

REACH ACADEMY FOR GIRLS

Charter Renewal Application

September 30, 2014

**Reach Academy for Girls
Charter Renewal Application
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1. Overview

1.1a Basic Information

| BASIC INFORMATION | |
|---|--|
| Name of School | Reach Academy for Girls |
| Year School Opened | 2010 |
| Grade level(s) in 2013-14 and additional grade levels approved to be served in the next charter cycle | K-8 |
| Current Enrollment | 381 |
| Approved Enrollment | 475 |
| Current Waiting List by Grade | None |
| School Address | 170 Lukens Drive New Castle, Delaware 19720 |
| District/ Region of Residence | Colonial School District |
| Website Address | www.reachacademyforgirls.org |
| Name of School Leader | Tara Allen |
| School Leader Email and Phone Number | tara.allen@reach.k12.de.us 302.654.3720 |
| Name of Board President | Rev. Canon Lloyd S. Casson |
| Board President Email and Phone Number | canonbhai@comcast.net 302.530.3821 |

1.1b Demographic Information

| CURRENT YEAR ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION | |
|---|-----|
| Total Enrollment | 381 |
| # of Students on Waiting List | 0 |
| Gender | |
| # Male | 0 |
| # Female | 381 |
| Ethnicity/Race | |
| # White | 29 |
| # Black | 321 |
| # Hispanic | 19 |
| # Asian | 3 |
| # Other | 9 |
| # Multiracial | 0 |
| Special Populations | |
| # Students with disabilities | 27 |
| # English language learners | 0 |
| # Low-Income | 354 |

2. Academic Framework

2.1 Is the academic program a success?

2.1a1) Academic Achievement Results

In 2013-14, Reach Academy for Girls (“Reach”) took proactive action to address its academic challenges. In February 2014, Reach engaged Claremont Consulting, a national firm which has successfully worked with numerous charter schools to improve academic and organizational performance, to conduct a comprehensive school review. With the ultimate goal of improving student achievement and outcomes, Claremont Consulting highlighted the following areas for improvement for Reach: clarifying leadership roles and responsibilities, improving governance practices and creating a stronger partnership between the school leader and the Board, articulating a clearer and more ambitious vision for the girls enrolled at Reach, improving instructional practices and increasing rigor, and raising the bar on accountability and establishing a truly data-driven culture. Claremont Consulting presented Reach with an action plan, which the school has been implementing and will continue to implement in 2014-15 school year. (Improvements already realized are highlighted in sections 2.1a2, 3.1a2, 5.2a and 5.2f.)

In order to improve the effectiveness of Reach’s school leader and teaching staff and to implement the project plan prepared by Claremont Consulting, the Board has employed a leadership coach for Ms. Allen and has contracted with School Turnaround for ongoing activities and training. School Turnaround is an intensive intervention and leadership development initiative that helps principals turn around failing or underperforming schools. The program is designed specifically for schools and districts where the Board and leadership perceive a current failure that requires urgent intervention. While most educational initiatives geared toward demonstrating student achievement take place over a long time period, School Turnaround has been proven to instill a sense of urgency among staff and students resulting in measurable improvement in a compressed time frame. Reach has engaged School Turnaround for the 2014-15 school year and will consider an extension of the contract upon the accomplishment of the projected results

Reach understands there is still substantial improvement that needs to be made, and the entire school community is committed to ensuring that girls in Delaware continue to have access to an all-girls public charter school, a unique and valuable educational opportunity in the State.

Towards that end, Reach has already dramatically improved academic performance in the 2013-14 school year because of the changes it has implemented. Highlights include:

- As demonstrated in Table 2.1.a below, Reach made Adequate Yearly Progress for the first time in 2013-14, although there is still much work to be done in this area. In addition, Reach has improved its summary and overall performance by one performance level on the Academic Framework in 2013-14.

| Table 2.1a Reach Academic Performance Framework | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| State & Federal Accountability | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
| 3a–Adequate Yearly Progress | *** | | | |
| Summary & Overall Rating | 32.2 | 39.4 | 28.4 | 39.1 |
| Legend | Exceeds Standard | Meets Standard | Does Not Meet Standard | Falls Far Below Standard |

