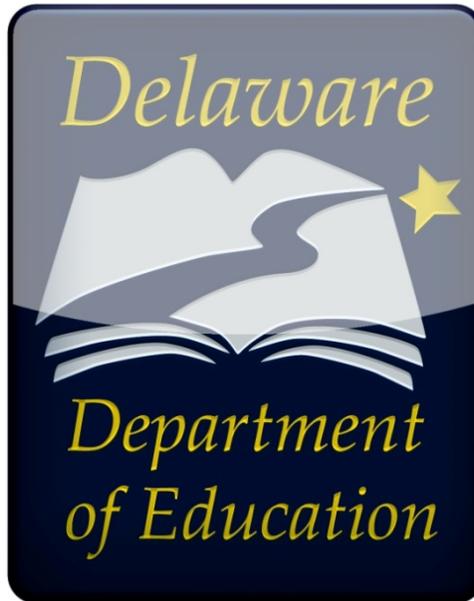


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



PIKE CREEK CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

PRELIMINARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPLICATION TO OPEN A CHARTER SCHOOL

Opening Date: August 2014

Grades: 6 - 8

Location: New Castle County

Date of Report: 22 March 2013

Background

| | | |
|----------------------|--|-----|
| Name | Pike Creek Charter Middle School | |
| Projected Enrollment | 2014 – 2015 | 245 |
| | 2015 – 2016 | 320 |
| | 2016 – 2017 | 380 |
| | 2017 – 2018 | 380 |
| | 2018 – 2019 | 380 |
| | At capacity | 380 |
| Mission | Pike Creek Charter’s mission is to promote pre-adolescent student achievement through rigorous academic instruction while incorporating wellness and fitness strategies. | |
| Vision | To ensure that students are prepared to succeed in the most prestigious academic settings and to live a healthy and physically active lifestyle. | |

Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (Committee), met with representatives from Pike Creek Middle Charter School (Pike Creek) on 23 January 2014 for the Initial Meeting and on 6 February 2014 for the Preliminary Meeting. The Committee discussed each of the nine criteria of the application.

Founding Group and School Leadership

The Committee discussed the response to the Founding Group and School Leadership section in the application and noted the following.

- The mission statement is clear and conceptually interesting. The applicant group derived its mission and vision from First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” campaign that promotes a healthy lifestyle for children.

Response Required: The applicant did not establish a set of priorities that are meaningful, manageable, and measurable as they relate to the mission and vision. There was insufficient evidence provided in the application that substantiated the efficacy of this proposed model.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School’s purpose is to educate the whole child, both mentally and physically. Students will be engaged through rigorous academics and the inclusion of physical activity throughout. PCCMS will support recent studies along with our mission and vision through the increases in academic performance as students’ physical activity and Fitnessgram scores increase. In addition to students improvements academically and physically, PCCMS students will develop the skills necessary to live a healthy and active life as continuous learners.

In order to successfully achieve PCCMS’s mission and vision, the following priorities have been established:

- Provide students with rigorous academic instruction through the Common Core Standards, Data Driven Instruction and on-going assessments
- Promote student investigation, student independence, use of the inquiry process and the ability to think creatively, critically and infuse information skills.
- Shift the focus of teaching a set of known facts to a process modeled in similar ways

- to experts in the field.
- Engage students in learning through Kinesthetic Lessons, morning exercise and daily physical activity.
 - Develop the skills necessary to live a healthy and active lifestyle through participation in physical activity events in the community, participation in the online health and fitness portal and increase the amount of daily physical activity.
 - Emphasize service, quality, accountability, persistence and integrity by performing rigorous work as members of the community.

Below are similar successful school models that focus on physical activity in addition to academics.

Legacy Charter School is located in Greenville, South Carolina and serves students in grades K-11. Legacy Charter's vision "is to offer a quality, rigorous, and relevant educational program leading to college graduation and empowering underserved urban students to become productive, fit, principled citizens in a changing society" (Legacy Charter School, 2013)¹. "Legacy Charter School's multifaceted approach to education is based on the premise that a 'sound body nurtures a sound mind.' Physically active children tend to have greater academic achievement and enhanced cognition. Physical activity has also been documented to support learning capacity along with stimulating structural changes in the brain important for learning"(Legacy Charter School, 2013)².

Dr. Julian Reed, associate professor of health sciences at Furman University conducted a study on the link between exercise and cognitive change in elementary and middle school children at Legacy Charter School. He analyzed the effects of providing 45 minutes of daily physical education on the fitness and cognitive performance of students during the 2009/2010 school year. Participants included students at Legacy Charter School along with students of similar demographics who attended two other county schools. Students that attended the control schools only received one period of physical education a week. Results found that Legacy Charter students improved on 92 percent of the fitness measures tested, compared to 8 percent improvement by students in the control schools. The middle school students that attended the control schools performed worse at the end of the year in 42 percent of the measures. In addition to improved fitness measures, Legacy Charter students increased their cognitive abilities by 59 percent compared to control schools that only improved 25 percent. (Landor, 2011)³

Namaste Charter School located in Chicago, Illinois serves students in grades K-8. Namaste Charter Schools' vision is to "promote life long student success and a love of learning by implementing and sharing a groundbreaking educational model that combines health and wellness with academic rigor in a peaceful environment" (Namaste Charter School, 2013)⁴. Namaste

¹ Legacy Charter School. (2013). *Active kids, have active brains at legacy charter school*. Retrieved from

<http://www.legacycharterschool.com/fitness.php>

² Legacy Charter School. (2013). *Legacy charter school*. Retrieved from

<http://www.legacycharterschool.com>

³ Landrum, C. H. (2011, October 30). In-school sports equals brain power. *Journal WatchDog*. Retrieved from

<http://www.journalwatchdog.com/schools/1282-in-school-sports-equals-brain-power>

Charter's core program includes 60 minutes of daily physical education, morning movement exercises, nutritious breakfast and lunch, balanced literacy-based academic curriculum, and character education and age appropriate nutrition and wellness classes. Namaste Charter has been recognized and awarded the "Gold Award of Distinction in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Healthier US Challenge," which is the highest mark of a healthy school. In addition to this award, in 2009 the school received cognition as one of the six successful charter schools in Illinois. (Namaste Charter School, 2013)⁵

Namaste Charter achieved 87 % proficiency on the Illinois Standards Achievement test and outperformed Chicago Public Schools who achieved 74 %. By breaking down the data even further it is noted that Namaste Charter School achieved 98 % proficiency on the ISAT, which included students that are not receiving special education services, this also outperformed the Chicago Public Schools by 20 %. Namaste spends nearly 20 % less than districts to educate each student but provides more such as 60 minutes of daily physical education, nutritious breakfast/lunch along with family wellness and education workshops at no cost. Last year 33 % of all fourth grade students in Illinois public schools and 18 % of all fourth grade students attending Chicago Public Schools were reading on grade level. However, 75 % of Namaste Charter Schools' fourth grade students were reading on grade level. (Namaste Charter School, 2012)⁶

Response Required: The proposed school leader has very limited administrative experience and has not led a school nor has she had experience in a charter school.

Taking into consideration the committee's concern, PCCMS agrees that it is important to make sure that the business side and the educational side of running a school is done so by seasoned individuals who have notable track records in each respective area. Therefore, PCCMS has decided, in the best interest of the school to adopt an administration framework that would include a Head of School and a Director of Curriculum and Instruction. PCCMS is currently exploring Glenn Moore, as a candidate for Head of School; please see attachment 40 for his resume. PCCMS will use 3 avenues to execute the search. First, the Board Members will reach out to personal/ professional contacts and use networking opportunities to identify potential applicants who possess the qualifications and shared view for the mission and vision of PCCMS. Second, media, in the forms of the PCCMS website, Facebook page, and newspaper articles will invite those individuals who are interested in becoming part of the PCCMS to come to an informative session to learn about the school. Lastly, the proposed positions of Head of School and Dean of Curriculum and Instruction will be posted on Internet sites such as www.teachdelaware.com, www.monster.com, www.indeed.com.

