

DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name: Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security

Mailing Address: 801 North DuPont Highway
City/State/Zip: New Castle , Delaware 19720

Email: charles.hughes@dapss.k12.de.us

Telephone: 302-322-6050

Fax: 302-322-4029

Website:

Charles Hughes

Head of School

Date

Charles E. Hughes

Head of School

9/30/2014

Date

Charlie Copeland

Board President

9/30/2014

Date

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 1st (September 30th for renewing charter schools)

All schools submit one (1) signed copy (PDF via email preferred) to the DDOE Charter School Office

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ABSTRACT

The Board of Directors is proud to again share that the foundational goal of our Academy, to become a viable educational option that ultimately increases Delaware's high school graduation rate and provides cadets with first responder skills and certifications, is achievable. We now have more evidence of our vision's success and are confident in our capacity to continue our positive trends.

Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security has now completed a full year at the new location. Our enrollment numbers increased and our operational expertise expanded as we added a full year of grades 9 through 11 academic programs. This increase impacted both on the academic front as well as the Public Safety offerings. Our new space, which we are expanding again for the 2014-15 school year, has provided more classroom and training space.

It was critical for our culture of academic success that over the course of the 2013-14 school year our Academy work, school wide, to improve results on the DCASS assessment. The improvement plan shared as part of our 2012-13 annual report was implemented during the 2013-14 school year. The results were important and significant.

DCASS results for the 2013-14 school year reported, often time double digits in critical areas of ELA and Math. Of note, 85 % of cadets scoring in our lowest quartile in math meet growth targets and 74% did so in ELA. At almost every data point, our Academy showed improvement and was able to return the scoring trends to a positive trajectory.

Over the course of our school's growth and expansion we have continued to serve a diverse population of families. Review of our cadets' performance, desegregated in to sub-groups, adds credence to our claim that our cadets are outperforming their traditional high school peers. (See Appendix A. Academic Progress DCAS Overview in Charter Renewal)

Since 2011, when our school opened, more than 25 cadets have utilized emergency training learned at our Academy to intervene or help in real time emergencies. During the 2013-14 school year we instituted a Life Saving Award, which we use to recognize cadets who used skills to intervene in life saving events. In 2013-14 we were proud to bestow 7 cadets' awards. Their "lifesaving" experiences ranged from performing CPR in a crowded auditorium, to providing advanced first aid which prevented the amputation of a young person's fingers. Importantly and realistically, not all cadets earning our award actually saved lives, we also elected to honor two cadets whose effort were not able to prevent ultimate fatalities, a reality for all public safety employees.

Serving the public and helping in organization and management of civic events are demands of the public safety field. Our Academy features a select group of top academic and career committed cadets called the Tactical Operations Unit (Tac Ops). This group of 25-30 cadets has provided support to such events as Special Olympics, mud-runs and community parades and marathons. They have acted as support ranging from parking monitoring, barricade placement, safety table stations, hall security, to direction and information experts. The Tac Ops unit is proud to have recorded more than 20 hours of community work all three Delaware counties, and over 100 hours overall. The success of this group, and community organizers demands for their return to help at events, includes a current commitment schedule of over 65 events for the 2014-15 school year.

Moving into the future, our Academy (like all Delaware schools) will be facing the rigorous demands of fully embracing and implementing the Common Core Standards. Preparing our cadets to learn and apply new skills will demand a school-wide approach. As our Academy has inherent proven strengths, such as a unity of purpose in the areas of career preparation and core values which address equally scholarship and diligence, we are in a strong position to embrace and implement the systematic reforms required by the adoption of Common Core Standards by our state.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

What are the school’s academic performance outcomes that will demonstrate student growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness levels as measured by the performance framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

Our academic program is our most important work, and demands regular adjustments and revisions to better meet cadet needs, and the statewide commitment toward higher academic standards. Our performance efforts have many positive elements yet also reflect many obstacles and challenges which are yet to be overcome.