- As demonstrated in Table 2.1b below, the percent of students testing at proficiency increased from fall to spring by double digits in ALL grades for reading and math, with an average increase of 27% and 25%, respectively

| Table 2.1b - REACH DCAS Percent Proficient Fall to Spring 2013-14 Improvement | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------|------------|------|--------|------------|
| Grade | Reading | | | Math | | |
| | Fall | Spring | Change | Fall | Spring | Change |
| 2 | N/A | 43 | N/A | N/A | 39 | N/A |
| 3 | 14 | 44 | +30 | 9 | 33 | +24 |
| 4 | 19 | 57 | +38 | 4 | 35 | +31 |
| 5 | 21 | 40 | +19 | 4 | 28 | +24 |
| 6 | 19 | 45 | +26 | 10 | 36 | +26 |
| 7 | 38 | 58 | +20 | 8 | 38 | +30 |
| 8 | 24 | 50 | +26 | 10 | 27 | +17 |
| Average | | | +27 | | | +25 |

- As demonstrated in Tables 2.1c and 2.1d on the following page, when comparing proficiency scores of grade cohorts,¹ average increases of 27% (fall to spring) and 13% (spring to spring) was realized in reading, and average increases of 25% (fall to spring) and 7% (spring to spring) was realized in math

¹ As an example of a cohort comparison, the spring 2012-13 proficiency rates for last year's third graders is moved to the fourth grade row to show how Reach's former third graders tested in fourth grade. This was done for all grades in both subjects.

| Table 2.1c REACH DCAS READING Percent Proficient Cohort Improvement | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|--------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Grade | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | | Fall to Spring Change | Spring to Spring Change |
| | Spring | Fall | Spring | | |
| 2 | N/A | N/A | 43 | N/A | N/A |
| 3 | 39 | 14 | 44 | +30 | +5 |
| 4 | 19 | 19 | 57 | +38 | +38 |
| 5 | N/A | 21 | 40 | +19 | N/A |
| 6 | 28 | 19 | 45 | +26 | +17 |
| 7 | 54 | 38 | 58 | +20 | +4 |
| 8 | 52 | 24 | 50 | +26 | -2 |
| Average | | | | +27 | +13 |

| Table 2.1d REACH DCAS MATH Percent Proficient Cohort Improvement | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------|--------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Grade | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | | Fall to Spring Change | Spring to Spring Change |
| | Spring | Fall | Spring | | |
| 2 | N/A | N/A | 39 | N/A | N/A |
| 3 | 45 | 9 | 33 | +24 | -12 |
| 4 | 19 | 4 | 35 | +31 | +16 |
| 5 | N/A | 4 | 28 | +24 | N/A |
| 6 | 14 | 10 | 36 | +26 | +22 |
| 7 | 27 | 8 | 38 | +30 | +11 |
| 8 | 29 | 10 | 27 | +17 | -2 |
| Average | | | | +25 | +7 |

2.1a2) Proposed Changes to Instructional Program

- With the goal of improving students' academic performance and outcomes, Reach initiated the following changes to its program's features and continues to refine its programs and add new elements as necessary. Recent enhancements, predominately over the last year of its charter, include:
- **Intensive and Targeted Student Support System:** Reach has been developing a comprehensive system of tutoring and support for underperforming students including:
 - ✓ *Acceleration Program* that targets underperforming grade 4–8 students, based on their SMI, SRI, and DCAS scores in math and literacy and teacher recommendations. Students receive between 15–35 minutes of instruction twice weekly. In the 2014-15 school year, this program will be extended to grades 2 and 3. Students' progress will be assessed using the Kaufman and Raven Test of Education Achievement, a measure of cognitive development.
 - ✓ *Tutoring Program:* In the 2014-15 school year, this sixth-month program will be extended to eight months. Sessions are 60-minutes, twice weekly in reading and math tutoring. To monitor the effectiveness of the program, data is collected

biweekly. In reading, the focus is on paired and independent reading, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, and writing activities. In math, students use the Khan Academy program, which addresses students' individual learning styles, skills, and needs. Tier 3 students also receive intervention for reading and math in class daily and additional intervention by the ELA/math specialists three times weekly.

