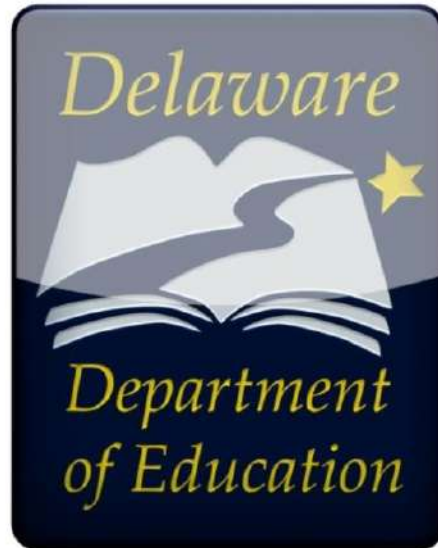


# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## **Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence**

**Application to Open a Charter School  
INITIAL REPORT**

CSAC Initial Meeting: February 2, 2021  
CSAC Initial Report Published: February 8, 2021

Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) met with representatives from Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE) on February 2, 2021 for the CSAC Initial Meeting to address the approval criteria set forth in 14 Del. Code § 512.

The following were in attendance at the Initial Meeting of the CSAC on February 2, 2021:

- Kim Klein, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Associate Secretary of Education, DDOE
- Tierra Fair, Director, United Way of Delaware, Community Member
- Gregory Fulkerson, Ph.D., Education Associate, Academic Support Team, DDOE
- Tiffany Green, Education Associate, Educator Support Team, DDOE
- Joyce Leatherbury, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Workgroup, DDOE
- April McCrae, Ed.D., Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Ted Molin, Vice President, Wilmington Trust, Community Member
- Brian Moore, Education Associate, School Climate and Discipline, DDOE
- Catherine Oravez, Education Associate, Federal Funds and Cost Recovery, DDOE
- James Pennewell, Education Associate, Capital Projects Management, DDOE
- Michael Saylor, Ph.D., Education Associate, Educator Support Team, DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Community Member and Former Charter School Leader

**Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)**

- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network
- Vincent Lofink, Delaware State Board of Education
- Wali Rushdan, Delaware State Board of Education

**Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)**

- Leroy Travers, Lead Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE
- John H. Carwell Jr., Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Alicia Balcerak, Administrative Secretary, Charter School Office, DDOE

**Representatives of Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence**

- Alonna Berry, Educator and Consultant, Founding Board Chairperson
- Chantalle Ashford, Educator, Founding Board Vice Chairperson
- Betsy Renzo, Educator and Attorney, Founding Board Secretary
- Amy Shepherd, Educator, Founding Board Member
- Teresa Berry, Ed.D., Educator, Founding Board Member
- Leslie Slan, Retired Educator, Advisory Board Member
- Brad Owens, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, Founding Board Member
- Diaz Bonville, Community Outreach Coordinator, Founding Board Member
- Rahsel Holland, Community Outreach Coordinator

- B. Robin Eglin, President and CEO, Omnivest Management, Inc.
- Kimberly Hesinger, Vice President, Omnivest Management, Inc.
- Leigh Kelly, Chief Financial Officer, Omnivest Management, Inc.

Ms. Klein stated the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss the New Charter Application with the applicant, ask questions, and probe areas of concern based on the CSAC's initial review of the written application. She added that the meeting would also serve as the applicant's opportunity for an interview in support of the application. She also noted that each section of the application was aligned to the minimum requirements for consideration, as identified in 14 Del. Code § 511 and 512.

### **Application Overview**

Ms. Klein asked the representatives of BASSE to summarize the charter application. Ms. Berry stated that the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence was named after Bryan Stevenson, a world-renowned social justice attorney, best known for his work with the Equal Justice Initiative, fighting for wrongly convicted people in Alabama. Ms. Berry added that Mr. Stevenson also wrote the book, *Just Mercy*, which recently released as a film. Ms. Berry noted that one of the most important aspects of his story is his connection to Sussex County, Delaware, and the power of his story is important for BASSE students to know, learn about, and embody in our community.

Ms. Berry stated that the idea for BASSE started as a kitchen-table conversation, envisioning what education could be and look like in our community. Coincidentally, she added, during that time she and Ms. Ashford were participating in a national fellowship, the Rural School Leadership Academy, which provided opportunities to visit rural schools around the nation. The first school visit was to a reservation-based school in New Mexico and traveled to Idaho, Eastern North Carolina, Texas and Kentucky to see rural school innovating. Ms. Berry noted three key lessons from these school visits: 1. Rural schools have similar challenges to urban schools but are funded and discussed less; 2. Proximity matters in a rural environment. The context and the needs of the community should drive how and why a school is created; and 3. Oftentimes, social services in rural communities are more challenging to access. Innovative rural schools found ways to bring social services to the school site and the school became the center/hub of the community. Ms. Berry stated that she and Ms. Ashford visited schools that mitigated food deserts, bringing farm to table, provided access to healthcare, provided wraparound services, and after school activities. After visiting these schools, she added, BASSE took the learnings from the school visits and determined to figure out what the innovations would look like in Sussex Community based on the needs of the community.

Ms. Berry stated that the development process for BASSE reminded her of her own personal experience as a Delawarean, growing up in rural Sussex County. She added that the service opportunities she experienced are what changed her life trajectory. She noted that Mr.

