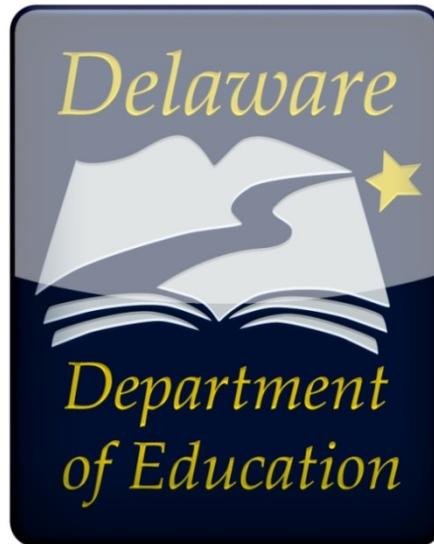


# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## Family Foundations Academy

**RENEWAL APPLICATION  
INITIAL REPORT**

CSAC Initial Meeting: October 14, 2014  
CSAC Initial Report Published: October 22, 2014

By September 30, 2014, Family Foundations Academy submitted an application to renew its charter. Consideration of this application is in accordance with the applicable provisions of 14 *Del. C.* § 514A and 14 DE Admin. Code § 275. Written renewal application guidance is provided by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) on its website. The renewal application template developed by DDOE is aligned to measures and targets within the Performance Framework, which outlines the academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all Delaware charter schools are evaluated. The evaluation of the school's performance as measured by the Framework is a major component of the decision on the renewal application. The decision on the renewal application is based on a comprehensive review, guided, in part, by the following three questions:

1. Is the academic program a success?
2. Is the school financially viable?
3. Is the school organizationally sound?

This report serves as a summary of the strengths, areas of follow-up, and/or concerns identified by members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) during their individual reviews of the charter applicant's renewal application, Performance Review Reports, Annual Reports and Performance Agreements and during the CSAC meetings.

The following were in attendance at the Initial Meeting of the CSAC on October 14, 2014:

**Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee**

- David Blowman, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Deputy Secretary, DDOE
- Karen Field Rogers, Associate Secretary, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM, DDOE
- Tasha Cannon, Deputy Officer Talent Recruitment, Selection and Strategy, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU), DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Community Member and Former Charter School Leader

**Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)**

- Catherine Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Jennifer Nagourney, Executive Director, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Jennifer Carlson, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Michelle Whalen, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE

**Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)**

- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network
- Donna Johnson, Executive Director, Delaware State Board of Education

**Representatives of Charter School**

- Sean Moore, Co-Director and Chief Administrative Officer
- Dr. Tennell Brewington, Co-Director and Chief Academic Officer
- Byron Brooks, Board Chair
- David Alston, Board
- Patricia Brooks, Satisfaction Officer

## Performance Framework Ratings Summary

### Rating Scales

Academic	Financial	Organizational
E = Exceeds Standard (89-100)	M = Meets Standard	M = Meets Standard
M = Meets Standard (63-88)	D = Does Not Meet Standard	
D = Does Not Meet Standard (39-62)	F = Falls Far Below	DNM = Does Not Meet Standard
F = Falls Far Below Standard (Below 39)		

### Academic

Year	1.a. Growth		1.b. Bottom 25%		1.c. Growth to Prof		2.a. Prof		2.b. Overall Subgroup		2.c. District		2.d. Similar Schools		3.a. AYP	4.a. SAT	4.b. Grad Rate	5.a. Mission Specific	OVERALL RATING/SCORE	
	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA						
10-11	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	F	D	D	D	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	D	51.9
11-12	F	D	D	D	D	M	F	D	D	M	F	D	D	D	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	D	51.9
12-13	M	M	M	M	M	M	D	D	D	M	D	M	D	M	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	M	68.4
13-14	D	D	E	D	M	M	D	D	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	N/A	N/A	N/A	M	67.5

### Financial

Year	1.a.	1.b.	1.c.	1.d.	2.a.	2.b.	2.c.	2.d.	OVERALL RATING
10-11	M	M	M	M	NR	D	NR	M	M
11-12	F	M	M	M	NR	D	NR	M	D
12-13	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
13-14	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

