

# 2017-2018 DDOE Charter School Annual Report

## Charter Renewals



**Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.**

### **First State Military Academy**

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## **I. Charter School Program**

### **Narrative:**

*Provide a Synopsis of the School's Mission and Educational Program, Including Key Components of the Education Model and Any Unique or Innovative Features of the School*

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the First State Military Academy is to provide an educational experience that focuses on developing the intellectual, physical and emotional growth of our cadets through the cultivation of an environment that rewards honesty, integrity, teamwork and commitment. With a strong focus on academic rigor, military discipline, citizenship and through the application of strong moral values, graduates will develop respect ensuring successful entry into life.

### **New Tech Network**

Schools can inspire and engage all students. Teachers can offer relevant and authentic learning experiences in all subjects. Students can develop skills essential for both college and career, in addition to mastering academics. As a leading design partner for comprehensive school change, New Tech Network has proven public schools can accomplish all of these aspirations. We do not operate schools; instead, we work with districts and communities throughout the country to transform schools into innovative learning environments.

### **Marine Corps JROTC**

The goal is to develop leadership, character and citizenship skills, and enhance self-discipline through a tough and challenging four-year leadership education program.

Cadets will learn about Marine Corps leadership and character development and apply those skills in challenging assignments / jobs during their time in MCJROTC.

In addition, cadets will learn the Marine Corps values of **Honor, Courage, and Commitment** and how these values help young men and women become effective leaders and citizens both during and following high school. Approximately 60 percent of the MCJROTC graduating senior cadets continue to higher education.

The MCJROTC program also includes team activities such as drill and Color Guard, Raider/physical fitness team, Marksmanship, and orienteering / land navigation. All activities are available to incoming freshman.

While the training is along military lines, it is conducted so as to encourage initiative and individuality in order to develop natural gifts, to teach self-control, develop personal character, responsibility and qualities of integrity, loyalty, and dedication.

MCJROTC is not an easy path, but if you're looking for a challenge and an opportunity to stand out above the crowd, give serious consideration to our program here at FSMA. Should you decide to join our program, you will not regret your decision.

### **Highlights of our Program**

Project based Learning - It is not what we teach, but how we teach. The emphasis on content mastery DOESN'T change in a PBL classroom. Rather, the project drives the students to want/need to master the content while also developing the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills related to the various applications of the content to some real problem.

Teaching that engages with students learning disciplinary knowledge and skills to conduct inquiry and solve real-world problems. A culture that empowers by making learning relevant and creating a collaborative learning culture. Use of technology that enables through a technology-rich environment, teachers and students create, communicate, access information, and experience self-directed learning. Learning outcomes that matter, measuring collaboration, written and oral communication and the development of student responsibility for their own learning, or agency.

The goal of MCJROTC is to develop leadership, character and citizenship skills, and enhance self-discipline through a tough and challenging four-year leadership education program. Cadets will learn about Marine Corps leadership and character development and apply those skills in challenging assignments / jobs during their time in MCJROTC.

### **Pillars of Our Success**

- Leadership and Character Development
- Teaching that Engages
- Technology that Enables
- Culture that Empowers
- Outcomes that Matter

### **Naval Honor School in three years**

First State Military Academy's MCJROTC program received the honor and distinction of being selected as a Naval Honor School representing one of the top 15% of 68 MCJROTC programs in Region 1 after only three years.

The selection is based on several criteria, including the number of cadets active in school activities and clubs, the number of community service hours for the unit as a whole and per cadet, the number of organizations assisted by the unit, and scholastic achievements including the number of academic awards and scholarships given to cadets. The units are also measured by participation in public affairs events, drill team competitions, rifle team competitions, physical fitness team competitions, and field trips.

The distinction of achieving Naval Honor School status has two significant advantages:

- 1) the Senior Marine Instructor can nominate up to six cadets to three of the service academies - U.S. Naval Academy, the Military Academy at West Point, and the U.S. Air Force Academy, and
- 2) the SMI’s nomination is considered equal a nomination from a U.S. Representative or Senator. While it is helpful for cadets seeking an appointment to one of the above service academies to apply for several letters of nomination, additional nominations are not required.

**IG Inspection**

First State Military Academy achieved a rating ***Exceeds Expectations*** on their first IG inspection during their third year of existence.

