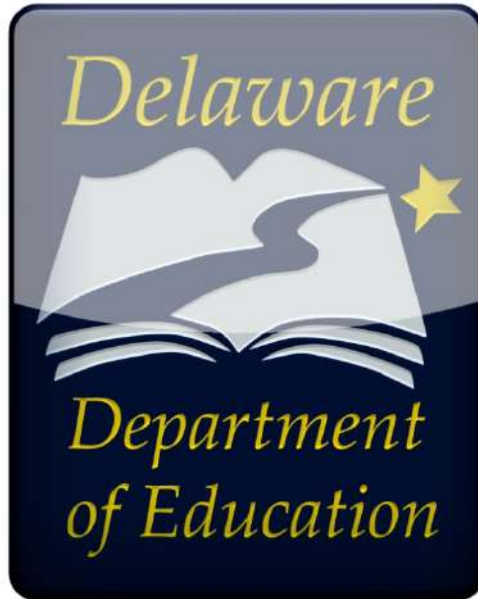


# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**Maurice J. Moyer Academic Institute**

**MAJOR MODIFICATION APPLICATION**

**FINAL REPORT**

CSAC Meeting: July 9, 2014

Final Report Published: July 21, 2014

**CSAC RECOMMENDATION: NOT APPROVED**

On May 21, 2014, the applicant submitted a request for a major modification of the Education Plan of its charter, so that a new curriculum, SpringBoard, could be instituted for its entire population for Math and English Language Arts.

Per 14 Del. C. §511(e), the first Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) meeting provided the applicant an opportunity for an interview in support of the application, and provided the members of the Charter School Accountability Committee and the Delaware Department of Education with an opportunity to assess applicant capacity, allow the applicant to clarify information provided in the application, and gather additional information. The applicant was provided with an Initial Report that detailed areas of follow-up, and/or concerns identified by members of the CSAC during the Initial Meeting. The applicant then submitted a response to the Initial Report, which is considered part of the application.

After reviewing the response to the Initial Report, CSAC held a Final Meeting to determine its recommendation on whether the application should be approved. This Final Report details CSAC's recommendation and any outstanding concerns about the application.

The following were in attendance at the Final Meeting of the CSAC on July 9, 2014:

#### **Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC)**

- David Blowman, Deputy Secretary, DDOE (Chair to the Committee)
- Karen Field-Rogers, Associate Secretary, Financial Reform & Resource Management, DDOE
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM, DDOE
- Theresa Bennett, Education Associate, Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development, DDOE
- Tasha Cannon, Deputy Officer, Talent Recruitment, Selection & Strategy, Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU), DDOE

#### **Ex-officio Members (Non-voting)**

- Donna Johnson, Executive Director, Delaware State Board of Education
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network

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

- Catherine Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, DOJ
- Jennifer Carlson, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Jennifer Nagourney, Executive Director, Charter School Office, DDOE

## **Representatives of Maurice J. Moyer Academic Institute**

- Christopher Curry, Ed.D., Board President
- Bebe Coker, Board Vice President
- Keenan Dorsey, Principal
- Nikia Whitaker, Director of Curriculum
- Nikia Wongus, Business Manager
- Allen Samuels, Board Member
- Meredith Griffin, Board Member
- Kim Jackson-Harper, Board Member
- Kevan Turman, Board Member
- Kalisha Turman, Director Internal Affairs
- Valerie Jones, Executive Assistant

## **Additional Attendees**

- Michelle Whalen, Education Associate, DDOE
- Thalia Nawi, Special Assistant to the Secretary, DDOE
- Keith Sanders, Chief Officer, School Turnaround Unit, DDOE
- Gloria Grantham, Deputy Officer, School Turnaround Unit, DDOE

## **Section A: Core Questions**

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Ms. Field Rogers stated that the revenue sheets were satisfactory. She also stated that as of July 9, Moyer had 205 students enrolled for the next school year, or 77% of total authorized enrollment (265 students). Ms. Field Rogers also noted that Moyer's budget projected the school's special education enrollment to be at 35% but it is currently at 27.8%. She explained that the school's 80% budget, which includes a \$77,000 surplus, would get tighter if the current special education figures hold. Mr. Blowman noted that a smaller proportion of special education students would generate fewer units/dollars. Ms. Wongus noted that the budget submission did not include Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 carryover funds. Ms. Field Rogers concluded that the budget submission was satisfactory.

