

DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name: Delaware Military Academy

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Head of School
Anthony Pullella, Commandant

11/26/13

Date



Financial Director
Kenneth Gatson

11/26/13

Date



Board President
Donald Fulton

11/26/13

Date

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 1st (September 30th for renewing charter schools)

All schools submit one (1) signed copy (PDF via email preferred) to the DDOE Charter School Office

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ABSTRACT

Delaware Military Academy (DMA) is a non-profit, 501-c-3, charter school located in Wilmington, Delaware. It is the first Navy JROTC Military Charter School in the United States financially supported by the US Navy. DMA does not teach military philosophy, but rather uses military philosophy to teach. This philosophy has a strong value system to promote and develop integrity, citizenship, service, fitness, patriotism, leadership, teamwork, and self-esteem. The program offers Delaware high school students a tuition-free, four-year, college preparatory curriculum.

The school is chartered by the Red Clay Consolidated School District, as opposed to being chartered by the State of Delaware. In accordance with the charter, any high school student in Delaware can gain admission to the Academy. However, most cadets come from Northern New Castle County and a few live in Southern New Castle County.

DMA was officially formed on September 20, 2001, at the first board meeting. On October 18, 2001, the Board approved the By-laws, and filed necessary incorporation documents. One month later, the Red Clay Consolidated School Board voted unanimously to accept the Delaware Military Academy's application as a charter military high school. The final charter was approved and granted on May 15, 2002. With the charter approved, the Delaware Military Academy received monetary grant awards from the Delaware Department of Education. The school received its certificate of occupancy on June 13, 2003.

In its ten years of operation, the mission of the Academy has never changed. The Academy's targeted population is any student in the 8th grade in the State of Delaware who is interested in becoming the graduate described in our Profile of Graduate.

Mission

The mission of the Delaware Military Academy is to prepare young men and women for their next level of education by providing them with a foundation that leads to good citizenship. Encouraged by military training, learning will take place within an environment that embraces both mental and physical health. This holistic approach to education fosters an understanding of the obligations of citizenship and self-discipline. In addition, cadets are exposed to positive moral ideals while being afforded opportunities to engage in appropriate social activities.

Belief Statements

- The role of the Delaware Military Academy is to educate the entire cadet, paying particular attention to academic, social and emotional needs
- An education at the Delaware Military Academy fosters citizenship, leadership and self-discipline
- Military training teaches cadets a sense of responsibility, integrity and morality
- Responsible citizens have a sense of honor and respect for themselves and for others
- Hard work, dedication and motivation are essential for learning
- Cadets, parents and teachers share accountability and responsibility for the cadet's education
- A safe and enjoyable learning environment promotes positive interaction between cadets and teachers
- Cadets graduate from the Delaware Military Academy ready to accept an adult role in society
- Community service builds strong character, unity and a sense of responsibility for others
- A Delaware Military Academy graduate exhibits creative, critical and independent thinking skills

Profile of Graduate

Scholarship

- Ability to express oneself effectively in oral and written form
- Ability to think independently
- Proficient in all academic content areas
- Proficient in the use of technology
- Prepared to enter a post-secondary program of study

Leadership

- Ability to give and receive respect
- Ability to set goals, motivate others, and lead by example
- Ability to see a mission through to completion
- Maturity in thought and expression
- Commitment to excellence
- Command presence
- Integrity
- Physical and mental wellness

Citizenship

- Patriotism
- Cultural, political and environmental awareness
- Respect for rules and regulations in the community
- Regard for honesty in self and others
- Compassion and empathy for others
- Sense of duty to serve the community

Fall Enrollment by Grade

	<u>2012-13</u>
Grade 9	143
Grade 10	145
Grade 11	138
Grade 12	130
Total	556

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

	<u>2012-13</u>
African American	6.5%
American Indian	0.9%
Asian	2.2%
Hispanic/Latino	5.0%
White	83.8%
Multi-Racial	1.6%

Other Student Characteristics

	<u>2012-13</u>
English Language Learner	0.2%
Low Income	21.9%
Special Education	0.9%
Enrolled for Full Year	N/A

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE STUDENT GROWTH, PROFICIENCY, AND COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS LEVELS AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

Strengths-

- Above the state averages in DCAS scores
- 8th place or better in DCAS scores within the high schools' median scores in Reading (5th), Math (8th) and Science (8th)
- At the two extremes of DCAS scores, the cadets scored significantly better than the state average.

