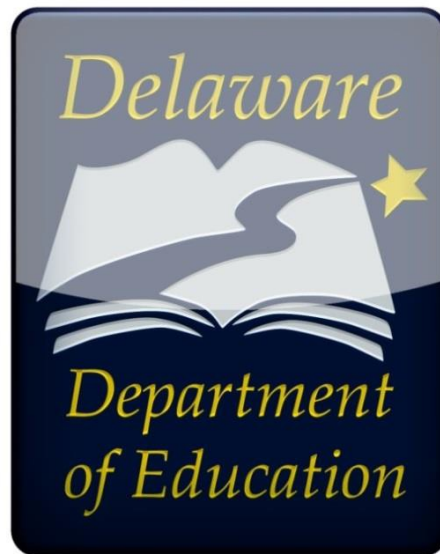


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



First State Montessori Academy

**RENEWAL APPLICATION
FINAL REPORT**

CSAC Final Meeting: November 28, 2017
CSAC Final Report Published: December 1, 2017

By September 30, 2017, First State Montessori Academy (FSMA) 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 November 28, 2017:

Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- David Blowman, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Associate Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE
- Karen Field Rogers, Deputy Secretary, DDOE
- Amy Baker-Sheridan, Education Associate, Academic Supports
- Tracey Neugebauer, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Head of School, Providence Creek Academy
- Seher Ahmad, Data Fellow, Performance Supports

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Catherine Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Delaware Department of Justice, Counsel to the Committee
- Denise Stouffer, Lead Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE
- Sheila Kay-Lawrence, Administrative Secretary, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Jen Roussell, Administrative Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE

Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)

- Donna Johnson, Executive Director, Delaware State Board of Education

Representatives of Charter School

- Yvonne Nass, Board Chair
- Courtney Fox, Head of School
- Angela Angeny, PTO President, Board Member

Discussion

Mr. Blowman stated that an initial public hearing was held on October 17, 2017 and the CSAC Initial Meeting was held on October 24, 2017. He added that the CSAC Initial Report was issued on October 30, 2016. The school submitted a response to the CSAC Initial Report on November 14, 2017.

Mr. Blowman 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.

Ms. Hickey asked the school since Mr. Taylor was not in attendance at the initial meeting if they had any objection to him participating in today's meeting. The school had no objections.

Mr. Blowman said the response from the school was to provide an updated MOU for the Social Studies Coalition, as well as, the school's method for tracking and reporting the school's participation in the Coalition meetings. He noted that the CSAC did receive the requested documentation.

Mr. Blowman asked committee members of CSAC if there was any additional information they needed regarding the school's application or if they had any questions or concerns about the school's response to the CSAC Initial Report. No committee members needed any follow up information or had any questions or concerns.

Conclusion

Mr. Blowman requested a motion to recommend renewal of the charter of First State Montessori Academy Charter School for another 5 year term beginning on July 1, 2018. The motion was made and seconded to approve the recommendation and was carried unanimously.

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

Next Steps:

- The CSAC will provide the school with a Final Report no later than December 5, 2017.
- A second public hearing will be held on December 5, 2017 at the J.W. Collette Education Resource Center, Conference Rooms A&B, 35 Commerce Way, Dover.
- The public comment period ends on December 8, 2017.
- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the next State Board of Education meeting on December 14, 2017.