- **Fifth-Grade Initiative:** In the 2014–15 school year, a lunch/after-school club, 24 Math Club, is planned for fifth graders, and the math and reading program will be expanded to sixth grade. Expansion of this initiative to other grades will be implemented as indicated by scores on state assessments. In the 2013–14 academic year, the Responsive Classroom curriculum was incorporated into the program and throughout Reach. The goal of this curriculum is improving academic outcomes and academic achievement, while decreasing problem behaviors. In grade 5, to track students' progress, the teacher collects baseline data on students during the first 20 days of school, works with coaches on key indicators of success, sets measurable instructional goals that are reviewed quarterly, provides frequent formative assessments, and works with coaches reviewing and revising focused instructional interventions used for explicit modeling of needed skills. In, PLCs, the teacher works with the math coach and math consultant on new curriculum approaches to teaching math for this grade, including guided math, Singapore Math, and Engage New York.
- **Extended Day Learning:** In the 2014-15 school year, the after-school curriculum in math will consist of First In Math, IXL, and Khan Academy. In reading, the book clubs (Raz Kids and Reading Olympics) will be combined. To gather data on the program's effectiveness, Test Wiz, a comprehensive assessment development tool, will be used in the upcoming year. All students at Reach attend school before and after school, increasing learning time to 7 1/2 hours each day (8:15 a.m.–4:00 p.m.). Students receive 1½ hours of tutoring in both reading and in math and help with homework and on social and communication skills.
- **Enhanced Professional Development:** Reach teachers and staff are committed to implementing best teaching practices. Begun in the 2013-14 school year and continuing in the upcoming school year, all teachers are introduced (via video) to classrooms that demonstrate strong instructional practices. In October 2014, teachers also will begin rounds of inter-school visitation at three high-performing schools in New York with similar student demographics to learn about their instructional practices. K–5 teachers also will attend the Daily 5 conference in November 2014 to learn how to implement this system that develops students' daily habits of reading, writing, and working independently. All teachers are expected to attend the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 writing instructions conference at the Teachers College in New York. A teacher reward system was developed for the upcoming year to recognize teachers actively engaged in innovative instructional practice. Professional development seminars, including a summer 2014, 50-hour summer professional development academy, will be continued for summers 2015 and 2016. It features local literacy and math experts providing guidance on the Common Core Standards, Technology Integration, mathematics, Text Wiz, and PD 360. Other aspects of the PD program include Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions, focusing on Common Core State Standards, data analysis, effective use of

technology, and math and reading best instructional practices. Grade-level PLC sessions focus on analyzing common grade-level performance tasks and student work and re-adjusting instruction plans to align across classrooms. Teachers build an electronic data binder on OneDrive for each student and use this data to build flexible student groupings and targeted lessons. A curriculum webpage has been developed. This site provides timely information to faculty, staff and stakeholders. The goal of this site is to inform community and staff of resources that help educate students and assessment tools that supports teachers in continuous improvement of their knowledge and skills.

- **Peer Mentorship Program:** Research has shown that girls particularly benefit from peer-mentorships.² In class, grades 7 and 8 students work with underperforming peers, including those in Tier 2 intervention, who have varying abilities in reading. They model successful skills, help students master basic academic skills, and play academic games that support students' learning. In the 2014-15 school year, the peer-mentoring program will be expanded to the extended-day program.

2.2 Is the school meeting its mission?

2.2a1) Mission

Reach Academy for Girls is a school that will provide a rigorous core curriculum based on scientifically based research strategies, and globally recognized best practices. Our goal is to help all students, in collaboration with the family and community, reach their highest potential and become leaders in their school, family, and community.

2.2a2) Measuring and Tracking Mission Accomplishment

Going into our fifth year of operation, Reach can report that it is on the right path to fulfilling its mission. In this pursuit, Reach consistently uses data to track issues related to student achievement. Multiple assessments are used to track students' progress in meeting standards for reading and math, including the DCAS, the Early Learning Survey (grade K), the SMI and SRI, and new, Test Wiz Standards-based common assessments. Reach will continue to evaluate student performance in the upcoming charter term. Data will be analyzed and summarized by teachers and administrators and will be shared with parents. Students will set SMART goals related to academics and behaviors. Teachers will set SMART goals related to teaching and learning, tracking progress quarterly to determine if they are moving toward their goal or if adjustments need to be made. Additionally, for the 2014-15 school year, a data coach will be utilized to mine weaknesses in the instructional program and target instruction on a weekly and monthly basis.