Please see Attachment 36

Response Required: The organizational team appears to be diverse, supportive, and

<http://namastecharterschool.org/index.html>

⁵ Namaste Charter School. (2013). *Namaste charter school*. Retrieved from

<http://namastecharterschool.org/index.html>

⁶ Namaste Charter School. Department of Education, (2012). *Annual report*. Retrieved from Namaste Charter School website: <http://namastecharterschool.org/documents/NamasteAnnualReport2012.pdf>

committed to advancing the mission of the proposed school. However, the Board has limited charter board experience, especially in the areas of school leadership and finance.

The charter school movement originated in the 1970's by a number of education reform ideas, most note-worthy, community-parental empowerment. This avenue allowed parents, educators, administrators, community residents, etc. and any combination there of to form a Founding Board and propose a unique student-centered educational environment. (pbs.org) As the panel has noted, PCCMS' Founding Board is comprised of just that; a diverse and supportive group individuals who are educators, parents, and community residents committed to the mission of the PCCMS to benefit a unique student-centered learning environment.

Moving forward, members that join the Governing Board will need to posses certain skill sets such as charter board experience, legal, school leadership, finance, and additional skills to successfully function as a Governing Board. PCCMS has been planning for this transition by obtaining mentorship agreements from Jed Desmond of the Charter School of Wilmington, offering his support in Charter Finance and The Delaware PTA. PCCMS will continue to seek out mentorship opportunities to ensure that all members are well versed on the skills sets that are needed to function successfully and fully execute the mission and vision of the school.

The Founding Board will continue to work closely with The Delaware Charter School Network to utilize resources and trainings. The future Governing Board will participate in DCSN charter school board trainings coupled with the trainings that the Delaware Department of Education provides. Supplemental resources provided by the National Charter School Resource Center will be incorporated as needed.

Response Required: The Committee expressed concern about the impact on the charter school if the district in which it was proposing to locate decided to build a new middle school.

PCCMS received verbal confirmation from Red Clay's Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents' office that there are no plans to build another middle school at this time.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the applicant's response to the "Founding Group and School Leadership" section did not meet the standard.

Education Plan

The Committee discussed the response to the Education Plan section in the application and noted the following.

Curriculum and Instructional Design.

English / Language Arts – Meets Approval

- The scope and sequence show alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
- As the applicant continues to develop units of instruction, it will be important to include Common Core writing standards grades 7-9. These standards are the explicit teaching of short focused and sustained research as well as evidence and resource gathering needed during the research process.
- No description is provided of curriculum resources or adoption thereof. There is concern that the scope and sequence does not include texts to be utilized in instruction to make certain that the percentage of literary and literary non-fiction will allow for full implementation of the CCSS.

Please see revised attachment 5, Curriculum Timeline.

Mathematics – Does Not Meet Approval (Response Required)

- The timeline for implementation of the mathematics curriculum is unclear. More detail is needed on the number of days and class periods being used in each unit of instruction.
- Content standards should not merely be used as a checklist to build curriculum. Learning targets should be accompanied by plans for implementation, including themes, big ideas, essential questions, and formative and summative assessment measures to describe student progress.

Please see revised attachment 4, Math Scope and Sequence.

Science – Does Not Meet Approval (Response Required)

- The timeline for implementation of the Science curriculum is unclear. More detail is needed on the number of days and class periods being used in each unit of instruction.
- Content standards should not merely be used as a checklist to build curriculum. Learning targets should be accompanied by plans for implementation, including themes, big ideas, essential questions, and formative and summative assessment measures to describe student progress. For example, what will students know and be able to do following instruction in the unit “Atoms and Bonding”?
- It appears that the students will be engaged in Science Lab once each week. This may not be enough instructional time to meet curricular goals.

Please see revised attachment 4, Science Scope and Sequence. Also, please note that due to the change in curriculum choice there will not be a lab once a week. PCCMS could not locate the Science MOU. One of the board members reached out to personnel on science coalition to obtain MOU, but was unsuccessful. The following letter has been sent to DDOE to obtain the Delaware Science Coalition MOU – See Attachment 41

Social Studies – Meets Approval

- Attachment 4 outlines a scope and sequence that matches the intent of the Delaware Recommended Curriculum.

Health Education – Meets Approval

- The scope and sequence documents provide a comprehensive planning process.
- Future curriculum development should focus on Health for Personal Power

Curricular resources may be found at

http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content_areas/health.shtml

PCCMS acknowledges that future curriculum development should focus on Health for Personal Power and will use the resources provided to us by the Delaware Department of Education.

Physical Education – Meets Approval

- The Scope and sequence shows alignment of instruction to standards.
- Future curriculum development and creation of units of instruction should focus on P.E: Fit for Life rather than on sports.
- Curricular resources may be found at
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content_areas/phys_ed.shtml
- Assessment should include Fitnessgrams.

PCCMS' future units of instruction will include a focus on P.E. Fit for Life. The Fitnessgram will be used as an assessment.

World Languages – Does Not Meet Approval (Response Required)

- Cultural awareness has been included as a separate unit at the end of each level of curriculum. It should *not* be taught as a separate unit but rather embedded in each unit of instruction across all language courses.
- There is no evidence of planned assessment strategies.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School has decided to remove World Languages from the elective classes in order to include Visual and Performing Arts.

Visual & Performing Arts – Does Not Meet Approval (Response Required)

- The application makes no mention of curriculum in Visual and Performing Arts. Whereas World Language is optional in middle school, Visual and Performing Arts is not. Reference: 14 DE Admin Code 503.6.0 (Instructional Program Requirements – Visual and Performing Arts).
- “6.1. Local school districts and each charter school shall provide instructional programs in the visual and performing arts for each grade K – 12 with the exception of the James H. Groves High School Program.
- 6.2. All public school students in each grade 1 to 6 shall be enrolled in a visual and performing arts program.”

Please see revised attachment 4, Visual & Performing Arts Scope and Sequence.

Professional Development – Does Not Meet Approval (Response Required)

- The applicant provided plans for professional development; however, the timeline identified training dates only in the month of August. Best practice would mandate that professional development is researched-based and on-going over time. Topics include but are not limited to: School Culture, Positive Behavior Supports, Curriculum, Special Education and e-school. This is a list of topics that cannot and should not be addressed in one month before school begins.

Please see Attachment 30, Professional Development Table

Technology Plan – Does Not Meet Approval (Response Required)

▪ There was no evidence of a plan to use technology as a tool for instruction, curriculum development, or assessment.

Technology is deeply imbedded within PCCMS' instruction, curriculum development, and assessment strategies. As detailed in the budget, PCCMS is looking to provide Smartboards in at least the ELA/Math classrooms in each grade level, Mobile laptop carts and desktop computers, in the classrooms to also support the students and teachers. With the understanding that technology is always advancing, currently, these forms of technology are what we have identified to support the needs of our teachers and students

As a project-based school, technology is vital to instruction. Referencing the ISTE's Educational Technology Standards for Students, states using technology, such as computers, Smartboards, webquests, powerpoints/Prezi presentations, as well as other applications that promote self guided and hands on learning through technology show benefits in the following areas.

- Creativity & Innovation
- Communication & Collaboration
- Information and Research Fluency
- Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making,
- Digital Citizenship
- Technology Operations & Concepts

Teachers will use Data Service Center and Edinsight Data Dashboard to store and analyze student data. This will allow teachers to tailor and diversify curriculum instruction to meet the needs of their students. Technology driven curriculum is essential, and resources such as the National Charter School Resources page, The Middle Wed and Schoolcollective.com are only a few examples of resources available to support teachers. Best practices can be shared and implemented into the development and enhancement of the curriculum. With the Common Core Standards online, teachers have instantaneous access that will enable them to efficiently and effectively manage and analyze student data.

Student Performance Standards

Response Required (see below):

- The applicant provides an acceptable explanation of student performance standards and exit requirements. However, according to the application, students must achieve a 75% or better by the end of the trimester in each of the four core content areas. It is unclear if this requirement is to be applied consistently for each separate course and with equal rigor. For example, if a student has 90% or better in mathematics, English language arts and science but a 69% in social studies at the end of the third trimester, will the child be retained?

Pike Creek Charter Middle School made the following adjustments to the student performance standards and exit requirements: In order for students to be promoted to the next grade, they must demonstrate 75 % proficiency in Math and English Language Arts in their final grade for the year. Students that fail two or more classes may be retained if the board votes that this is necessary.

- 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 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.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School will not include the Delaware Comprehension Assessment System (DCAS) as a requirement for promotion or retention. It is noted that a charter modification may be required if the board decides to make this a requirement in the future.

