

## 1.5 Staffing

---

### Staffing Plans, Management, and Evaluation [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]

#### 1. Explain the relationship that will exist between the proposed charter school and....

The relationship between LTA and its employees will be governed by the following:

**Federal, state and local employment laws.** It is the policy of LTA to comply with all federal, state, and local statutes governing Equal Employment Opportunity. LTA will provide equal employment opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation national origin, age, disability, marital status, military status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including recruiting, hiring, compensation, promotion, transfer, disciplinary action, training and termination. All such employment decisions will be made without unlawfully discriminating on any prohibited basis.

**Employment Contracts.** LTA will use employment contracts for all professional personnel who hold licensure and/or certification, for all administrative personnel, and full-time support staff. The Founding Board of LTA believes a contract implies a commitment and pledge of good faith and open-minded dealing that provide the continuity that is a factor in developing a positive school culture. All professional staff will be required to participate in the Delaware Education Data System (DEEDS) to ensure accurate credentialing.

**Accountability for Performance.** LTA will use Performance Appraisals for all professional personnel who hold licensure and/or certification, for all administrative personnel, and full-time support staff.

#### **106A Teacher Appraisal Process Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II) Revised --**

The Delaware Performance Appraisal System, or DPAS-II, is Delaware's statewide educator evaluation system. It provides performance expectations for students, educators, and leaders across the state's schools. As outlined by the Delaware Department of Education DPAS-II provides educators with feedback that is designed to:

- Foster **professional growth** by providing educators with actionable feedback and opportunities to improve and refine their teaching and support their students' growth;
- Ensure that there are **quality educators** in every school building and classroom; and
- Continue to **help students grow and succeed** through targeted interventions and individualized educator professional development opportunities

LTA will create a Personnel Manual upon charter approval. The personnel manual will not serve as an employee contract. This manual is a general statement of policies and benefits. For all employees who do not have a contract at LTA is "at-will," which means that any such employee may voluntarily leave employment upon proper notice and may be discharged by LTA at any time for any justifiable and legitimate reason.

An employment relationship other than at-will must be set out in writing by LTA's Board of Directors, CEO, Project Leader and School Leader.

#### 2. Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees

**Salary ranges/incentives and rewards**

It is the basic principle of LTA's Personnel Manual to establish salaries and benefits for LTA employees that are competitive in our marketplace. Compensation may also include incentive or bonus amounts under plans that may be developed by the Board of Directors from time to time. Subject to the availability of funds, employees may be eligible to receive a pay increase yearly. Additionally, teachers may be eligible for merit pay based upon performance and accountability measures as established by the CEO and School Leader and approved by the Board of Directors. *See ATTACHMENT 16 Budget and Finance for the salary schedule.*

**Employment Benefits – Insurance and Other Programs**

LTA will offer to all regular, full-time, salaried employees the benefit programs listed below. Part-time and Temporary employees are not entitled to the benefits outlined in this section. Employees may be required to pay a portion of the benefit programs. Participation in all plans is subject to the eligibility requirements for each plan as offered by the State of Delaware. Any employee who wishes to participate in a group plan must, before coverage under the plan can begin, complete membership enrollment forms and submit dependent verification, i.e., marriage license and birth certificate for children if applicable, and social security cards for all dependents. If the appropriate forms are timely submitted, coverage under the group plan will commence the first day of the month following or coincident with the ninetieth (90<sup>th</sup>) day after the Date of Hire. Coverage options are as follows: Health Insurance, Dental Insurance, Group Life Insurance, Group Vision Insurance, Dependent Life Insurance, Blood Bank, Prescriptions, FLEX Payment Plan for uncovered medical expenses, Disability Insurance; Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and the DelaWell Program.

