

Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security

Diligence - Fidelity - Scholarship

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February 16, 2018

To the Charter Schools Accountability Committee:

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of the CSAC Initial Report on February 1, 2018. Per your request, we are providing the following information for consideration in your evaluation of our formal review. Through public comment and the formal review process, it has become apparent that the educational stakeholders of Delaware agree that a high school program that prepares our graduates for careers as first responders is not only a benefit to our children, but a benefit to our state as a whole. Throughout public comment the words "nitch-school" were often used. DAPSS has chosen to utilize the process of formal review to share our unique story about our past three years, as well as a tool to ensure the future success of our very unique and specialized school.

Academic Performance

1. Describe why the school has not shown academic growth.

DAPSS has not shown the amount of academic growth that our school knows our children are capable of demonstrating. As shared by the DOE, and reinforced by our team during CSAC, there have been some challenges that DAPSS has along with other high schools relating to the increased rigor of the SAT assessment. This story is compounded exponentially at DAPSS due to small class size and student attrition. With that said, we want to make sure to clarify that DAPSS students ARE growing academically. Unfortunately, there have been times over the last three years where this growth is difficult to capture on a state report card. We want to take this opportunity to share that story in a way that everyone understands.

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CHARLES COPELAND

Below is a chart of the students tested last year broken down by their grade level and feeder school pattern.¹

Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security

School Name	Students by Grade Level, School Year 2016-17		Total Students
	11	12 ¹	
Penn (William) High School	12	4	16
Newark High School	7		7
Dickinson (John) High School	3	1	4
Christiana High School	3	1	4
McKean (Thomas) High School	4		4
Glasgow High School	3		3
Smyrna High School	2		2
Brandywine High School	2		2
Mount Pleasant High School	2		2
duPont (Alexis I.) High School	1		1
Middletown High School		1	1
Grand Total	39	7	46

The trends of feeder pattern school for DAPSS have remained fairly consistent. Comparatively, DAPSS and its feeder pattern schools have scored similarly across the three years demonstrating that the growth of DAPSS students has been consistent with its feeder pattern schools. As the scores of the feeder pattern schools fluctuated, so have those of DAPSS. Comparatively, DAPSS has remained within 5 to 150 points within the state average. DAPSS scored above three of the feeder pattern schools consistently for the last three years.

SAT Average Scores for the Class of 2013-2014	Total Students Tested	Average Total Score	Average Math Score	Average Reading Score	Average Writing Score	# Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmark	% of Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmark
McKean High		1,130.89	385.31	379.38	366.20	20	10.42%
Christiana High		1,156.46	388.97	385.60	381.89	13	7.43%
Glasgow High		1,162.41	386.31	397.85	378.26	11	5.64%
Penn High		1,178.98	401.81	393.92	383.26	46	11.70%
Dickinson High		1,254.56	426.25	411.10	417.21	23	16.91%
Smyrna High		1,262.16	420.16	425.03	416.96	50	16.34%
Del Acad Public Safety		1,266.67	423.33	423.33	420.00	0	0.00%
Brandywine High		1,313.65	445.57	442.81	425.26	42	21.88%
Delaware State Total	8,026	1,316.97	445.97	440.26	430.74	1,803	22.46%
Mt Pleasant High		1,349.13	453.15	452.55	443.42	50	33.56%
A I duPont High		1,353.05	456.56	450.43	446.05	80	31.25%
Newark High		1,370.35	455.18	463.06	452.11	84	29.58%
Middletown High		1,397.81	472.12	470.73	454.96	78	28.47%

¹ Some people may ask why 12th grade students are included on the chart when only 11th grade students are tested. These students represent a group of students that were behind in credits when they arrived at DAPSS. Through credit recovery and other initiatives, the school was able to assist these students in getting 'caught up' in their course work for these students to graduate with their proper grade level.

SAT Average Scores for the Class of 2014-2015	Total Students Tested	Average Total Score	Average Math Score	Average Reading Score	Average Writing Score	# Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmark	% of Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmark
McKean High		1,163.04	391.52	394.49	377.03	11	7.97%
Christiana High		1,175.90	394.96	399.42	381.51	11	7.91%
Glasgow High		1,184.44	397.40	404.26	382.78	22	9.87%
Penn High		1,187.69	400.41	408.37	378.91	28	6.80%
DAPSS		1,235.38	414.29	421.65	399.45	12	13.19%
Smyrna High		1,270.83	421.09	432.15	417.58	41	13.58%
Dickinson High		1,277.75	434.31	427.94	415.49	17	16.67%
Delaware State Total	8,054	1,325.87	449.13	448.85	427.89	1,807	22.44%
Brandywine High		1,326.84	454.34	447.45	425.05	47	22.17%
Newark High		1,359.91	452.91	471.13	435.88	101	29.97%
A I duPont High		1,377.70	467.01	465.83	444.87	49	26.20%
Middletown High		1,413.47	470.67	482.24	460.56	86	32.09%
Mt Pleasant High		1,468.64	500.15	496.21	472.28	85	41.26%