*Discuss Key Accomplishments of the Charter School Program Over the 2017-18 School Year*

**II. Performance Reflection**

Please Complete the Questions that Match the Charter School’s Performance Tier.

| Tier 1  | Tier 2   | Tier 3  |
|---|--|---|
| “Meets Standard” overall ratings on all of the following:<br>- 2016-17 and 2017-18 Org Frameworks<br>- 2016-17 and 2017-18 Financial Frameworks | “Meets Standard” overall Ratings on one or more Performance Framework reports during 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years<br>OR<br>Opened in 2017-18 School Year, Never on Formal Review | At any point during 2017-18 school year:<br>- Renewed with Conditions<br>- Placed on Formal Review<br>- Earned “Falls Far Below Standard” on any Framework Report |

|                               |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| - 2017-18 Academic Frameworks |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|

**Tier 2 Narrative:**

Academic Performance

*Identify areas or factors where the school has met standard in academic performance.*

**PSAT Growth**

Major Challenges: Establishing a new school with two unique programs created many challenges. Our emphasis has been a creating a school climate to build a base for our learning culture. Many of our cadets came to us approaching or below standard. We were able to make significant growth with our cadets both in the State of Delaware and Nationally.

We found that 50% to 80% of our incoming cadets were below standard. This discovery required us to differentiate our teaching methods in order to teach students the learning and critical thinking skills that they needed to comprehend, process and learn the curriculum. We will continue to work to improve the quality of our project-based learning by engaging in specific drivers to improve our instructional practice.

The table below displays PSAT 9 results, starting with the number of cadets that met the standard in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The 2016-2017 school year reflected the results of our teaching and learning strategies. We tested our students in the Fall and the Spring. Using the Fall as our baseline, the Spring scores showed an increase of 19 points. The state regressed by 11 points that year. Our Cadet scores grew by 30 points in the 2017-2018 school year.

While we recognize that our proficiency scores are low, we are consistently evaluating our students’ academically and implementing strategies to assist them with their learning

obstacles so that we can bring them up to standard. We want to see better growth in our cadets' scores every year. We also realize that there are many factors outside of our school's control but we embrace the challenge to help our Cadets overcome obstacles and rise to their fullest potential.

Our incoming freshmen class entered First State Military Academy with 20 percent of the cadets in math and 38 percent of the cadets in ELA meeting standards in 8th grade. During the initial, assessment in the fall of 2017, our cadets average were 61 points below the state average. In the second assessment in the spring of 2018, our cadets were only 29 points below the state average. Their growth was by 30 points while the state decrease by two.

Our sophomore class entered First State Military Academy with 31 percent of the cadets in math and 40 percent of the cadets in ELA meeting standards in 8th grade. During the initial, assessment in the fall of 2017, our cadets average was 92 points below the state average. In the second assessment in the spring of 2018, our cadets were only 53 points below the state average. There was growth while the state decreased by 38.

While both classes have entered First State Military Academy with a majority of the cadets below standard, we were able to achieve significant growth in both groups while the state average dropped.

| PSAT 9    |                               |        |             |            |            |
|-----------|-------------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|------------|
| 2017-2018 | 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade         | Growth | School Mean | State Mean | Total Mean |
|           | Meets:<br>38% ELA<br>20% Math | Fall   | 795         | 856        | 860        |
|           |                               | Spring | 825         | 854        | 889        |

|  |  |               |           |           |           |
|--|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  |  | <b>Growth</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>-2</b> | <b>29</b> |
|--|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

| <b>PSAT 10</b>   |                               |               |                    |                   |                   |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>2017-2018</b> | <b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>   | <b>Growth</b> | <b>School Mean</b> | <b>State Mean</b> | <b>Total Mean</b> |
|                  | Meets:<br>40% ELA<br>31% Math | Fall          | 841                | 933               | 933               |
|                  |                               | Spring        | 842                | 895               | 933               |
|                  |                               | <b>Growth</b> | <b>1</b>           | <b>-38</b>        | <b>0</b>          |

Our junior class entered First State Military Academy with 25 percent of the cadets in math and 34 percent of the cadets in ELA meeting standards in 8th grade (2014-2015 School Year). During the initial assessment in the fall of 2017, our cadets average was 109 points below the state average. In the second assessment in the spring of 2018, our cadets were only 54 points below the state average.

| 11th Graders  | School Mean | State Mean |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| PSAT NMSQT    | 858         | 967        |
| SAT           | 905         | 959        |
| <b>Growth</b> | <b>55</b>   | <b>-8</b>  |

We are satisfied with our growth that the cadets have shown in three years but recognize that we need to do more. We realize that we are building a school and are planning to make improvements to continue cadet improvement into the cadets' junior year to improve on our Academic Achievement measurement.



