environment.

The school representatives were asked to explain how the Board would evaluate K12's performance based on the Charter Performance Framework and the results the Charter School Office shared with Moyer on November 30, 2012.

The Moyer team responded:

- It would be best for Board President Curry to answer this question.

Preliminary Meeting Discussion

With the nature of the modification request, the Committee determined that the following approval criteria listed in 14 Del. C. §512 apply to this application: Mission, Goals, Educational Objectives (3), Goals for Student Performance (4), Evaluating Student Performance (5), Educational Program (6), Students with Special Needs (7), Economic Viability (8), and Management Companies (14).

Criterion Three: Mission, Goals, Educational Objectives

The Committee noted that New Moyer modified its high school program from online instruction

to traditional instruction (Note: Middle school courses are taught traditionally as planned in the original charter). A modification request should have been submitted to DDOE prior to implementation. The Committee also noted that New Moyer's mission statement (see below) highlights online learning (K-12 world class technologies) as an innovative feature of the charter.

The New Maurice J. Moyer Academy's mission is to provide opportunities for students to achieve the highest academic and personal goals. The mission underscores the importance of its research-based curriculum, which offers traditional classroom instruction, K-12 world class technologies, and data-driven instruction while recognizing and meeting the unique, learning differences of each student.

Given the changes to the high school program it is not clear what is innovative or different now that traditional instruction has replaced online instruction. The Committee requested that the school's response to the preliminary report include an explanation of the innovative features of the school and how the current educational program will improve student learning and meet measurable standards of student performance. The Committee also noted that the K12 curriculum was never aligned to Delaware standards and could negatively impact student performance on the DCAS.

Criterion Three was not met.

Criterion Four: Goals for Student Performance

The Committee noted that the modification application did not address any goals for student performance. The modification application states that the Board would like to use the Charter Performance Framework to assess the school's academic progress and that they had not received data to apply to the framework. This is not accurate. The Charter School Office provided the Performance Framework results to the school on November 30, 2012.

Criterion Four was not met.

Criterion Five: Evaluating Student Performance

The Committee noted that the modification application did not include any information relative to evaluating student performance.

Criterion Five was not met.

Criterion Six: Educational Program

Curriculum: The Committee noted that the school did not submit scope and sequence documents. The following content areas did not meet approval: English language arts, mathematics, social studies, health education, physical education, world languages, visual and performing arts, and technology.

High Risk Students: The Committee noted that the school plans to support high risk students by

providing after school academic support groups, tutoring and family engagement. The information did not constitute a plan.

Graduation Requirements: The Committee noted that the school did not accurately reflect the current graduation requirement of 22 credits nor the change in graduation requirements for the class of 2015 and beyond, which increases the graduation requirements to 24 credits and requires that specific courses be taken. For example, the school requires 2 credits for world languages and 1.5 credits in electives. Currently, there is no state requirement for world languages until the class of 2015 and 3.5 elective credits are required. If world languages are considered electives, then the school would meet the requirement

Student teacher ratio: The Committee noted that the teacher/student ratio was not provided in the application.

Unique features of the school: The Committee noted that the application lacked sufficient detail regarding research-based instructional strategies used to deliver or differentiate instruction. In addition, there is no detail describing how the students are monitoring their own learning.

The application states that courses will be delivered traditionally by core teachers but instruction will be delivered via laptop and an interactive whiteboard. It is not clear how instruction will ultimately be delivered and differentiated based on individual student needs. The school's response to the preliminary report should include a description of how students will interact with technology. Specifically, how will students be exposed to ISTE technology standards? The response should also include measurable outcomes around mastery of these standards.

High quality professional development & School Calendar: The Committee noted that the application (p. 20) refers to a professional development calendar but it was not included with the application. The school's response to the preliminary report should include the professional development calendar and the following information:

- List the proposed activities (e.g. how will teachers adapt K-12's curriculum to traditional instruction?)
- The individual(s) delivering the professional development
- The intended outcomes for teachers and students and how the school will support and sustain them.
- Professional development for administrators
- What differentiated professional development will provide teachers with the ability to adapt the K-12 curriculum (designed for virtual classrooms) to face-to-face classrooms.
- What professional development is planned to ensure optimal use of the interactive white boards by teachers and students.