### Organizational

Year	1.a.	1.b.	2	3.a.	3.b.	3.c.	4.a.	4.b.	4.c.	4.d.	5.a.	5.b.	6	OVERALL RATING
11-12	M	DNM	M	DNM	DNM	M	M	M	N/A	M	M	DNM	M	Does Not Meet
12-13	M	M	DNM	DNM	DNM	M	M	M	DNM	M	M	DNM	M	Does Not Meet
13-14	DNM	M	DNM	DNM	M	DNM	M	M	DNM	M	M	M	M	Does Not Meet

## Discussion

### Section 1: Overview

Mr. Moore gave an overview of the school, stating that it is the school's ninth year. He noted that the school started with 235 students in grades 1-3. He said that, this year, the school has over 800 students in grades K-8. He stated that this is the school's second renewal and that the school has gone through several modifications to expand grades. He noted that the school currently has two locations with grades K-4 in New Castle and grades 5-8 in Wilmington across from Banning Park at the old St. Matthews.

Dr. Brewington added that, as the school grows, it has increased its academic information to be more innovative and in competition with its fellow schools. She stated that the goal is to continue to learn as the school grows and to continue to provide a quality education.

### Section 2: Academic Framework

Mr. Blowman noted that the school has met the standard in the Academic Framework for the last two years and asked the school to speak to any areas of strength and any ongoing challenges.

Dr. Brewington stated that the school is still working diligently with its subgroups to get them to proficiency. She noted that the school's special education students met the State standard last year. She commented that a challenge that the school faces is to make sure that everybody keeps the momentum, drive and passion. She noted that teachers tend to burn out by around Christmas, but that the school stays revved up throughout the school year. She stated that one challenge that teachers often face is getting students to do homework, so the school makes sure to engage parents and students with feedback.

Mr. Blowman asked the school about its area of greatest challenge. Dr. Brewington replied that teacher retention is the school's greatest challenge, particularly in light of the data-driven expectations. She said that having teachers in teams and providing new teachers mentors helps.

Mr. Blowman asked the school about its greatest challenge with respect to students. Dr. Brewington responded that the greatest problem is with English Language Learners (ELL) students, including obtaining their proficiency scores and getting parents involved in their learning process.

Ms. Mazza asked the school about the increase in proficiency scores for reading and math for students with disabilities. Dr. Brewington attributed the increase to having special education teachers and families involved in the students' data. She stated that the focus is on growth targets and doing things differently. She noted that some general education teachers were afraid of the inclusion model and that a lot of training has led them to now feel comfortable.

Ms. Mazza noted the low percentage of special education students at the school and asked whether the school could be under-identifying. Dr. Brewington replied that the school goes through RtI (Response to Intervention) and screenings. She commented that the school works harder on its students in the highest RtI tier.

Mr. Blowman stated that, last year's special education proficiency was not good and this year it was. He asked what CSAC should weigh more. He noted that the special education population was small and asked whether the numbers were moving because of the nature of the population or because of something systemic that the school now has in place. Dr. Brewington responded that the change is systemic and about the increased confidence of the students, as well as the school's educators. She noted that the school now has a larger academic team, including two Directors of Curriculum Instruction, herself, and a support team. She stated that the feedback is now more specific. She commented that school also now does a lot more to educate and involve special education parents, including showing parents their child's data and the feedback from their teachers.

Ms. McCrae noted that there was a significant jump in math proficiency for special education, but a trend in the opposite direction for the general population. She asked whether there was a distraction from the regular education population due to a strong push in special education. Dr. Brewington attributed the change to the Common Core expectations, stating that some teachers understood how to dissect the Common Core and some did not. She stated that, as a general matter, the slippage was a result of the learning curve for new teachers. She also attributed the school's prior special education results to a learning curve for teachers in understanding the special education regulations. She clarified that a lot of the school's special education teachers last year were returning, whereas many of the school's general education teachers were new. Mr. Taylor asked about the plan's expectations moving forward in closing the gap. Dr. Brewington replied that the school invests a lot in professional development. She stated that the hope is to make the teachers more confident and that, with the support, they will stay. Mr. Taylor asked if all teachers have common planning and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Dr. Brewington stated that they do. Mr. Taylor then asked if all teachers are involved in the IEP meetings and Dr. Brewington stated that they are. She stated that the school also has Child Study Teams in place for the more challenging students and a Wellness Center to help with counseling and medical services.