We push our students beyond their limits. We challenge them academically, mentally, physically, and psychologically. This can also be a struggle for some of our cadets but at the culmination of their time at First State Military Academy they will have the physical stamina, mental fortitude, and academic competence necessary to succeed.

As we continue to grow, we will consistently review our strategies to ensure that they are effective. We will always seek to improve the way that we structure our supports based on the growth and needs of our cadets.

First State Military Academy entered Phase 2 of the New Tech Network to improve the quality of our Project Based Learning (PBL) Instruction. Phase 2 incorporates what you have been doing well in the implementation of PBL and implements specific drivers to enhance the process. The drivers for the this school year are as followed:

1. Use collaboration to grow, instead of using the school-wide learning outcome (SWLO) to only complete the assigned tasks or project.
2. Develop performance assessments to show competency for each of our benchmarks instead of using performance assessment as the culmination of the project.
3. Analysis of cadet work to guide, or drive, our instructional decisions for learning achievement occurs within every project.
4. Engage in deeper learning
  - a. Improve and make content more robust
  - b. Use higher level thinking skills
  - c. Emphasize our learning dispositions. Use Agency (SWLO) to improve attitudes to learning.

#### **New Tech Network - Hierarchy of Change**

First State Military Academy chose to adopt New Tech Network (NTN) as its method of instruction in the school's original charter application. NTN was created in 1997 for the sole focus to prepare students college or work. Their philosophy is a shift in the conventional wisdom currently in education and asks the educator to think differently about how we educate our children.

This dramatic shift in thinking and learning will take time to learn and master for both student, teacher, and administration. Not only are the students expected to show competence in their knowledge, but are also assessed in written or oral communication, collaboration, and agency, which measures their attitudes to learning. These five outcomes combine make up the school wide learning outcomes in New Tech which are proven to prepare our students for life beyond high school and develop their 21st learning skills.

New tech Network has established a hierarchy in which to build a school to initiate change. The process is to establish each step and build a strong foundation for the school that will eventually find growth and success through the process. In order to have academic achievement, the first four steps must be establish and reinforced.

While our academic achievement scores are not quite up to the state standard now, we have no doubt that our method will ultimately lead to this goal. The process will take more than three years but a more realistic measure will be obtained after our fifth year of operation. We will not deviate from our method for short term success that will result in long term failure.



## **School Climate**

FSMA will increase the culture of learning within the school by setting rigorous expectations of standards for students and staff. We will measure this through climate and culture surveys by achieving an average score of 110 or higher on the Climate and Culture Survey from parents, staff, and students.

First State Military Academy has met its mission specific goal for the 2017-2018 by a combined score 112.76. This score is essential because establishing a culture of learning is essential for building a school where growth and success can flourish.

## **Tier 2 Narrative:**

### Academic Performance

*Identify areas or factors where the school has not met standard in academic performance. Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas. What are the school's academic performance outcomes that will improve student growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness levels as measured by the Performance Framework?*

### **Academic Achievement**

The DSSF measurement of Academic Achievement takes a snapshot of our 11<sup>th</sup> graders and measures proficiency in ELA and Math. This snapshot does not measure our student population as a whole and does not look at the overall growth in these areas (see PSAT results listed earlier). As outlined in previous sections, many of our incoming cadets are deficient in Math and ELA. However, our data show a pattern of growth that we believe is due to the support that we provide. In addition, many of our cadets initially struggle to fully embrace project-based learning and the responsibilities associated with its student-centered approach. We believe that Math and ELA are foundational to overall academic success. To that end, we have implemented multiple strategies to address the challenges that we face and to help our cadets reach and maintain proficiency.

1. Hired additional Math and ELA instructors both certified in Special Education
2. Created remedial and recovery classes that will allow students that are struggling in these core subjects to have smaller classrooms and sometimes one on one instruction.
3. Decreased class sizes in Math and ELA 1:20 for all incoming students.
4. Increased performance assessments in the classroom in an effort to monitor progress and determine if additional intervention is necessary.
5. Added additional after school tutoring opportunities for both Math and ELA
6. Created additional coursework in Edgenuity for students needing additional Math and ELA supports and/or recovery courses.
7. Hired a Director of Instruction to work with our teachers to assist them in identifying root cause through data mining, scaffolding, and differentiating instruction.