See the State Benefits Office: <http://ben.omb.delaware.gov/>

**Retirement and Savings Plans**

- (1) Pension Plan. All regular, full-time, salaried employees of LTA are required as a condition of employment to participate in the State of Delaware's Pension Plan which requires mandatory contributions by the employee.
- (2) Savings Plans. All regular, full-time, salaried employees of LTA are eligible to participate in the savings plans offered by the State of Delaware.
- (3) Worker's Compensation. All employees of LTA are covered under Delaware's Workers' Compensation Laws in the event of occupational injury or illness. Should any injury or illness (treatable or not) be incurred on account of and in the performance of assigned tasks of LTA an employee must notify the School Leader or his/her designee immediately. Failure to report a work related illness within ten (10) days may result in loss of workers' compensation benefits.

**LTA Strategies for Retaining Teachers**

Implement a strong induction and mentoring program that reflects the School Leader's personal involvement in meeting with new teachers, having her/his office open for conversations; assign new teachers classroom rosters that were not heavily weighted with challenging students, and providing mentors early in the school year; oversee a safe and orderly school environment with active support for teachers on disciplinary issues; maintain a welcoming and respectful administrative approach toward all staff, the students, their parents and school visitors; develop the leadership skills of school staff; provide materials and supplies

to all teachers in a consistent, timely and inclusive manner; advocate for federal and state legislation and grant programs that support new school staffing structures and leadership roles for teachers; encourage and promote professional development and advance studies and offer bonuses at the end of the year for signing contract for the next year.

A management style grounded in respect for all in the school environment, along with strong communication and interpersonal skills and effective organizational strategies, will encourage all teachers to feel supported and gain a commitment to the school and to their responsibilities.

### **3. Describe the plan and timeline for recruiting and selecting the teaching staff and other educators/professional staff...**

#### **Plan for Recruiting and selecting teaching staff....**

The Founding Board believes that a strong program of teacher recruitment is necessary to maintain and enhance the teaching staff at LTA. LTA will follow Best Practices that succeed in recruiting, selecting and also retaining teachers. LTA will be strategic in effectively guaranteeing that its teachers are kept happy and motivated and also avoid burnout. Teachers, as well as others, in the community will know that LTA is a positive place to work, to inspire, and nurture children.

As soon as its application is approved, LTA will quickly begin our search for teachers who will lead the way for our students at LTA. The Founding Board further believes that recruiting good teachers for its classrooms requires giving them: 1) adequate preparation, 2) support, 3) leadership, and 4) autonomy as well as compensation that reflects their professional stature. LTA will recruit and select diversity among teachers to match the diversity of students. LTA's teachers will be role models for our students. LTA will utilize the services and resources of the Delaware Charter School Network (DCSN), Innovative Schools, National Charter School Alliance, Education World, Employee Referral, National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse, University of Delaware, Delaware State University and national venues for recruiting, screening and pre-training its educators.

#### **Plan for meeting educator requirements...**

LTA will abide by the Delaware Charter Law, 14 Del. C. § 507 with respect to which there is no "qualified alternative certification," as hereinafter defined, in effect, a charter school may, where it deems it beneficial to the success of its educational program, hire teachers that are not fully certified and licensed so long as such teachers have at least a bachelor's degree in the content area in which they are teaching and comprise no more than 35 percent of the teachers at the school. If teaching one or primarily one specific content area, a teacher shall have a bachelor's degree in that content area. For purposes of this section, a "qualified alternative certification program" shall be one which aligns with all requirements as specified in §§ 1260—1264 of this title and pursuant regulations. If non-certified teachers are hired on emergency certification, it will be necessary for them to successfully pass the PRAXIS I and II and to possess a nationally accredited degree in their core area of instruction. If LTA has to hire teachers through alternative and probationary measures, it will create a positive working environment to

support teachers and administrators alike. Teachers will be made aware of the Alternative Route to Teacher Certification program (**ARTC**); which offers an alternative to the traditional route to teacher certification in Delaware. Through ARTC, qualified individuals complete certification requirements *while* they are employed as full-time teachers, through a state-approved program of professional education course work, accompanied by intensive, school-based supervision and mentoring in lieu of student teaching. The ARTC is a collaboration among the Delaware Department of Education, which establishes standards, determines eligibility for the program, and issues certificates; Delaware public and charter schools who hire ARTC teachers and mentor and supervise them in lieu of student-teaching requirements, and the University of Delaware, which administers the program and provides a state-approved program of courses that satisfies the professional education requirements for certification. The most recent Delaware code governing ARTC can be found on the Department of Education website.

