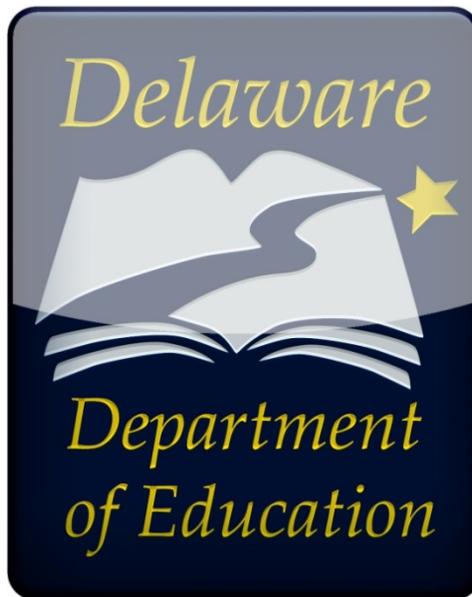


# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**REACH ACADEMY FOR GIRLS**

**FINAL REPORT**

**APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN EXISTING CHARTER**

Opening Date: August 2010

Grades: K – 3 and 5 - 8

Location: New Castle County

30 September 2012 Unit Count: 390

Date of Report: 5 July 2013

## Background

**Name** Reach Academy for Girls

**Current Enrollment** 390

<b>Projected Enrollment</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>
	Year 1	252	K - 1 and 5 - 6
	Year 2	338	K – 2 and 5 - 7
	Year 3	432	K – 3 and 5 - 8
	Year 4	475	K - 8

**Mission** Reach Academy for Girls is a school that will provide a rigorous core curriculum based on research-validated strategies. Our goal is to help students, in collaboration with the family and community, reach their highest potential and become leaders in their school, family, and community.

**Vision** To invest each student in her own personal growth and development; to teach students how to plan and map out strategies with milestones to help each student achieve her goals; and to do so in creative ways.

Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (Committee) convened on 3 July 2013 for the Final Meeting.

At the Initial Meeting, the Committee engaged the Applicant in discussion about the proposed change in the location of the school. During the Preliminary Meeting, the Committee considered the modification application relative to the following approval criteria listed in 14 Del. Code § 512:

- Criterion Eight: Economic Viability
- Criterion Nine: Administrative and Financial Operations
- Criterion Ten: Insurance
- Criterion Twelve: Health and Safety.

## Initial and Preliminary Meetings

- Reach Academy for Girls will be at maximum capacity, even with the addition of modular classrooms. Additionally, the enrollment is growing and the school has one more grade to add to complete its final configuration of grades K – 8.
- The opportunity presented by the availability of the Pencader site would solve the school's space issues and seemed to be the best option for the school. Although there had been discussion about building a new school, the move to the Pencader site was the better option. The move is feasible and would maintain the economic viability and academics of the school.

- Additionally, a clear majority of parents (over 80%) favor the move and are willing to send their daughters to the new location. Based on a survey, parents, representing 273 students, would send their daughters to the new location. Furthermore, parents of approximately 95 new students are supportive of the move.
- School representatives stated that the move will enable Reach Academy to draw from the entirety of New Castle County, with the New Castle area being the largest base.
- The school currently has a waiting list for some grades and would be able to accept more students at the new site. Additionally, at the current site, the school is now at capacity and would not be able to accept more students next year.
- The capacity of the two Pencader buildings is for 1040 students. The site would accommodate more students than is currently possible at the current site and would allow the Board and administration to consider expanding to a high school at some point.
- Criterion 12 (Health and Safety), specifically Transportation and Providing Meals to Students and Compliance with the Free/Reduced Lunch Program, was “partially met.” This criterion required a written response from the Applicant.

## **Final Meeting**

### **Criterion Twelve: Health and Safety**

The Committee discussed the response to the Health and Safety Criterion and noted the following.

- *School Transportation.* The DOE Transportation Office understands that for the previous school site in the Brandywine S. D., the school provided the same level of transportation service that the Brandywine S.D. provided to its students and that the school intends to maintain that same level of service for those students going to the new school location. Students residing in the Colonial S.D. and going to the new site will now be provided the same level of transportation service as the Colonial S.D., i.e. students can walk safely to their bus stops (no hub stops and crossing 4-lane roads) which may be up to ½ mile from their residences for spur routes. The Applicant needs to confirm that the understanding of the DOE transportation Office is correct and/or to provide clarification about the changes in student transportation that would result from the move to the proposed new site.
- *Providing Meals to Students and Compliance with the Free/Reduced Lunch Program.* The Applicant’s response reflects a clear understanding of the Provision 2 process, counting and claiming meals, and vendor charges.

***The Committee concluded that Criterion Twelve was partially met.***

## Summary and Recommendations

Criterion	Charter School Accountability Committee's Recommendations
(8) Economic Viability	Met
(9) Administrative and Financial Operations	Met
(10) Insurance	Met
(12) Health and Safety	Partially Met

The Charter School Accountability Committee recommended that the charter school modification application for Reach Academy for Girls ***be approved with clarification/follow up information from the school staff.***

## **Appendix A**

### **List of Attendees**

#### **Final Meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee**

**3 July 2013**

#### **Application to Modify an Existing Charter**

##### **Members of the Committee**

- Mary Kate McLaughlin, Chief of Staff; Committee Chair
- Karen Field Rogers, Manager, Financial Reform and Resource Management
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- Paul Harrell, Director of Public and Private Partnerships
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network (non-voting)

##### **Staff to the Committee**

- Catherine T. Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Patricia Bigelow, Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Charter School Finance
- Chantel Janiszewski, Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Sheila Kay-Lawrence, Administrative Secretary

##### **Representatives from Reach Academy for Girls**

- Reverend Canon Lloyd Casson, Board President
- Tara Allen, Head of School
- Maureen Thomas, Business Manager
- Charles White, Realtor for Lukens Drive property

## Appendix B

### Additional Information: Transportation

- DOE Regulation 1105 provides transportation eligibility requirements. The present school is located in an area where apparently 26 students are not eligible for transportation. The new school will be located in an area where this number will likely change. The school should evaluate the area and could also check with the local school district transportation staff for assistance in how they have defined eligibility zones in that same area. Any change in students eligible for transportation would impact the transportation funding available for the school.
- DOE Regulation 1105 states that students residing in the same district as the school will receive the same level of transportation service that would be provided by that school district. Hub points may be established for those outside of the district where the school is located. The change in location from within the Brandywine School District (S.D.) to the Colonial School District could impact transportation operations. For example, students living in the Brandywine S.D. previously were to be provided the same service that the Brandywine S.D. provides. The school could set up hub stops in that area, if desired. On the other hand, where hub stop service was provided for students residing in the Colonial S.D., the service would need to be modified.