- The “Path to College Plan” does not reference the existing Student Success Plan requirement (part of 14 DE Admin Code 505) or the Career Cruising tool currently available to students and schools. This tool performs many of the functions described in this section.

Please see the revised attachment 6 for revisions including the Student Success Plan requirement.

High School Graduation Requirements

Response Required: The response does not indicate how the school will address those students in grade eight who are required to have a Student Success Plan as outlined in 14 DE Admin Code 505, Section 5.0 and how the school will develop transition planning for students with IEPs.

At the beginning of their 8th grade year, students will begin to develop the Delaware required Student Success Plan. The success plan for Pike Creek Charter students will be a six-year plan, which includes 8th grade, 9-12 grades (high school) and one year beyond high school. The plan will be developed and updated annually by the student, student’s crew mentor, an additional staff member and their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) through the Student Success Plan online program. The plan will include courses needed for entry into the workforce or post secondary education. In addition to courses, the plan will include support services necessary to prepare the student to graduate from high school. The students’ crew mentor will actively monitor the plan for progress at the end of each trimester. Support services will be provided to students who are failing, in danger of failing or not making progress towards their plan’s goals. The student success plan will be transferred to their high school of choice at the end of their 8th grade year to continue the progress of their plan.

Transition planning will be used to address the students’ academic, emotional, and social needs.

of self-advocacy, responsibility, goal setting, career exploration, study skills, and organization. Additional strategies aligned with academic success will be implemented on a case-by-case basis to prepare the individual student for their transition to high school. Planning meetings will be held prior to the student's transition time. The student, parent/guardian, Crew mentor, special education representative, counselor, and representative of the high school the student is transitioning to will meet. During this meeting, the attendees will review and discuss the student's IEP, Student Success Plan and progress. Additionally, strategies and supports for the student will be identified to assist in the transition process.

School Calendar and Schedule

Response Required (see below):

- The school calendar made no indication of planned professional development days for staff members.

Please see revised attachment 7

- Technology and Spanish courses were noted as electives. There is no mention of arts offerings within the regular school day.

PCCMS has excluded Spanish from the electives and have replaced this class with Visual and Performing Arts.

College and Career Readiness Plans and Student Success Plans

Response Required: The application did not include a response about the success plans

At the beginning of their 8th grade year, students will begin to develop the Delaware required Student Success Plan. The success plan for Pike Creek Charter students will be a six-year plan, which includes 8th grade, 9-12 grades (high school) and one year beyond high school. The plan will be developed and updated annually by the student, student's crew mentor, an additional staff member and their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) through the Student Success Plan online program. The plan will include courses needed for entry into the workforce or post secondary education. In addition to courses, the plan will include support services necessary to prepare the student to graduate from high school. The student's crew mentor will actively monitor the plan for progress at the end of each trimester. Support services will be provided to students who are failing, in danger of failing or not making progress towards their plan's goals. The student success plan will be transferred to their high school of choice at the end of their 8th grade year to continue the progress of their plan.

School Culture

Response Required (see below):

- The culture of the school highlighted the nature of middle school students. Five characteristics of commitment will describe Pike Creek Middle Charter School students: perseverance, citizenship, courage, motivated, and self-disciplined. Students will meet daily in Crewroom with an adult mentor. Once a month, the entire school will participate in Community Meetings to celebrate and share pertinent school-wide information. These meetings were not noted on the school calendar.

Please see revised attachment 7

- Due to recent legislative and model policy changes, sections of the sample bullying prevention policy need to be revised. See Appendix B for more information.

- It is unclear how a student/parent should report what they believe to be an incident of bullying to school administration.

Please see revised attachment 24

- This statement from the code of conduct is incorrect: *“According to state law and Department of Education regulations, when a situation rises to bullying, defined above, it must be treated as a criminal offense and must be reported to the appropriate authorities.”* Bullying, per se, is not a crime in Delaware. Certain types or elements of bullying may be considered a crime, such as terroristic threatening or offensive touching. Although these offenses are no longer required to be reported to police, they can be at the school administration’s discretion. Most instances of bullying are handled at the school level with no police involvement.

Please see revised attachment 9

An anti-hazing policy is not addressed. Reference: [14 Del C. §§9301-9304](#).

Please see revised Attachment 9.

Supplemental Programming

Response Required: Students will be required to participate in after-school activities of their choice on Monday through Thursday. Examples cited include academic tutoring, co-ed sports, band, Odyssey of the Mind, and Science Olympiad. There was no mention of how students will be transported to their homes after these activities. No summer school was planned.

All students will be required to participate in after school activities Monday through Thursday. Therefore, transportation will be provided at the conclusion of after-school activities, which is the end of PCCMS's day for all students. 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. Transportation will be provided on Fridays at 2:25pm after the instructional day.

Special Populations at At-Risk Students

English language learners (ELL)

Response Required: The applicant response included significant errors related to English language learners (see below):

- The response confused the annual ACCESS test (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) with the W-APT (WIDA [World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment]-Access Placement Test). Both assessments are required.
- Misunderstandings occurred in the use and purpose of the Migrant Agricultural Work Survey as well as the roles of the schools and the DDOE.
- The application does not indicate that services will be provided to all English language learners (ELLs).
- Teachers and/or contracted staff who provide services to ELL students must be ESL certified and provide research-based instruction.

Below is the revised response to the ELL section:

3. Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL)...including: a. How the school will identify ELL students.

Students who are not currently being served under an IEP but who are suspected of having language delays due to a different language being spoken at home will be given the Home Language Survey to take home and be completed by their parent(s) or guardian(s). This will begin the process for evaluating the student's need for language instruction as a necessary part of their education. In order for the necessary modifications to be made so teachers can reach and teach ELL students, teachers will be educated through professional development on how to deliver multiple assessments to determine the students' needs. Students who are currently being served as ELL students will continue to receive ELL services from a contracted certified ESL teacher who will use research based instruction to deliver lessons. In the case where a student is a migrant child, under the definition set forth in Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children of the No Child Left Behind Act, PCCMS will refer to the resources available at the DDOE. Pike Creek Charter Middle School will also refer to the Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance document provided by the US Department of Education to be sure that they are in compliance with all regulations governing these students to ensure that they receive FAPE

b. How the school will assess and monitor the progress ...

The law requires that all ELL students be tested annually. By testing the student using the ACCESS test (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) each spring, baseline data can be collected and language acquisition goals can be set. These goals will allow for progress monitoring to occur over the course of the school year. The student's level of proficiency needs to be established in order to plan for appropriate accommodations, identifiable goals and lesson delivery so that ELL students have equal access to the general education curriculum and are ensured FAPE. Based on the ACCESS and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the current level of language acquisition is determined, based on identified proficiency guidelines. According to the ACTFL performance guidelines, students will place within one of the six levels ranging from entering (level 1) to bridging (level 5). Once this level is determined, teachers are able to use the resources from the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) to provide students with appropriate opportunities to access both the content and language objectives. For students who are eligible for intense, supplemental English Language instruction so that they can achieve at levels commensurate with their English speaking peers, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model will be used to plan and implement effective instruction for all language learners. Within this approach to language acquisition, teachers will be educated in the instructional framework as well as be provided resources for ensuring that content delivery will scaffold appropriately to meet the needs of emerging English Language Learners, as well as students who speak English as a second language. Teachers will promote English Language Proficiency Standards as well as content-based standards within each of their lessons. Once students become Fluent-English Proficient, they will continue to be monitored for two years to ensure that they remain able to access grade level content with no barriers due to language or communication delays. Students that experience academic challenges during the two-year period will receive additional instructional services through the contracted ESL certified teacher. In addition to student support, the contracted ESL teacher will provide workshops for parents, parent resources and after-school tutoring as necessary and appropriate. This will ensure academic success and equitable access to core content classes for ELL, immigrant, migrant and refugee students.

Exceptional Children

The responses to the section for exceptional children are appropriate.

Gifted Students

With planned small class size, the school will rely on teachers to individualize instruction of highly able learners.

According to the Center for Education Reform, researchers have linked small schools with higher achievement, more individualized instruction, greater safety and increased student involvement.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

▪ In the School Enrollment Projection, the maximum student enrollment is 390; 130 per grade. Information is provided for years 1 – 5.