It is evident that Reach is meeting the parent engagement portion of its mission, as measured by attendance at school events, which has risen significantly. This year, parents have volunteered at record numbers, with 44 parents currently on the volunteer waitlist. Part of Reach's mission, is partnering with parents. Parents' participating in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication with teachers around students'

² Small, S (2008, January). *What research tells up about effective youth mentoring programs*. University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension.

academic proficiency ensures that they are an integral part of the education process and play an important part in their children's education. Regular activities include: *Parent Advisory Committee*: Parents assist in reviewing the student handbook, Parent Involvement Plan, parent involvement fund use, the Parent/school Compact (responsibilities of the students, parent/caregiver, teacher, and administrator), and the Title I program and school improvement plan. *Parent Programs*: At monthly programs, such as "Family Math, Science and Literacy Nights" and "Parent Nights," parents hear an overview of the curriculum, assessments, and expectations of both parents and teachers. In the 2014-15 school year, an additional program will focus on Grade-5 parents, including them in the Reading Olympics and 24 Math programs that encourage reading and math engagement. *Parents as Volunteers*: Room mothers or "Watch Dog Dads" encourage parents to help teachers during activities/events and provide support in the classroom. Finally, PTO meetings are held one a month, and two parents serve on the Board. For additional information see the Parent Involvement Plan in Appendix B (7.1).

As part of our mission, Reach strives to prepare girls to become confident leaders in the 21st century. Research has shown that character education/leadership programs for girls help them "develop positive attitudes toward learning, seek opportunities for expanding their knowledge and skills, and set challenging goals for themselves."³ In grades K–5, students build these skills through classroom routines and at after-school events that teach responsibility. In grades 6-8, students participate in a leadership class emphasizing leadership styles, goal setting, organization, personal finance, team building, conflict resolution, problem solving, decision-making, and effective communication skills. The Responsive Classroom approach, which Reach implemented in all grades and was detailed in the Fifth-Grade Initiative (Section 2.1a2), focuses on character education through teaching students' social and emotional skills.

3. Organizational Framework

3.1 Is the School Organizational Sound?

3.1a1 Performance Against Organizational Measures

Reach has met the organizational Performance Framework standards for all three academic years for which it was calculated (2011-12 through 2013-14). However, in 2013-14 school year, the Department of Education noted that, although Reach is in compliance with the percentage of uncertified teachers allowed at charter schools, Reach did not meet Measure 4c since the school's percentage of Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT) did not meet the statutory requirement.

³ The U.S. Department of Education has concluded that, "There is empirical support for the view that single-sex schools may accrue positive outcomes, particularly for young women." In fact, students at girls schools evidenced more positive attitudes towards and interest in academics, such as math and English, than girls attending coeducational schools (V. Lee & H. Marks, 1990). Girls in single-sex schools were also more likely to explore subjects that they might otherwise not try such as science. A study of an eighth-grade, single gender physics class found that girls were more engaged in physics than those in a coed physics class and were less likely to agree with the statement: "Physics is for boys" (U. Kessels & B. Hannover, 2008). In general, countless studies have shown that girls attending a single-sex school have better self-esteem (J. Granleese & S. Joseph, 1993), higher educational aspirations (V. Lee & H. Marks, 1990), and are more likely to take on leadership roles than they would in a mixed-sex school.

3.1a2 Proposed Changes to Organizational Practices

Improve teacher certification rate: Reach is committed to employing 100% highly qualified teachers (HQT) for every position, and currently 92% of teachers are HQT. Teachers must successfully pass the PRAXIS exams and possess a nationally accredited degree in their core area of instruction. If a strong candidate is not highly qualified, and Reach chooses to hire them, an immediate plan to enable the candidate to become HQT at the earliest possible time is developed. Reach subsidizes the costs of Praxis II examinations and offers other supports as needed to become fully qualified teachers. Reach can report that in the 2014-15 school year, the four teachers who were not certified in the 2013-14 school year are *all* working towards certification and have submitted personalized plans, including tutoring and monthly attempts to pass the test. Teachers are responsible to follow-through with the plans as devised and to secure certifications that match their teaching assignments.

Improved attendance: As an example of Reach's ability to improve performance, the school made attendance a higher priority (in reaction to prior year's performance framework reporting.) Reach now acknowledges students who meet a 95% attendance rate at monthly school-wide celebrations. In addition, family activities are held for those students reaching the 95% goal. Attendance goal sheets for each grade level are placed in the entrance foyer. Each class with perfect or close to perfect attendance is rewarded with discount tickets to the local bowling lane and sporting events, such as the 87ers basketball team and Blue Rocks baseball team. Finally, at drop off and/or pick up times and at open houses, teachers reinforce with the families the importance of attending school and its positive impact on achievement.

