

2017-18 DDOE Charter School Annual Report



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I. Charter School Program

Narrative:

Our Mission

Kuumba Academy Charter School's mission is to provide an innovative learning environment for the whole child from kindergarten through eighth grade. Our directors, staff, and families share the core belief that parents are children's primary educators. KACS parents, in partnership with teachers and administrators, believe that every child can maximize his or her learning potential given the opportunity to do so.

II. Performance Reflection - Tier 2

Academic Performance

Identify areas or factors where the school has met standard in 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?

Over the course of the 2017-18 school year, Kuumba has celebrated several accomplishments. Highlights of our academic performance include:

- Scoring a rating of *Exceeds Expectations* on school Quality/Student Success in 17-18.
- Earning a *Meets Expectations* for Academic Progress in 17-18 (up from approaching over the previous three years).
- Making significant gains in growth on SBAC, especially in grades 6-8 from 2016-17 to 2017-18.

Academic Achievement

In 2017/18, Kuumba received a rating of *Approaching Expectations*. Kuumba can credit this improvement to its intentional analysis of student interim data and planning for flexible groups based on need, its focused professional development around analyzing student data and building 6-week intervention plans to address targeted areas of improvement, and its frequent and ongoing job embedded coaching for teachers in all content areas, among other factors. The three most significant factors that impacted performance in 17/18 include: increased numbers of students entering below grade level, teacher turnover, and increased numbers of special education students and/or students with additional needs related to trauma and social emotional learning, particularly in grade 4.

Academic Progress

Kuumba received a rating of *Meets Expectations* in Academic Progress. This metric measures how well schools are doing at improving student learning over time. This area includes metrics on the collective performance of students within a school as compared to students with similar assessment history in ELA and math. Over the course of the 2017-18 school year, KACS students demonstrated considerable progress on ELA growth measures based on SBAC in all tested grade levels. These gains resulted in an overall school increase of 19 percentage points, from 43% to 62%, of students meeting or exceeding growth targets. Under the DSSF framework, this earned the school a *Meets Expectations* rating for 2018. Based on the DSSF rating, KACS has demonstrated sufficient growth with both our upper and lower quartiles of

students in ELA and Math respectively. Over the next five years, our focus is to continue to make significant gains in student growth measures and to reduce the impact of the opportunity gap for our students.

School Quality/Student Success

In the 2017/18 school year, under the new DSSF framework, Kuumba was measured solely on Chronic Absenteeism. Kuumba received a score of 47 out of 50 points, and achieved a rating of “Exceeds Expectations”.

Accomplishments

Kuumba Academy Charter School is proud of its continued persistence and commitment towards excellence in overcoming the opportunity gap that exists for many of the students that we serve. Just in the past academic year, Kuumba students made great strides towards closing the achievement gap, particularly in middle school. Our students outperformed their peers in both district and other charter schools from similar zip codes. In 2017-18, when comparing Kuumba students to students in Christina School District where our school is located and more than 50% of our students reside, Kuumba students significantly outperformed their peers - by between 18 and 29 percentage points higher in ELA and between 16 and 30 percentage points higher in Math as measured by 2018 SBAC results.

We have found that the longer a student remains within the walls of Kuumba Academy, the more likely they are to find academic success. KACS middle school students are performing on par with the state as a whole with 44.3% of our 6th-8th grade students proficient in math, where state average in 2018 was 44%. In ELA, KACS middle school students (6-8) are closing the gap when compared to their peers across the state performing at 47% proficient where the state average was 54% in 2018. When comparing KACS middle school students to their district counterparts from the neighboring schools where more than half of our students reside, KACS students are outperforming their peers by 35% percentage points in ELA and 39% percentage points in math.

Challenges

Despite its many accomplishments, Kuumba still has its challenges when working to eliminate the achievement gap that persists for many black, brown and low-income students in Wilmington and across the state. While KACS has been fortunate enough to secure additional grant funding to bring additional resources to support our students and families, the resources available are still not sufficient enough to meet the needs of the student population. In order to eliminate the achievement gap, KACS students and other black, brown and low-income students across the state must grow at a rate twice that of their white and middle to high

income peers. This requires a concerted and coordinated effort of talent and resources - an effort which Kuumba is committed to making.

In 2017-2018, KACS experienced staff turnover in grades 2 and 4, and lost a K-4 dean of students. This staffing turnover impacted student performance and school climate. In response to this staff turnover, KACS board and leadership planned an organization restructuring in order to increase the supports available to staff and students in order to minimize staff attrition. While KACS has had historically higher than average rates of teacher retention, the mounting pressures of increased enrollment, higher percentages of SPED students, and an increase in students experiencing social emotional trauma led some staff to make the decision to leave the organization. KACS has added several new positions in the 2018-2019 school year to address these challenges, including but not limited to: a K-8 principal, a director of family engagement, a director of instruction and several instructional paraprofessionals. KACS also seeks to reduce our overall enrollment over the course of the next charter term from 735 to 700 students in order to reduce class size and better position staff to meet the unique needs of each individual student.

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?

KACS has received an *Approaching Standard* due to performance in 1a. While this has been a challenge over the prior two school years, we have since restructured and the head of school is now responsible for direct oversight of staff responsible for posting all compliance items on the website. We are confident that we will return to *Meets Standard* for 2019, as we have done so the previous 5 years..

Kuumba did not meet standard in Measure 2a. Kuumba has earned 4 out of 10 points and has received an *Approaching Standard* rating. This rating is because of a delay in posting of CBOC minutes and financial reports. As outlined in the previous section, Kuumba has restructured our administrative team for the 2018-2019 school year. This restructuring added a principal to oversee academics and climate, allowing the head of school to focus on operations and external partnerships. This restructuring will result in more more focused attention and oversight to avoid posting delays going forward. All of the outstanding items have now been corrected. It is our expectation that we will continue to remain complaint in this domain for the next school year.

Kuumba has always strived to be in compliance with all DOE requirements. We plan to continue this practice. We have strong internal capacity to continue to meet all organization expectations. Our leadership team, school board and staff work in unison to ensure that we are an exceptional organization.

Financial Performance

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

KACS received an overall rating of “meets standard” over the course of the charter term overall. However, KACS received a rating of “far below standard” for 2a. total margin within the framework. This rating is attributed to a large grant (\$2 million in FY15) that was expended over a three-year period FY16-FY18.

Year	Near Term Indicators				Sustainability Indicators				Financial Management & Oversight	OVERALL RATING
	Current Ratio	Days Cash	Enrollment Variance	Default, Loan Covenants, & Debt Service Payments	Total Margin	Debt Asset Ratio	Cash Flow	Debt Service Coverage Ratio		
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	2d	3	
2017-2018	M	M	M	M	F	M	AS	N\R	M	Meets Standard

KACS received a rating of approaching standard for cash flow. This rating is attributed to inflated expenses associated with the same prior year grant that was awarded in FY15 and spent down FY16-FY18.

Kuumba's board and management team continues its current policy of monitoring monthly financial performance to address any variances from the School's financial objectives. Our policies are reviewed annually to determine any areas of risks that may need to be strengthened through implementation of new policies and procedures. Our CBOC and Board of Directors very actively monitor the financial performance of the school on a monthly basis in addition to this annual review of policies and procedures.