Stevenson often references the theory of proximity. Ms. Berry stated that it is likely that Mr. Stevenson would have been a good attorney anywhere but it was when he first started visiting prisons and learned about the injustices his life trajectory changed to his current path. She noted her own experience as a high school student when she founded the Youth Philanthropy Board through the Delaware Community Foundation. That experience, she added, as a 16 year old exposed her to the challenges in her community that she was not aware of, such as homelessness, and influenced her life trajectory to her current work. Ms. Berry stated that BASSE's theory of change is to create these types of proximate experiences for high school students so they can learn about what is happening in their own communities and, more importantly, know that they have the power to change it. She added that in addition to receiving a rigorous academic experience, bounded by the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, BASSE would provide high school students transformational proximate experiences. BASSE will help students build networks, community, and investment in their own community.

Ms. Berry stated that BASSE's goal is to not only help students figure out their career path but also help students figure out who they want to be and why that matters. She noted that this is a different frame on education. Ms. Berry asked Ms. Ashford to provide an overview of BASSE's curriculum model.

Ms. Ashford stated that the BASSE curriculum falls into two tiers – 1. Service learning, and 2. Academic – delivered through interdisciplinary, cross-curricular, thematic units that will be anchored by class-wide book study. The goal, she added, is for BASSE students to take the knowledge they learn in the classroom and apply it through service learning opportunities, which will begin in ninth-grade as a class-wide service-learning project. In tenth grade, students will do a small group service-learning project. Between their sophomore and junior year, students will have a summer learning project, which will help them select a specific area to continue their service. In their junior and senior years, students will work on an individualized service-learning project that requires them to apply their academic knowledge and provide a solution at a community-based organization and/or real-world community problem. Ms. Ashford noted that this is an innovation for this community because students seldom have opportunities to apply what they have learned in real time.

Ms. Ashford stated that the education program would offer the IB program for all students, which is unique because many schools offer the IB program to a subset of students, similar to Advanced Placement courses. She added that BASSE wants to make rigorous curricula accessible to all students to ensure they are prepared in all opportunities available to them. Ms. Ashford noted that the IB program has a baseline service-learning component, which BASSE will build upon. Ms. Berry stated that it is important to note how COVID-19 has impacted the entire education system, students, and families and how the BASSE model can mitigate these challenges by providing real world, hands-on experiences and building connection with community. The BASSE model, she added, will provide opportunities for students to learn inside and outside of the classroom. Ms. Berry also stated that if BASSE had to operate a hybrid

model, students would learn online, but still have the service learning opportunities with community partners. Ms. Berry asked a representative from Omnivest Management, Inc. to comment on the BASSE's financial viability.

Ms. Hensinger stated that BASSE projects a first-year enrollment of 250 students, 375 students in year two, and 500 students in year three. The school's revenue, she added, includes a diverse portfolio of funding streams that include State and local appropriations based on the Unit Count, federal funding from Title I, II, IV and IDEA, free- and reduced- lunch programming, and private donations. Ms. Hensinger also stated that State and local appropriations would cover all personnel, contractual, and facilities costs. Federal funding, she added, will support contractual services in the school's special education program and social-emotional services. Additionally, BASSE will participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program to offset costs related to providing free- and reduced priced lunch. Ms. Hensinger also stated the private funding would be used to cover additional furniture, equipment, and additional materials and supplies for special education.

Ms. Berry asked Ms. Slan to provide comments. Ms. Slan stated that she is a retired educator, having spent 30 years in education. She stated that she is impressed with BASSE's efforts to connect with the community and emphasized the importance of being proximate. Ms. Slan also acknowledged the value of providing students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned in school to their community through their service learning projects. She commented that BASSE would provide students in the target rural community access to wraparound services and help them reach their potential.

Ms. Berry stated that BASSE is pleased to provide an innovative education model to students in Sussex County. She added that BASSE's goal is to provide a smaller than average high school that fulfills the charter law by providing an innovation that is not an innovation in isolation, but one that gives back to the overall education community. Ms. Berry stated that BASSE would show the value of service learning and help other schools how to incorporate it in their contexts.

## **Discussion**

Ms. Klein asked if the CSAC if they had any questions or concerns regarding the following sections of the application.

### **Section 1.1 – Executive Summary**

Mr. Taylor asked BASSE to explain how they intend to pay for the IB curriculum and how teachers will be trained. In addition, he asked BASSE to describe what will be expected of students regarding service learning. Ms. Ashford stated that the IB program has a two to three year accreditation process. The conversations to date, she added, have included discussion

about teacher training. She added that BASSE has identified someone who will serve as Academic Head of School who will be trained first. Ms. Ashford stated that IB training covered through BASSE's private funding model, which is supported by Omnivest. Regarding service learning, Ms. Ashford stated that in ninth grade, an example of a service-learning project could be studying access to quality water in rural communities and research questions might include: What does access to quality water currently look like in Sussex County? What needs to change to improve access to quality water? Ms. Ashford stated that students would develop a service-learning project to examine these questions. In tenth grade, she added, students would deepen their research. For example, students might be interested in healthcare Sussex County and do a service-learning project focused on diabetes awareness. Ms. Ashford stated that BASSE will pair eleventh and twelfth grade students with community-based organizations to develop capstone projects based on what they learned in their freshman and sophomore classes. Ms. Berry stated that the IB program is accounted for in BASSE's funding model. More specifically, she added, private funding will cover any costs that are not funded by State, local, and federal funds. Service learning, she added, is a gradual release model that starts broad and becomes increasingly focused with each successive grade, providing opportunities for students to explore various career paths. Ms. Berry noted that ninth grade is a classroom-based model, tenth grade is group-based model. During the summer between tenth and eleventh grades students have a summer intensive individualized service learning experiences based on their areas of interest.