Mr. Moore added that the population increase has also had an impact, but noted that the school's enrollment has capped and will remain stable. Mr. Taylor asked whether the swing included outside students and whether they were on grade level. Mr. Moore responded that a lot of the incoming students were outside students and some of them were not on grade level. Ms. Brewington added that all students are benchmarked at the beginning of the school year and described how that data is used to drive the students' instruction.

Mr. Blowman asked about the school's mission-specific goals and Ms. Nagourney stated that she was particularly interested in learning more about how the school interacts with families.

Dr. Brewington stated that, in her experience, one thing that was lacking in the public school system was parent involvement. She said that parents felt that their presence was adversarial. She stated that the school's goal is to invite parents into schools to observe and give input. She commented that she would like to see the school eventually have parents run the front office and events. She added that the school and Board welcome parents to meetings. Mr. Blowman asked whether the school has measures to track parent involvement. Dr. Brewington stated that the school uses surveys to receive feedback. She noted that the school recently had a town hall meeting about bus concerns and a curriculum night to inform and involve parents.

Ms. Nagourney expressed concern at the volume of parent complaints and the chief complaints allege a lack of responsiveness from the school's leadership. She asked how the leadership to speak to how this works operationally and how the Board reacts. Ms. Brooks stated that, when she joined the school last year, she realized that the school did not have a structure in place to address complaints. She stated that she met with Mr. Carwell, who provided all of the complaints, and addressed as many as she could. She noted that, upon her arrival, the school did not have a process in place, but there is now a complaint process in place and all staff have been trained. She stated that she and one other individual are Satisfaction Officers and that all complaints come to her office immediately to reach out to parents. Ms. Nagourney commented that the complaints have slowed but have not stopped. Ms. Brooks replied that she was only aware of one or two complaints since April, but that she would like to see additional complaints if they exist.

Mr. Taylor asked if the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is active. Dr. Brewington stated that it is currently an active group of ten, but that it was previously a group of three that was not active. She added that the PTA now has agendas with response times and outcomes for parent concerns.

Mr. Taylor then asked whether a complaint policy was available for parents. Mr. Moore responded that the school had a policy beginning in August of 2013, but there is a new process as was described by Ms. Brooks. He explained that the process calls for parents to first go to the source of the complaint, then the source's supervisor, then either he or Dr. Brewington depending on the issue, then to the local Board. He stated that, oftentimes, the complainants bypass the process and go right to the DDOE. Mr. Taylor asked about how many complaining students stay at the school. Dr. Brewington responded that approximately seventy percent of students stay. She said that leadership tries to resolve complaints when they are raised. She stated that the bus is the biggest issue and that the school updates parents on a regular basis regarding how the school is addressing the issue. Mr. Moore added that the school's enrollment trend suggests that people are not running from the school. He said that the majority of the issues involve the buses and occur within the first thirty days. Ms. Brooks stated that there is a complaint form that she uses to follow up with parents after the issue is addressed by the school's administration.

Mr. Taylor asked about the Board's process for responding to parent complaints. Mr. Brooks stated that, at the last meeting, there was one parent with a complaint. He said that the Board

allowed the parent to be heard at the meeting and then immediately put the parent into contact with Mr. Moore to put together a resolution plan. He stated that the individual attended the next meeting and had no issues. Mr. Taylor asked if the Board follows up on a monthly basis and Mr. Brooks stated that the Board follows up with administration.