▪ **Response Required:** The response included various recruitment ideas (Public Town Hall meetings, social media, advertisements in stores); however, the applicants did not provide a recruitment/ marketing plan and timeline. The response also indicated that the majority of student will come from a five-mile radius and that these students will include all races, financial classes, and performance levels. No data were provided about the diversity within the five mile radius.

▪ **Response Required:** The preferences in Attachment 8 do not mirror the Delaware statute. It was not clear if the five mile radius is based on the location of the school as required. The span of the five mile radius is not clear. The application includes a preference for children of the schools Founders that needs to be defined. The preference for Founding Board's grandchildren is not permissible under the Delaware charter statute nor is the preference for siblings of former students.

Please see revised Attachment 8.

Student Discipline

Response Required (see below):

▪ Under "Dismissible Offenses" in the code of conduct, the reference is no longer to H.B. 322 but rather to 14 Del Code §4112. It's now law in Delaware.

Please see revised Attachment 9, which has been updated to the new Delaware Law. Also, please see updated paragraph below.

"Any of these infractions may also result in suspension. In addition to any action taken by school officials, the school will comply with the notification requirements of 14 Del Code §4112, which includes notification of police."

▪ A statement must be included to ensure compliance with 14 DE Admin Code 601 and 14 Del Code §4112, that school administrators will attend required DOE trainings about the mandatory school crime reporting law as required by 14 DE Admin Code 601, and staff will receive training on their duty to report certain incidents of misconduct to school administration under this regulation and statute. In addition, administrators must use the DOE School Climate and Discipline program manager and DOJ Ombudsperson for technical assistance in regard to the Mandatory School Crime Reporting Law.

The following statement has been included in the Students Rights and Responsibilities Manual in addition to the Charter.

*"** Pike Creek Charter Middle School will ensure compliance with 14 DE Admin Code 601 and 14 Del Code §4112 by providing training on mandatory school crime to administrators and teachers. School administrators will attend required DOE trainings on the mandatory school crime reporting law as required by 14 DE Admin Code 601. Staff will receive training on their duty to report specified incidents of misconduct to school administration. School administration will use DOE School Climate and Discipline program manager and DOJ Ombudsperson for technical assistance regarding the Mandatory School Crime Reporting Law."*

Performance Management

Mission-Specific Educational Goals

Response Required: The applicant references DCAS goals in this section, but many of the additional goals that are listed do not include quantifiable measures. For instance, Science Target 3.2 states that, "All students will participate in creating a science project," but participation is not equal to mastery, nor does this target reference the rigor expected of the science projects. Similar comments can be made with reference to the Social Studies Target 4.2. Student performance goals #5 and #6 do not identify quantitative OR qualitative measures.

- **Literacy Target 1.1:** 80 % of PCCMS students will meet their growth targets on the DCAS Reading assessment.
- **Literacy Target 1.2:** 80 % of our students in the lowest quartile of performance will meet their growth targets on the DCAS Reading assessment.
- **Literacy Target 1.3:** 80 % of our students will make growth sufficient to maintain or achieve proficiency in three years or by 10th grade on the DCAS Reading assessment.
- **Literacy Target 1.4:** PCCMS' average proficiency rate on the DCAS Reading assessment will meet or exceed statewide average student performance compared to public schools serving the same grades.
- **Literacy Target 1.5:** PCCMS's average subgroup proficiency rate on the DCAS Reading assessment falls above 50th percentile.
- **Literacy Target 1.6:** PCCMS's average proficiency rate on the DCAS Reading assessment meet or exceed the average student performance of students in the surrounding district, in the same grades, by up to 14 percentage points.
- **Literacy Target 1.7:** PCCMS's average proficiency rate on the DCAS Reading assessment meet or exceed the average student performance of students in similar schools, in the same grades, by up to 14 percentage points.
- **Literacy Target 1.8:** Students at each grade level will demonstrate growth in writing through common core writing samples that will be scored using state recommend rubrics.

Students Performance Goal #2: Students will demonstrate mastery in math literacy and problem solving skills.

- **Math Target 2.1:** 80 % of PCCMS students will meet their growth targets on the DCAS Math assessment.
- **Math Target 2.2:** 80 % of our students in the lowest quartile of performance will meet their growth targets on the DCAS Math Assessment.
- **Math Target 2.3:** 80 % of our students will make growth sufficient to maintain or achieve proficiency in three years or by 10th grade on the DCAS Math assessment.
- **Math Target 2.4:** PCCMS' average proficiency rate on the DCAS Math assessment will meet or exceed statewide average student performance compared to public schools serving the same grades.
- **Math Target 2.5:** PCCMS's average subgroup proficiency rate on the DCAS Math assessment falls above 50th percentile.
- **Math Target 2.6:** PCCMS's average proficiency rate on the DCAS Math assessment meet or exceed the average student performance of students in the surrounding district, in the same grades, by up to 14 percentage points.
- **Math Target 2.7:** PCCMS's average proficiency rate on the DCAS Math assessment meet or exceed the average student performance of students in similar schools, in the same grades, by up to 24 percentage points.

Student Performance Goal #3: Students will demonstrate mastery of their knowledge of the natural sciences.

- **Science Target 3.1:** By the end of the third year of operation and for each year thereafter, 80% of students in grade 8 will achieve meets or exceeds on the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment for Science.
-

Student Performance Goal #4: Students will demonstrate mastery in their understanding of the world and their nations past.

- **Social Studies Target 4.1:** By the end of the third year of operation and for each year thereafter, 80% of students in grade 7 will achieve meets or exceeds on the Delaware

Student Performance Goal #5: Students will demonstrate mastery in their understanding of lifetime fitness.

- **Physical Education Target 5.1:** By the end of the third year of operation and for each year thereafter, 80 % of students in grades 6-8 will show improvement in their Fitnessgram scores from Fall to Spring.
- **Physical Education Target 5.2:** By the end of the third year of operation and for each year thereafter, 80 % of students in grades 6-8 will demonstrate proficiency (>75 %) on the written lifetime fitness assessment.

Student Performance Goal #6: Students will demonstrate mastery in their understanding of Health and Nutrition concept.

- **Health and Nutrition Target 6.1:** By the end of the third year of operation and for each year thereafter, 80 % of students in grades 6-8 will achieve proficiency (>75%) on the final assessment for Health and Nutrition.

DCAS Expectations for At-Risk Students (If proposing to serve students at risk of academic failure)

In the application, this section was cited as “not applicable” because Pike Creek Charter Middle School is not proposing to serve at- risk students.

PCCMS still notes “not applicable”.

Mission-Specific Organizational Goals

Response Required: The application contains a chart that lists goals and key performance measures, such as rates for average daily attendance, parent satisfaction, and teacher retention. These goals do not reflect the stated mission of the school: to promote pre-adolescent student achievement through rigorous academic instruction while incorporating wellness and fitness strategies.

Goal #1: Healthy School Culture

PCCMS’s average daily attendance will meet or exceed the state’s average middle school daily attendance. The healthy culture built into PCCMS through physical activity, nutrition and overall wellness will keep students healthy and engaged in school. Research has shown that physical activity and good nutrition have a positive correlation with student attendance. In addition to student attendance, physical activity and good nutrition have also shown a positive correlation with student discipline. PCCMS’ school culture will demonstrate its effects through low discipline infractions and suspensions from school. As a result of low discipline infractions and suspension there will be few, if any reportable incidents to local law enforcement.

Goal #2: Community

PCCMS values the involvement and satisfaction of the community and will promote community engagement consistently from parents, staff and community members. Community stakeholders will actively engage in school activities, which include Community Meetings, fitness related school

hours and re-enrolling their children each year. Teacher satisfaction will be demonstrated through an annual survey, daily attendance, and participation in after school events, low levels of teacher turnover and actively engaging in community events. The community will demonstrate their satisfaction by continuing to partner with the school, participating in school fitness related events and working with students on community projects. PCCMS's community partnerships will continue to increase from year to year.

Student Performance Levels and Academic Needs

Response Required: An assumption is made that students who enroll at Pike Creek will be at or near grade level proficiency. This is based on “surrounding schools’ data.” What specific data have been analyzed to make this assumption is unclear, and does not take into account that students who are performing below grade level may enroll. A placement test is referenced in the application, but it is not named and no evidence or research base is provided for this placement test.