Mr. Travers noted that BASSE's projected percentage of low-income students (33%) aligns with the surrounding districts, Cape Henlopen School District and Indian River School District, but the projected percentages of special education students and English learners are lower. For example, in Indian River School District, 22.61% of its students are English learners, but BASSE projects that 10% of its students will be English learners. Ms. Berry stated that the enrollment projections are based county averages. She added that the recruitment plan would include targeting low-income communities as well as multilingual efforts, including Haitian Creole and Spanish parent outreach.

Ms. Oravez asked BASSE to elaborate on community engagement efforts, noting that the data provided in the application did not reflect that parents would actually enroll if BASSE is approved for a charter. Ms. Berry stated that recruitment efforts are continuous and ongoing. She added that recruitment during COVID is especially challenging because outreach is limited to virtual methods. In rural communities, she added, access to internet and devices is markedly more challenging than urban communities. Ms. Berry explained that BASSE's original recruitment plan targeted community centers, festivals, etc. She noted that outreach for the two existing charter schools in Sussex County – Sussex Academy and Sussex Montessori School – historically focused on community festivals. As a result, BASSE has shifted its outreach efforts parent webinars, conducted twice per month, averaging five parents each webinar. Ms. Berry stated that when the pandemic occurred, BASSE immediately switched its outreach efforts to virtual and conducted six-webinar series about BASSE's education model, core values etc.,

which drew in upwards of 100 participants in each webinar. She stated that the parent survey numbers are a reflection of the impact COVID-19 has had on communication with families in general and, particularly, for families in rural communities, low-income families, and families for whom English is not their primary language.

Dr. Saylor stated that of the 144 surveys submitted only 15 percent of the families had high school-aged children and, of those, only two families indicated that they would select BASSE as their first choice. He stated that he would need to see more survey data or other evidence of need and demand for the school before he could recommend approval. Dr. Berry stated that surveys would continue to be collected based on the application review timeline to further build the case that BASSE is needed in Sussex County.

Mr. Travers stated that the business plan does not address facilities, transportation, prospective partners, and start-up funding for year one and he requested more detail. Ms. Berry stated that the application includes a transportation plan based on consultation with a local bus contractor that includes four bus routes and the costs are reflected in the budget. Regarding prospective school sites, she stated that BASSE has identified a prospective property and the owner provided a letter after the charter application submission date. The property owner, she added, who is willing to work with BASSE in accordance with the application timeline. Ms. Berry also stated that the costs of the prospective facility were built into the budget. Regarding private funding, she added, the Longwood Foundation has indicated that they will accept a grant application for up to \$1,000,000. Mr. Eglin confirmed that the budget reflects allocations for transportation, facilities, and the plan for raising the necessary private donations.

Mr. Pennewell referenced the Richard Allen School, a prospective facility, and asked the BASSE team to describe its current suitability for BASSE's education plan, any required renovations, estimated costs, and timeline. Ms. Berry stated that the Richard Allen School was considered initially but the Board has since determined that it would be more financially viable to purchase a property and start with modulares or new construction with a phased-in build out. She added that the Richard Allen School was operated by the Indian River School District less than 15 years ago. Ms. Berry also stated that BASSE worked with an architecture firm to develop a renovation plan and estimated total costs was \$5M. Mr. Pennewell asked if they have cost estimates for building a new facility. Ms. Berry stated that they currently have cost estimates for the modulares and currently working with Moonlight Architecture on the building design and cost estimates. Ms. Oravez underscored the importance of engaging the surrounding community regarding the potential school site.

### **Section 1.2 – Founding Group and School Leadership**

Mr. Travers stated that the summer 2022 hire date for the Manager of Community Partnerships position does not seem to provide sufficient time to line up service learning opportunities for

students. Ms. Berry stated that BASSE's service learning would be a gradual release model so students will not work in community partner organizations until their junior and senior years. She added that hiring the Manager of Community Partnerships would provide a full one-year runway to cultivate community partnerships. Ms. Berry also stated that BASSE has already hired its Founding School Leader and Community Outreach Coordinator who are both currently focus on building community partnerships.

Mr. Moore asked if the Founding School Leader would be responsible for support services such as nursing, mental health, nutrition. Ms. Berry stated that leadership structure includes an Executive Director and two Co-Heads of School. In year one, BASSE will have the Executive Director and the academic Co-Head of School. She added that the Academic Co-Head of School is the leader BASSE has already hired and, through a fellowship program, is currently working at Sussex Academy, which is why she was unable to join the CSAC Initial meeting. The fellowship's learning model provides experiential learning opportunities to work side-by-side with school leaders at Sussex Academy and charter schools in Philadelphia over the course of two years before BASSE opens. Ms. Berry noted that the academic school leader would focus on student and teacher outcomes. In year three, BASSE will be fully staffed with three senior leaders, Executive Director, Co-Head of Academics, and Co-Head of Community Partnerships. The Executive Director will focus on operations and the Co-Head of Community Partnerships will focus on service learning outcomes.

### **Section 1.3 – Education Plan**

#### **Curriculum and Instructional Design**

Dr. Fulkerson stated that the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development workgroup was very excited about BASSE's vision regarding social justice, service learning, and building critical connections with the community. He also stated that the applicant's curricular materials were reviewed by DDOE's content specialists and summarized the findings as follows:

##### **1. English Language Arts – Partially Meets Expectation**

BASSE has chosen to implement high quality ELA curricular materials (Paths to College and Career) but the ELA unit of instruction was not found.