3.2 Is the school implementing the essential terms of the charter's education program as defined in the current charter, and complying with applicable state and federal requirements?

3.2a1 Compliance with Instructional Requirements

The school year at the Reach is 182 student days. Students attend school from 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., totaling 1,410 hours each year—33% greater than the 1,060 hours required by Delaware statute. The Reach School Calendar for the 2014–2015 school year is included in Appendix B (7.2).

3.2a2 Use of State Assessments, Content Standards

Reach uses Delaware's system of assessment and accountability to monitor students' progress towards meeting content standards. Students are assessed each year on the Early Learning Survey (grade K) within the first 30 days of school, and take the DCAS in grades 3-8 as required, and in grade 2 at the end of the school year. Additional common diagnostic assessments for content areas; math, science, reading are utilized at the beginning, middle and end of the school term, the data from which is used to determine prior student learning and to make initial decisions related to levels of instruction, grouping and instructional strategies. These assessments are given in alignment with DPASS II component 5 and to continually monitor student learning. The Reach Assessment Calendar is included in Appendix B (7.3).

Our curriculum has been evaluated by the DDOE and has met alignment criteria with the Common Core State Standards by content area and grade level. Please see Appendix A (6.8) for reading and mathematics curriculum units. (Reach is a member of the science and math coalition, which Reach joined at the end of 2013-2014 school terms.)

3.2a3 At-Risk Students

Students are screened the first weeks of school. Teachers complete Response to Intervention (Rtl) referral forms if students fall into the bottom 25%. The Rtl process provides a carefully documented learning path outlining areas of growth with aligned intervention strategies and accommodations. When a student does not meet performance expectations and prescribed benchmarks, teachers review all relevant data, including the student's performance on benchmark assessment and determine the best course of action, including additional support, interventions, or alternative activities in the regular classroom. As indicated earlier in Section 2.1a2, Reach has several programs in place to target underperforming students, including the Acceleration Program, Tutoring, the Fifth-Grade Initiative, Peer Mentorship, and Extended Day.

3.3 Is the school protecting the rights of students with disabilities and English language learners?

3.3a1 Identification and support for students with disabilities

Reach is committed to serving all students, including those who are in need of special education services. If the Rtl process results in a student reaching Tier III, the student can be referred through the Instructional Support Team (IST) for a psycho-education evaluation. Reach parents or guardians and educators who have specific concerns about the academic progress of their child or student also may make a written request for a psychological evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services, and within 45 days or 90 calendar days, whichever is fewer, the initial evaluation is conducted.

A certified school psychologist conducts the evaluation to determine whether or not there are identifiable disabilities hindering the student's academic success. Evaluation results are made available to the teachers, parents, school administrator, psychologist, school nurse, and the student, if the parent desires. Parties then meet to discuss evaluation results and determine whether or not there are enough data to determine if the student is eligible for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and special education services. If the child has a disability and needs related services, an IEP is developed in accordance with sections 20.0-24.0 of the Delaware Regulations Administrative Code, Title 14:900.

Reach's Coordinator of Special Education Services, Maureen McGovern, in accordance with the school leader, Tara Allen, makes certain that IEP meetings are held, correct timelines for identification and services are followed, and paperwork is completed. Teachers receive IEP goals, after which accommodations and modifications to existing classroom practices and curricula are made in order for every student to receive a Free

and Appropriate Education. Classroom teachers collaborate with the special education teacher on prescribed programs for students.

In alignment with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Reach provides accommodations to students who do not require special education but have a type of disability that impacts them educationally. A 504 eligibility team reviews internal and external assessment data to determine if a student qualifies. If so, the team compiles a list of accommodations and/or services to meet each student's needs. As needs change, the 504 plan is revised.

3.3a2 Identification and support for English Language Learners

The Home Language Survey is given to all new students as part of the application process for Reach. If a language other than English is listed on the application, the student will be given the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) within 25 days of enrollment. All K-8 students who score below a 5.0 on the W-APT receive ELL support. In the spring, all ELLs will take the ACCESS to determine their eligibility to continue to receive ELL services. Reach will appropriately staff an ELL department if ELLs begin to enroll at Reach.

