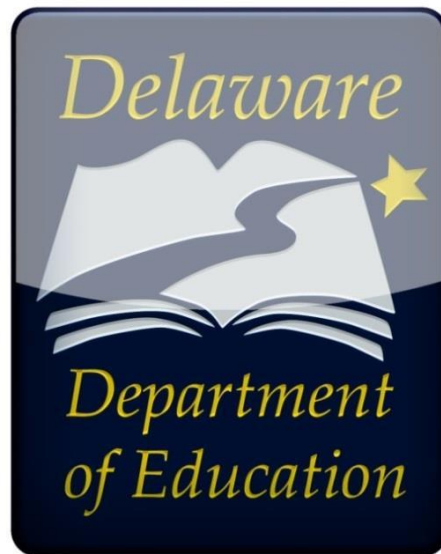


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



EastSide Charter School

**RENEWAL APPLICATION
FINAL REPORT**

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

By September 30, 2019, EastSide Charter School submitted an application to renew its charter. Consideration of this application is in accordance with the applicable provisions of 14 **Del. C. Ch. 5**, including § 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, Ed.D., Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee, Associate Secretary of Education, DDOE
- Susan Keene Haberstroh, Ed.D., Director, School Support Services, DDOE
- Raushann Austin, Education Associate, Educator Support Team, DDOE
- Catherine Oravez, Education Associate, Finance Office, DDOE
- Gregory Fulkerson, Ph.D., Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- April McCrae, Ed.D., Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Susan Veneema, Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Chuck Taylor, Community Member, Retired Head of School

Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)

- Audrey Noble, Ph.D., Vice President, Delaware State Board of Education
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Networks

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Darryl Parson, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee, Delaware Department of Justice
- Leroy Travers, Lead Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Finance Office, DDOE
- Jennifer Roussell, Administrative Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE

Representatives of Charter School

- Jocelyn Stewart, Board President
- Charles McDowell, Past Board Chair
- Aaron Bass, Chief Executive Officer (by phone)
- Michelle Lambert, External Accountant

Discussion

Dr. Longfellow stated that an initial public hearing was held on November 13, 2019 and the CSAC Initial Meeting was held on October 30, 2019. He added that the CSAC Initial Report was issued on November 7, 2019 and the school submitted a timely response.

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 stated that at the initial meeting on October 30, 2019, the CSAC identified areas that required a response and/or additional information from the school. This information included:

1. Organizational Performance

a. **Educational Program:** The curriculum review conducted by department's Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development workgroup noted that:

- English Language Arts – met expectations
- Mathematics – met expectations
- Science – met expectations
- Social Studies – did not meet expectations
- Visual and Performing Arts – did not meet expectations

b. **Staffing:**

- Provide a plan to stabilize leadership;
- Provide a sample of the board's school leader evaluation template that shows the feedback and support provided; and
- Provide a plan for mentoring and induction for new leaders and new teachers that includes strategies to improve staff retention.

2. Financial Performance

a. **Budget:** Provide clarification on the current summer pay obligation and where it is captured in the budget.

b. **Closure Requirements:** Identify individuals responsible for handling the school's final closeout activities.

3. Application for a Major Charter Modification

a. If necessary, submit a revised mission statement that aligns with the legislative intent. (**Note: The school has with withdrawn its modification application.**)

Dr. Longfellow asked each member if they had any comments or questions regarding the school's response to the CSAC Initial Report. Dr. McCrae stated that DDOE's Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development (CIPD) workgroup approved the school's submission. CIPD's Preston Shockley requested that the school contact him for additional information regarding its Social Studies curriculum.

Dr. Noble thanked the school for its response regarding its leadership stabilization and succession plan. She commented that the plan was helpful and comprehensive. She referenced the academic excellence goals and asked the school to explain what the Healthy Schools and Regions (HSR) survey addresses. Mr. Bass explained that the HSR survey addresses a number of standards such as safety in the work environment, connections between management and employees, access to resources, materials, curricula, and professional development. He added that the survey is nationally normed and used by district and charter schools. He also noted that EastSide has used the survey for three years. Dr. Noble asked if the school uses the State's School Climate Survey. Mr. Bass stated that EastSide is using the School Climate Survey this year.

Dr. Longfellow suggested that the school continue to develop its leadership stabilization and succession plan. Dr. Noble concurred that building leadership depth will mitigate any leadership vulnerability. Dr. McCrae stated that she was concerned about the school's past leadership instability and its impact on students. She acknowledged the potential positive impact of the REACH Riverside partnership and asked the board to describe its efforts to build the school's leadership depth and ensure EastSide long-term success. Mr. Bass stated that the school's response to the CSAC Initial Report did not include details such as role descriptions. He noted that the following staff members comprise EastSide's current leadership depth:

- Katelyn Whelan – has been at EastSide for eight years and she is the lead administrator when Mr. Bass is out of the building. She is prepared to be the next school leader if Mr. Bass ever transitions out of his current role.
- Marco Alberti – previously worked for a successful charter school network and has trained with Mr. Bass as an aspiring leader via the Achievement First Network. Mr. Albert currently receives grant funded coaching and training from the Achievement First Network.
- Becky Hamilton – she is being groomed for leadership and currently heads up EastSide's APEX program which serves students with advanced academic abilities, providing them with an education that both supports and extends those abilities. She previously worked at Delaware charter schools and Appoquinimink School District.
- Brianne Kennelly – currently heads up EastSide's lower school.
- Michael Williams – is currently EastSide's middle school math teacher/coach and he serves on EastSide's board of directors.

Ms. Veneema asked Mr. Bass if any of the leaders he mentioned were part of the school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) leadership team. Mr. Bass stated that the leaders are part of

the MTSS leadership team and Ms. Whelan leads the team. Ms. Stewart noted that Mr. Bass was recently on medical leave for two weeks and the school ran well under Ms. Whelan's leadership. Mr. Bass noted that Ms. Whelan could not attend the CSAC Final Meeting because she was leading the MTSS team training on Social-Emotional Learning.

Mr. McDowell stated that Mr. Bass' responsibilities under the REACH Riverside project are important to consider. He commented that Aaron's primary responsibility in the REACH partnership is to make EastSide a great school. Ms. Massett stated that she has known Ms. Whelan for the eight years she has been at EastSide and commended her growth and development and the board's role in supporting her.

Ms. McCrae asked if there is any governance training available for the board that would help them better understand the nuances of serving the unique needs of EastSide students. Ms. Massett stated that EastSide's partnership with Purpose Built Communities will increase their governance capacity. Dr. Longfellow commented that EastSide's partnership with REACH Riverside will likely prepare the board to train other boards. Mr. Bass noted that a majority of the board visits the school weekly, working with students and families throughout the year. He also noted that EastSide's most recent Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) results show 21% on meeting Mathematics targets and 55% meeting English Language Arts targets. Ms. Veneema encouraged the school to continue its efforts through MTSS and the school will eventually see great student outcomes, both social-emotionally and academically.

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. There was one abstention, Dr. Fulkerson, who did not attend the CSAC Initial Meeting.

Dr. Longfellow reminded the school 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 closes on December 13, 2019.
- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the December 19, 2019, State Board of Education meeting.