**Expectations:** Provide one ELA unit of instruction employing the provided templates to the curricular resource. Please ensure there is a culminating summative assignment with a corresponding scoring rubric.

**Recommendations:** See Appendix A



Dr. Fulkerson asked the BASSE team to describe how they plan to address its multi-disciplinary vision regarding social justice and service learning while maintaining fidelity to the predetermined text choices that are part of the Paths to College and Career curriculum. Ms. Ashford stated that the BASSE application included a unit of instruction for ELA, but she will provide another copy. Regarding the text choices for the curriculum, she stated that as a current high school teacher she focuses on the college and career ready standards. She explained that the selected texts will be comparable regarding structure, rigor, themes, ideas, and writing assignments, but the texts might change based on students' needs and interests.

Dr. Fulkerson stated that the application outlines an ambitious model for supporting English learners through a variety of different program models. He asked the BASSE team to describe how the various programs models will be implemented or confirm if one program model will be selected later. Ms. Ashford stated that a specific model would be selected later. Dr. Fulkerson asked the BASSE team to describe how professional development would be provided to staff on how to support English-language learners. Ms. Ashford stated that the professional development would be designed based on the competencies of staff and provided prior to the school's opening.

## **2. Mathematics – Partially Meets Expectations**

BASSE has chosen Eureka Math, which meets expectations regarding focus and coherence of the standards. However, the rigor in the standards are not fully addressed or developed.

**Expectations:** Either address these deficiencies with addenda to the existing lessons or submit new lessons to replace those that do not meet expectations. The EdReports Eureka Reports outlines the lessons to be addressed.

## **3. Social Studies – Meets Expectations for Application**

Dr. Fulkerson stated that BASSE has indicated that they plan to join the Social Studies Coalition and submitted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). If the application is approved, BASSE is required to submit evidence that it has joined the coalition prior to opening.

## **4. Science – Meets Expectations for Application, but Does Not Meet Expectations for Science**

Dr. Fulkerson stated that BASSE has indicated that they plan to join the Delaware Science Coalition. However, the Delaware Science Coalition does not offer a full set of high school courses nor does it offer IB courses. Coalition membership would only provide *Science and Global Issues* (SGI, full-year biology) and *Living by Chemistry* (9th grade, one marking period). Dr. Fulkerson asked BASSE to describe to how membership in the Delaware Science Coalition will support its scope and sequence given the limitations of the content provided at the high school level. Ms. Ashford stated that the Science Coalition would support the school's first two

years while BASSE works with the IB Program to build out the coursework for the upper grades. She added that BASSE will hire high quality science educators to help build out the science curriculum for the upper grade levels.

**Recommendations:** See Appendix A

## **5. Visual & Performing Arts: Partially Meets Expectations**

Dr. Fulkerson stated that the Visual and Performing Arts scope and sequence documents provide bullet points associated with curriculum documents from the San Francisco Unified School District and the American International School of Johannesburg. While the San Francisco Unified School District makes a connection to the 2014 National Core Arts Standards, adopted by the State of Delaware in 2016, the documentation provided for BASSE does not make a connection to these rigorous standards.

The concept behind the new core arts standards is to seamlessly weave the arts together into four artistic processes of Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding, and Connecting. It is the ability as artists in all disciplines of music, dance, theater, visual art and media art to combine these artistic processes and standards to provide high quality arts instruction to students.

While the document provides skills to acquire and concepts to grasp, it does not articulate a connection to standards.

**Expectations:** Submit updated scope and sequence documents that must match the rigor of the (Delaware) National Core Arts Standards. One way to do this would be to identify indicators from the Delaware standards document, which will demonstrate alignment and focus on both grade-level and course-level proficiency targets. Please see the standards documents found at the website listed. [www.deartsstandards.org](http://www.deartsstandards.org).

## **6. World Languages – Partially Meets Expectations**

Dr. Fulkerson stated that the submitted scope and sequences are based on the District of Columbia Modern World Language scope and sequences. From the skills identified in the document, they indicate a tight alignment with the 2009 DC World Language Standards. At the time that DC released its standards in 2009, they were aligned with Delaware's standards. However, in 2016, Delaware adopted new standards that increased the rigor and proficiency expectations for student language learning. While the goal areas such as Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities remained the same, the focus and rigor of the individual standards did change. This means that a number of skills identified in your Scope and Sequence document do not align with the 2016 Delaware World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. The most notable difference is with the Culture

standards 2.1 and 2.2. For example, Culture Standard 2.1 states “Learners use the language to investigate, explain and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.” The novice level proficiency indicators include such verbs as “use, participate, create, imitate, list, role play, etc.” However, the skills identified in your level 1 curriculum documents remain at the level of recognition of cultural products with only minimum mention of moving from recognition to interaction in level 2 and then to full-on intercultural engagement in level 3.

**Expectations:** Submit revised Scope and Sequence documents so that the skills that you identified as evidence of alignment match the rigor of the [Delaware World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#). One way to do so is to update the Scope and Sequence documents so that they identify indicators from the Delaware standards document, which will ensure seamless alignment and focus on course-level [proficiency targets](#).

Dr. Fulkerson asked BASSE if other world languages will be offered in addition to Spanish and, if so, describe the selection process. Ms. Ashford stated that BASSE would start with Spanish since so many students in Sussex County have Spanish language proficiency or live in Spanish speaking communities. She added that as BASSE grows to full enrollment the school would look to add other world languages such as French since students who speak Haitian Creole are expected to enroll.