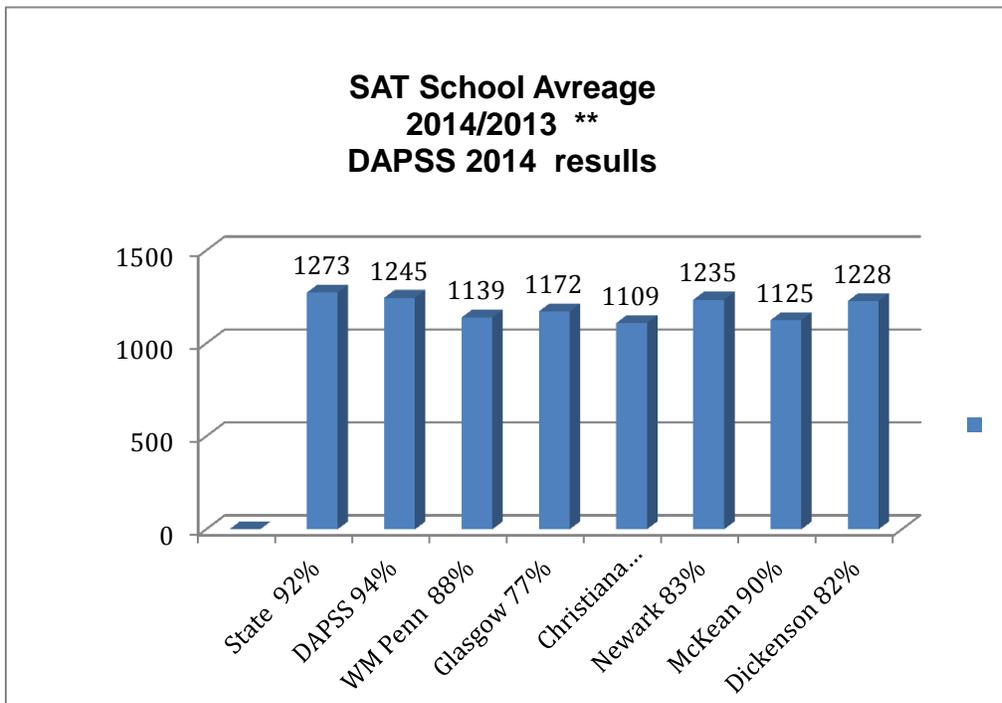
The cadets who join our Academy performing at adequate academic levels have continued to grow academically and those cadets, who enroll with a history of lower academic performance, have made important growth. During the 2013-14 school year, just 32% of our 9th grade cadets began the year performing at or above the state standard in English Language Arts and only 27% of cadets performed at or above the state standard in Mathematics. Proudly, the 2014 Spring DCAS results produced a significant achievement reversal, including over 62% of cadets scoring proficient or higher in English Language Arts and 65% meeting standards on the mathematics portions. These “double digit gain” results support our claims of success, but also shed light on the unfinished work of raising achievement even higher (See Appendix A in Charter Renewal document).

DCAS Overview

2011-14

Reading / ELA	Grade 9 Percent Proficient	Grade 10 Percent Proficient	Math	Grade 9 Percent Proficient	Grade 10 Percent Proficient
2011-12	66	x	2011-12	61	x
2012-13	53	62	2012-13	40	57
2013-14	63	66	2013-14	66	57

Delaware Academy, by design, expanded a grade level annually over the past 4 years. During the 2013-14 year, we had 94% our 11th graders participate in the state offered administration of the SAT. Although this is just one year of performance data, DAPSS scores reflect a positive foundation. Our cadets’ average scores were not at the state average; however our results and percent of participation outpaced local traditional public feeder high schools.



Over the course of our school's growth and expansion we have continued to serve a diverse population of families. Review of our cadets' performance, desegregated in to sub-groups, adds credence to our claim that our cadets are outperforming their traditional high school peers. (See Appendix A. Academic Progress DCAS Overview). For example, based on 2014 DCAS data, our cadets from lower economic households outperform surrounding school districts and in some areas, outperform state wide averages.

Our work remains significant, cadets with disabilities still lag in performances and our school's Science test results demand more attention in the upcoming year. Our ongoing work will continue in helping cadets raise mathematics performance at all grade levels.

Moving into the future, our Academy (like all Delaware schools) will be facing the rigorous demands of fully embracing and implementing the Common Core Standards. Preparing our cadets to learn and apply new skills will demand a school-wide approach. As our Academy has inherent proven strengths, such as a unity of purpose in the areas of career preparation and core values which address equally scholarship and diligence, we are in a strong position to embrace and implement the systematic reforms required by the adoption of Common Core Standards by our state.

Moving forward as we enter the 2014-15 school year our Academy is set to offer cadets opportunities to participate in dual enrollment options (Wilmington University) and AP programs (AP Calculus plus more online).