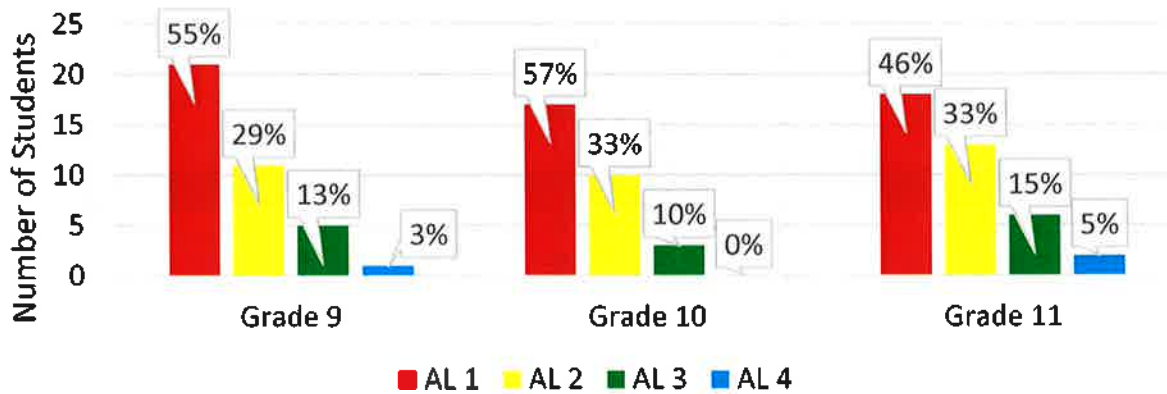
SAT Average Scores for the Class of 2015-2016	Total Students Tested	Average Total Score	Average Math Score	Average Reading Score	Average Writing Score	# Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmark	% of Students Meeting College Readiness Benchmark
McKean High		1,006.09	360.22	366.42	279.44	5	2.79%
Christiana High		1,080.52	382.71	376.65	321.16	9	5.81%
Dickinson High		1,111.36	394.70	379.77	336.89	13	9.85%
DAPSS		1,134.12	384.24	406.24	343.65	4	4.71%
Penn High		1,143.06	393.97	397.06	352.03	28	6.70%
Glasgow High		1,166.13	400.86	407.47	357.80	19	10.22%
Smyrna High		1,227.03	410.85	419.80	396.38	45	13.12%
Brandywine High		1,262.56	440.70	431.16	390.70	35	17.59%
Delaware State Total	8,262	1,284.33	442.14	437.43	404.76	1,683	20.37%
Newark High		1,305.17	456.84	456.35	391.98	86	24.71%
A I duPont High		1,306.94	450.50	445.54	410.91	59	24.38%
Mt Pleasant High		1,361.90	475.87	460.16	425.87	80	31.75%
Middletown High		1,367.83	470.85	462.37	434.61	75	25.42%

*This data can be accessed at [Delaware School Profiles](#)

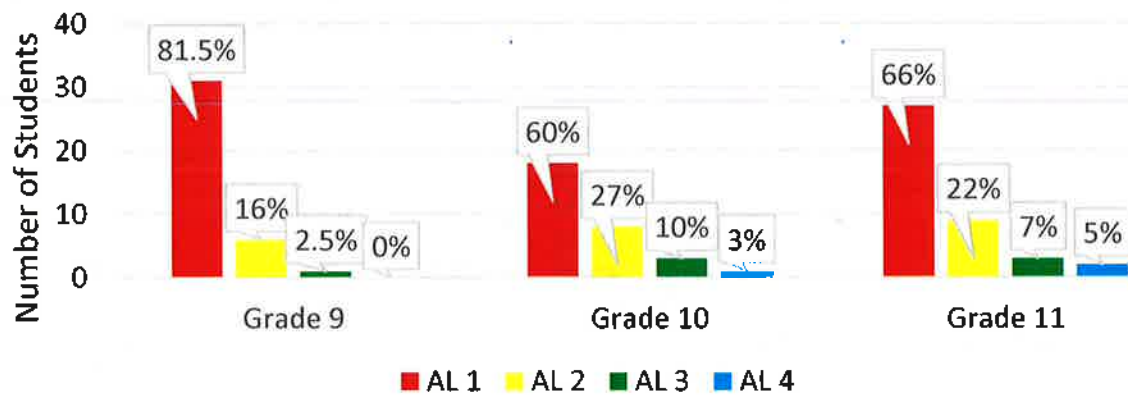
What has changed most dramatically is the number of actual students assessed by the school. This number went from 91 students in 2014-2015 to 47 students in the 2016-2017 year. This was further compounded by the addition of new students to the school. Data provided by the DOE and School Profiles indicates that 35% of the students assessed during the 16/17 school year attended the school for 18 months or less prior to the state assessment. The data is compelling as only the students that have attended the school for 3 years were proficient in ELA. While 0% of students were proficient in Math, the School Profiles growth data indicates that DAPSS has minimally exceeded that state average in growth by 1.17%.