PCCMS has decided not to use a placement test for students that are enrolling. After year one, students may be placed in honors classes as determined by their report cards, Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System scores and teacher recommendation. Therefore, PCCMS will offer honors classes for 7th and 8th grade students from year 2 and beyond. Students who transfer in to either the 7th or 8th grade will be able to enter the honors track based on the same criteria: report cards, DCAS scores or teacher recommendation. To address the concerns of the committee, please find in the chart below the break down of the surrounding schools in Math % and Reading % proficient. PCCMS anticipates the majority of the student population to perform near, at, or above grade level expectation. However, it is understood, using the below data, that students that are not near, at, or above grade level expectation will enroll at PCCMS. Having small class sizes enables the staff to be able to work with the students on a deeper level to identify their areas of need.

| School | Math % Proficient | Reading % Proficient |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| A.I. MS | 45% | 50% |
| Baltz | 42% | 43% |
| Brandywine Springs | 87% | 92% |
| First State | N/A | N/A |
| Forest Oak | 73% | 76% |
| H.B. Dupont MS | 74% | 76% |
| Heritage | 76% | 83% |
| Highlands | 41% | 53% |
| Lewis | 46% | 38% |
| Linden Hill | 90% | 90% |
| Marbrook | 47% | 51% |
| Mote | 62% | 59% |
| North Star | 92% | 94% |
| Richardson | N/A | N/A |
| Richey | 58% | 67% |
| Shortlidge | 45% | 42% |
| Skyline MS | 77% | 80% |
| Stanton MS | 50% | 51% |
| Warner | 31% | 36% |
| Avg. of 5 mile radius | 61% | 64% |

Interim Assessments

The paragraph provided to describe the alignment and the response about the development of internal assessments is 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

Response Required (see below):

- This section presents multiple concerns. Multiple data collection and comparison terms and phrases were used to describe what might occur over time, but a coherent plan was difficult to identify.
- The narrative states that “student assessment data will be presented by cohort-to-cohort comparisons” but a clear definition of the cohorts was lacking. This same sentence alludes to value-added, a comparison that indicates a teacher-to-teacher comparison based on growth models within the school; however, the narrative provided does not support this sort of plan, nor does it illustrate an understanding of the value-added approach.
- To improve this section, the applicant should consider approaching the question in stages: fully describing the methodology for monitoring data sources and trends for individual students over time; then describing the methodology for monitoring data sources and trends for student cohorts (classes or grade levels); and finally describing the methodology for monitoring data sources and trends for school-wide data.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School will measure the growth of students using multiple sources of data such as assessments, student work, and exit tickets. PCCMS will also collect student mastery data through formative and summative assessments as identified in the Assessment table. Assessment data will be warehoused on eSchoolPLUS, which will also be uploaded into Data Service Center and EdInsight Data Dashboard to be evaluated and reviewed by PCCMS administration and staff. These programs will guide grade level Professional Learning Communities in identifying individual students’ strengths and weaknesses along with trends, such as patterns of need, which are occurring across the student cohorts and school-wide. Once identified, action plans will be developed and implemented to address weaknesses. Action plans will be followed up with an evaluation to ensure effectiveness and revise any areas as needed.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School will measure the growth and academic progress of the students by the following process:

Stage 1: Individual student data will be collected and analyzed by individual teachers and reviewed by teachers in their Professional Learning Communities. A Professional Learning Community is defined as the collaboration as a group of grade level teachers who work together to seek out best practices for teaching and learning, develop action plans for areas of need, continuously improve processes for addressing student challenges and focus on results for improved student learning. Teachers will use root cause analysis and the cycle of inquiry to identify patterns of need, develop and implement action plans and evaluate actions plans. In addition, teachers will use individual student data to differentiate instruction and create small groups.

Stage 2: Professional Learning Communities will then be able to aggregate data to identify trends within student cohorts and across the grade level cohort. A student cohort is defined as a group of

tracked over time. For our use, the student cohorts will include class cohorts and grade cohorts, i.e. students that are enrolled in Math Honors (class cohort) or all 7th grade students (grade cohort). Teachers will use triangulation, patterns of need and the cycle of inquiry to develop and implement actions plans. Teachers will also use this information to adjust whole group instruction, identify curricular issues and engage in solution-oriented conversation to address trends. In addition to formative and summative assessments, every six weeks Interim Assessments will be given to each grade level and specific content area. Professional Learning Communities will focus on data from the interim assessments to track trends that identify strengths and areas of need. This data will be aggregated and presented to the administration. Professional Learning Communities will use the Cycle of Inquiry to develop action plans to target areas of need.

Stage 3: The Head of School or his/her designee will be responsible for the collection of school wide data, although much of the data is automatically uploaded into eSchoolPLUS and EdInsight Data Dashboard. School wide data will be reported to the Board of Directors monthly to evaluate progress towards school wide goals. Data will be presented to demonstrate cohort-to-cohort comparisons, which include following a cohort of students as they progress through grades 6-8 along with comparing specific grade levels year by year (comparing 7th grade this year to the previous 7th grade).

The academic accountability committee will hold special meetings to collect and analyze the interim assessment data every six weeks. The committee along with the school leader will then present this information to the Board of Directors. A Data Newsletter will also be sent to stakeholders, such as parents and staff that highlight the accomplishments, challenges and the schools' progress towards goals. An Academic Accountability Committee is defined as a subcommittee created by the board of directors that will assume the primary responsibility for working with the school leader to define academic excellence, ensure that all board members know the charter promises that were made to the community and the authorizer and to devise clear and consistent measure to monitor these goals. The Academic Accountability Committee will consist of the school leader, teacher representation and appointed members of the Governing Board.

Information System to Manage Student Performance

Response Required: The question of what information system will be used is answered adequately; however, the question of who will be responsible for warehousing the data and who is ultimately in charge of the data management system at Pike Creek Charter was not answered.

The Head of School or his/her designee will be responsible for warehousing the data. Data will be easily accessible through the use of eSchoolPLUS, EdInsight Data Dashboard and Data Service Center. Through these programs reports can be viewed and printed that contain data such as achievement, attendance, discipline, longitudinal data, accountability, or demographic reports. PCCMS can rely on these reports with confidence that the data is accurate.

Teachers will be responsible for uploading their data from assessments, assignments and grades into eSchoolPLUS. Information in eSchoolPLUS will be available to parents and their students through the Home Access center. It is PCCMS' intention to transition the warehousing responsibility to either the IT personnel or Instructional Coach, based on school need, during the expansion of staff which is projected to occur after year 5 once core staff has been stabilized and/or budget allows.

Training and Support for Teachers in Data Use

Response Required: The applicant explains how they will support teachers in training, but does not describe or provide details regarding the training itself. Who will be in charge of the initial training program? Will this be completed through a contract or will it be done internally? If the program will be completed internally, who will be the primary manager and program facilitator, especially in the initial phases of implementation?

Data Training will be completed internally using the TADa Framework. The Head of School and Director of Curriculum and Development will manage and facilitate the training throughout the year. Year one teachers will be exposed to phases 1-3 from the TADa Framework however; each phase will be introduced at different points in the year. During the initial stage of implementation in August, Phase I will be introduced and staff will be trained. The administrative team will be charged with facilitating Professional Learning Communities during the first stages of implementation. Since PLCs will occur bi-weekly on Fridays when students are dismissed, the administrative team will be able to focus on their assigned Professional Learning Community. Team leaders will continued to be trained in order to take over the responsibility as facilitator while the administrative team member will be there for support.

Corrective Actions if the School Falls Short of Student Goals

This section meets the expectations of the application. However, there is a heavy emphasis on the school principal for data review, guidance, assessment review, and improvement planning. It is important to ensure that there is a distributed leadership approach in the event that a situation arises that prevents the principal from performing his/her duties as expected.

The board recognizes the need for distributed leadership and has included the team leaders and academic accountability committee as the personnel responsible for data review, guidance, assessment review and improvement planning.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the “Performance Management” section did not meet the standard.

Staffing

Staff Structure

▪ The school identifies a prospective/potential school leader and provides a résumé, profile, etc. of that individual. The individual has some track record of human capital management and of building external partnerships to hire/build staff capacity in a charter school setting. The application rests heavily on this hire, and it is recommended that the authorizing committee interview the prospective candidate (who currently serves as a DDOE Data Coach). It is stated that the proposed leader is aligned with the physical activity theme of the school's application, so there is evidence of alignment there.