DCAS Reading of Spring 2013				
	9 th Grade		10 th Grade	
	DMA	State	DMA	State
Advanced	65%	41%	74%	48%
Well Below	1%	15%	0%	12%

DCAS Mathematics of Spring 2013				
	9 th Grade		10 th Grade	
	DMA	State	DMA	State
Advanced	74%	48%	31%	21%
Well Below	0%	12%	1%	10%

Challenges

We did not meet standard in Academic Measure 4a. (Does students' performance on the SAT reflect college readiness?). Only 32% of the cadets earned a 1550 combined score on the SATs. A high school who goal is to graduate young men and women ready for their next step should have 100% or as close as possible of its graduates college ready. Therefore, College Readiness is one of the Academy's goals in its Middle States Accreditation plan.

The Academy had a College Application Week from 11/18 through 11/22. It was a huge success. At the end of the week, only 10% of the seniors had not filled out a college application. Most who did applied to multiple colleges. Cadets are becoming more focused on what they need to do to go to college and in earlier grades.

We did not meet standard in Academic Measure 1c. (Are Students making enough annual growth to maintain or achieve proficiency status or by the 10th grade?). We switched to the traditional curriculum from the integrated mathematics curriculum. It is the first year for the

new Geometry text. Typically, implementation of new textbooks result in a drop in standardized test scores for the first year or two until the teachers learn the areas of weakness in the text.

Opportunities

As previously mentioned, the Academy is beginning a new cycle of accreditation with Middle States. One of our goals is College Readiness which we are measuring with SAT scores among other metrics. We have developed an action plan to improve SAT preparation for Middle States which will improve this metric in the Frameworks also.

There is an emphasis at the State level to increase college readiness. This is an opportunity for us because the State is offering professional development and some funding for this initiative. Our guidance department has already attended several events.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

Strengths:

In June 2013, the Academy hired a new Finance and Human Resources Director, Kenneth Gatson. Mr. Gatson was previously with the Colonial School District, where he was the Finance Specialist with significant FSF experience. Since joining the Academy, Mr. Gatson has also completed the necessary PHRST training to effectively perform functions in the human resources role. Additionally, he is working diligently with the School Board of the Academy, specifically with the finance committees of the Board, to establish a new budget format and process that is transparent and easily understandable to the public at large.

Furthermore, the Academy commissioned an external audit in 2013, which is done on an annual basis. Mr. Gatson worked closely with the auditors to provide and explain the financial records of the Academy. As a result of these efforts, the Academy received an encouraging audit report, as the auditors found the Academy to be solvent and in good standing, and continuing to move in the right direction.

Attached is a letter from Deborah Roberts who is the Supervisor of Accounting for the Red Clay Consolidated School District. The Academy is chartered by Red Clay. She writes that new policies put in place meet the Red Clay's Board recommendations. She states, "Overall, DMA has put forth great effort into developing and implementing fiscal procedures that were not previously in place."

Challenges:

The previous financial team at the Academy, unfortunately, did not keep the books and records of the Academy in good order and was not compliant with State preferred methods of handling finances. However, with the addition of Mr. Gatson, despite the record keeping difficulties in the past, the Academy is now compliant with all State regulations and has adopted an immaculate record keeping system.

Moreover, the new leadership at the Academy, including the new Commandant, Anthony Pullella, is committed to the mission of introducing a new philosophy that focuses on compliance, transparency and strong internal controls. It is expected by the new leadership that everyone involved with the Academy--the Board, the staff and the cadets/families-- will also be committed to this new philosophy and will actively work towards its implementation.

Opportunities:

Continue to implement new financial policies and have them adopted, supported and practiced by all constituents of the Academy.

Continue to work with the auditors to address negative audit findings with a goal of eliminating the findings for a completely positive audit for FY14 and beyond.

As we work toward these, we realize that the results of our efforts will be evident to all parties, through our transparency and compliance with State regulations and requirements.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS IN MEETING ITS ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS, REPORTING, AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

The Delaware Military Academy has had a change in leadership the 2013-2014. Our founder and Superintendent retired and Commandant Pullella began full leadership of the Academy. In the Spring and Summer of 2013, many new policies were developed and administrative personnel to fill the former Superintendent's functions, including Chief Financial Officer, were hired.

Strengths:

The Academy recently hosted its Middle States Accreditation Visit. It was headed by Dr. Patricia Carlson. One of the areas reviewed was Governance. The Visiting team has indicated to the Academy that they will highly recommend it for accreditation in the report back to Middle States. They had no concerns with the areas of governance in the Middle States Protocol.