**Recommendations:** See Appendix A

Dr. Saylor asked if the team could walk the CSAC through Performance Goal 1 , School Based Success and address the assessments that are being used to measure those goals. Ms. Ashford stated that those assessments would be classroom based, using common assessments in all content areas to ensure students are meeting the standards. They will administer preassessments at the beginning of the year, again in the middle of the year, and again at the end of the year to assess growth over time in each subject area. These assessments will be developed by teachers.

Dr. Saylor stated that, for a high school, these targets should be based on SAT’s, not the Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF). SAT’s are instead listed under college and career readiness. Also, the SAT readiness benchmark target of forty percent is set below the State average. Under academic achievement, there is no reliable or valid assessment currently listed if they are all based on teacher assessments. If the school is using the DSSF, they should include SAT data and could use PSAT data. Dr. Saylor could not find their IB benchmark goal in the application. Dr. Saylor stated that the school’s graduation rate target of 85% is also below the State Average of 88%. Dr. Saylor asked that Performance Goal 1 section be revisited.

Dr. McCrae stated that the school has some fantastic ideas in their application. The school stated in their application that they do not plan to develop additional academic performance goals. Dr. McCrae advised that they revisit that thought. She stated that they will likely be using

the IB scholar assessments and the school will want to think about how these assessments fit into their educational goals and their students' success plans. This will be an expectation of their students as part of the IB program.

Dr. McCrae asked if the school planned to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses in addition to the IB courses. Ms. Ashford stated that they will initially track AP courses as students move into their school, however, if there is interest from students, they will explore other ways to offer them, such as partnering with other schools. They will not offer AP courses, initially. Dr. McCrae reminded the school that if they plan to change their curriculum in the future the DOE will need to be made aware.

Dr. McCrae asked about their Summer Intensive Program. The application states that all students will take part in the summer program. Dr. McCrae worried that some of their target populations (homeless, low income, etc.) may struggle to balance school with work responsibilities. She asked if the school planned to offer any supports to those students. Ms. Ashford stated that the program is three weeks and the school will offer transportation, food and access to the community partners. The school plans to meet the needs of every student and will provide them with anything they need to access the program. Ms. Massett stated that DHSS currently runs a program that can allow students to get paid for some of the time that they put in to community partnership.

Ms. Berry clarified that the Summer Intensive Program is a requirement for students between grades ten and eleven only, as an exploration activity. Students will work with a local non-profit to see if that area is of interest to them. The program is considered a pathway for students to build networks and potentially gain summer internships or paid opportunities. Traditionally underserved students typically do not have access to these networks, connections, and experiences. Dr. McCrae cautioned that the school should be careful requiring unpaid opportunities for students that may interfere with other obligations given their target populations.

Dr. McCrae stated that the Delaware Science Coalition is a bit different at the high school level. If the school intends to use the IB curriculum for science, they should provide a crosswalk or alignment documentation illustrating how the IB curriculum addresses or could address Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Ms. Ashford stated that an NGSS crosswalk was included, however, she could submit something more detailed, if needed.

Dr. McCrae asked the school to discuss the pre-student attendance preparation of teachers, particularly concerning teacher quality, growth and improvement, in terms of the IB curriculum and pedagogy.

Ms. Ashford stated that BASSE is now working to develop their teachers' pre-service professional development plans. They are working in partnership with IB to prepare training in

the program. There will be a three-week pre-service training program, as well. Pre-work materials will be sent to teachers once they have been hired.

Mr. Moore asked that plans for promotion and retention be laid out with clear expectations. The application suggests that it would be a team decision instead of being target based. College entrance exams are listed as a transcript item. Mr. Moore stated that including them on a transcript is not a best practice because students can suppress scores going forward. Mr. Moore asked if teachers will implement the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and asked who will provide Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS) Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports. Ms. Ashford stated that teachers will provide those MTSS supports through advisory blocks and synthesis days. These days and times are purposefully built into the schedule to provide those supports. Ms. Ashford stated that they have not yet selected a SEL curriculum, however, they have been in conversation with Teri Lawler about the best options for their students. Ms. Berry stated that SEL is not separate from a trauma-informed approach or a culturally responsive approach. The school is searching for a curriculum that includes all of those pieces or can be supplemented to do so.

Ms. Massett asked if the school will be utilizing the WAVE pod-learning program that supports students and families with a socially-distant safe learning environment. Ms. Berry stated that the school is currently involved in conversations about how to replicated that model at BASSE.

Mr. Moore asked for a breakdown of services that will be provided by Delaware Guidance and qualifications for the providers.

Mr. Moore asked the school to include a foster care plan that is ESSA compliant and includes a foster liaison.

Mr. Moore asked that the teacher on-boarding plan include non-academic mandatory training to ensure that all teachers meet state requirements.

Mr. Moore asked how the school's restorative practices model will fit into their discipline plan and specifically how they will be applied to the code of conduct. Ms. Berry responded that the Board is currently in the process of developing a code of conduct policy. They want it to be informed by students' and parents' perspectives. They wish to involve students and parents in developing a policy that is fair, equitable, and culturally responsive. Ms. Berry would welcome feedback from Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore stated that he has worked with successful models of Peer Court and Restorative Circles. There is a Restorative Circle certified alternative program in New Castle County that he can connect them to.

Mr. Moore stated that there are multiple opportunities for student participation in the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group and suggested that the school keep that in mind when searching for service learning opportunities for students.