### **College and Career Readiness**

The New Tech Network (NTN) puts out an impact report every year. The greatest statistics list the graduation rate and the level of persistence of their students once they enter college. NTN states that our method is meaning and relevant form of public education which produces students prepared for life after high school. The model was built around this purpose. Measurement of College and Career Preparation should be measured after two years of leaving high school. How can we measure preparation while the student is in high school?

NTN Data:

1. NTN ACT composite percentile is 6% higher than non-NTN students, 37.95 to 31.77.
2. NTN students graduate nine percentage points greater than the national average.
3. NTN students persist in college at a rate of 82 percent.
4. NTN students are estimated to grow 52 percent in higher order thinking skills. These results are measured in students from their freshmen and senior years using the Career and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA+).

As explained earlier, First State Military is following the Hierarchy of Change in building our school in the method prescribed in our model. We feel that with the addition of the Marine Corps JROTC (MCJROTC) our results will exceed the networks. This program develops leadership and character development skills in our cadets to enhance their preparation upon graduation.

During the 2017-2018 school year, First State Military Academy's junior and senior classes only made up 38 percent of the student population. We had a total of seven advanced placement (AP) classes and three dual enrollment courses. Our numbers of students taking these classes will increase with each passing year. This number also affected the number of cadets taking the ASVAB and SAT Essay. We also added our second Postsecondary Credit

Attainment in our approval to start a second career pathway in STEM: Biomedical during the 2018-2019 school year. We know that by following our hierarchy of change with the emphasis of deeper learning in our courses, these scores will rise.

## **On-Track to Graduate**

### **Description**

On track to graduate is one indicator of a cadet finishing high school. The rate of drop-out rises when the cadet does not advance towards tenth grade.

Ninth grade is considered a make or break year for completing high school. It is during ninth grade that first time cadets must earn passing grades in their courses to advance towards graduation (McCallumore, 2010). Furthermore, core courses are typically some of the toughest and most rigorous classes in high school (McCallumore, 2010). Our school places an increase demand on each cadet outside of the rigors of academics. Coupled with academic rigor and our expectations, This can result in low-grade point averages, absentee issues, failing grades, and an increase in referrals.

### **Preparation**

What is the solution? Our leadership team have spoken with many colleagues and reviewed other school's policies to seek a solution to this local and national issue. Many schools try to alleviate this issue by implementing a "No Zero Policy" or by lowering the grading scale to prevent students from failing. Neither of these options is acceptable at FSMA because lowering our standard will only create issues in the long term.

How do you adjust preparing a cadet for life after high school without compromising what you do because they are not prepared to enter high school? We have created an environment where failure can occur through a lack of productivity and that only through

perseverance and not giving up or giving in will lead to success. We teach our cadets to constantly make adjustments and improvements. We teach that a single failure or setback does not define you but effort you give to overcome that failure is what will define you as a person. That is success.

We are attempting to solve this problem in two areas this past June. The first is the creation of the Cadet Leadership Camp. This camp was focused on our cadet leadership by allowing them to plan and execute a summer camp for all of our new incoming cadets. This involved weeks of planning and coordination between marine instructors and cadet leaders.

The second was our Summer Orientation Camp for all new incoming cadets. This camp introduced our cadets to our standards, expectations, and our culture to ease the transition into FSMA. It also allowed our cadet leadership to mentor all our new cadets.

### Organizational Performance

*Identify areas or factors where the school has met standard in organizational performance.*

*Identify areas or factors where the school has not met standard in organizational performance. Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas. What are the school's performance outcomes in meeting its organizational responsibilities including, but not limited to, administrative operations, reporting, and legal responsibilities as measured by the Performance Framework?*

### Financial Performance

*Identify areas or factors where the school has met standard in financial performance.*

\*2017-2018 audit was not prepared in time for this document. The school had a carryover of \$651,762 for the 2017-2018 school year, included in this amount is the \$429,000 for summer encumbrances.

*Identify areas or factors where the school has not met standard in financial performance. Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas. What*

*are the school's financial performance outcomes that will demonstrate viability and sustainability as measured by the Performance Framework?*

\*2017-2018 audit was not prepared in time for this document. I have listed negative impacts to the school's budget below. These impacts are different than what was originally planned in the initial charter application.