Ms. Mazza stated that the Exceptional Children Resources workgroup continues to have concerns regarding Moyer's compliance with special education requirements. She also stated that the workgroup met with Moyer on July 8, 2014 and entered into a compliance agreement based on the department's onsite monitoring which occurred during January and February of 2014. Ms. Mazza explained that a plan was developed to address areas of non-compliance (e.g. professional development for administrators and faculty and support staff; hiring of special education teachers; use of funds generated by needs based funding; and provision of services

and procedural safeguards). Ms. Mazza stated that the department's concerns are being addressed through the compliance agreement.

### **Section C: Education Program**

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Ms. McCrae stated that Moyer has provided the requested materials. She also noted that Moyer provided the attendance records for teachers who have attended required Science Coalition trainings. Ms. McCrae stated that the following kits were shipped to the school for use, but have not been returned to the department's materials warehouse:

- Transformation of Energy
- Diversity of Life
- My Body and Me

Ms. McCrae stated that several teachers registered for Science Coalition training but did not attend. For example, one teacher was registered for "Planetary Science", "Weather" and "Our Genes Ourselves" but did not report. Another teacher was registered for "Earth History" and "Forces that Cause Motion" but did not report. Ms. McCrae noted that these teachers did attend other trainings. She underscored the importance of communication with the department's Education Associate for Science, Tonyea Mead, and Science Coalition leadership.

Ms. McCrae referenced the sample lesson plans for curricula Moyer adopted last year. She expressed concern that the lesson plans for science were not reflective of the Science Coalition's training (i.e., guided inquiry, deep questioning). Ms. McCrae noted that the lesson plans were aligned to the content but there were disconnects between the training and classroom delivery. Ms. Coker asked Ms. McCrae to clarify whether the concerns were with methodology or content. Ms. McCrae explained that the methodology, what is described in the lesson plans, did not describe what students should do with the information they are taught. Ms. McCrae also noted that there were similar concerns with the Social Studies sample lesson plans which reflected low levels of rigor. Dr. Curry explained that the Board observed similar concerns based on Moyer's self-analysis. He added that staff turnover is a result of the Board becoming intimately involved with the school. Ms. McCrae stated that the lesson plans for Spanish and Fine Arts were satisfactory.

Ms. Johnson expressed concern that the Science lesson plans lacked the rigor and depth of Common Core State Standards but were labeled as such. She also expressed concern that the school would submit these lesson plans as model or exemplary samples for inclusion with the charter modification application. Dr. Curry explained that the Board did not look to filter the sample lesson plans provided, but their intent was to provide an accurate representation of instruction and take responsibility for its level of quality.

Ms. Johnson also noted that the accommodations and modifications specified in the lesson plans were cut-and-paste, word-for-word copies on each document. She explained that the lesson plans do not address the specific needs of students from class to class and did not align to what is expected of students. In addition, Ms. Johnson expressed concern that the grouping structures were also word-for-word copies on each sample lesson plan for Science. Further, the level of rigor was at a depth-of-knowledge level 1 and, at times, barely a depth-of-knowledge level 2. Ms. Johnson stated that there was little opportunity for students to actually experience science. She noted that inquiry-based science lessons are a requirement for every member of the Science Coalition. Ms. Johnson commented that students will not be college and career ready without inquiry based lessons. Mr. Dorsey stated that professional development will be provided to address these concerns.

Ms. Johnson stated that Moyer's submission did not include a plan to transition students from the current curriculum to the rigor of the SpringBoard curriculum which is aligned to Common Core and at depth-of-knowledge levels 3 and 4. She also noted that the school's professional development plan includes three days of initial training for teachers but SpringBoard's follow-up training was not listed. Ms. Whitaker stated that teachers will attend SpringBoard's follow up training as well as in-house training to help them deliver more engaging lessons.

Ms. Johnson noted that the school's submission did not include a gap analysis to address the students' significant gaps in knowledge between the current curriculum and the SpringBoard curriculum as measured by the state assessment. She explained that it will be very challenging to implement SpringBoard with fidelity without a robust plan. Ms. Whitaker stated that the gaps will be addressed through Moyer's Response to Intervention (RTI) plan. Dr. Curry stated that the Board realizes that students have not been provided the appropriate levels of rigor. He added that the new staff is qualified to transition students to the new curriculum and provide the appropriate levels of rigor.