Our future growth plan include but not limited to items listed below:

Enculturate an Academy wide focus on implementation of Common Core Standards

Increase dual enrollment course offerings

Increase AP programs in every content area

Expand mission focused elective offerings

Expand computer science offering to a 4 year track

Feature DAPSS Tactical Operations similar to ROTC programs

Extend PSAT & SAT preparation including online support and guidance

Expand Credit recovery options and programs

Public Safety Curriculum and Training Certifications updated and expanded

Our staff and cadets' journey forward will demand increased professional development attention, as well as cadet assimilation to these new challenges and assessments. Our annual plans and reports to the Department of Education will document these efforts and progress. We anticipate our positive improvement trajectory to continue upward over the course of our next charter renewal cycle.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:

What are the school's financial performance expectations that will demonstrate viability and sustainability as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

Our Board of Directors is proud of the fiscal oversight and progress of our school. Starting up our Academy, insuring funding is present to accomplish our mission, and managing the organization in light of the fiscal realities and constraints, which present during this dynamic time.

The overall financial viability for DAPSS is promising despite the loss of federal start-up funds and Title 1 Funds in 2012, resulting in a net loss of nearly \$400,000 in revenue for the first three years of operations. The school has been able to meet all financial obligations including State required 2% surplus. In doing so, DAPSS at the close of business June 30, 2014, had over \$160,000 in funds available to carryover. DAPSS has been able to achieve this while doubling in school size, relocating and improving the new facility. To solidify and insure this positive fiscal direction, the Board of Directors have also committed to employing a full time, Delaware schools experienced Business Manager beginning in June of 2013.

From 2014-2015 DAPSS invested over \$300,000 in capital improvements including classroom renovation to accommodate schools growth. DAPSS will continue to invest in equipment and materials that will not just benefit students, but will increase current assets. DAPSS maintained an 80% enrollment variance from 2012-2013, up from 59% in 2011-2012, based on the current year's enrollment and pre-registration for the 2014-2015 school years. DAPSS is on track to meet all enrollment standards and projections. DAPSS significantly decreased its outstanding debt in FY14 , which will lead to an improvement in its debts measures. Additionally, with the completed repayment of the schools line of credit and construction note, the school plans to meet the debt to asset ratio and debt service coverage ratios.

Moving forward, our Board of Directors remains confident that while balancing our allocated funds and resources our Academy will continue to be able to deliver on the mission of providing our cadets a college and career ready educational opportunity.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

What are the school's performance expectations in meeting its organizational responsibilities including, but not limited to, administrative operations, reporting, and legal responsibilities as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

The Board of Directors understands and accepts the critical nature of insuring our Academy is organized in a manner that insures compliance with legal responsibilities and timely reporting. Importantly, our Board of Directors also requires that the day to day operation for our Academy functions in an efficient and effective manner.

Based on the 2013-14 performance framework report and internal observations, the Board of Directors is confident that our Academy's organizational operation is operating efficiently and effectively. Review of the 2013-14 includes the Academy meeting that standard in most categories. As noted in the performance the standard our Academy did meet the standard in 11 out of 13 component parts. Two areas of concern involve HQT status and school attendance. Although we have increased our HQT status above 95% we hope that in the upcoming years to reach 100%. The work we have done on school wide attendance also produced increases, however were still a percentage point off the 95% base line target. As noted in the performance the standard our Academy did meet the standard in 11 out of 13 components. As with all growing organizations our goals include a future that insures we both maintain our success in all areas plus, for those points not meeting standard, make adjustment to better insure future accomplishments.

STATUS OF CONDITIONS PLACED UPON THE CHARTER:

Include:

A status update of any conditions imposed upon the school's charter,

Your plan to meet any conditions that are currently "not met".

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Your plan to meet any conditions that are currently "not met".

Delaware Academy is proud to report that since our school opening; no formal conditions have been placed on our charter. We pledge our efforts to make this an ongoing success category.

STUDENT RETENTION GOALS AND TARGETS:

Include:

The percentage of students who have re-enrolled from the prior year according to ESEA demographic categories,

The number of students who have left your school before the year is over or before the end of the charter school's grade configuration per ESEA demographic category,

A summary of why students chose to leave,

The percentage of students who did not pass from one grade to the next,

Your plan to improve student retention and average daily attendance if less than your stated targets.

Enrollment Trends

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Total
2011-12	117	x	x	117
2012-13	99	93	x	192
2013-14	144	91	95	330

Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security has now moved into our third year of operations. Our mission to provide cadets with a unique blend of academics and public safety career experiences is progressing in positive directions. We continue to attract a diverse student population.