Instructional strategies/formative and summative assessments: The Committee noted that the application did not include any information relative to instructional strategies and formative assessments.

Criterion Six was not met.

Criterion Seven: Students with Special Needs

The Committee noted that the application does not describe how the school will be in full compliance with current federal and state statutes relating to the education of students with disabilities, including how they will provide special education services in an online environment or how they will provide accommodation, modifications and/or support to insure student success in the K12 curriculum. In addition, Moyer does not describe how the school will provide a continuum of education placements for students with disabilities within the online environment.

Criterion Seven was not met.

Criterion Eight: Economic Viability

The Committee noted that the school's responses during the Initial Meeting discussion raised a number of concerns and questions regarding the school's economic viability. The budget revisions received to date (scenarios with and without K12) do not demonstrate sufficient year end balances to meet summer payroll obligations in 2014. The Committee requested that the school's response to the preliminary report include the following:

- A revised budget correcting any discrepancies highlighted during the Initial Meeting discussion and demonstrates economic viability through August 2014 (including summer payroll). The budget should also reflect the following items:
 - Copy of Achievement Network contract and confirm that costs are captured in budget.
 - Summer Bridge Program – confirm that costs are captured in budget.
 - Marketing Plan – confirm that costs are captured in budget.
 - Corrected Federal revenue projections.
 - Total funding provided by K12.
- A contingency budget based on 161 students.
- Written confirmation from K12 that all fees will be waived for FY13 based on 14 Del. Code § 512 (14).
- Written confirmation from The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) of rent reduction (from \$325,000 in FY13 to \$144,000 in FY14).
- A contingency plan if TRF rejects the Board's offer to purchase the facility.
- FY14 shows a \$45,758 deficit based on 225 students enrolled.
- Written agreement from K12 that Moyer's Board is permitted to reserve \$307,000 to cover summer payroll and pay the \$40,275 management fee in FY14
- FY15 does not include a management fee.
- Written confirmation that K12 will provide the various positions listed on page 11 of the services agreement (e.g. educational and program management personnel, administrative, facility and student support staff). Incorporate these costs into the revised budget to provide an accurate picture of total costs to run the school.

Criterion Eight was not met.

Criterion 14: Management Companies

The Committee noted that it is not clear from the budget the total funding that K12 is providing to the school (positions, services, etc.). The Committee requested that the school's response to the preliminary report include this information.

The Committee also noted that it is unclear how the New Moyer Board would evaluate K12's performance based on the Charter Performance Framework and the results the Charter School Office shared with the school on November 30, 2012.

Criterion 14 was not met.

Summary and Recommendations

Criterion	Charter School Accountability Committee's Recommendations
(3) Mission, Goals, Educational Objectives	Not Met
(4) Goals for Student Performance	Not Met
(5) Evaluating Student Performance	Not Met
(6) Educational Program	Not Met
(7) Students with Special Needs	Not Met
(8) Economic Viability	Not Met
(14) Management Companies	Not Met

The Charter School Accountability Committee recommended that the modification application from the New Maurice J. Moyer Academy **not** be approved.

Appendix A

List of Attendees

Initial/Preliminary Meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee

14 March 2013

Modification Application from the New Maurice J. Moyer Academy

Members of the Committee

- Mary Kate McLaughlin, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Chief of Staff, Delaware Department of Education
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- Paul Harrell, Director of Public and Private Partnerships
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Karen Field Rogers, Manager, Financial Reform & Resource Management
- Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Director, Exceptional Children Resources
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools 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
- Patricia Bigelow, Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Chantel Janiszewski, Education Associate, Charter School Office

Representatives from the New Maurice J. Moyer Academy

- Glenn Clarke, Principal
- Keith Stephenson, Regional Vice President, K12, Inc.
- Nikia Wongus, Business Manager

Other

- Keith Sanders, DDOE
- Brian Curtis, DDOE