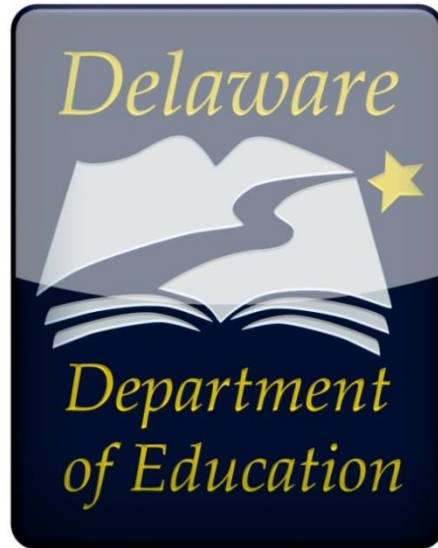


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Las Américas ASPIRA Academy

**RENEWAL APPLICATION
FINAL REPORT**

CSAC Final Meeting: December 2, 2019
CSAC Final Report Published: December 6, 2019

By September 30, 2019, Las Américas ASPIRA 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 Final Meeting of the CSAC on December 2, 2019:

Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- Chuck Longfellow, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Associate Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Tiffany Green, Education Associate, Educator Support, DDOE
- Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Catherine Ortiz, Education Associate, Operations Support, DDOE
- Susan Veenema, Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Susan Haberstroh, Education Associate, Student Support, DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Community Member and Former Charter School Leader

Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)

- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network
- Wali Rushdan, Delaware State Board of Education

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Darryl Parson, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Leroy Travers, Lead, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Jennifer Roussell, Finance Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management

Representatives of Las Américas ASPIRA Academy

- Margie Lopez-Waite, Head of School
- Greg Panchisin, Director of School Operations
- Emily Edmonds-Eveland, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Deborah Panchisin, Academic Support

Discussion

Dr. Longfellow noted for the record that, at the Initial CSAC Meeting on October 28, 2019.

Dr. Longfellow stated that an initial public hearing was held on November 13, 2019 and the CSAC Initial Meeting was held on October 28, 2019. He added that the CSAC Initial Report was issued on November 7, 2019. The school submitted a timely response to the CSAC Initial Report.

Dr. Longfellow stated that the purpose of the CSAC Final Meeting was for the CSAC to continue its review of the Renewal Application, probe any areas of concern through a discussion with the applicant, and to issue a recommendation on the renewal application to the Secretary of Education. Dr. Longfellow added that a final report will be issued no later than December 6, 2019.

Dr. Longfellow noted that, at the initial meeting on October 28, 2019, the CSAC had requested the following information in order to inform its decision-making:

- Science Curriculum: Revised K-5 scope and sequence to include the engineering design standards.
- Follow up with Michael Saylor, Education Associate, School Leadership, if there is a delay in meeting the November 1, 2019 goal setting date.

Dr. Fulkerson acknowledged that the school submitted the documents for the science curriculum and the Department determined that the science curriculum submission was satisfactory.

Ms. Green explained that Dr. Saylor approved the school's goal setting.

Mr. Rushdan asked, with regard to the expansion of the high school, how the open houses are going. Ms. Lopez-Waite explained that they will be having their third open house on December 3, 2019 and they are planning for another one on December 18, 2019. She explained that they have 34 applications for the ninth grade thus far, not counting the students that are in their present eighth grade that will be transitioning into the ninth grade.

Mr. Rushdan asked is there a plan with that permitted enrollment number to other grades.

Mr. Rushdan asked if there was a plan to add students to grades five through eight if the high school enrollment doesn't materialize as expected. Ms. Lopez-Waite stated that they plan to expand the kindergarten from four classes to five.

Dr. Longfellow asked the CSAC members to indicate whether there were any questions, comments or feedback related to the supplemental information that the school submitted. There were none.

Conclusion

Dr. Longfellow then asked if there was a motion to recommend that this applicant meets the standard for charter operations under the charter school law and therefore its charter should be

renewed for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2020 with or without conditions. The motion was made and seconded to recommend approval without any conditions and was carried.

Dr. Longfellow reminded the applicant that the CSAC's recommendation was just that; a recommendation to the Secretary of Education on the renewal application.

Next Steps:

- On or before December 6, 2019, the CSAC will issue a Final Report, which will include its recommendation on the Renewal Application.
- The public comment period ends on December 13, 2019.
- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the December 19, 2019 State Board of Education meeting and seek the assent of the State Board, if necessary.