



**Department of Education
Charter School Accountability Meeting**

**May 6, 2013
Modification Application
Final Meeting**

MOT Charter School

Mr. David Blowman called the meeting to order in the absence of Mary Kate McLaughlin. Mr. Blowman stated that the Secretary of Education has authorized him to chair today's meeting. For the purpose of the record introductions were made:

Attending Committee Members:

- David Blowman, Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Chair
- Karen Field Rogers, Financial Reform & Resource Management
- Deb Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- Paul Harrell, Director, Public & Private Partnerships
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network (non-voting)
- Donna R. Johnson, Executive Director, State Board of Education (non-voting)

Support to the Committee:

- John Carwell, Director, Charter School Office
- Catherine Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Charter School Finance
- Chantel Janiszewski, Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Sheila Kay-Lawrence, Administrative Secretary

Representatives of Charter School:

- Linda Jennings, Head of School
- Brian Glancy, Esq, Board Chair

Mr. Blowman explained the purpose of today's meeting is to make a final recommendation on MOT Charter School's application for a charter modification to add grades 9-12. He said the Committee's preliminary recommendation was that the charter application not be approved, and the Committee's report required specific responses from the school.

Mr. Blowman said the Committee's discussion today will focus on the criteria which require further clarification from the school:

- *Criterion Two: Form of Organization*
- *Criterion Four: Goals for Student Performance*
- *Criterion Six: Educational Program*
- *Criterion Seven: Students with Special Needs*
- *Criterion Nine: Financial and Administrative Operations*

- *Criterion Eleven: School Discipline and Attendance*

He explained John Carwell will provide next steps at the conclusion of the Committee's discussion.

Criterion Two: Form of Organization. Ms. Hickey said the applicant has submitted a copy of the certificate of incorporation and amended bylaws, which appear to be generally in compliance with the legal requirements of the code and regulation and appear to support the requests for modification.

Ms. Hickey's recommendation is that this criterion be considered met.

Criterion Four: Goals for Student Performance. Ms. McCrae said the information provided was good; especially the student data currently in place for grades K to 8. She said it is commendable that the school uses the information from the performance framework to produce their student achievement outcomes. She explained that there seems to be confusion at the high school level regarding percentile and percent proficiency measures for student outcomes. She explained percentile is dependent on statewide data, over which you have no control, and you cannot predict what is going to happen to that information. She said the school goals, the measure over which you may have control, is the proficiency of the students at your school. She said the information presented in the chart clearly confuses the two (percentile and percent proficiency) in talking about student proficiency on state exams and then measuring that in percentiles. She said it shows the school needs a little more guidance in the area of student goal setting. Also, Ms. McCrae stated it would be helpful to use the baseline data from eighth grade students, or those students feeding into grades nine to twelve. She stated there was no information referencing the school's prediction of what the students would be able to do once they are in high school. She said a lot of thought has been put into this but there is still a lot of confusion in the information presented by the school. She would like it to be clarified before this section is considered fully met.

Mr. Carwell asked Ms. McCrae if they could add a condition stating they would follow up with the school to provide technical assistance from the Charter School Office.

Ms. McCrae replied, "absolutely," and she is also available to assist. She recommends that the condition be added to her "partially met" recommendation. Ms. McCrae explained that Ms. Janiszewski and she would meet with the school within the next three weeks to provide guidance.

Ms. Massett said instead of the school having assistance within the next three weeks, because of upcoming graduations, maybe the leader of the school could have the guidelines for the performance agreement which addresses the needs.

Ms. McCrae explained that the issue here is not a performance agreement issue. She said the problem is the confusion of the data, and the projection of student achievement plans, or what is expected of students once they open the high school. Ms. McCrae read from the application, "we have projections for how we expect our students to perform once we open the doors of the school." She explained that she understands the information provided is valuable, but it has to show that it is clearly understood by the applicant presenting the data. She said, "it is fine for the numbers to be here but whether they are these numbers or some other set of numbers it is important that there be a narrative or something that shows an understanding on the part of the administration of what these numbers mean, and because of what these numbers mean, what we intend to do." She reemphasized with another example, "this is where the numbers come from and this is what is going to happen." Ms. McCrae continued, "We want

to make absolutely sure that the responsible party, the people applying for an application to open a school, recognize what their data is saying now and what that data means for the students they anticipate in receiving at their school.” She clarified that she is not saying the people providing the information are incapable of telling us what the data means; but this one piece of paper presented doesn’t provide that information. She said that it wouldn’t be responsible of the Committee to say, ‘absolutely, go ahead,’ without having that information.

