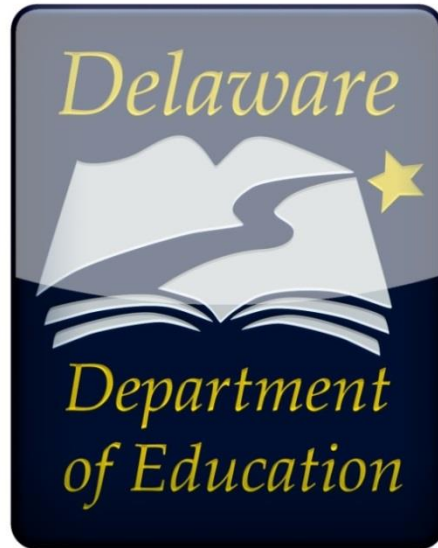


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Sussex Academy

**MAJOR MODIFICATION APPLICATION
INITIAL REPORT**

CSAC Report Published: January 31, 2020

On December 31, 2019, Sussex Academy (SA) submitted an application for a major modification of its charter.

The following individuals comprise the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC):

Voting Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- Chuck Longfellow, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee, and Associate Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE
- Susan Veenema, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- Brian Moore, Education Associate, School Climate and Discipline, DDOE
- Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate, Language Acquisition, DDOE
- April McCrae, Education Associate, CTE / STEM initiatives, DDOE
- Raushann Austin, Education Associate, Educator Effectiveness, DDOE
- James Pennewell, Education Associate, Capital Project Management, DDOE
- Cathy Wolfe, Education Associate, Federal Funds / LEA Indirect Costs, DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Community Member, Retired Head of School
- Chandra Pitts, Community Member, CEO, One Village Alliance

Non-voting Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- Audrey Noble, Vice President, Delaware State Board of Education
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Darryl Parsons, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice, Counsel to the Committee
- Leroy Travers, Lead Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Finance Office, DDOE

Please find the following attachments submitted by members of the CSAC Committee:

- Attachment 1 – Comments, questions, concerns and follow-ups from the Delaware State Board of Education.
- Attachment 2 – Comments, questions, concerns and follow-ups from the Academic Support Team, DOE.
- Attachment 3 – Statements regarding the financial health of the school.

Conclusion

The criteria for approving a modification to a charter are set forth in 14 *Del. C.* § 512. The criteria include that the charter school's educational objectives are consistent with the legislative intent of and restrictions set forth in Title 14, Chapter 5 of the Delaware Code; the charter school's educational program has the potential to improve student performance; the plan for the charter school is economically viable; the charter school's financial and administrative operations meet or exceed the same standards, procedures, and requirements as a school district; and the charter school's procedures to assure students', employees', and guests' health and safety are adequate.

The CSAC requested that SA provide the following information to the Charter School Office on or before February 17, 2020:

- 1) A statement clarifying why the decision was made to create a new elementary program as opposed to responding to the already expressed demand of the community.
- 2) Clarification of procedures that will be utilized to ensure that qualified teachers will be in place in time to offer the proposed elementary school program within the proposed time frame.
- 3) A detailed recruitment plan that will illustrate your commitment to serve a wider range of students in your community, specifically in the newly added grades.
- 4) A description of activities that you have utilized to share successful practices with other Delaware schools
- 5) The application outlines a purchase of the 43-acre Jefferson school but does not describe a plan for explanation for inclusion of teachers and staff or administration of the new facility. Please provide a staffing plan to include the answers to the following questions:
 - a. Will the existing Jefferson School staff be included in the SA staffing plan?
 - b. Will the existing staff be implementing new state curricula, and will they receive appropriate training in all elementary curricular standards and instruction expectations before opening next year?
- 6) Clarification as to whether Spanish-speaking English – Language Learners (ELs) will be a special focus for recruitment for the new elementary program
- 7) An explanation of how the Spanish literacy program will be structured to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, specifically for ELs? Explain how this will be different than the two-way immersion programs currently in Seaford, Indian River, Milford and Cape Henlopen? Explain other structures that are being considering such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Guided Language Acquisition Instruction (GLAD) that would provide a school-wide approach to meeting the needs of ELs?

In addition, in accordance with 14 *Del. C.* § 511(k), SA has until February 17, 2020 to submit any written comments on this report to the Charter School Office.

Next Steps:

- The applicant will have the opportunity to submit a written response to the CSAC Initial Report, which is due by close of business on February 17, 2020.
- The final meeting of the CSAC will be held on February 27, 2020; 2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Townsend Building, Dover.
- A public hearing will be held on February 10, 2020; 2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Townsend Building, Dover.
- A second public hearing will be held on March 10, 2020 at a location to be determined in Sussex County..
- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the March 19, 2020 State Board of Education meeting and seek the assent of the State Board.