***Pre-Service Training That Prepares Educators.....***

*LTA will model the “Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training Program” – Institute of Education, University of London. See Appendix 1 Section 1.5 Pre-Service Training. Effective during its second year of operation, the CEO of LTA and other staff developers will facilitate a similar summer pre-service for teachers. Teachers will spend two days at a retreat to learn about the importance of leadership. The retreat environment will be used as an opportunity for reflection on teaching as a vocation and their personal qualities or reasons for selecting teaching as a profession. New teachers will be able to reflect on their own lives and leadership qualities so they can incorporate those aspects into their teaching behavior. LTA will produce lifelong learners, therefore the founders will demonstrate ongoing commitment to the professional learning of its teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents by allocating the budget resources of time, materials, expertise to pre-service training and professional development.*

During its screening process, LTA will consider the following research based evaluative approaches:

- 1) Documentation of time spent in preparing for their career in a career service center at college
- 2) Experience as student teacher
- 3) Philosophy of education
- 4) Instructional skills
- 5) Technology/computer skills
- 6) Classroom discipline philosophy
- 7) Classroom management plan/style
- 8) Knowledge of content/materials
- 9) Planning skills
- 10) Relationship with administration, staff, parents, students

**4. Outline the school’s procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, ....**

LTA will use the policies and operating regulations established by the State of Delaware for areas of Human Resources Management. The Administrative and Policies and Procedures Manual will be developed in the start-up year. The school intends to comply with all federal, state, and local statutes governing fair hiring practices. At entry, all employees must submit a clean criminal history background check and child protection clearance (not more than one year old) as a condition of hire.

#### **Termination of Employment**

Reasons for dismissal (following the guidelines of the Board approved employee handbook) may include, but are not limited to: unsatisfactory performance; action contrary to the best interest of LTA; a change in mission requiring different credentials and/or training.

LTA will implement due process through progressive discipline and supervision. LTA administration will document performance through scheduled appraisal, proper feedback, and allow time to improve then reassess performance. If performance is insufficient, the School Leader will inform the employee with a second administrator present. The CEO will report to the Board routinely on all personnel matters. Whenever an employee is to be dismissed, the School Leader will give him/her written notice of the ground(s) for termination. The final decision of the Board of Directors will be mailed to the employee within a reasonable time for the Board's final decision.

#### **5. Describe how the School Leadership Team will use the Delaware Performance Appraisal**

...

LTA's School Leader will complete the online DPAS II Evaluator Training, accessible via the Professional Development Management System (PDMS) during the school's planning year, as required for all new administrators in Delaware public schools. The School Leader will also attend the recommended three-day, in-person DPAS II Training for New Administrators, offered in the fall of the planning year. LTA teachers who need to, will complete the online DPAS II Teacher Training or DPAS II Specialist Training blackboard course available through PDMS prior to their first evaluations.

The School Leader will ensure that all observations and related materials are entered into Evaluation Reporting System (ERS) as required by the state. To ensure reliability of the DPAS II evaluation system, the Board and CEO will monitor the progress of the School Leader toward teacher evaluation timelines. The Board and/or CEO will request feedback from the state to ensure that reports are accurate and complete. Periodically, the Board and/or CEO will request that external "experts" in the DPAS II evaluation system to review or audit the evaluation reports and provide feedback on their accuracy and thoroughness.

LTA will use Performance Appraisals for all professional personnel who hold licensure and/or certification, for all administrative personnel, and full-time support staff. Procedures for implementing the Delaware Performance appraisal System are found in the websites listed below:

(DPAS II Guide for Teachers)

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/csa/dpasii/ti/DPASII TeachFullGuide.pdf> ;

(DPAS II Guide for Specialist)

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/csa/dpasii/specialist/DPASII SpecFullGuide.pdf>;

(DPAS II Guide for Administrators (Principals)

(<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/csa/dpasii/files/aps/DPASIIforAdministratorsGuideforPrincipalsv2.pdf>).