Dr. Saylor stated that the periods within the daily schedule appear to be relatively short, especially given the rigorous curriculum that has been chosen. Dr. Saylor stated that there are four hours and forty minutes of instructional time each day and wondered if the curriculum can be taught in those shortened time periods. Dr. Saylor would like to see the scope and sequence to ensure that the material is going to be covered and that students will be successful on assessments. Ms. Ashford explained that the Friday synthesis day is planned to provide additional, targeted, and specific instructional time to students in the areas where extra development will be needed. This time will be very high-leveraged and allow more opportunities to meet specific targets. Dr. Saylor cautioned that there is not yet data to show that asynchronous learning days are effective.

Dr. Saylor asked the school to provide an explanation of the school's preference to students with specific interest to BASSE teaching methods and philosophies. The application states that it will be provided with the entrance application on the website. Dr. Saylor asked how the school will ensure that this does not create barriers to some students. Ms. Berry stated that this will be an optional preference to be included only after the school has reached their enrollment capacity and transition to lottery or waitlist.

Dr. Saylor stated that the Performance Management section refers to the DSSF, however, it is not clear which specific measure is being used and he would like some clarification on this.

Dr. Saylor stated that the school leader contract refers to teacher observations. Dr. Saylor wanted to ensure that teacher observations are aligned to the new Delaware Teacher Growth and Evaluation System. The contract also states that the Board will provide goals and evaluations to the school leader. Dr. Saylor reminded the school that there is a State evaluation tool for school leaders and Board members would be provided training from the DOE. Ms. Massett reminded the team that the school can utilize an alternative evaluation.

The teacher recruitment plan is effective in involving Alternative Routes to Certification (ARTC) and Relay. Dr. Saylor stated that strategies seem to target novice teachers and asked that they include a plan to recruit experienced teachers. Ms. Berry stated that their plan is intended to recruit 25% novice teachers, 25% with two to three years experience, and 25% to with five to eight years of experience. The school feels that it is critical to have teachers on staff that represent all experience levels.

Ms. Leatherbury asked how their plan to hire twelve teachers in year one connects to students with disabilities. Will teachers have dual certification? Ms. Berry stated that their plan will be dependent on the school's funding formula. The school plans to hire at least one teacher at each grade level with dual certification and their current founding school leader currently has dual certification. The school plans to employ a special education director or contract to do so.

Ms. Leatherbury asked the school to describe how the personalized learning plan for each student will connect to an IEP for students with disabilities. Ms. Ashford stated that the personalized learning plans would be a supplement to a student's IEP and be developed and operationalized through advisories.

Ms. Green asked if there will be a site coordinator for their mentoring and induction program. Ms. Green also asked if they have identified a lead mentor. Ms. Berry stated that they have given a lot of thought to this. The school will begin to plan this program as they go through the hiring process and identify teachers that can mentor and those that will need mentors. In addition, each grade level will have a lead teacher that may naturally be a good fit for the mentor role.

**Section 1.4 – Performance Management** No questions or concerns were expressed.

**Section 1.5 – Staffing**  
No questions or concerns were expressed.

**Section 1.6 – Governance and Management**

Ms. Oravez asked for more information about the role of Omnivest within the context of the school's financial operations. Specifically, will there be a business manager, who will work within First State Financials (FSF) and what the onboarding process would look like for financial operations. Ms. Berry stated that Ominvest is currently serving as the school's accounting firm and will continue to do so as the school opens. Omnivest has a history of supporting charter schools with financial management and back-office support. Mr. Eglund stated that Omnivest supports ten schools in Pennsylvania and is committed to take part in all necessary training for Delaware requirements. Omnivest will work closely with school personnel on processing accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, audits, financial statements and compliance requirements.

Ms. Oravez asked who the school contact would be for Omnivest. She reminded the school that there is a great amount of front-end work to be completed to get a new school set up in the State system. She asked if that contact person is reflected in the school's budget. Ms. Berry stated that the Executive Director would be the primary contact and that it would be critical for that person to have experience in FSF.

**Section 1.7 – Parent and Community Involvement**

No questions or concerns were identified.

## **Section 1.8 – Start-Up and Operations/Section 1.9 – Facilities**

Ms. Oravez asked for the school to clarify the school's specific types and levels of insurance coverage. Ms. Berry thought this was attached to the application, but will resend them.

Mr. Travers asked for a follow-up plan to include the student enrollment process, specifically the application window and recruitment events and plan for the entire enrollment process. Additionally, Mr. Travers asked for a plan for training staff in eSchool and Unit Count as well as FSF and PHRST. There should also be a plan to secure furniture and supplies.

## **Section 1.9 – Facilities**

Mr. Pennewell asked for estimates as far as building a new school and the funding plan for facilities as well as expected time frames.

Mr. Rushdan asked how the choice of an actual location will impact enrollment preferences. Ms. Berry stated that one preference is a five-mile radius preference. This would be dependent on their location. All current preferred locations are identified in Georgetown, DE or Milton, DE. Those areas are highly concentrated with EL families and low-income families. A five-mile radius preference may not be implemented if the property is extremely rural or expansive. Mr. Rushdan asked if the school had any initial thoughts on what may change or nullify that preference. Ms. Berry stated that she would like to have a deeper conversation with the Board around this first.

## **Section 1.10 – Budget and Finance**

Ms. Oravez stated that there was a concern around the level of detail around some of the budget items and stated that some of those line items seem to be budgeted low. She asked for more detail around the budget line item. Additionally, it appears that some lines, such as textbooks, appear to be budgeted for 25 students instead of 250, at \$1,000.00 per student. Ms. Oravez expressed concern about the viability of the budget and the potential that there could be a deficit situation if line items are budgeted incorrectly. Ms. Oravez stated that there was not much information regarding the levels of fundraising amounts and how much is actual versus projected.

