



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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October 16, 2015

Via email attachment and U.S. Mail

Nash Childs
 Chair, Board of Directors
 The Delaware Met
 920 N. French St.
 Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Mr. Childs:

Please be advised that, for the reasons set forth below and with the assent of the State Board of Education, the Department of Education ("Department") has placed The Delaware Met on Formal Review, pursuant to Title 14, Delaware Code, Section 515(b), to determine whether the school is violating the following terms of its charter and, if so, whether to order remedial measures:

Educational Program (pursuant to 14 Delaware Code § 512(6))

Approved in Charter	Implemented
<p>"Through a 1:1 student computing ratio, instructional technology complements learning at the Delaware Met by enabling each student to proceed at his/her own rate on their individual projects, Personalized Learning Plans, and exhibitions." (Application , P. 2-2)</p>	<p>No student use of technology observed in classroom instruction during Department site visits.</p>
<p>"The hallmark of the Big Picture Learning school design is the integration of LTI [(Learning Through Interest)] project into the academic program. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of each week, students will rotate between dedicated time in each content area and an integrated project time when students work independently or in small groups on their LTI projects with the support of the content area advisors." (Application, p. 2-2)</p>	<p>No LTI project activity observed during Department site visits; public comment at September 23 and September 28 Board of Directors meetings included questions about Delaware Met's preparedness for the LTI program launch in the second semester.</p>
<p>"In grades 9-12, the English Language Arts advisor will collaborate with the Social Studies advisor to deliver an integrated Humanities course." (Application, p. 2-2)</p>	<p>English Language Arts and Social Studies taught separately during Department site visits and taught in separate blocks on student schedules.</p>
<p>"The Delaware Met will join the Social Studies Coalition" (Application, p. 2-2)</p>	<p>Department has not received any correspondence from Delaware Met evidencing participation in the Delaware Social Studies Coalition.</p>
<p>"The Delaware Met will join the Delaware Science Coalition." (Application, p. 2-3)</p>	<p>Department has not received any correspondence from Delaware Met evidencing participation in the Delaware Science Coalition.</p>
<p>"In all classes, project-based learning will be the instructional delivery method. Project-based learning focuses on each student's interests, provides a context and structure for integrating academic, technical, and career skills into a holistic learning opportunity." (Application, p. 2-5)</p>	<p>No project-based learning observed during Department site visits.</p>

<p>“Students will grow to become their own Directors of Learning through using the Personalized Learning Plan, while being guided by their advisor to meet academic credit requirements.” (Application, p. 2-6)</p>	<p>No evidence of development of Personalized Learning Plans was observed during Department site visits.</p>
<p>“ To meet the needs of each student, the Delaware Met will use blended learning – the coordinated use of online and computer-based learning to supplement classroom instruction, enhancing student engagement and increasing the time that students spend interacting with content materials” (Application, p. 2-7)</p>	<p>No blended learning activities observed during Department site visits.</p>
<p>Included Course Scope and Sequence Curriculum development timeline stated that units and instructional materials for the first 6 weeks of school would be completed by July of the year the school opened. (Curriculum Development Timeline, 5-1)</p>	<p>No evidence was observed during Department site visits that units and instructional materials for the first 6 weeks of school were completed before the beginning of school.</p>

School Culture (pursuant to 14 Delaware Code § 512(6), (7) and 14 Delaware Code §4112D)

Approved in Charter	Implemented
<p>“The school culture will be one of collaboration and communication, fostering engagement in school activities, personal responsibility, trust, and respect. Since students will be well-known through this structure, it is anticipated that student misbehavior will be addressed quickly, before it escalates through Restorative Justice practices that emphasize the restoration of students to the community and the mediation of the offender and the victim of misdeeds. Furthermore, advisors and the school principal will work to develop a strong culture of community and respect at the school, utilizing proven practices of the Big Picture Learning Network.” (Application, p. 2-12)</p>	<p>There have been some instances of involvement with the school by the Wilmington Police Department since its opening; a Wilmington police officer has contacted the Department to express concerns about school policies regarding student discipline and potential gang activity, raising questions about the effective implementation of the school's student conduct polices.</p> <p>Public comments made at the September 23 Board of Directors meeting expressed concerns about school policies regarding student discipline.</p> <p>Numerous student discipline issues were observed during Department site visits, also raising concerns about the effective implementation of the school's student conduct policies, including the use of Restorative Justice practices and the statutory requirements regarding the prevention of and response to bullying .</p> <p>Gang graffiti observed on cafeteria walls on September 1 Department site visit had not been removed as of October 12 Board of Directors meeting.</p>
<p>Included Sample Drug and Alcohol Policy (Student Code of Conduct, p. 9-B-1)</p>	<p>During site visits by the Department, no evidence was found of a current Student Code of Conduct with an included Drug and Alcohol Policy that had been adopted by the Board, disseminated to students, and was effectively being implemented by the school staff.</p>

Governing Board & Leadership Capacity [14 Del. C. §§ 512 (1), (2), (6) and (9)]

Approved in Charter	Implemented
Required Qualifications for school leader include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful leadership experience in a public or non-public school serving diverse and low-income student populations, with significant results in closing student achievement gaps• Five (5) years of instructional/classroom experience (Staffing Chart, p. 10-6)	September 28 Board of Directors meeting included announcement identifying the acting school leader, who also serves as Executive Director of the Delaware Leadership Project in a full-time capacity; the acting school leader stated that most of the day-to-day responsibilities would fall on a Delaware Leadership Project intern who has never been a school leader before.
The Board will maintain compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and public bodies, public records and open meeting laws. (Application , p. 5-3)	Board meeting minutes discuss an Executive Committee, which has never been publicly noticed or had meeting agendas and minutes posted.

Additionally, there are concerns about student enrollment and financial viability. As of the middle of August 2015, Delaware Met had a reported 259 students enrolled (or 98% of an approved total of 264). As of the September 30 count, Delaware Met had a total of 215 students enrolled. Although this is over the 211 students which constitutes 80% of the authorized enrollment, concerns remain as to whether the school will have sufficient funding to meet the educational needs of all enrolled students.

Finally, all of these concerns raise questions about the capacity of the Delaware Met's Board of Directors and charter management organization, Innovative Schools, to oversee and operate a charter school that is academically successful, organizationally sound, and financially solvent.

This matter will be referred to the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) for review and recommendations. Enclosed please find a timeline for this process, including dates of CSAC meetings and public hearings.

The Department requests that the Delaware Met provide copies of the following materials no later than November 1, 2015:

- A written statement addressing each issue of potential non-compliance detailed in this letter, including descriptions of actions taken to address them to date and supporting documentation; and
- An updated budget reflecting the September 30 unit count, detailing projected expenditures and the allocated budget stream.

These documents, and any other materials you wish the CSAC to review, should be submitted to the Charter School Office at infocso@doe.k12.de.us.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Nagourney in the Charter School Office at 302-735-4020 or Jennifer.Nagourney@doe.k12.de.us.

Sincerely,



Steven Godowsky
Acting Secretary of Education

Enclosure

cc: David Blowman, Deputy Secretary of Education
Ryan Harrington, Vice Chair, Board of Directors, Delaware Met
Sean Gallagher, Acting School Leader, Delaware Met