Taking the committee's concern into consideration, PCCMS has developed a recruitment strategy for a Head of School and Director of Curriculum and Instruction. We are currently exploring Glenn Moore as a candidate of interest for Head of School. We see the talent that Melissa Whitehead has and we are exploring her as a candidate of interest for Director of Curriculum and Instruction. We believe it is important to foster talent in a manner that provides personal and professional growth, to ensure the continuous flow of leadership for years to come at PCCMS.

Please see Attachment 40

▪ The Staffing section outlines a staff of 18 teachers (10 core content) in the first year of operation, with five additional being added each year. The staffing structure is personnel-heavy, which may limit the school's ability to incentivize performance. At-will hiring is acknowledged. The applicant outlines a compensation plan that is aligned with Red Clay, with competitive salaries by year 3 or 4 of operation. The application notes that "We anticipate employees being attracted to the PCC mission and small class sizes."

The following staff positions are included for the first year of operation:

10-Classroom teachers
1-Special Education Coordinator
1-Director of Finance and Operations
1-Head of School
1-Director of Curriculum and Instruction
1-Clerical
1-Custodian
1-Administrative Assistant

Please see revised Attachment 21

▪The charter strategy for retention of high-performers is outlined succinctly, if not simplistically, within the Staffing section. However, the guiding principles articulated are consistent with the state's RTTT efforts, etc.

As we continue to work with our mentors throughout the planning year, we will be developing a plan/strategy for retention of high-performers.

▪ The recruitment strategies/plan is thin. There is no clear plan to attract educators (in the literal sense; not the principles outlined above) evident and the timeline does not account for the complexities of human capital management. The "Stages" outlined on page. 48-49 are broad-based categories.

Please see Attachment 35, Teacher Recruitment Plan

- Dual certification is noted as a priority, as is certification for all teachers prior to the proposed charter opening in September 2014. The application does not articulate a realistic sense of the hiring/talent pool available.

The following table highlights the resumes and inquiries that PCCMS have received from interested individuals:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Number of total inquires | 37 |
| Number of resumes received | 18 |
| Number of inquires for teaching positions | 29 |
| Number of resumes for teaching positions | 12 |
| Number of candidates that are dual certified | 25 out of 29 |
| Number of inquiries for Head of School | 8 |
| Number of resumes for Head of School | 6 |

Please note that PCCMS has not advertised for any of these positions as of yet. However, the table above demonstrates a realistic sense of the hiring/talent pool available.

- Basic DPAS-II requirements are acknowledged and some additional “shadowing” for novice evaluators is included. The plan essentially re-states the Delaware Code and regulation, but also indicates that experienced educators will be evaluated on an annual cycle (summatives annually). This demonstrates a commitment to annual educator evaluation at all levels, and the charter also demonstrates a commitment to fully advising and informing teachers as to the components and expectations of DPAS-II.

No Response Requested.

- No additional educator evaluation tools are outlined within the application.

No Response Requested.

Professional Development

- A professional development schedule for the summer prior to school opening is provided; however, the scope and sequence of delivery needs to be streamlined. There are 10 professional development sessions offered during the month of August, and measurable outcomes for each of these sessions are missing. Moreover, the applicant indicates that these professional development opportunities are to take place in one week. The individuals with expertise in each of these areas are expected to deliver the professional development have not been identified.

Please see Attachment 30

- PLC (Professional Learning Community) time has been allocated for data analysis and professional development during the year will be offered every other Friday. The applicant did not address how the staffing plan, schedule, and calendar will be structured to accommodate this plan.

Teacher days are 7:00-3:45 Monday- Friday. Students are dismissed on Fridays at the end of the instructional day, which is 2:25. Professional Learning Communities will meet from 2:30-3:45 on the days highlighted in the School Calendar.

- The response does not include a structure for how student assessment data will be used to inform professional development needs of the staff.

PCCMS will develop and set professional educational goals and strategies annually that will be shared with the professional and support staff. When possible, topics for each in-service and other professional educational opportunities will be included in the annual notification. PCCMS will organize a Professional Education Committee charged with designing a structure for regular, articulated professional development opportunities. The Professional Education Committee will develop a method to gather regular input from staff and the strategic plan to ascertain professional education needs and opportunities for all professional and support staff members. The committee will also search current mandates, research and best practices to determine professional education topics. The personnel responsible for training the staff are identified on the professional development table. These include both internal and external personnel that will be contracted as needed. In the initial trainings, the school leader along with the administrative staff will manage professional development along with facilitating internal sessions. The administrative team will organize and disseminate student achievement data from interim assessments to staff members. This assessment data will be analyzed in an effort to identify and conduct staff development needs.

In addition to professional development provided onsite, professional and support staff will have access to PD360, which is a program used to differentiate professional development. This program contains the world's largest online library of educator training videos and topics that allow differentiated professional development to meet individual needs and career levels.

- The method of evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development is vague. The four-tier model needs to be accompanied by the sources for evidence that will be used at each tier. In addition, more detail needs to be provided around on-going supports throughout the school year.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School will use the Guskey Model for evaluating professional development. Professional Development evaluations require the collection and analysis of five critical levels of information, which include participants' reactions, participants learning, organization support and change, participants' use of new knowledge and skills and student learning outcomes. With each succeeding level, the process of gathering evaluation information gets a bit more complex. Each level builds on those that come before which means that success at one level is usually necessary for success at higher levels.

Level 1: Participants Reactions

Gauge the participants' reactions about information and basic human needs

Level 2: Participants Learning

Examine participants' level of attained learning

Level 3: Organization Support and Change

Analyze organizational support for skills gained in professional development

Level 4: Participants use of new knowledge and skills

Determine whether participants are using what they learned and using it well.

Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes

Analyze the correlating student learning objectives.

Please see Attachment 29 for Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development Evaluation.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the “Staffing” section did not meet the standard.

Governance and Management

Response Required (see below):

- The Board is comprised of mostly educators and appears to lack administrative and school finance experience.

Please see Attachment 33, Letter of Mentorship by Jed Desmond of the Charter School of Wilmington.

- The application indicates that the Governing Board will have twelve individuals but page 53 indicates no more than ten voting members. It is unclear if the additional two members or non-voting.

The application has been revised to indicate that there will be no more than ten voting members on the Governing Board.

“PCCS will operate with a Governing Board of not less than seven (7) and not more than ten (10) voting members.”

- The response to subsection 4 did not explain the procedure by which Board members will be selected.

Board members will be selected on a needs basis in order to keep balance among the different roles within the board and Delaware requirements. As openings arise, communication will be sent to all school stakeholders and posted on the schools’ website to ensure a fair, open and transparent process. Interested candidates will be required to complete a board member application and submit to the board by the specified date. The board will review applicants and select candidates, based on the boards’ needs, to be interviewed. Candidates will then be selected by a majority vote at the next board meeting. New board members will be required to complete all board trainings through the Delaware Charter School Network to ensure adequate knowledge and understanding of their significant role in the schools success.

- There is no mention of best practices relative to board training and board evaluation. The training provided by DOE is not designed to provide all the necessary training.

PCCMS will be partnering with the Delaware Charter School Network who will provide best practices relative to board training. PCCMS board will receive training in school effectiveness; governance and oversight aligned to the schools’ mission and vision; financial, legal and academic performance accountability and best practices for school leadership and operations. The Board will use formal and informal evaluative measures to ensure the school is on target in all areas of its Performance Agreement. Each year the board will review the approved charter application and compare with the schools’ data to evaluate the progress toward goals. The board will use this process to identify goals for the following year. In accordance with the Charter Performance Agreement, an Annual Report will be provided to the Delaware Department of Education with required procedures and timeframes.

Please see Attachment 39, proposed/example Board Evaluation sheets.

- The response to the advisory bodies does not include a reference to the statutorily required Citizen Budget Oversight Committee. There is no evidence of partnership with the Charter School Network, similar schools, or higher education.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School has developed a Partnership with the Delaware Charter School Network. In addition to the Charter School Network, PCCMS has been in communication with Namaste Charter School in Chicago, Illinois. Some of the board members will be visiting the school and discussing partnership options with the Head of School once the charter has been granted.