## **Conclusion**

Ms. Klein asked members of the CSAC to specifically articulate any outstanding concerns with each section of the New Charter Application. The following specific information was requested by the CSAC:



### **1. Executive Summary**

- a. Additional details on what financial resources will be available during the planning year and additional details on the fundraising plan to include dates and fundraising targets.

### **2. Founding Group and School Leadership**

- a. No follow-up necessary

### **3. Education Plan**

- a. One ELA unit of instruction employing the provided templates to the curricular resource and including a culminating summative assignment with a corresponding scoring rubric.
- b. Addenda to existing lessons or new lessons to address gaps identified by the EdReports Eureka Report.
- c. Evidence of joining the Social Studies Coalition prior to the opening of school.
- d. Clarification of Science Courses with Corresponding Scope and Sequence documents in alignment to the NGSS for courses not provided for in the Coalition.
- e. Revised Visual and Performing Arts Scope and Sequence Documents.
- f. Revised World Language Scope and Sequence Documents.
- g. A more detailed plan to education students in their least restrictive environments, specifically students with disabilities.
- h. MTSS plan that includes plans for both Tiers 2 and 3.
- i. A plan for Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum.
- j. A Foster Care plan that includes a Foster Liaison.
- k. An example of the Student Code of Conduct that the Board is currently working on.
- l. A non-academic mandatory training plan.
- m. A revision of item three on pages seven and eight of section 1.3, that includes IB assessment expectations built into student performance measures.
- n. Additional survey data from families with children eligible for attendance in 2022.
- o. A scope and sequence document that shows identified curriculum for math and ELA (including NYS Common Core ELA and Literacy Curriculum, IB courses, and NYS Common Core Math Curriculum) fitting into the 60/80-minute instructional blocks specified in the schedule.
- p. Revisit Performance Goal 1: School-Based Success in the Education Plan. Provide examples of assessments that align to the DSSF as well as any other valid and reliable academic measures.
- q. Identify the evaluation tools that will be used to evaluate teachers, specialist, and administrators keeping in mind that the planning and approval process for an alternative system takes a minimum of twelve months. Currently, applications are not being accepted for an alternative evaluation system.

- r. Give specific clarification on the purpose of preference bullet number three (Students who have a specific interest in BASSE’s teaching methods, philosophy, and educational focus) including how it is being factored into decision making as an enrollment process. Please include how student work submissions will be measured.
- s. The names of the mentoring and induction site coordinator and lead mentor of the Comprehensive Induction Plan.
- t. A plan for Driver’s Education.

#### **4. Performance Management**

- a. Clarify the measure being used for Grade 12 for College and Career Readiness.
  - i. In lieu of Growth to Goal data, in grade 12, students will be held accountable for meeting at least one of the measures listed in the Delaware School Success Framework (page 20) prior to graduating

#### **5. Staffing**

- a. Provide an alignment between teacher salaries in the budget for year 1 (\$510,000.00) and the described staffing goals from various experience levels.
- b. A plan to train staff members that join as late or mid-year hires in the IB program.

#### **6. Governance and Management**

- a. Additional details regarding the handling of financial duties. What functions will Omnivest be handling and what functions will be the responsibility of school staff? Who will have access to FSF and PHRST? Who will be responsible for onboarding new employees and maintaining personnel records?
- b. Clarification on any potential delayed opening due to low enrolment. Would the school delay opening if enrolment does not meet 100% capacity? If not, what would the threshold percentage be?

#### **7. Parent and Community Involvement**

- a. No follow-up necessary

#### **8. Start Up and Operations**

- a. A more detailed start-up plan to include:
  - i. Physical student record keeping to include records kept after graduation
  - ii. Training of staff in eSchool
  - iii. An understanding of the school choice window
  - iv. Recruitment events to take place during the school choice window
  - v. Gaining access in State systems (FSF, PHRST)
  - vi. Training of appropriate staff in state systems
  - vii. Procurement of furniture and supplies
  - viii. Obtainment of a Certificate of Occupancy by the June 15 deadline.
  - ix. Addressing of start-up plan tasks to occur between January 2022 and July 2022.

- b. A list of the types of insurance coverage that the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage.

#### **9. Facilities**

- a. A facilities plan that incorporates cost estimates for different facilities options and timelines.

#### **10. Budget**

- a. Additional information regarding the Other Funds/Foundation Grants included in the budget and budget narrative. Information should include commitment letters from funders and actual amount of funds raised to date. Without substantiation, we cannot count these amounts as available to the applicant for the planning year or the out years. If outside funds are removed from the budget, it appears that the school will operate in a deficit situation.
- b. Provide a budget narrative that depicts the budget should only 80% of the enrollment materialize.
- c. Budget Narrative – Additional documentation to support the budgeted amounts for all categories. The narrative does not provide sufficient detail or support. Several of the expenses appear to be under-budgeted, incorrectly budgeted or missing. Examples:
  - i. The amount budgeted for textbooks is \$25,000 but the narrative states that the amount is based on \$1,000 per new student which would be \$250,000.
  - ii. There is no amount budgeted under Curriculum or Assessments.
  - iii. Amounts appear to be under-budgeted in several lines including Computers, Maintenance, Supplies/Materials, Equipment and Other. For example, the amount budgeted for Maintenance in Year 1 is \$2,500 and Year 2 is \$7,563. How were these numbers calculated? According to the narrative this should include trash removal services, exterminators, shredding services and routine maintenance. These amounts appear to be under-budgeted.
  - iv. Dean of Academic Excellence is in the budget narrative beginning with Year 2 but the organizational chart shows the position in Years 0 through 5.
  - v. An understanding that employees of the State of Delaware may choose any insurance plan offered by the state regardless of cost to the school.
  - vi. A break-down of professional development costs.
  - vii. Costs to contract with an outside company to provide services for progress monitoring and summative assessments.
  - viii. Contracted Services – the amounts budgeted are inadequate to cover all of the items that have been referenced in the narrative. In Year 1, the budget reflects \$30,000, which is supposed to cover state safety and security personnel (see Line 29), substitute teachers, other educational