The intent of employee performance appraisal shall include, but not limited to:

- Provide teachers with information and support for continuous improvement;
- Motivate members of the staff to participate in the development and evaluation of instructional programs;
- Foster an atmosphere of cooperation and two-way communication between administrators and teachers' to support effective evaluation processes;
- Provide information for decision on staff development programs;
- Document formal records for making judgments about personnel promotion, reassignment, tenure and termination.

The formative nature of the DE Performance Appraisal System (DPASII) builds in supports for teachers and administrators even as it holds them accountable for producing results. Both management and all other personnel will be made aware of their performance at every step along the way, and early in the school year, are given time to adjust their actions, in order to produce improved results. The School Leader and CEO will be transparent with the Board, keeping them informed at least monthly on personnel matters, through the CEO's report. All certified/licensed personnel at LTA will be on yearly employment contracts. Teachers who have summative ratings of 'Effective' or 'Highly Effective' may be considered for advancements, promotions, and extra responsibilities within the building. Teachers who have summative ratings of 'Needs Improvement' or 'Ineffective' will be provided with written expectations and/or improvement plans targeted at enhancing their performance. Ultimately, teachers who do not improve and continue to exhibit patterns of ineffective teaching may be subject to dismissal. In the event that the School Leader or teacher is rated 'Ineffective' by April 15<sup>th</sup> of the calendar year, a recommendation for non-renewal would be made to the Board. The Board of Directors would determine employment matters at the regular April meeting of the Board. Also, see No. 4 above for unacceptable job performance dismissal procedures.

#### **6. Explain how and when the Board will evaluate the Principal/School Leader...**

*See Appendix 2 Section 1.5 Staffing -- School Leader Contract.*

In addition to the DPAS II Guide for Administrators (Principals), the Board will create 8 – 10 performance measurements for the School Leader to accomplish each school year. Raises and bonuses are contingent upon the overall rating of these measurements. An "Ineffective" rating which does not meet performance expectations, will require that he or she be notified of the need for improved performance in written and verbal communication by the Board President. The Board President, in conjunction with the CEO, will meet with the School Leader to create an improvement plan, and to develop a coaching schedule with a leadership coach for the school, provided by Dr. E. Wayne Harris, LTA's school developer and strategic planner

advisory consultant. In the most extreme cases described above, where students may be put in harm's way by the continuation of the school leader's employment; he or she will be terminated immediately. In the event that the school leader is terminated, the CEO will support the Board President and Personnel Committee to begin recruiting and interviewing for a replacement of a School Leader.

**7. What mechanisms or options will the Board leverage to address satisfactory leadership....**

If the improvement in leadership capacity is not realized within the developed timeframe, the Board President, in collaboration with the CEO, will make the decision to terminate the School Leader. Employment decisions related to the School Leader are at the sole discretion of the Board. In the event that the School Leader is terminated, the CEO will support the Board President to begin recruiting and interviewing for a replacement of a School Leader.

With regards to cut points within established metrics triggering a different course of action in regards to the oversight of the School Leader, LTA Board will establish performance goals that the School Leader must meet to receive a higher raise or satisfactory evaluation. They will use specifics, answer questions, give The School Leader an opportunity to say what he/she needs and want to say, but establish limits. The Board will avoid lecturing. They will end the evaluation interview on an upbeat note, if possible. The Board will listen to the School Leader. The Board may learn something useful about LTA's systems, employees, hierarchy, job structuring, and the school community chemistry. The Board may need to consider revising the School Leader's job description. If the School Leader's evaluation is poor, set goals for immediate improvement, and schedule a supplemental evaluation for the end of that period (usually one to three months), repeating the process if the School Leader has made some improvement but needs to make more improvement. But, at no time will cut points stand in the way of the mission and standards that LTA Founding and Governing Boards have set in motion for the success and safety of its students. LTA's students will never be held in harm's way due to the negligent performance of the School Leader.