Incoming students are entering the Academy with increasingly lower test scores. Per the state assessment (SBAC), DAPSS students entered 9th grade with low proficiency levels as illustrated below by Achievement Level (AL).

8th Grade SBAC ELA



8th Grade SBAC Math



During CSAC, data was presented that spoke of the change in school demographics including the number of special education students. While this information is true, it should be noted that the greatest impact from the demographic change will occur this year when 30.6% of the students tested will have disabilities.

Grade	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
	# Students	% Students with Disabilities	# Students	% Students with Disabilities	# Students	% Students with Disabilities	# Students	% Students with Disabilities
Grade 9	105	25.7	78	25.6	76	32.9	61	32.8
Grade 10	104	16.3	71	22.5	83	31.3	49	-
Grade 11	75	-	74	-	53	-	72	30.6
Grade 12	79	-	80	-	58	-	46	-
Total	363	16.5	303	19.5	270	25.2	228	30.3

What do all of the numbers mean? In the simplest form, it means that the singular snap shot provided by the Delaware School Success Framework needs to be further investigated when examining the data of small schools with high percentages of student attrition, students with disabilities, and students in course recovery to determine if the school is growing. The data indicates that students are making progress but continue to need effective systems of RTI.

2. The school described the performance of their current 9th grade class but this data is not a part of the academic achievement data that has resulted in the formal review process for DAPSS. Use specific data from State sources like Ed Insight, DeSSA, etc. to describe the performance of the graduating classes of 2017 and 2016 to demonstrate students made progress at the school. Please be sure to redact any personally identifiable information.

See response to Q1

3. Provide the Star assessment data for each grade level for school year 2016-17 and school year 2017-18. Please be sure to redact any personally identifiable information.

Below is the STAR data for each grade level for both the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. As seen by the data below, students performed lower in the 2017-2018 year as compared to 2016-2017. This decline is consistent with the decrease in SAT average scores for DAPSS and state as shown in Q1 chart above.

STAR Fall Scale Scores				
	Math 2016-2017	Math 2017-2018	Reading 2016-2017	Reading 2017-2018
Grade 9	713	687	744	672
Grade 10	724	718	731	727
Grade 11	769	732	904	751
Grade 12	831	739	1084	834

4. Provide a summary, by grade level, of how many students are grouped across Response to Intervention (RTI) tiers in mathematics and English Language Arts.

The Academy recognizes that we are receiving students who are coming to us suffering from trauma or with special needs. Approximately 46% of our population currently receives Tier II or Tier III RTI services in math and/or ELA. This takes place in five Read 180 sections and four math enrichment sections. Math enrichment focuses on the individual instructional report pulled from the math STAR report. The teacher is then responsible for assigning the student to specific concepts within IXL or OdysseyWare. With Read 180, students spend approximately 30 minutes in whole group instruction, 30 minutes working on the computer answering questions related to reading passages within the Read 180 program, and 30 minutes of independent, leveled reading.

RTI Tiers	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Tier II ELA	13	12	15	1
Tier III ELA	15	5	9	0
Tier II Math	12	10	8	0
Tier III Math	4	3	3	0
Both Tier II Math and ELA	1	1	0	0
Both Tier III Math and ELA	4	3	2	0

- a. **Please describe what training teachers receive to provide specific instruction to meet these students' needs.**

Teachers receive a variety of training to meet student needs. Teachers are trained on how to look at data and group students accordingly. Teachers of RTI classes have received 3 PD days of Read 180 training; math RTI teachers receive training on IXL as well as how to pull STAR reports to identify specific instructional needs of students. All teachers receive training on OdysseyWare. Other trainings include (1) differentiated instruction (2) basic, proven instructional practices and (3) instructional grouping.

