



**Department of Education  
Charter School Accountability Meeting**

**November 17, 2014  
Renewal Application Process  
Final Meeting - Minutes**

**Gateway Lab School**

Mr. Blowman called the meeting to order. For the purpose of the record, introductions were made:

**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
- Atnre Alleyne, Director of Talent Management, Leadership and Educator Effectiveness, 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 Gateway Lab School**

- Joyce Henderson, Board President
- Pamela Draper, Board Treasurer
- Devie Smith, Board Member
- Catherine Dolan, Head of School
- Stacy Soloman, Principal
- Dorcell Spence, Financial Contractor
- Connie Fisher, Delaware Academy School Leadership (DASL), University of Delaware
- Steven Godowsky, DASL, University of Delaware
- Amy Sanders, Special Education Coordinator

**Meeting purpose:** To review the relevant statutory criteria for renewal and issue a final recommendation relative to the school's renewal application.

**Meeting between the CSAC and Gateway Lab School:**

Mr. Blowman noted for the record that, at the Initial CSAC Meeting on October 14, 2014, the CSAC indicated that the Financial Framework section of the renewal application met standard, whereas the Academic Framework and the curriculum component of the Organizational Framework did not meet standard.

Mr. Blowman noted, and Ms. Nagourney confirmed, that the DDOE's Curriculum and Instruction Workgroup had reviewed the school's revised math and English Language Arts (ELA) submissions and concluded that the revised submissions meet approval.

Mr. Blowman noted that the CSAC had requested the following information:

- Revenue sheets;
- Clarification regarding whether the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway teacher attends IEP meetings;
- Documentation regarding whether the special education teacher signs the IEPs for both special education and regular education;
- A change in paperwork to reference the Delaware Administrative Code for special education requirements;
- A copy of the Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL) Comprehensive Success Review (CSR) report and the school's status as of October 15, 2014; and
- Data points that reflect students' current status.

The CSAC confirmed that it had received all of the requested information. Mr. Blowman asked if there were any questions, comments, or feedback related to the supplemental information that the school submitted. Neither Ms. Field-Rogers nor Ms. Mazza had further questions regarding the additional information received.

Mr. Taylor asked members of DASL about the school's progress as it relates to the CSR report. Mr. Godowsky stated that it was not DASL's responsibility to monitor the school's progress. He clarified that it was DASL's responsibility to develop the report at the request of Ms. Dolan. Mr. Godowsky stated that the process was a mini-accreditation review. He was a temporary data coach with the school for one month and was impressed by the sincerity of its staff to make progress. Ms. Fisher stated that she was impressed with Ms. Dolan and Ms. Soloman because they have embraced the findings and have moved forward. She stated that they are a model of how to make CSR recommendations come alive. According to Ms. Fisher, they have prioritized curriculum and instruction, are moving towards addressing other areas of the CSR report, and will continue to address the recommendations of the CSR report. She commended the dedication and commitment of the school's leadership. Mr. Godowsky noted that the process was modified for the school because the school did not have months to prepare and the intent was different for the school.

Ms. Johnson asked the school how the CSR has been utilized and how things are progressing. Ms. Dolan stated that it is a whole new atmosphere that is focused on instruction and faculty is embracing it. She stated that the school has an improved instructional practices and that there is an attention to detail that wasn't present before the CSR. Ms. Johnson then asked what diagnostic tools have been used to measure progress. Ms. Dolan stated that the school has only completed baseline studies because CSR changes have been implemented this year. She said that the teachers have been trained on curriculum. Ms. Soloman explained that they are using baseline data because they can't show progress until spring. Ms. Soloman stated that the explanation of the difference between basic and proficient has been provided to teachers. She stated that they have changed the mindset so children believe they can and the bar has been raised this year. She stated that the school is at a beginning phase but, in terms of action, the school has implemented a great deal from the CSR.

Mr. Blowman asked if there were additional questions about the data reflecting students' current status. Ms. McCrae stated that the information has been covered.

Mr. Blowman asked the CSAC if there were any sections of the application that warranted a "Does Not Meet Standard" based on their review of materials. The CSAC members stated that the school did not meet standard on the Academic Framework.

#### **Conclusion of the meeting:**

Mr. Blowman summarized that the school meets standard on the Organizational and Financial frameworks. He stated that the Academic Framework is the most important part of the Performance Framework and noted that the school falls short on both traditional and alternative reports. Mr. Blowman stated that it that the school's team is working hard and has dedicated people in place who believe the students can learn at same high standards as everyone else. He stated, however, that there is very little growth based on information to date and it is the CSAC's primary responsibility to base its decision-making on the historical record instead of what might happen in the future. Mr. Blowman stated that, on the record before it, the CSAC cannot make any other recommendation than that of non-renewal.

The motion was made to recommend non-renewal and it was carried by a majority vote, with Mr. Alleyne abstaining, as he was not in attendance at the Initial CSAC meeting on the school's renewal application.

Mr. Blowman reminded the applicant that the CSAC's recommendation is just that; a recommendation to the Secretary of Education on the renewal application.

#### **Renewal Application Process Timeline:**

Mr. Blowman discussed the renewal application process timeline as follows:

- The CSAC will provide the school with a Final Report no later than November 24, 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.
- The public comment also 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, located 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.

The meeting was adjourned.