Challenges:

We did not meet standard in I.b. Students with Disabilities. We were among the schools involved in the 2013 Compliance Monitoring by the State which occurs on a three year cycle. The three files that were noted in the monitoring have been corrected since January, 2013. When we checked with Dale Matusevich about the professional development issue, he did not know of any problems. Mrs. Jardine attended all State mandated training in the 2012-2013 year for Charter Schools.

Attached is a letter from the Delaware State Department of Education stating that we have corrected IEPs for 2012-13 to meet with compliance. In addition, another Prong 2 audit was done to review current school year IEPs. The Academy was found to be in compliance.

Previously, the Academy was not in compliance with rules regarding the School Board meetings. The Board minutes for the past year are now posted on the school website, as is the budget reports for the past year. Also, the meeting dates for the current school year are listed. Agendas now are put on the website a week prior to the meeting, well within the required 6 hours prior to the meeting require by Delaware Code. All final approved minutes for Board Meetings are also posted per Delaware Code.

While the Academy Commandant and Staff members have attended State meeting on building safety and the Academy has its own committee which has created a Battle Bill to respond to safety emergencies. The Department of Education now has a copy of the Battle Bill and it has also been sent to the Homeland Security office. Unfortunately, the former superintendent did not comply with this last year.

Opportunities:

This year the Academy is celebrating its ten year anniversary. As with Middle States Accreditation, this is a moment for reflection. We need to identify what we do well and do it better. We need to identify areas where we need to improve and create action plans towards those goals.

STATUS OF CONDITIONS PLACED UPON THE CHARTER:

Include:

- A status update of any conditions imposed upon the school's charter,
- Your plan to meet any conditions that are currently "not met".

No conditions have been imposed on the Academy's Charter.

All conditions not met have been corrected.

STUDENT RETENTION GOALS AND TARGETS:

Include:

- The percentage of students who have re-enrolled from the prior year according to ESEA demographic categories

-In 2012-13 these are the rates of returning cadets from the previous year.

- *Class of 2016- 145/151= 96.0%*
- *Class of 2015- 138/144= 95.8%*
- *Class of 2014- 130/134= 97.0%*

- The number of students who have left your school before the year is over or before the end of the charter school’s grade configuration per ESEA demographic category, and a summary of why students chose to leave:

Cadet 1- Male, White, 11th grader, left to attend different high school in Red Clay.

Cadet 2- Male, White, 9th grader, never attended school, received a scholarship To attend Valley Forge Military Academy.

Cadet 3- Male, White, 11th grader, received a scholarship to attend Valley Forge Military Academy.

Cadet 4 Male, Hispanic, 12th grader, left to attend William Penn High School

Cadet 5 Male, Black, 12th grader, moved out of state to live with father.

Cadet 6 Male, White, 9th grader, never attended, parents chose to homeschool him.

Cadet 7 Female, 10th grader, moved to a different school before the beginning of the school year.

Cadet 8 Female, 11th grader, moved to Polytech at end of 1st marking period.

- **The percentage of students who did not pass from one grade to the next**

Retention in Grade:

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR: 2012 -- 2013

Grade Level	Sub-Group of Students	Percentage Retained in Grade
ALL	All	2%
09	All	6.6%
10	All	0.7%
11	All	1%
12	All	0.7%

- **Your plan to improve student retention and average daily attendance if less than your stated targets.**

Our student retention and average daily attendance are well within our stated targets.

Performance Objectives from Charter

1. DMA's average daily attendance will exceed 90% of the average daily enrollment for each year of school operation.

-During the 2012-2013 school year, the average daily attendance was 95.3%.

2. DMA will have fewer total reportable discipline incidents (DOE, Police reports) than the average for all schools in the same grade configuration in New Castle County for each year of school operation.

-DMA had 4 incidents because of which 3 cadets or 1% of the school population was suspended. Both the State and District (Red Clay) were at 14% their respective populations.

3. At least 85% of the non-graduating cadets will return to the school the following September. Of all the cadets entering the school at any given grade, 75% will continue at the school through the end of the educational program.

-In 2012-13, 90% of the 2010-11 returning sophomore class graduated from DMA. (129/143=90%).

4. At the end of each school year the school will demonstrate that it has strong marketability.

-The Academy enrolled 151 freshman cadets this year and still has a lottery list of 100+ students for the 9th grade.