5. **The Department approved the school's English Language Arts and mathematics curricula that was submitted with its September 30, 2014 charter renewal application. Describe how teachers and administrators are being trained in the implementation of the Common Core standards including curricular resources the school has chosen to use.**

- a. **Provide a professional development calendar showing curricular aligned professional development for school years 2016-17 and 2017-18.**

A rigorous professional development calendar was created beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. Teachers were required to attend PLCs, PDs, and off-site PDs to improve in instruction, classroom management, and how to use data in the classroom (See Appendices A and B).

- b. **Provide a list of the textbook and/or curricular programs used in mathematics and English Language Arts including dates when they were adopted and what types of training was provided to teachers.**

Math: The Academy currently uses the Common Core edition Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II (Holt McDougal) as well as the fifth edition of Pre-Calculus with Limits (Houghton Mifflin) and Calculus of a Single Variable (Houghton Mifflin). Last year, the staff was introduced to a scope and sequence concept in the form of Power Standards by Learning Focused. Teachers grouped, identified the most important standards, and created an outline for instruction. Additionally, teachers worked in PLCs to create mid-terms and finals that could be input into Performance Plus so that teachers would have easy access to student performance results to make instructional decisions.

ELA: The Academy uses the Holt McDougal Grade 9 and 10 books for ELA and Glencoe British Literature and World Literature for grades 11 and 12. Additional novels are incorporated within the curriculum. Just as discussed above concerning the Power Standards, ELA teachers were asked to do the same.

Professional Development: Teachers receive training in implementing their curriculum in a variety of ways. PLCs were created that incorporated the CCSS and concepts such as text complexity, academic vocabulary, close reading, and analysis of the specific ELA/Math strands. Social studies and science teachers were trained in how to incorporate history/social studies, science, and technical subjects within their instruction. Teachers regularly meet as departments to create assessments based on these same standards. We are currently looking at updating our current curriculum guides during PLCs.

6. Based on the school's request for an additional year to implement a transformational plan, provide the following:

a. Describe why the school has not been successful.

There were several reasons why the school has not been successful. The turnover in Board members and school leaders created a shift in priorities from quality to quantity, which resulted in a focus on filling seats as opposed to ensuring alignment to the school mission. This shift in priorities created a deterioration of the school culture and climate, which led to staff and student attrition. The increase in attrition had a negative impact on the school revenue. The loss of revenue required a decrease in expenses, which hurt the quality of instruction and resulted in low academic achievement. As part of the transformation plan, a root cause analysis will be completed to determine the contributing factors and develop a resolution for each one.

b. Specify what metrics and goals the school expects to meet by next year.

Goal	Metric	On-Site Monitoring & Technical Assistance Schedule
All Teachers and Special Ed Coordinator Trained in the Development and Implementation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards Based IEPs The ABCs of IEPs 	Preliminary training completed before the start of the 18-19 SY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2018 February 2019 June 2019
All Teachers, Support Staff and Administration trained in "Enhanced CPI" Training to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit setting in the classroom De-escalation of Conflict 	Preliminary training completed before the start of the 18-19 SY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2018 February 2019 June 2019
All Teachers, Support Staff and Administration trained in "Special Ed 101" to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic overview of IDEA and DE Code Best practices in working with SWD 	Preliminary training completed before the start of the 18-19 SY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2018 February 2019 June 2019
All Teachers, Support Staff and Administration trained in the development and implementation of 504 Accommodation Plans to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic overview of Section 504 of the ADA Best practices in implementing accommodations 	Preliminary training completed before the start of the 18-19 SY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2018 February 2019 June 2019
Administration and Support Staff Trained in the Development and Implementation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Tiered System of Behavioral Supports (i.e., RTI for Behavior) Trauma-informed practices 	Preliminary training completed before the start of the 18-19 SY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 2018 February 2019 June 2019

Note: Minimum training time is two, 8 hour days.