3.4 Is the school monitoring and minimizing attrition rates and maintaining enrollment stability?

3.4a School Enrollment Trends

| School Enrollment Trends | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | 2010-2011 | | 2011-2012 | | 2012-2013 | | 2013-2014 | | |
| Grade | Approved Enrollment | Sept 30 Enrollment Count | Current Waitlist for The 2014-2015 school year |
| K | 51 | 65 | 51 | 47 | 51 | 63 | 51 | 73 | 0 |
| 1 | 71 | 60 | 71 | 61 | 71 | 59 | 71 | 62 | 0 |
| 2 | | | 44 | 38 | 44 | 56 | 44 | 60 | 0 |
| 3 | | | | | 44 | 49 | 44 | 59 | 0 |
| 4 | | | | | | | 43 | 52 | 0 |
| 5 | 60 | 45 | 54 | 27 | 54 | 21 | 54 | 25 | 0 |
| 6 | 70 | 50 | 64 | 52 | 64 | 52 | 64 | 45 | 0 |
| 7 | | | 54 | 41 | 52 | 48 | 52 | 50 | 0 |
| 8 | | | | | 52 | 42 | 52 | 42 | 0 |
| Total | 252 | 220 | 338 | 266 | 432 | 390 | 475 | 468 | 0 |

3.4b Attrition Rates

| Attrition Rates | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------|---------------------|-------------|
| School Year | Enrollment | | Attrition | |
| | September 30 | June 15 | Number | % |
| 2010-2011 | 221 | 215 | (6) | 2.7% |
| 2011-2012 | 266 | 268 | +2 | 0.0% |
| 2012-2013 | 390 | 385 | (5) | 1.3% |
| 2013-2014 | 468 | 447 | (21) | 4.5% |
| | | | 4 Yr Average | 2.1% |

3.4c Monitoring Attrition Rates and Summary of Student Attrition

Since its inception, once enrolled, very few students have left Reach each school year, as demonstrated by an average attrition rate of 2.1% over 4 years. Given the recent uncertainty about the school’s charter, this is a particularly impressive fact, one which speaks to parental demand for an all-girls school serving Reach’s communities. Also, in the 2012-13 school year, 96.4% of students were enrolled at Reach for the full year, in comparison to the Delaware charter school average of 95.8%.⁴ Reach monitors attrition throughout the year, and the following table summarizes attrition by reason.

| ATTRITION | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Reason | Number of Students | | | |
| | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
| Threat of Closure | 4 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Student Moved | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Transportation Issue | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 6 | 0 | 5 | 21 |

3.5 Is the school complying with governance and reporting requirements?

Reach’s Board adheres to open meeting laws, complies with its bylaws and code of conduct, has at least one teacher and parent represented on the Board, and is in compliance with all governance and reporting requirements outlined in the performance framework standards. Finally, the Board’s engagement of Claremont Consulting to conduct a comprehensive school review demonstrates its commitment to evaluating student and school performance and developing a corrective action plan, pursuant to Del. C., Title 14, Ch. 5, §512 (5).

3.5a Organizational Chart

A current organizational chart can be found in Appendix A (6.7).

3.6 Is the school complying with closure requirements?

To prepare for a possible closure or dissolution of the school, Reach has set aside adequate funds to ensure that all employees are paid according to their contractual

⁴ State of Delaware Website, Charter School Demographics, Other Student Characteristics, “Enrolled for the Full Year,” 2012-13.

school agreements; to pay any staff who would be required for close-out activities; and to pay any vendors, such as auditors, movers, liquidators, etc., that would be needed. All cash and cash equivalents will be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for employees of the school, then to the remaining creditors of the school.

Over the last four years, cash reserves equivalent to 90% of estimated closing costs have been built up. In each succeeding year, Reach will budget an amount sufficient to maintain up-to-date closing costs requirements. If Reach is closed for nonfinancial reasons and, following the authorizer’s charter school closure protocol, Reach’s Board would work closely with the DDOE concerning the steps forward (parent notification, transfer of records, disposition of school assets, etc.) to ensure a smooth and orderly closure and transition of students. The school will follow all legal and regulatory requirements, such as those contained in Delaware Code 512, Section 16.