Ms. Johnson added that it is important to separate this condition from the condition with the performance agreement. She said what Ms. McCrae is asking for is different from what is in the performance agreement. She said the performance agreement is talking about your overall expected outcomes for the length of your charter. She said this is different from the application and she doesn’t want the school to think it is one and the same.

Mr. Carwell agreed that this particular piece is not part of the performance agreement, and the Charter School office will assist the school with guidance.

Ms. McCrae’s recommendation is that this criterion is partially met with a condition.

Criterion Six: Educational Program. Ms. Hansen said the school’s responsiveness and its willingness to seek assistance from curricular content specialists is commendable. She said it was evident within the material for social studies that the school was very receptive to feedback. She said the school restructured courses in grades nine, ten and eleven, and the school is continuing to refine their grade twelve courses. She said the inclusion of Standard 4 in the economics course included revision, and the schools adopted a personal finance curriculum and the expanded the United States History course’s scope and sequence. She said the school needs to be commended for their alignment to the Delaware standards within the visual and performing arts for dance, music, theatre, and visual art. Whereas in the past, they were aligned to the Kentucky DOE standards. Ms. Hansen said she will provide more details in the final report.

Ms. Hansen’s recommendation is that this criterion be considered met.

Ms. Johnson said they (the Committee) need to be very careful when looking at aspects of innovation brought in from charter schools. She wants to make sure the Committee is not overly prescriptive. She said she recognizes they have a lot of strong resources from Delaware teachers, and she doesn’t want to indicate to a charter school that we (the Department of Education) would not recommend utilizing something from the Kennedy Center or a national best practice. But the Committee should encourage a unit developed by a teacher whom might be able to bring something new and fresh that could be replicated to the state. She wants to make sure the Committee is not overstepping in terms of the autonomy we provide and encourage them (charter schools) to bring in new and innovative projects that can be replicated throughout schools in Delaware.

Ms. Hansen said the curriculum people have worked very hard with Delaware teachers to provide instructions on the standards, and she wanted to clarify to the applicant that there was a source available for them to use.

Unique features of the school. Ms. Janiszewski said in the preliminary report the Committee asked for a plan for which the dual-enrollment program becomes a reality. She said the response submitted did address the concern around the timeline and planning process.

Ms. Janiszewski's recommendation is that this subsection is met.

School calendar. Mr. Carwell said that this subsection was met from the preliminary meeting.

Criterion Nine: Financial and Administrative Operations.

Internal Form of Management at the School. Mr. Carwell said from the preliminary meeting the request was for the school to submit an organizational chart in which they have and he considers it to be satisfactory.

Criteria and timeline for hiring staff. Mr. Carwell said this section was reviewed by Mr. Ruszkowski and was considered met.

Recruitment Plan. Mr. Carwell said he requested a copy of the wait list and he received it. He considers this subsection to be met.

Admissions preferences. Ms. Hickey said the response from the applicant did address the clarifications she was seeking. She said the applicant did provide an explanation that the "specific interest" preference. She said this is new and would only be used for grades 9 to 12. She said it appears the applicant is also asking for a major modification to its charter, and seeks to alter enrollment preferences. She said it needs to be acknowledged that this is another request for modification. She said there are really five rather than four modifications being sought by this application. She said as long as they get confirmation that they are asking to alter the student preference, and the enrollment preference to include the "special interest," then they would consider this section, "met."

Mr. Carwell said for clarification, the Committee had another charter school, Sussex Academy, which requested a similar modification application, and it was approved. They (Sussex Academy) included an interest preference as well, and it was considered as part of the process.

Ms. Hickey said the statute was listed separately and the regulation talks about a major modification being altered as student preferences. She said as long as they get confirmation from the applicant that they are also requesting a modification to alter the student preferences then that would be fine. She said she agrees that it was presented as part of the request, but it wasn't listed as part of the modification request specifically in their application.

Mr. Carwell said on the final report they would add met with a condition for clarification.

Ms. Hickey replied yes.

Mr. Carwell's recommendation is that this criterion is met with a condition.

Administrative tasks. Mr. Carwell said this section was satisfactory and is met, as well.

Criterion Eleven: School Discipline and Attendance. Mr. Carwell said this section was reviewed by Mr. Sadowski, and it was considered met.

Mr. Blowman's recommendation to the Committee, for purposes of the Final report, is that MOT Charter School Modification application will be considered, "approved with conditions." A vote was taken: five ayes, zero opposes, and one abstention.

Mr. Blowman asked Mr. Carwell to share next steps.

- Public Hearing will be held on June 4, 2013 beginning at 5:00 PM in the Cabinet Room in the Townsend Building.

Meeting adjourned.