- c. **Provide a specific and targeted plan to achieve those goals that includes multiple measures that will demonstrate the growth needed to meet standards within three years.**

The DAPSS Transformation Plan will be a multi-tiered approach with a single focus on student achievement. The plan includes the following initiatives:

- **Governance:** The Board of Directors will partner with the Delaware Alliance for Non-Profit Advancement (DANA) to complete a series of training sessions (Board Recruitment, Board Excellence, and School Mission & Vision). The first session will focus on evaluating the composition of the current Board and identifying any needed skills/expertise, which will drive targeted board recruitment. The second session will provide the Board with the necessary knowledge and skills to govern effectively. After the second session, the Board will complete a review of its bylaws and policies. Revisions and/or additions will be made as necessary to ensure accountability. The Board Excellence session will also provide guidance for the development of the DAPSS strategic plan. The third session will guide the Board and school leaders as they examine the current school mission and vision to ensure they reflect the DAPSS core values and strategic plan.
- **School Leadership:** The school leadership team will complete a written school improvement plan that outlines the root causes and research-based plans for systemic improvement in the areas of student academic performance, enrollment, school climate, and finances.
- **Educator Effectiveness:** All DAPSS teachers and leaders will attend a minimum of 25 hours of Professional Development trainings beyond scheduled PD days as approved by the head of school, curriculum director or board chair (for administrators). The Colonial School District evaluation system (The Teaching and Learning Framework or TLF) for teachers and specialists will be used by DAPSS administrators. DAPSS administrators will be fully trained on its usage prior to the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year. At least 75% of DAPSS teachers will be rated as proficient or higher by March 2019 as measured by the Colonial TLF. DAPSS will align their school calendar to the 2018-2019 Colonial district calendar. With that alignment, DAPSS staff will attend all Colonial teacher and administrator professional development offerings on those days.
- **Student Achievement:** Student achievement proficiency scores will increase by 25% in reading and math annually as measured by Colonial approved common assessments and on SBAC. DAPSS average daily student attendance will increase to a minimum of 95% for 2018-2019 school year.
- **School Culture and Climate:** A school culture based on high expectations and strong character will be established from day one. Core values will focus on character traits such as grit, perseverance, and a positive mindset. A code of honor will be implemented to decrease discipline referrals by 25% and improve overall school climate.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** DAPSS will develop a plan to strengthen family and community engagement that will include communication, volunteer and mentor opportunities, fundraising, and partnerships for student success.

Budget

7. Submit a budget for the school year 2017-18.

See Appendix C – FY18 2017-2018 Operating Budget.

8. Submit budgets and revenue sheets, accounting for the new building and one-time cost to move based on both 200 and 240 students.

See Appendix D – School Year 2018-19 Operating Budget and narrative.

Proposed Facility

9. Specify anticipated one-time cost to move and prepare the building for use as a high school.

a. Will there be savings in-ongoing cost?

As a result of our modification request being declined, we are in the process of renegotiating our current lease at Fatima. The provided budget takes the proposed lease amount into account.

b. Provide a timeline for building upgrades.

n/a

Student Enrollment

10. Based on the school's changing student demographics, describe the additional resources the school will provide to meet the needs of these students.

The changing demographics of DAPSS's students have clear implications for the Academy—especially in terms of academic achievement and the rate of high Academy completion. These trends signal the importance of careful planning for DAPSS's long-term needs. Not all cadets entering the Academy are equally ready to learn at grade level. In response, the Academy will implement programs to promote educational readiness and close achievement gaps, such as summer academy and after school tutoring. Through our partnership with Colonial, educator effectiveness will be supported with professional development, coaching and feedback. Students will receive instruction focused on small-group/skill-based learning, access to a mental health professional, access to mentors, and positive academic and behavior supports. The RTI program will be evaluated from assessment tool to targeted instruction to ensure the right metrics are being used to achieve the desired outcomes.

11. Provide a detailed recruitment strategy and timeline to meet the specified 240 student enrollment target required for the school's financial viability.

See Appendix E – Recruitment Plan

Insurance

12. Provide a copy of the school's insurance policy to address potential complaints or compensatory education.

See Appendix F – Certificate of Insurance.

- 13. Provide copies of all settlement agreements the school has entered into and evidence that those agreements have been or are being complied with, including documentation of any trust funds or payments required under the agreement.**

See Appendix G – Settlement Information.

- 14. Identify any potential claims that may result in financial liability of which you are aware.**

No such claims exist at this point.