**Impact on school from original contract to actual conditions**

| <b>Impact of financial difference from original application to actual operation of school to the 2017-2018 school year.</b> |           |  |   |                               |              |
|---|-----------|--|---|-------------------------------|--------------|
|   |           |  | <b>Unit cost to school's operating budget</b> | <b>Description</b>            | <b>Total</b> |
|   |           | MCJROTC Instructors  |   |                               |              |
| Original  |           | The original charter application included a total of four instructors in JROTC. There salaries will be paid by the military. |   |                               |              |
| Actual  | 2015-2016 | JROTC requires two instructors per 150 cadets. These salaries are not paid by MCJROTC.                                       | \$30,000.00                                   | per Instructor                | \$60,000.00  |
|   | 2016-2017 | JROTC requires two instructors per 150 cadets. These salaries are not paid by MCJROTC.                                       | \$30,000.00                                   | per Instructor                | \$90,000.00  |
|   | 2017-2018 | JROTC requires two instructors per 150 cadets. These salaries are not paid by MCJROTC.                                       | \$30,000.00                                   | per Instructor                | \$120,000.00 |
|   |           | Curriculum   |   |                               |              |
| Original  |           | No Fees Budgeted for New Tech Network Services   |   |                               |              |
| Actual  | 2015-2016 | 1st Year Fees  |   | <b>included in Bill to IS</b> |              |
|   | 2016-2017 | 2nd Year Fees  |   |                               | \$91,200.00  |
|   | 2017-2018 | 3rd Year Fees  |   |                               | \$115,200.00 |



|          |  |  | <b>Extra cost due to increase in mileage</b> | <b>Buses</b>               |                     |
|----------|--|--|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
|          |  | Transportation   |  |                            |                     |
| Original |  | Majority of cadet population will come from Appoquinimink, Smyrna, Dover area.                                       |  |                            |                     |
| Actual   |  | 2015-2016 Cadet population is spread from Newark and Wilmington in the north to Milford and Harrington in the south. | 40 Miles per day increase                    | Cost over state allocation | <b>\$126,000.00</b> |
|          |  | 2016-2017  | 40 Miles per day increase                    | Cost over state allocation | <b>\$101,381.00</b> |
|          |  | 2017-2018  | 40 Miles per day increase                    | Cost over state allocation | <b>\$58,564.00</b>  |
|          |  | Original Renovation (fees applied to operating budget)   | One time payments                            | to whom                    |                     |
| Original |  | USDA loan will cover all cost of renovation  |  |                            |                     |
| Actual   |  | Overrun of project expected to paid by school - One time payment to Ventresca  | <b>\$150,000.00</b>                          | Contractor                 | <b>\$150,000.00</b> |
|          |  | Second payment expected to be made to Ventresca  | <b>\$17,000</b>                              | Contractor                 | <b>\$17,000</b>     |
|          |  | Assurance Media - After E-Rate Approval  | <b>\$43,110.11</b>                           | Contractor                 | <b>\$43,110.11</b>  |
|          |  | Becker and Morgan  | <b>\$66,000.00</b>                           | Contractor                 | <b>\$70,287.98</b>  |
|          |  | Technology Assistance  |  |                            |                     |
| Original |  | Charter School Application Budget Worksheet showed no cost for IT Consulting   | 0  |                            | 0                   |
| Actual   |  | Contracted services to school - first two years  | <b>\$1,800.00</b>                            | Month                      | <b>\$36,000.00</b>  |
|          |  | Morrel Hall  | <b>\$20,000.00</b>                           | one time                   | <b>\$20,000.00</b>  |

|          |           |   |             |                        |                |
|----------|-----------|---|-------------|------------------------|----------------|
|          |           | Start up cost to prepare chromebooks<br>- first two years                           | \$10,000.00 | per year               | \$20,000.00    |
|          |           | Technology Equipment  |             |                        |                |
| Original |           | No cost in Charter School application<br>Budget Worksheet                           |             |                        |                |
| Actual   |           | Cost to school in second year only  | \$55,000.00 | 170<br>Chromebook<br>s | \$55,000.00    |
|          |           | Third year  | \$55,000.00 | 190<br>Chromebook<br>s | \$74,692.00    |
|          |           | Maintenance   |             |                        |                |
| Original |           |   | \$24,000.00 | Year 2                 | -\$24,000.00   |
| Actual   | 2015-2016 |   | \$30,000.00 | Year 2                 | \$49,838.10    |
|          | 2016-2017 | Year 2 Budgeted - this includes the<br>cost of replacing two AC units<br>(\$28,000) | \$48,750.00 |                        | \$76,838.00    |
|          | 2017-2018 |   | \$67,500.00 |                        | \$111,362.00   |
| Actual   |           | Cost to the school's operational<br>budget  |             | Deficit                | \$1,462,473.19 |