4. Financial Framework

4.1 Is the school fiscally viable?

4.1a Analysis of Financial Performance Reports

Reach has consistently improved its performance against the measures included in the Financial Performance Framework as indicated by the overall rating of “meets standard” for 2012-13 and 2013-14. An analysis of the financial performance reports can be found in Appendix B (7.4).

4.1b Independent Audit Findings and Responses

See pages 3 and 4 in the separate file Reach2014Financials.pdf.

5. Five-Year Planning

5.1 Projected Enrollment

| Projected Enrollment | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Grade | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 |
| K | 32 | 60 | 66 | 70 | 75 |
| 1 | 41 | 55 | 65 | 70 | 75 |
| 2 | 41 | 59 | 65 | 70 | 75 |
| 3 | 51 | 48 | 61 | 70 | 74 |
| 4 | 49 | 54 | 49 | 70 | 70 |
| 5 | 46 | 48 | 54 | 49 | 75 |
| 6 | 44 | 49 | 48 | 54 | 54 |
| 7 | 35 | 43 | 49 | 48 | 54 |
| 8 | 42 | 34 | 43 | 49 | 48 |
| Total | 381 | 450 | 500 | 550 | 600 |

5.2 What are the school’s plans for the next five years of the charter?

5.2a Proposed Changes and Improvements

As outlined above, Reach plans to increase its maximum enrollment during its next charter to 600 students, enrollment which can be easily accommodated in its current building. Unfortunately, primarily due to the uncertainty regarding its charter, enrollment will be 17% lower in 2014-15 (from 459 at June 15, 2014 to the current enrollment of 381.) Once its charter is renewed and as achievement continues to improve, Reach anticipates that its 2015-16 enrollment will quickly rebound to 450, roughly where it was in 2013-14. Subsequently, Reach will grow its student enrollment by 50 students annually in each of the last three years of its charter.

Based on student performance outcomes, Reach will institute the following changes and improvements in the next five years: *Use of data:* Use data from the DCAS/SBAC, Aimsweb and Test Wiz Common Assessments and other assessments more efficiently and effectively to inform instruction and curriculum and to identify students who are at risk. Focus on student achievement by holding the bar increasingly high. *Continue development of a student support system:* Provide underperforming students with a comprehensive support system to improve student outcomes. *Improve instruction:* Provide professional development opportunities, PLCs, seminars, and training to model innovative and effective instructional practices. Create rewards/recognitions for teachers who are actively engaged in innovative instructional practice. Attract, reward, and retain superior, highly motivated educators. *Create a culture of high expectations:* Communicate high academic and behavioral expectations to all students and their parents/guardians and guide parents on supporting their children in school.

5.2b Goals and Performance Outcomes

Performance goals in three major areas (academic, financial and organizational) are defined in the Performance Agreement provided by the DDOE and can be found in Appendix A (6.1). In addition, the board has defined the following performance goals:

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| Goal 1: Decrease the number of students falling below basic in reading growth targets by 5.5% each year for the next three years. | Based on the 2013 Academic Performance Framework report, 36.4% of the girls met fall to spring growth targets for reading. In 2014, we increased the amount of students who met their growth target by 3.4% to 39.8%. We also increased proficiency rates with students in the lowest quartile from 34% to 50%. By increasing the percentage of girls meeting growth targets by 5.5% each year, in three years, there will be a 16.5% proficiency growth. Reach students will achieve 56.3% proficiency. |
| Goal 2: Decrease the number of students falling below basic in math growth targets by 5.5% each year for the next three years. | Based on the 2013 Academic Performance Framework report, 26.8% of the girls met fall to spring growth targets for math. In 2014, 36.6% of students met growth targets, which is an overall increase of 9.8%. We also increased proficiency rates with students in the lowest quartile from 35.8% to 53%. By increasing targets to 5.5% each year, in three years, there will be a 16.5% proficiency growth. Reach students will achieve 53.1% proficiency. |
| Goal 3: Increase the percentage of students reaching reading proficiency by 5.5% each year for the next | Based on the 2013 Academic Performance Framework report, 42.5% of the girls achieved proficiency in reading. In 2014, 49% of students achieved proficiency in Reading, which is an increase of 6.5% from the previous year. By increasing the percentage of girls meeting reading standards by 5.5% each year, in three years the percentage of girls meeting or exceeding |