consultants, and progress monitoring and summative assessments (see Line 25). ix. A clarification of the term “White Boards”. If this is in reference to “SmartBoard Technology” the budget should be adjusted as these costs over \$2,500.00 per classroom.

- x. A cost of the 1:1 technology plan as it is not reflected in the budget.
  - xi. The applicant states that Proximate Network will provide 30% of the funding required to purchase land and modular units. Are the funds currently available? If not, what is the timetable for making those funds available?
  - xii. Telephone / Communications – the amounts budgeted seem very low. Year 1 budget is \$3,000 and includes internet access, landlines, VoIP service, cell phones and air cards. The applicant notes that they will participate in E-rate.
  - xiii. Other – the amount budgeted in Year 1 is low. \$3,500 is budgeted to cover facility supplies, toilet paper, trash bags, soap, paint, hardware and other school supplies.
  - xiv. Equipment Purchase - \$50,000 in Year 1 to purchase classroom furniture, computers, laptops, servers and projectors. This amount seems low considering most of the school will need to be outfitted. The timing is also concerning- these items should be purchased prior to Year 1 to ensure that everything is in place before the start of the school year.
  - xv. Accounting and Payroll – provide a breakdown of expenses in this category. How much has been budgeted for the audit and how much is budgeted for back office services?
  - xvi. Federal Funds Budget – Line 20 – Supplies and Materials – Given the amounts budgeted in this line, provide a more detailed breakdown of the proposed expenses. The budget narrative states “Supplies and materials used in federal funded activities.”
- d. A Business Plan depicting the following:
- i. Additional information regarding the school’s contingency plan. Information provided does not provide sufficient detail regarding the plan if revenues are lower than estimated.
  - ii. Additional information regarding internal controls plan including how separation of duties will be maintained during the deposit process.
  - iii. The applicant states that the board will build a sufficient cash reserve to cover possible closure over the next five years. Please note that schools must meet this requirement by December 31 of the third year of operation.
  - iv. Timelines for accessing State systems (will they be accessed during the planning year and if so, will staff be paid through PHRST?)

**Next Steps:**

- The CSAC Initial Report will be issued no later than February 8, 2021.
- The first of two public hearings will be held on February 15, 2021, beginning at 6:00 p.m. That meeting will take place virtually.
- The school will have an opportunity to comment on the CSAC's Initial Report. The school's comments are due on or before February 23, 2021.
- A second and Final Meeting of the CSAC will be held on March 25, 2021, at 12:30 P.M. That meeting will take place virtually.
- On or before, April 2, 2021 the CSAC will issue a Final Report, which will include its recommendation on the New Charter Application.
- A second and Final Public Hearing will be held on April 5, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. That meeting will take place virtually.
- The public comment period ends on April 9, 2021.
- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the April 22, 2021 State Board of Education meeting and seek the assent of the State Board.

## APPENDIX A

### 1. English Language Arts Recommendations:

- Promote and support teacher’s use of the opportunities provided in Paths to College and Career for students who read, write, speak, or listen below grade level, or in a language other than English. Paths to College and Career is rated highly as an instructional resources for the scaffolds it provides so that all students can access the complex texts and meet or exceed grade level standards. These resources should be maximized before supplemented or modified.
- Develop a thorough system of supports for struggling adolescent readers as part of the MTSS framework. According to the application, “These same districts (in Sussex County) are also home to some of the largest populations of students from low income households, students with disabilities, English-Language Learners, and students of color. Although Sussex County contains some of the most diverse rural school districts in the country, the state has still not closed the gaps for the educational outcomes of its rural students.” It is expected that this system will be part of regulation curriculum requirements by the end of the year.

### 2. Science Recommendations:

- Teachers should register for NGSX training when available.
- Administration should attend NGSX PLANS training when available.
- Use [www.stemteachingtools.org](http://www.stemteachingtools.org) for reference to help guide professional development and use supports for science classroom equity, three-dimensional learning, and assessments.
- Use the Safety-First Manual and Regulation 885 to meet the facility requirements for middle school science classrooms.

### 3. World Languages Recommendations:

- Consider intentionally aligning curriculum to the IB themes. IB has established the following themes for World Languages: Identities, Experiences, Human Ingenuity, Social Organization and Sharing the Planet. While some themes identified in the Scope and Sequence documents do obviously connect with an IB theme, the overall Scope and Sequence documents did not seem to be intentionally design to closely align with those particular themes or with the IB essential questions for each theme. Would there be value in identifying the aligned IB theme(s) and organizing the unit around an essential question?
- Consider the power of focusing on the elements of Social Justice and Service Learning in your curriculum. The current Scope and Sequence is somewhat traditional in its approach to curricular themes. How could the current proposed themes intentionally focus on the school’s mission “to create pathways, through proximity, for our students, their families, and our community”? How could the concepts of social justice and service learning be more intentionally integrated?