5. At the end of each charter term, the school will demonstrate parent satisfaction with the school's administration and educational program.

The Academy administered the Middle States Survey. The average scores for each area were in the Meets or Exceeds the Standard.

6. Cadets will be able to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.

-On the DCAS, 90% of the ninth and tenth grade classes met or exceeded the standard in Reading.

-On the various AP exams, cadets earn a passing grade on 49.9% of the exams. The AP European History Exam, a very challenging essay exam, was passed by all the cadets enrolled.

-An integral part of the NJROTC program is for cadets to provide periodic briefing to high ranking military officers inspecting the unit. The program has received a Distinguish Ranking with Academic Honors for four years.

-Cadets performed over 10,000 hours of community service, much of which required effective communication skills.

-At present, 68 graduates are studying at service academies or in ROTC programs in their universities. These appointments require the ability to interview well.

7. Cadets will be technologically literate and be able to use and understand computers.

-All cadets are required to complete two years of computer technology. The first two levels of Business Finance and Marketing I and Business and Corporation Management II. The third course has been implemented this year creating the CTE pathway for cadets interested in pursuing a career in business and increasing the percent of cadets completing the CTE Pathway.

-Our Business Professionals of America won many competitions at the state level. Ten cadets were qualified to compete at the National Competition.

-With Smart Boards installed in every classroom, students had access to them for their class presentations.

-Cadets use data collection probes in their sciences classes as they will in their university courses and careers in science should they choose one.

-A Production class was started this year which produced regular news broadcasts for the entire school.

8. The school will attain accreditation status associated with the accountability act and maintain it each year.

-DMA has been accredited by the Middle States Association since 2006. The Academy was in its mid-term review in 2008-09 and was deemed as making satisfactory progress on its goals. The Visiting Team for Middle States indicated that they strongly recommended the Academy for re-accreditation and we expect a positive outcome in the spring from the Middle States Association.

9. The school will demonstrate cadets have exhibited positive behavior related to academic success.

-The cadets continue to have a high acceptance rate at diverse universities. As previously mentioned sixty-eight graduates attend a service academy or have a full NJROTC scholarship. Of the 128 graduates of 2013, two were appointed to a service academy and five received full ROTC scholarship to a four-year university. Sixty-nine, in total, were accepted at a 4-year university. Thirty-five were accepted at a 2-year college. Eighteen cadets joined the military and five have joined the work force.

INNOVATION:

Include:

- A discussion of innovation occurring at the school in areas including, but not limited to, curriculum development, instructional strategies, school culture and climate, community and parent engagement, professional development, operations and management practices, and extra-curricular programming.

-Curriculum Development-

This school year, the Academy added an additional AP class with European History. Next year, we are adding US History and English Composition and Literature at the junior level.

-Instructional Strategies-

With the Consolidated Grant, the Academy has purchased a Prezi license which in conjunction with the previously purchased SmartBoard, each teacher is able to create engaging and challenging lessons for the cadets.

The teachers focused in their PLCs last year on using data to differentiate instruction. This year they continue to strengthen their instruction.

-School Culture and Climate-

DMA was chosen again as one of the top workplaces by the NewsJournal.

The new Commandant began a cultural change by naming us the Seahawk Nation. He increased ownership within the cadet population. We also received a grant which enabled the Academy to install a new lighted display on the front of the Naval Science Building.

The Academy is also celebrating its tenth year. The first event was a 5K run/walk which had over 200 participants.

-Parent and Community Engagement-

-100% of the parents belong to the PTA. Many others also belong to the Music Boosters and Sports Boosters. These parents are tireless in their efforts to raise money to support school events. There are even parents whose cadets have graduated who still volunteer for DMA.

-The cadets volunteer at many functions. Frequently, they are honored for their efforts above and beyond what they were asked to do. Many have been honored by local police forces and fire companies because they stopped and helped at accidents or when participants were injured.

-Professional Development-

Commandant Pullella attended the National Charter School Convention in Washington, DC.

Kenneth Gatson was trained in Phirst and to become the Business Manager

Donna Galinski was trained in Phirst.

Rachel Taylor was trained in PCards and FFS.

Anne Fabian attended the AP Convention and paid her own way there.

Teachers attended the Smartboard Training at Tatnall.

At present, 5 teachers are pursuing a master or doctorate degree.

-Extra-Curricular Programming-

DMA had 20 Academic Organizations with 517 members. DMA has 17 sports teams with 417 athletes.