Ms. Bennett expressed concerns regarding Moyer's ambitious professional development plan which only built out the first three weeks and covers 10 different, fairly large topics. She noted that the breadth of information is a lot to cover in three weeks with the remainder of the professional development plan to be determined by need. Ms. Bennett also commented that the current schedule is not a purposeful professional development calendar for teachers, most of whom are new to the school. Ms. Bennett suggested that the initial three weeks focus on content and help teachers develop plans with guidance from SpringBoard consultants. She added that what is delivered during the first session should be recursive throughout the year. Mr. Dorsey explained that the intent of the initial session was to provide a brief overview of the topics and provide more in-depth information during the year. Ms. Johnson commented that the professional development plan was similar to the sample lesson plans in that it provided

brief overviews of the content areas, but lacked depth. She added that implementation of SpringBoard requires a deep level of professional development for the team to build model units. Ms. Bennett underscored the importance of prioritizing the professional development. Mr. Dorsey stated the professional development will occur almost weekly to cover the breadth of information. He added that Ms. Whitaker has provided similar feedback and the professional development plan has been updated since the draft schedule was submitted to the department. Dr. Curry added that the schedule has also been modified to reflect the recommendations provided by the Exceptional Children Resources workgroup through the compliance agreement process.

Ms. Bennett noted that Moyer's handbook for RTI contains language from the national model for RTI but it is not customized for Moyer. For example, it does not contain Moyer's assessments or Delaware's regulations for time and frequency for tiers 2 and 3. Thus, in its current form, it will not be a sufficient guide for teachers. Ms. Whitaker stated that this is being addressed.

Ms. Bennett noted that the only assessment mentioned is from Compass Learning which does not provide a balanced, full array of assessments that align to the cycle of inquiry nor does it inform the RTI process. Ms. Whitaker stated that in addition to Compass Learning, Moyer will use Terra Nova and Smarter Balanced.

Ms. Bennett provided the following feedback on the math curriculum:

- The scope and sequence documents for Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 (and Pre-Calculus) are now aligned to the Common Core Content Standards. However, the documents do not indicate any alignment to the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice. Thus, Moyer's curriculum specialist should review the curriculum documents and indicate which math practices will be emphasized in particular lessons/units. For example, some mathematical content/topics/standards lend themselves quite well to math practice #4-Model with Mathematics. High school standards that might be supported by mathematical modeling are indicated in the high school standards by a star symbol. There are eight math practice standards. Rarely will a single lesson emphasize all eight math practice standards at once. Moyer's curriculum specialist should identify a resource that educators can use in thinking about specific student dispositions and teacher actions that indicate the use of a particular math practice standard.
- Plans for formative, interim and summative assessments are not included in the course documentation for Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus. An assessment plan should be in place for all courses.

- Pacing information was not included in the Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus documentation. This documentation would be helpful for teachers as a guideline.
- Provide a plan for filling in knowledge gaps for students when transitioning to the SpringBoard courses. The professional development provided to teachers should address the challenge of filling in content gaps that students may have as they move through the curriculum.

Ms. Bennett also recommended that pacing information is needed for English Language Arts as well.

Ms. Cannon asked Moyer's representatives to describe the teacher recruitment strategy and process used to hire appropriate staff to turn around the school. Dr. Curry explained that staff for the 2014-15 school year have already been hired. The process started early and most of the staff are dually-certified. Dr. Curry also stated that given the climate of the school, the Board has increased salaries to attract higher caliber individuals and ensure retention. He also noted that the Board screened new candidates for expertise with student data and student development. Ms. Cannon asked Moyer's representatives to indicate whether the school uses a competency-driven selection model that defines the competencies Dr. Curry described and if they are used to drive hiring. Dr. Curry stated that a competency-driven selection model was not used for recruitment but candidates were required to conduct a demonstration lesson and review and interpret student data.

Ms. Nagourney asked Moyer's representatives to describe how student progress and teacher effectiveness will be tracked with the new curriculum. Ms. Whitaker explained that student progress will be tracked through Compass Learning. She added that a block of time has been allotted for Moyer's RTI plan. Additionally, teacher lesson plans will be reviewed for evidence of student data, scaffolding, specific tools provided in professional development, and depth-of-knowledge. Ms. Whitaker added that 100% of her time is dedicated to classroom walkthroughs, observations and coaching. She also stated that alignment between Moyer's middle and high school will occur through professional learning communities.