Ms. Johnson expressed concern about the volume of complaints and the fact that parents have felt the need to copy the DDOE and State Board of Education over the last three years. She asked how parents find access to the grievance policy. Mr. Moore stated that the Board members' emails and the grievance policy are available on the school's website under "Policies and Procedures." Ms. Johnson asked how the complaints are addressed, stating that, when she attended a meeting last fall, a Board member raised the issue of complaints being addressed during any part of the public record. She asked what action the Board has taken to address this concern, as well as the influx of parent and staff complaints. Mr. Brooks stated that the number of complaints that have come directly to the Board has diminished immensely, but that individuals have the opportunity to raise complaints during the public comment period. Ms. Johnson also expressed concern that complaints are addressed during the public session. Mr. Brooks stated that they are addressed during the public session or an executive session. Ms. Johnson asked if, as Board President, Mr. Brooks meets with the Satisfaction Officer or School Leader on a regular basis. Ms. Johnson asked about Ms. Brooks' other duties. Ms. Brooks stated that she is involved in staff professional development and communication with parents. Ms. Johnson asked whether Ms. Brooks is considered part of the administrative team. Ms. Brooks stated that her primary function is that of Satisfaction Officer. Ms. Johnson asked whether Ms. Brooks is evaluated by School Leaders or the Board and Ms. Brooks stated that she is evaluated by School Leaders.

Ms. Mazza asked whether the school participates in the school climate survey and Ms. Brooks stated that the school does participate. Ms. Mazza also asked whether the school has a process for looking at complaints historically to be more proactive and provide professional development on the front end. Ms. Brooks stated that the school did receive information about past complaints and use that information. Dr. Brewington added that she and Ms. Brooks did sit down with the information to spot recurring themes. She noted that the three top complaints involved buses, discipline, and communication. She stated that the school has systems to provide data for discipline.

Ms. Nagourney commented that neither the Board members' emails nor the grievance policy were currently available online. Members of the school stated that the school had recently gone through a website revision. Ms. Nagourney asked when the update took place. Ms. Brooks stated that it was launched at the end of last year and has gone through updates since then.

Ms. Massett asked if there was a PTA member on the Board. Mr. Moore replied that there is a parent on the Board, but the PTA had been non-functioning for several years. Ms. Massett suggested that it would be beneficial for the Board to include a representative from the PTA. Ms. Johnson confirmed that there were ten parents in the PTA and Ms. Mazza asked what the school is doing to build parent involvement, in light of the high student population. Dr.

Brewington stated that the school is asking parents to come out and get involved. Mr. Blowman added that parent involvement is important in and of itself, but that the importance of the issue becomes magnified in light of the school's stated mission.

### **Section 3: Organizational Framework**

Ms. Nagourney stated that the school's Organizational Framework Report has been provided and added to the record. She stated that the overall rating was "Does Not Meet Standard."

Mr. Blowman stated that a lot of the school's issues noted on the school's Organizational Framework Report involved lack of reporting, including financial, governance, and statutory program-specific areas. He asked the school why the reporting has not been happening and what the school's plan is to correct the issue. Mr. Moore responded that he and Dr. Brewington have learned to delegate. He stated that, this summer, the school created a management team to take on a lot of the day-to-day detailed work and responsibility. He commented that he did not anticipate the issues brought up, such as posting to the website, being an issue moving forward. Mr. Blowman noted that the issue has been ongoing and is not a one-year issue. Ms. Nagourney asked what the Board's response has been as it saw the reports each year. Mr. Brooks stated that too much had been put on two sets of shoulders. He said that, over the last couple of months, the school has defined an organizational structure so that there wasn't the same amount of responsibility placed on two individuals. Ms. Nagourney asked what was done one year ago and how the Board addressed the issues with School Leaders. Mr. Brooks stated that the Board addressed the issues directly with School Leaders. He added that he is new to the role of Board President, but that the Board directed the Co-Directors to start addressing the issues.

Ms. Nagourney asked about the prior Board President. Mr. Moore stated that it was Ms. Monnica May and, before that, Mr. Lamar Boyce. Ms. Johnson asked how many Board Presidents the school has had and Mr. Moore stated that the school has had three Board Presidents since 2010. Ms. Johnson asked how many current Board members have been on the Board for more than one year. Mr. Moore stated that all current Board members have been on the Board for more than one year. Mr. Johnson asked how many Board members there were and Mr. Moore stated five. Ms. Johnson noted that the school only has four listed on its website. Ms. Johnson asked how many Board members are outlined in the school's bylaws and Mr. Moore stated "three."