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| three years. | standards will be 65.5%. |
| Goal 4: Increase the percentage of students reaching match proficiency by 5.5% each year for the next three years. | Based on the 2013 Academic Performance Framework report, 25.2% of the girls achieved proficiency in math. In 2014, 32.5% of students were proficient in Math which is an increase of 7.4% from the previous year. By increasing the percentage of girls meeting standards to 5.5% each year, in three years the percentages of girls meeting or exceeding standards will be 49%. |
| For Goals 1 to 4: <u>Tools:</u> Scholastic Math and Reading Inventory, grades 1-8; Aims Web – SRI and Aims Web are able to provide forecasted growth toward the grade-level state assessment. Individual growth targets for reading and math will be set for each student and monitored through quarterly benchmarking | |
| Goal 5: Improve positive behaviors related to academic success | Performance Outcomes: Each year average daily attendance will meet or exceed the state average. Teachers will use graphs in classroom that mark the increase in positive behaviors. Monthly PBS awards will be provided students relative to the number of positive outcome cards they are provided by staff members for increasingly positive behaviors. |
| Goal 6: In-house suspensions fall below the state average for suspensions for students within each grade level. | Performance Outcomes: Each year, Reach will have fewer reportable incidents pursuant to Delaware Code, Title 14, Section 41123, than the average for public schools serving the same grade levels. |

5.2c Proposed Facility Changes/Improvements

Reach does not plan changes or improvements to the existing facility in the coming renewal period since the building can house the proposed enrollment of 600. Regarding school grounds, Reach ultimately plans to fence in the property and build a playground space and blacktop area for physical education classes and recess. The ability to make these improvements is dependent upon fundraising, so Reach is taking initial steps to expand its fundraising capabilities. A few small moves in that direction include a \$2.00 contribution to support the PTO and the sale of outdated school materials.

5.2d-e School Leader Evaluation Process

As outlined in its governance policies, Reach’s Board ensures that the school operates efficiently, effectively, and in accordance with its charter, mission, vision and contracted performance goals. To make this happen, the Board realizes there must be an inclusive and collaborative partnership between the Board and Head of School that recognizes each party’s distinct role, and sets up mechanisms for evaluation and accountability. To hold its leader accountable and to provide constructive feedback, 3 times a year, in accordance with DPAS II, members of the Board meet privately with the Head of School to review her performance and to assess her progress on goals set at the beginning of the school year. Annually goals for subsequent years, are established by June 30 of the current year, as occurred in 2013-14. A final review is completed each year by June 30.

5.2f Governance Effectiveness

In recognition of its commitment to continuous improvement, in the spring of 2014, the Reach Board contracted with a governance expert to conduct a comprehensive training on best practices for charter school governance, attended by the full Board. This fall, post charter renewal, Reach Board members will hold a day-long retreat in conjunction with school leadership to reflect on past success and challenges, determine additional Board training needed for the 2014-15 school year and beyond, move forward with a

succession plan (see 5.2g), and determine the long-term strategic direction for Reach. In addition to the six longer serving Board members, Reach recently elected five new members, extensively expanding the Board's educational expertise. New members include Elvira Berry, Esq, a long-serving state government employee and specialist in human resources; Dr. Chereese Winstead, Research Chemist and Chair of the Department of Chemistry at Delaware State University; Dr. Thelma Hinds, currently Assistant Professor/Statewide Practicum Placement Coordinator and Assistant Chair, Clinical Studies at Wilmington University; Martha Buell, the Director of the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood; and Carol Roth, an education consultant with extensive experience teaching and coaching. During the 2014-15 school year, the Board will develop a formal orientation process for new Board members. Reach will also conduct by December 31, 2014 an internal analysis of its governance practice to ensure it is in compliance with all requirements and open meeting laws.

5.2g Succession Planning Process

As a standalone charter school, Reach does not have a large pool of internal leaders from which to recruit or groom its next leader. Therefore, Reach will most likely need to look externally for its next leader. (It's important to note, however, that the Reach Board has recently re-contracted with its current leader and does not anticipate turnover in that position.) However, to ensure that it is well-positioned to respond quickly to a transition in the leadership, the Reach Board has prepared a packet of information it can quickly share with potential recruitment firms, including up-to-date job descriptions, a current organizational chart, a benefits summary, and a standard contract. Reach also maintains a list of potential charter school search firms, such as Koya Leadership Partners, The K12 Search Group, and Common Good Careers, all of whom the Board would connect with should a transition be imminent.