Organizational Performance

- 15. Provide a plan for the school's transformation that addresses the following:**

- a. Staff Quality (Credentialing): Provide the current licensure and certification status of teachers in each Core Content Course. Identify any teachers teaching courses outside of their areas of certification.**

Haye, Karl, ELA-Special Education Instructor	Continuing License, Standard Certificate, Teacher of Exceptional Children Grades K-12, Secondary English Language Arts Teacher (Grades 9-12, also valid 6-8 in a Middle School)
McGonigal, Ginhe, ELA Instructor	Continuing License, Standard Certificate, Teacher of English Language Arts Grades 9-12 (Valid 6-8 in a Middle School)
Williams, Stephanie, Chemistry, Biology	Emergency Certificate, Secondary Science Teacher (Chemistry Grades 9-12, also valid grades 6-8 in a Middle School)
Benjamin, Hodesblatt, Physical Science Instructor	Emergency Certificate, Secondary Science Teacher (Physical Science Grades 9-12, also valid grades 6-8 in a Middle School)
Davis, John, Math Instructor	Emergency Certificate, Secondary Math Teacher (Math Grades 9-12, also valid grades 6-8 in a Middle School)
Vacant Position, Secondary Math	Vacant Position, Secondary Math
Difillipo, Brittany, Social Studies Instructor	Initial License, Standard Certificate, Secondary Social Studies Teacher (Grades 9-12, also Valid grades 6-8 in a Middle School)
Vacant Position, Social Studies Instructor	Vacant Position, Secondary Social Studies

- b. Teacher Recruitment: Describe the schools teacher recruitment plan that factors in the school's low enrollment and one-time moving costs.**

As part Board of the Academy's transformation plan, there will be thorough examination of the current status of staffing needs and recruitment efforts. The transformation includes development of timelines for recruitment and hiring, as well as aligning roles and responsibilities with proper individuals. The Academy is also focusing on updating clear recruitment materials and marketing. The moving costs are no longer applicable (see Q9).

c. Student supports to address the changing student demographics.

The changing demographics of DAPSS's students have clear implications for the Academy—especially in terms of academic achievement and the rate of high Academy completion. These trends signal the importance of careful planning for DAPSS's long-term needs. Not all cadets entering the Academy are equally ready to learn at grade level. In response, the Academy will implement programs to promote educational readiness and close achievement gaps, such as summer academy and after school tutoring. Through our partnership with Colonial, educator effectiveness will be supported with professional development, coaching and feedback. Students will receive instruction focused on small-group/skill-based learning, access to a mental health professional, access to mentors, and positive academic and behavior supports. The RTI program will be evaluated from assessment tool to targeted instruction to ensure the right metrics are being used to achieve the desired outcomes.

d. Board transition: Describe how the Board is demonstrating to teachers and parents that the school is well run and a good school to keep working in or sending their students to.

The Board Chairperson has dedicated time to meet with staff, student and families to assure them of the steps being taken to improve the quality of instruction, culture and climate, and academic results. In the spirit of transparency, the Board has provided the school community with regular updates on the formal review process. Once strategic partnerships have been solidified, the Board Chairperson will be working with the DAPSS team to host information sessions with existing students/families, as well as potential students/families, to discuss the transformation plan and its expected outcomes.

e. Identify high leverage, low cost strategies that would build the school's mission, beliefs and practices.

Strategies will include:

- Board Retreat to review/reiterate/revise bylaws, expectations, processes and procedures for effective governance.
- School Culture & Climate Program to establish expectations, commitments, and consequences within School Code of Conduct. The program coordination will be handled by staff and students.
- Communication plan

f. The Board's plan to hold itself and school leadership accountable.

As stated above, the Board will review/reiterate/revise bylaws, expectations, processes and procedures for effective governance. The Board Chairperson will be responsible for holding all Board members accountable for their attendance, engagement, and leadership. Board membership and terms will be closely monitored and updated as needed.

g. Strategies to prevent recurrence of past Board dysfunction and how effectiveness will be sustained.

The Board dysfunction can be attributed to several factors; however, the systemic issue was a lack of knowledge of board's role and responsibilities in school governance. This issue then led to an ineffective Board, which impacted the school operations due to lack of oversight and accountability. To address the systemic issue, the Board will ensure every member completes board and financial training within 90 days of joining the board. We will

also implement an onboarding process to ensure all members understand their role and responsibilities.

- 16. The Board was provided notice of deficiencies three years ago when they were renewed with conditions. Why did the Board fail to act to correct those issues over the last three years?**

The Board governance issues have been acknowledged and addressed in previous responses.

- 17. Provide reports from the State system to verify monthly attendance rates as well as a breakdown of daily attendance and class period attendance.**

See Appendix H – Attendance Report.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Margie López Waite
Chairperson, DAPSS Board of Directors
margie.lopezwaite@laaa.k12.de.us