Mr. Taylor stated that it is important is to establish a detailed plan and dates to deal with complaints, which the Board can hold the School Leaders accountable for. He suggested that the school undergo board governance training specific to operating a charter school, which may be different than a traditional school district. Mr. Brooks stated that the Board did training with its legal counsel in February and that it was helpful, as many Board members were new to being on a Board and, specifically, a charter school Board. Mr. Taylor stated that it would be wise for the Board to train more. Mr. Brooks agreed, noting that, even though the Board did the training, they were still doing things wrong and are constantly learning.

Ms. McCrae asked whether the school was a member of the Science Coalition and Dr. Brewington confirmed that the school is a member. Ms. McCrae asked why the school submitted a Science unit for review. Dr. Brewington stated that it was because she was unable to locate the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Ms. McCrae commented that the unit that the school submitted contains outdated standards. She stated that, having read the renewal report and seeing issues that the school has had in the past with turning things in, finding things, etc., she got the sense that there was miscommunication or organizational dysfunction that seems to be in alignment with what is reported in the Organizational Framework Report. Dr. Brewington stated that the Director of Curriculum Instruction did not see through to see that the MOU was signed this year. She stated that it was something she (Dr. Brewington) did in the past, but has since delegated.

Ms. Nagourney stated that she noted in the school's prior Board minutes that Mr. Moore was once a Board member and asked him whether he in fact was. Mr. Moore stated that he once was a Board member. Ms. Nagourney asked Mr. Moore to clarify whether he was a Board member for months or years. Mr. Moore stated that it was years. He stated that he was glad the issue came up because he has sat through prior CSAC meetings as a Board member and that it was in the school's bylaws that were submitted. He stated that his name had been on documents as an *Ex-Oficio* Board member. He stated that, after the Board went through the governance training early this year and he was told that it was not proper for him to serve as a Board member, he stepped down. He stated that this was the first time that the issue was ever raised by the DDOE and it was well-known. Ms. Johnson asked for clarification regarding whether what Mr. Moore was referring to was the statutory conflict of interest referenced in the school's Annual Report and marked as "addressed and corrected." He stated that the school was not trying to hide something and it's not something the school knew was wrong at the time. He stated that it was okayed and the issue has never come up.

Ms. Johnson stated that the school has a unique management structure because of the two locations and co-leadership. She stated that it is important that there is a very strong relationship between the two leaders. She asked what the Board is doing to hold school management accountable, knowing that the DDOE has received emails that are contrary to that. Mr. Brooks stated that the Board asks each of them to speak at Board meetings and provide updates. He stated that the Board then meets with them in executive session to have further discussion about performance, issues, and concerns. He stated that decisions are only being made at public Board meetings, but the Board interacts with them in between as needed for the success of the school. Ms. Johnson then asked what the School Leaders have done to enhance the experience for students. Mr. Moore stated that the school learned that the leaders' roles had to be clearly defined and that has been done. He stated that the leaders each have time in which they are in each building. Mr. Brooks stated that the Board engaged a consultant from February to July to help define roles. Mr. Johnson asked how the Board evaluates leaders. Mr. Brooks stated that they are evaluated based upon school performance, DCAS results, and the Performance Framework reports. Ms. Johnson asked whether both Mr. Moore and Dr. Brewington are both certified as School Leaders. Dr. Brewington stated that she

is and Mr. Moore stated that he is not. Ms. Johnson asked whether Dr. Brewington is evaluated by the DPAS (Delaware Performance Appraisal System) and Mr. Brooks responded that she is not, but that the school needs to add that component.

Ms. Massett asked whether the board training was Delaware-specific and the school confirmed that it was. Ms. Massett then referred to the reporting requirements referenced in the Organizational Framework Report and asked whether they have been addressed. Mr. Moore stated that the nutritional program has been addressed, that there are disagreements with the DDOE regarding Title IIA, that the Internet policies have been in place, and that special education has been addressed. Ms. Massett then asked if the Board treats the two leaders as equals and Mr. Brooks replied that the Board does treat them equally.