- The Delaware Open Meetings law (29 Del. C., Chapter 100) permits participation in meetings by video conferencing; Article II, Section 7 of the applicant's by-laws, adds telephone conference, which is not included in the statute.

Article II, Section 7 of the By-Laws has been revised to exclude telephone conference and replaced with video conferencing per the Delaware Open Meetings Law (29 Del, C., Chapter 100)

Please see revised Attachment 13

- The Delaware Public Integrity Commission has issued an opinion (07-63) concluding that charter schools are "state agencies" under the State Code of Conduct (29 Del. C., Chapter 58) and that the State Code of Conduct applies to charter schools, their board members and their employees. Any code of conduct or conflicts provisions (e.g., Article V, Section 6 of the applicant's by-laws) should conform to the State Code of Conduct.

Article V, Section 6 of the By-Laws have been revised to conform to the State Code of Conduct.

Please see revised Attachment 13

The Accountability Committee concluded that the "Governance and Management" section did not meet the standard.

Parent and Community Involvement

Response Required (see below):

- The Applicant plans to partner with the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) for a pre-opening engagement plan.
- The post-opening parent engagement plan is not clear and lacks measureable goals and objectives.

Engaging parents for Pike Creek Charter Middle School.

Partnering with the Delaware PTA we will start with a presentation on the benefits of PTA.

There will be 3 parent information meetings to talk to parents about getting involved in the school, fundraising, mentoring, and program implementation.

The introduction meeting will be with the parents in the beginning of March 2014. State PTA will make a field service trip to Pike Creek Charter Middle School to talk about the history of PTA, PTA vs. other parent groups, benefits of the PTA, financial and fiscal responsibility of PTA board members. Parent emails and contact information will be collected and parent leaders will be identified.

There will be a meeting in April of the PTA to discuss plans for the fall of 2014. Nominations for board officers will take place.

May 2014 PTA elections will take place. Head of School will be on hand to meet parents and membership will begin. Parent names that are not on the PTA board will send their resume to be elected to the PCCMS Board of Directors.

June 2014 PTA will hold their first official meeting to talk about planning activities through the summer. There will be several evening tours of the school, meet your teacher night, Head of School's corner (an evening to get to know the school leadership, a question and answer session will take place for all parents)

July 2014 PTA board will plan out the school year's activities and set a budget with all projected income and outcomes for the new year. Membership will bring in revenue as well as donations from parents.

PTA will drive an annual fund that allows parents and community members to make an annual donation to the school.

August 2014 PTA will host a Meet Your Teacher evening. Students will tour the school, meet their teachers and other staff members. Parents will have the opportunity to join the PTA, sign up to volunteer, and get to know the PCCMS community. Nominees for the parent representative will present themselves to the parents for consideration to a board position on the school board of PCCMS.

Sept 2014 the first PTA meeting will be held where parents will vote on the budget for the PTA and have active discussion regarding the progress of the school. At this first PTA meeting parents will vote to place 2 parent representatives on the PCCMS Board of directors to ensure parents have a voice. The parents with the most votes will have their names put forth to the board for consideration.

~~The Accountability Committee concluded that the "Parent and Community Involvement"~~

Start-up and Operations

Start-up Plan

Response Required: The start-up plan is a very simple chart outlining the tasks that need to be completed. There is no narrative provided to show that the applicants truly understand the tasks required and have concrete steps to be taken to ensure completion and compliance.

See Revised Attachment 19

Transportation

Response Required (see below):

- The application states, "PCC will provide bus transportation for students that live more than one mile from the school and are located within the 5 mile radius." This does not meet the criteria for eligibility specified in 14 DE Admin Code 1105 and in the Charter School Technical Assistance Manual.

Pike Creek Charter Middle School will serve students in grades 6-8, which falls into both of the transportation criteria. According to 14 DE Admin Code 1105, students in grade K-6 that live 1(one) mile or more from the school are eligible for bus transportation. Students that are in grades 7-12 that live 2(two) miles or more from the school are eligible for bus transportation. Since there is a split between eligibility due to serving grade 6-8, PCCMS will provide 6th grade HUBS and 7th/8th grade HUBS for bus transportation.

- The application needs to address how transportation will be provided for students outside of the school district in which the school is located.

Students' that live outside of the school district will have the opportunity to use bus transportation by using one of the HUBS that the school has identified.

- The application needs to identify who will be responsible for oversight of transportation operations. Some duties are specified; however, it is not clear who will manage the day- to-day operations.

The Director of Finance and Operations will manage the day-to-day operations of transportation.

- The application states that the school will keep records of drug and alcohol testing. If the school contracts for transportation, it will not be involved in drug and alcohol testing for school bus drivers and aides.

Pike Creek Charter has removed the statement that the school will keep records of drug and alcohol testing since the school plans to contract out for transportation.

- Attachment 9, Bus Transportation, bullet 2, states that students will "wait for the driver's signal to cross." 14 DE Admin Code 1105.8.1.11, states that they will cross "only upon an audible clearance signal from the driver/aide."

Please see revised Attachment 9, Bus Transportation has been revised to include 14 DE Admin Code 1105.8.1.11.

"If crossing the street to board the bus, students MUST look both left and right for cars, make sure the RED lights are flashing, and wait for the driver's audible clearance signal to cross. Students should always cross the street in front of the bus."

Safety and Security

Response Required: This section needs to include a statement that Pike Creek will comply with the requirements of The Omnibus School Safety Act of the 146th Delaware General Assembly and 14 DE Admin Code 621.

3. Safety and Security. Provide the school plan for safety and security for students, staff, guests, and property. Explain the types of safety and security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ to provide a safe and healthy environment in accordance with 14 Del. C. § 512(12) and the safety provisions included in the Statement of Assurances.

“ Pike Creek Charter School will comply with the requirements of The Omnibus School Safety Act of the 146th Delaware General Assembly and 14 DE Admin Code 621.”

Please see Revised Attachment 26

Lunch/Breakfast

- The Applicant plans to participate in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast Programs (NSLP/SBP).

- **Response Required:** NSLP/SBP participants must follow NSLP procurement process for obtaining a vendor for meals, which includes going to bid prior to start-up. The current plan is to enter a contract with Revolution Foods, but this could only be done if Revolution Foods wins the bid or if the school chooses not to participate in NSLP/SBP. See below

- Schools participating in NSLP/SBP must have a current Food Establishment Permit. The charter will need to contact Public Health to ensure that the facility has one and, if not, must obtain one.

- Student eligibility for free or reduced price meals is *not* determined by Title 1. Rather, eligibility is established using USDA criteria, Meal Benefit Forms, and direct certification.

Response Required: Homeless students qualify for free meals and NSLP will reimburse these meals. Meals for homeless students do not need to be paid out of the LEA grant. See below

Response Required: The plan indicates that students will plan the menus, but all menus must be compliant with USDA regulations for meals. In addition, when schools procure meals from a vendor, it is often not possible to have students plan the menus, unless the vendor is willing to provide a list of possible entrées, etc. See below

Response Required: The Applicant needs to provide a statement that it will follow the NSLP procurement process for securing a vendor for meals; provide an acknowledgement of the proper way to determine student eligibility for free or reduced price meals; provide a plan for obtaining a Food Establishment Permit from Public Health (if there is not a current one).

Pike Creek Charter will provide students with healthy and nutritional breakfast and lunch options daily. PCCMS will participate in the National School Lunch program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). PCCMS will follow NSLP/SBP procurement process for obtaining a vendor for meals, which includes a bid prior to start up. Once approved, PCCMS will host a bid for food vendors that would supply healthy breakfast and lunch options that meet the requirements of the

vendor. In addition to the bidding process, PCCMS will obtain a food establishment permit from the Delaware Division of Public Health once approved. The potential building obtained a food establishment permit from the Delaware Division of Public Health in the past but PCCMS will obtain an updated permit for the NSLP.

Students' eligibility for free and reduced lunch will be established using the USDA criteria, meal benefit forms and direct certification. All necessary forms will be included in the application for students to enroll. Homeless students will be eligible for free meals and NSLP will reimburse these meals.

Insurance

The applicant submitted a quote for insurance coverage.

Student Records

The Applicant will use the eSchoolPlus (eSP) pupil accounting system. The Applicant included a statement about the staff being fully trained in eSP.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the "Start-Up Operations" section did not meet the standard.