Ms. Johnson asked Moyer's representatives to clarify that Compass Learning will be the product used for assessment. Ms. Whitaker explained that Compass Learning will be used for pre-assessment to determine students' starting points. Ms. Johnson noted that the depth-of-knowledge for Compass Learning's assessments may not align to the depth-of-knowledge in SpringBoard's curriculum.

Ms. Johnson commented that Moyer’s professional development is scheduled on Friday afternoons throughout the year which does not appear to be the most purposeful time slot for professional development.

**Conclusion:**

Mr. Blowman gave the reviewers the opportunity to restate any concerns about the application information and to clarify the additional information requested. The following concerns were noted:

- **Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice:** The scope and sequence documents for Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Pre-Calculus are now aligned to the Common Core Content Standards. However, the documents do not indicate any alignment to the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice.
- **Assessments:** Plans for formative, interim and summative assessment were not included in the course documentation for Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus. An assessment plan should be in place for all courses.
- **Pacing Information:** was not included in the Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus documentation.
- **Student Knowledge Gaps:** The applicant was asked to provide a plan for filling in knowledge gaps for students when transitioning to the Springboard courses.
- **Professional Development Plan:** While the calendar provides a comprehensive list of professional development, it seems that the professional development could have been prioritized and scaffolded across the school year. A suggestion would be to narrow, or at least connect the focus of the three weeks of training and plan for purposeful reoccurring/follow up sessions throughout the year.
- **RTI Structure:** The RTI handbook submitted with Moyer’s response to the CSAC’s Initial Report included a nationally recognized structure for the three tiers as well as forms and protocols to ensure the RTI process. It did not include the Delaware regulations for frequency and time for tiers 2 and 3.

The application was recommended for approval pending submission of satisfactory documentation by July 14, 2014 to address the CSAC’s concerns.

**Outstanding Concerns:**

On July 14, 2014, Moyer submitted documentation in response to the CSAC concerns listed above. Below are the department’s findings:

- **Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice:** The submission included an alignment to the Standards for Mathematical Practice for Algebra 1 only. Similar documents are required for Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus.
- **Assessments:** The submitted pacing guides include a plan for interim and summative assessments. The only reference to formative assessment practices within the pacing



guides is the statement, "Formative Assessments embedded throughout the year", which appears at the end of each pacing guide. The plan does not include details of the formative assessment plans. Additionally, since the pacing guides submitted for Geometry, Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus are incomplete, the assessment plans for these three courses are incomplete.

- **Pacing Information:** The submission includes a complete pacing guide for Algebra 1. The pacing guides for all other courses are substantially incomplete. The Geometry pacing guide ends at week 17. The Algebra 2 pacing guide ends at week 13 and the Pre-Calculus document ends at week 18. The Algebra 1 pacing guide ends at week 40. Forty weeks represents an ambitious pace. Is there a contingency plan for completing essential elements of the course if there are interruptions due to weather or some other challenge to class time?
- **Student Knowledge Gaps:** The submission lacked sufficient detail (e.g., a detailed plan for placing students in courses, an indication of the specific data that will be used to place students or determine deficits in prerequisite skills and knowledge.)
- **Professional Development Plan:** The submission was satisfactory.
- **RTI Structure:** The submission was satisfactory.

Note: Since the CSAC's recommendation was for approval on the condition that the applicant submitted satisfactory documentation by July 14, 2014 to address the CSAC's continuing concerns and the documentation that was submitted was not satisfactory for all of the specified concerns, the conditions for an approval recommendation were not met. Thus, the CSAC's recommendation is for non-approval.

Mr. Blowman articulated the next steps in the modification application process as follows:

- The CSAC Final Report will be issued no later than July 15, 2014.\*
- A final public hearing will be held on August 5, 2014 at 5:00 p.m., in the 2nd Floor Cabinet Room in the Townsend Building.
- The process will conclude with the State Board of Education meeting on August 21, 2014 where Secretary Murphy will present his decision.

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\* The Department required additional time to provide a complete and thorough review of the applicant's July 14, 2014 submission; as a result this CSAC Final Report was issued on July 21, 2014. The applicant was notified on July 15, 2014 of the extension of time and the new date of issuance.