Ms. Johnson referred to the Board's adoption of an Internet protection policy and how it is addressed with students. Mr. Moore stated that the elementary school has individuals instructing students and that middle school students each have a Computer Technology class. Ms. Johnson asked that the school provide information regarding which components are covered.

Ms. Cannon noted that the school's staff credentialing has not met requirements for the last two years and asked about the school's plan to obtain highly-qualified teachers. Dr. Brewington stated that she is aware of the change in regulations. She noted that there are two teachers on staff who are not certified. She stated that all teachers that are not certified go through the DPAS evaluations. She said that the school also provides the Title I form to parents by September 30<sup>th</sup>. She stated that both teachers are on a plan and have until this year to obtain their certification.

Ms. Johnson asked whether both Dr. Brewington and Mr. Moore evaluate teachers on the DPAS system. Mr. Moore stated that Dr. Brewington handles all evaluations. Ms. Johnson asked if Dr. Brewington had been re-credentialed this year. Dr. Brewington stated that she had not been re-credentialed this year, but had been the year before. Ms. Johnson noted that there was a program this summer that provided that every Principal in Delaware was to be re-credentialed. Dr. Brewington stated that she will follow up with the DDOE's TLEU regarding her own credentialing requirements and those of the staff.

#### **Section 4: Financial Framework**

Ms. Nagourney stated that the school's Organizational Framework Report has been provided and added to the record. Mr. Blowman stated that the overall rating was "Meets Standard" for the second year.

Ms. Field Rogers asked about attrition and whether she was reading the school's application right in that there were only approximately five students that left the school from one year to the next. Dr. Brewington stated that families always leave before September 30<sup>th</sup> because of the bus situation. Ms. Field Rogers asked how many students choose not to return. Dr.

Brewington responded that the school's re-enrollment rate has been over eighty. Mr. Moore stated that a lot of parents have concerns about their fourth grade students going into fifth grade with the older students, as the middle school is grades 5-8. Mr. Moore said that, in response, the school has invited parents of fourth graders to the middle school to acquaint them early. Mr. Blowman asked if it was feasible to go K-5 and 6-8. Mr. Moore stated that the building configuration precludes that right now, but that the school is considering changing locations.

Ms. Field Rogers requested the revenue sheets to help her look at the budget. She also stated that she was not sure how the preliminary budget ties into the budget that was submitted. Ms. Field Rogers also requested information about the school's \$200,000 per year foundation grant. Mr. Moore replied that, because the sheet is a protected document, he was unable to change the titles. He clarified that the school does not have foundation funds, but other programs that generate revenue, including the Before and After Care Program and the summer camp.

Ms. Nagourney expressed concern about a Board member serving as a paid staff member. She stated that it raises issues about conflict of interest and requested information regarding how that is addressed at the Board level. She asked if certain members of the Board recused themselves when the arrangement was in place. Mr. Moore stated that he never voted on financial matters when he was on the Board.

Ms. Nagourney asked whether there were any other conflicts of interest, or potential conflicts of interest, between staff members and Board members. Mr. Brooks stated that there were none that he was aware of. Ms. Nagourney asked whether Mr. Brooks and Ms. Brooks were related. Ms. Brooks replied that she is a consultant for the school and Mr. Brooks is her husband. Ms. Nagourney asked whether that was a conflict of interest. Mr. Moore stated that it was an acknowledged conflict of interest and that the Board voted on Ms. Brooks serving as a consultant. Ms. Massett asked who Ms. Brooks reports to regarding her work. Ms. Brooks stated that it is Mr. Moore.