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity		
	<u>2012-13</u>	<u>2013-14</u>
African American	28.1%	26.7%
American Indian	1.0%	0.6%
Asian	1.6%	2.1%
Hawaiian	0.5%	
Hispanic/Latino	13.5%	12.7%
White	55.2%	57.9%

The growth and expansion includes the ongoing development of a culture of academic achievement. Our hope is that all cadets meet academic success. Last year our promotion rates for 9th grade was 77.8 % and 10 grade was 89%. We elect to not promote cadets who have failed in core content areas. This designation insures that all parties remain aware that cadets have an important credit deficit which remains to be earned.

This is a rigorous promotion guideline; however we are also increasing our Academy options for credit recovery. Consequently, we believe over the course of 4 years our cadets will enter year 4 on track to graduate and not learn too late of credit deficiencies.

Our enrollment is growing. Our rapid increase during 2013-14 looks to be followed by a shortfall for the 2014-15 year. Although we hope to at one point to report a robust waiting list, we are not able to do so school wide. We believe that as our full grade 9-12 program is in operation, and we have recognized, successful graduates; enrollments will build and stabilize. We remain committed to our mission and vision and resist efforts to adjust that vision to simply "fill seats". Our slow and gradual growth, we contend, is allowing us to best meet our promises to young people.

Exit interviews and anecdotal information from families electing not to return to our Academy include mission misalignment, which means cadets were unclear of the required academic and career training expectations our Academy would support, location of our campus, the limited sports offerings, and most recently concerns for safety due to last year's arrest of a staff member for inappropriate contact with a cadet.

We hope cadets commit to our academy for all 4 years of school. This will allow them to accomplish the many goals we have established. Accepting cadets after freshman year has been necessary and will be required until we can establish a firm and consistent enrollment base, but will result in some cadets missing some key first responder skills and certificates. The current freshman enrollment can be repeated which will diminish our need to bring in upper classmen.

Attendance Rate

Our attendance rate of 94% is short of the state goal of 95%. As we enter the 2014-15 school year we are redoubling our efforts to improve on this statistic. In the past we had not done quarterly tracking and believe by increasing scrutiny on daily attendance, accurate enrollment data, and a quarterly focus on attendance, our attendance rate will increase.

INNOVATION:

Include:

A discussion of innovation occurring at the school in areas including, but not limited to, curriculum development, instructional strategies, school culture and climate, community and parent engagement, professional development, operations and management practices, and extra-curricular programming.

The Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security has a unique mission. Our cadets are offered a robust academic program plus exposure to first responder skills and trainings. Key to the culture of all first responder organizations and a core value at DAPSS is “fidelity to others”.

We help and train cadets to better understand that core value in many ways, especially where community outreach is involved. In 2013 -2014 cadets were visible at regular charity and community events helping and contributing. Our presence, as unique training avenue has resonated with a growing number of community groups and first responder organizations.

Our unique mission and our focus on “first responders” careers has produce some outstanding partnerships and support from state and local agencies. Although it might not be documented as “innovative” our Academy is, thanks to many agency donations, able to provide our cadets trading access to unprecedented resources.

In the past year the our Academy has benefitted from donations consisting of, but not limited to the items listed below;

Equipment	Donor Group
\$2,500 Grant for Airway Manikins	New Castle County Council
Fully Operational Working Ambulance	Leipsic Fire Company
50 sets of Turn Out Gear (Fire fighters uniforms)	City of Wilmington Fire Department
8 Fire Extinguishers for traning use	Austin & Pruitt Emergency Equipment Company
EMS Training Textbooks	Delware State Fire School

Operating EMS top grade patient gurney	Smyrna EMS
Class set of operation Fire Helmets	Minquindale Fire Company
Quarterly Fire truck access	Wilmington Manor Fire Company
Miscellaneous EMS training equipment	Newark Fire Company, Christiana Fire Company, Delaware City Fire Company,

Since the Academy's early foundation we have push ahead iwht an innovative idea about helping young people. We have increasing cadet and family support and clear support by state wide agencies. WE are confident that our newly retooled mission, shared below, is becoming closer to a regular reality!

The Mission of Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security

"The mission of the Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security is to provide an optimum setting for both typical and at risk students that equally supports academics and personal growth and will result in increased graduation rates. The school will prepare ninth grade through twelfth grade young men and women to qualify for positions with Delaware's public safety and security industry upon graduation and to pursue secondary education opportunities that lead to higher levels of public safety and security positions."