Facilities

- A proposed location has been identified at 405 Mermaid Blvd, in Wilmington DE. This location is currently a Swim and Fitness facility
- The building will be leased for five years with an option to buy in the second five-year term.
- The space will be renovated to include 15 classrooms, 18' X 34'.
- Classrooms will be located on the first and second floors, as well as a cafeteria, gym, locker rooms, offices, and common areas.
- The Charter School will keep and maintain the pool.
- PCC will install an elevator to ensure access for students with disabilities.
- Upon approval of the Charter application, renovations are due to start in June 2013.
- The land behind the proposed site is intended to be made available to New Castle County for its use in exchange for taking over all maintenance costs.
- The proposed address of the charter school appears to also be the address for other organizations co-located in the same building, such as: Achieving Physiques; Aquatic Management Systems, Inc.; Aquatic Management Systems Inc.; Page Christina; Precision Dance Center; Ramone's Landscaping, LLC ; and Wellness Today Personal Training Studio.

Response Required: The presence of these other organizations/businesses raises several concerns (see below).

School and student safety:

- The school is exposed to outsider intrusion and direct contact of students with the public.
- It is recommended to refer to the State of DE Homeland Security's Comprehensive Emergency Management Planning for Schools (CEMPS).

PCCMS remains in agreement with the landlord that the other organizations currently located at Delaware Swim and Fitness will be moving along with the current owner to a new location. The only organization that will be present once PCCMS takes over the lease of the building is PCCMS.

Transportation: School bus and parent drop off and pick up. If the limited parking lot is for use by all co-located organizations, it will severely impact the transportation of students to and from the school.

Student transportation to and from the school will not negatively impact traffic or parking, as PCCMS will remain the sole occupant of the building. There are 285 parking spots at Delaware Swim and Fitness.

- Being that the proposed facility is currently a swimming facility, proper inspections and precautions must be taken as per any local regulations to ensure proper air ventilation and mold eradication, if any.

Proper inspections and precautions will be taken per local regulations to ensure proper air ventilation and mold eradication, if any. This initiative can be seen as part of our CAM expenses for maintenance that is included in our budget. This will be administered and overseen by the landlord's aquatic business.

- Prior to the construction of a new charter school or the renovation of an existing building as a charter school, it is recommended that the charter school review Delaware laws and regulations regarding asbestos in school construction.

Prior to renovations, our team will review Delaware laws and regulations regarding asbestos in school construction. This will take place during our Planning Year during the renovation process with our selected vendor.

- Information about relevant specific websites is in Appendix C.

The Accountability Committee concluded that “Facilities” section did not meet the standard.

Budget and Finance

Response Required (see below):

- There is no budget narrative other than a list of assumptions about some of the budget figures.

Please see revised Attachment 22, Budget Narrative

- There is no contingency plan outlining how the school will operate financially at 80% of enrollment.

Please see Attachment 34, contingency plan, on how the school will operate financially at 80% enrollment. As you’ll see, we are financially viable at 80% enrollment with the same fixed costs at 100% enrollment. We would still have a balanced budget even with less proposed fundraising, foundation monies and mission specific grants. In the attached contingency plan, you will find a budget narrative that includes new assumptions for 80% enrollment with the variable and fixed costs included.

- There is an operating deficit shown in the first two years of operation unless significant private funds are secured. Additionally, there is no plan outlining how the school will be financially viable if those funds aren’t secured.

There is no operating deficit with the proposed budget. While taking your concerns into consideration, we have initiated meetings with the Welfare Foundation, Longwood Foundation, Rodell Foundation, Laffey McHugh Foundation, Crystal Trust Foundation and Delaware Community Foundation and feel confident in our projected income based off these discussions. In the budget, we did not include the mission specific grant monies that we will be applying for. Below is a breakdown of those grants with minimum and maximum monies distributed:

1. Carol M. White PE Program- \$50,033-\$786,257
2. Roadmaps to health- up to 200,000
3. School Grants for Healthy Kids- \$1,000-\$5,000
4. 30K NASPE Research Grant- up to 30,000
5. Children Health and Wellness Grant \$1,000-\$10,000
6. Fuel up to Play 60 – up to \$4,000
7. Fuel up to Play 60 Healthy lifestyle grant- up to 3,000
8. Obesity Prevention Regional Grant- \$25,000-\$50,000
9. Safeway Foundation \$10,000-\$25,000
10. Healthy Habits- MetLife- no set amount
11. School Nutrition/Physical Activity- National Institute of Health- no set amount
12. Community Partnership for Child Obesity, National Institute for Children-\$50,000/per yr

Along with foundation monies and grant monies, we have a community, capital and mission fundraising plan to hit target goals. As stated in the charter, these tasks will be delegated to a full-time, experienced fundraiser.

In addition, we have engaged in discussions with WSFS Bank and M&T Bank regarding loan options if funds are not secured.

- The staffing plan presented in the budget attachments does not seem consistent with the staffing section of the application. That section references 18 positions in year one whereas the budget reflects only 17. It isn't clear which position isn't included in the budget.

There was a miscalculation in the staffing section of the application. There are 17 positions in year one, which is represented in the budget, narrative, and assumptions. Please see revised attachments 21(budget sheets) and 22 (Budget Narrative).

- The staffing plan indicates that the school will have a Director of Finance *and* a business manager position. This staffing plan seems redundant for a small school.

With the Committee's concerns taken into account, we have decided to change our administrative make-up. They will now be classified as Head of School, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Director of Finance and Operations. This allows us to take the concerns of the Committee seriously by recruiting a Head of School with management and education experience while working with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. We have removed the Business Manager position all together. The duties of the Business Manager are fully encompassed in the Director of Finance and Operations with the help of their Accounting Clerk.

- The estimated cost of special education services seems low. The Applicant has assumed only 200 hours of related service therapies (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.) annually for over 30 special education students.

We assume all special education students will have a classification of "basic". With the special education coordinator, the dual certified teachers and the "basic" classification; we anticipate only half of the special education students requiring a minimum amount of outside related services. After speaking with contractors of outside related services, we budgeted the highest hourly rate of \$200 when in some cases, it could be as low as \$50 an hour; thus quadrupling the number of hours that we could have for outside services. Please see revised attachment 22, assumptions for further explanation.

- The technology plan in the narrative mentions iPads, netbooks, and responders for classrooms but budgets only \$5,000 annually. This amount seems low; however, there are not any additional details about the total number of devices that would be needed.

Please see revised Attachment 22, budget narrative for the technology plan and classroom technology for total number of devices and costs attributed to each.

- The building costs seem reasonable, but increases in costs over time will cause financial stress if enrollment targets are not met.

While hearing the Committee's concerns regarding stress of increased building costs if enrollment targets are not met, we don't understand that concern. In looking at our 80% enrollment budget, we still have sufficient revenue to cover the operations and maintenance of facilities expenses. Our plan of staggering rent costs allows us to pay more as enrollment does increase compared to no student revenue in the Planning Year and builds incrementally until

and our proposed recruitment plan, there is no reason for us to believe we won't hit recruitment targets by specific dates. Please see Attachment 41, student recruitment plan.

- The 80% budget is not balanced. There is a Year 0 deficit of \$479,000+ and Year 1 deficit of over \$137,000.

Please see revised Attachment 21, 80% balanced budget.

- There is no narrative about how the assumptions changed in the reduced budget. The staffing has been cut; however, without any explanation, it is hard to determine if the plan for the cuts is realistic

Please see Attachment 34, contingency 80% budget narrative with assumptions included on how they change from the 100% enrollment budget.

The Accountability Committee concluded that the “Budget and Finance” section did not meet the standard.

Summary and Recommendations

| Application Sections | Charter School Accountability Committee's Recommendations |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| (1) Founding Group and School | Not Met |
| (2) Education Plan | Not Met |
| (3) Performance Management | Not Met |
| (4) Staffing | Not Met |
| (5) Governance and Management | Not Met |
| (6) Parent and Community Involvement | Not Met |
| (7) Start-up and Operations | Not Met |
| (8) Facilities | Not Met |
| (9) Budget and Finance | Not Met |

The Charter School Accountability Committee recommends to the Secretary of Education that the application for Pike Creek Charter Middle School **not** be approved.