Ms. Nagourney stated that she noticed that a lot of the Board members are also officers in a local chapter of a fraternity and asked whether this serves as a conflict of interest. Mr. Moore stated that none of the Board members are officers in a fraternity. He stated that there are three Board members are members of the same national fraternity and all were initiated in different chapters and different schools. Ms. Nagourney asked whether the parent representative is also a member of the same fraternity and Mr. Moore confirmed that he is. Ms. Nagourney then asked whether the teacher representative is a member of the same fraternity and Mr. Moore stated that he is. Ms. Nagourney asked whether that was a coincidence and Mr. Moore stated that they were voted onto the Board through due process. He explained that Mr. Brooks was on the Board first and nominated Mr. Alston and Mr. Fletcher. He commented that he is not aware of any restrictions prohibiting members of the same national fraternity from serving on a charter school Board together. Ms. Nagourney asked Mr. Moore if he is also a member of the same fraternity and he stated that he is. Ms. Nagourney stated that it was not in and of itself wrong, but when things go wrong across the charter school landscape, conflicts of

interest often factor into financial impropriety, so she wants to be very cautious on the front end. Mr. Blowman stated that, to be clear, it is not an issue in and of itself, but given the organizational conversations that have been had and the challenges that the school faces, it is something to be aware of. Mr. Taylor commented that being on the same board as someone with an affiliation doesn't necessarily mean that they are in cahoots. He stated that there are lots of things on the national level and it is more of a subjective assumption, but that it is an assumption that is out there. Mr. Blowman added that the issues on the organizational framework heighten awareness over board and school leadership generally, and how they're managed. Mr. Taylor commented that, without proof, these are merely assumptions.

Ms. Johnson asked whether any other Board members have relationships with contractors who do business with the Board. The school replied that there are none.

### **Section 5: Five-Year Planning**

Mr. Blowman noted that the school indicated a desire to move to a single school and asked if it was a general desire or an active plan. Mr. Moore replied that the school has sites in mind but has not yet done a letter of intent for any particular site. He stated that the school is working with a real estate broker and has come close, but the site selection process is still ongoing. He said that the school hopes to submit a modification in the next few months related to a new location. Mr. Blowman clarified that he asked because, if it were relatively imminent, the school could include that as part of its application process.

Ms. Johnson asked about the shift in enrollment projections for each grade. Mr. Moore responded that the projections take the school's space into account, as well as the school's experience in losing students after the fourth grade. Mr. Moore commented that it was just a realistic projection and Mr. Blowman noted that it was closer to the current reality.

### **Conclusion**

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Blowman asked the voting members of the CSAC if there was any additional information they required in order to inform their decision-making.

The following information was requested:

- Information regarding the components of the school's Internet Policy.
- Revenue sheets.
- Information about the foundation grant not being a foundation grant.
- Detailed plan regarding how the school addresses complaints, including trend information.
- Information regarding how the school will address the non-compliant areas on the Organizational Framework over the next six months.

Ms. Nagourney noted that the DDOE's Curriculum and Instruction Workgroup has reviewed the units provided for English Language Arts (ELA) and math and has concluded that ELA meets approval, but math does not.

Mr. Blowman then asked the voting members of the CSAC if there were any sections of the application that they felt warranted a "Does Not Meet Standard" rating at this time based on their review of the application and the discussions at the meeting:

- Organizational Framework (including math curriculum) warranted a "Does Not Meet Standard" rating.

**Next Steps:**

- The CSAC will provide the school with an Initial Report no later than October 22, 2014.
- The applicant will have the opportunity to submit a written response to the CSAC Initial Report, which is due by close of business on November 7, 2014. Mr. Blowman recommended that the school not wait until the issuance of the Initial Report to begin preparing its response.
- The final meeting of the CSAC will be held on November 12, 2014, at 12:15 p.m., in the 2nd floor Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building at 401 Federal Street, Dover DE.
- CSAC's Final Report will be issued no later than November 20, 2014.
- A second public hearing will be held on December 10, 2014, in the 2nd floor auditorium of the Carvel State Office Building, located at 820 North French Street, Wilmington DE, and will begin at 6:00 p.m.
- The public comment period ends on December 10, 2014.
- The State Board of Education will hold a meeting on December 18, 2014, in the 2nd floor Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building at 401 Federal Street, Dover DE, at which time the Secretary will announce his decision on the renewal application and, if required, the State Board will act on that decision.