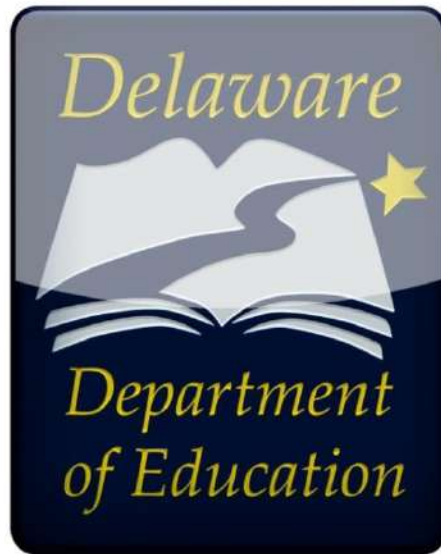


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Positive Outcomes Charter School

**RENEWAL APPLICATION
INITIAL REPORT**

CSAC Initial Meeting: October 25, 2018
CSAC Initial Report Published: November 1, 2018

By September 30, 2018, Positive Outcomes Charter School submitted an application to renew its charter. Consideration of this application is in accordance with the applicable provisions of 14 **Del. C. Ch. 5**, including § 514A, and 14 **DE Admin. Code 275**. Written renewal application guidance is provided by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) on its website. The renewal application template developed by DDOE is aligned to measures and targets within the Performance Framework, which outlines the academic, organizational and fiscal standards by which all Delaware charter schools are evaluated. The evaluation of the school's performance as measured by the Framework is a major component of the decision on the renewal application. The decision on the renewal application is based on a comprehensive review, guided, in part, by the following three questions:

1. Is the academic program a success?
2. Is the school financially viable?
3. Is the school organizationally sound?

This report serves as a summary of the strengths, areas of follow-up, and/or concerns identified by members of the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) during their individual reviews of the charter applicant's renewal application, Performance Review Reports, Annual Reports and Performance Agreements and during the CSAC meetings.

The following were in attendance at the Initial Meeting of the CSAC on October 25, 2018:

Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- Chuck Longfellow, Associate Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee
- Christine Alois, Deputy Secretary, Performance Support, DDOE
- Amy Baker-Sheridan, Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Michael Saylor, Education Associate, Educator Supports, DDOE
- Tracy Neugebauer, Education Associate, Academic Support, DDOE
- Brian Moore, Education Associate, Student Support, DDOE
- Chandra Pitts, CEO One Village Alliance, Community Member
- Charles Taylor, Retired Head of School, Community Member

Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)

- Audrey Noble, Vice President, Delaware State Board of Education
- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Networks

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Catherine T. Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Delaware Department of Justice, Counsel to the Committee
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE
- Sheila Kay-Lawrence, Administrative Secretary, Charter School Office DDOE

Representatives of Charter School

- Edward Emmett, Head of School
- Susan Wills, Board President
- Steven Norman, Dean of Academics and Instruction
- Julie Landis, Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Rachel Hohman, Dean of Student Supports and Services
- Megan Yeager, Special Education Coordinator
- Michelle Hastie, Business Manager

Discussion

Ms. Wills stated that on behalf of the Positive Outcomes' Board she would like to thank the members of the Charter School Accountability Committee, State Board of Education and the Secretary of Education for the consideration of Positive Outcomes' Renewal Application. She said she was pleased to participate in the process.

Mr. Emmett introduced a brief video about Positive Outcomes Charter School (POCS). After the viewing of the video, Mr. Emmett said the video was needed because so many people ask the same questions, "What is POCS?" He stated that the video could have been an hour longer because there are so many things that were not captured in the video. He said everyone that has visited POCS has always left with a better understanding of the school. Mr. Emmett extended an invitation to everyone to visit the school and noted that students will conduct the tour.

Mr. Emmett noted that over the last four years 73 students have graduated from POCS and their lives were turned around. He added that many students who enroll were close to giving up because of negative experience at their previous schools. Out of 73 graduates, he added, 48% of them went to college and he is still gather data on the rest. He noted that most of the students did not want to attend college when they came to POCS. Mr. Emmett noted that POCS encourages students to aspire to do anything.

Mr. Emmett mentioned that in 2017, the school was recognized by the state as Recognition School. He added that POCS celebrated its 20th anniversary during their charter school renewal. He noted that one of the students in the video was a 1997 graduate.

Mr. Emmett stated that the school was able to purchase its facility which provided improved the school's financial position and reduced their annual expenses by \$100,000. He commented that POCS staff love the work they do. He added that staff would not work at POCS if they did not love the work.

Mr. Emmett stated that their school has the Alternative Academic Framework based on the student population they serve. He added that students are growing academically. Regarding the school's organizational and financial performance, he stated that the school is on target.

Mr. Longfellow noted the following regarding the school's Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF):

- On September 18, 2018, the Charter School Office provided draft DSSF results to the renewing charter schools so that they could complete their renewal applications. The correspondence noted that the data was still draft and schools would be notified if there were any corrections.
- Four of the renewing schools had corrections to their DSSF data. Positive Outcomes did not have any corrections.

- For school year 2017-18, the ratings were based on the continuous improvement rating scale which is used for all public school accountability ratings. The draft DSSF data schools received on September 18th was based on the static ratings model which was the old accountability methodology used for school year 2016-17. The final DSSF data provided to the renewing charter schools reflects the continuous improvement rating scale.

Section 1: Overview

Mr. Longfellow asked the CSAC if they had any questions or concerns regarding the Overview section of the school's renewal application. There were none.

Section 2: Academic Performance

Ms. Baker-Sheridan commended the school for submitting its curricula for review as part of the early submission opportunity provided to the renewing schools. She noted that POCS worked closely with the Department's Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development team to make sure that the curriculum documents were aligned to state standards. She commented that POCS demonstrated a deep commitment to its students.

Ms. Baker-Sheridan asked the school to explain how their academic program has evolved since their last renewal. Mr. Norman stated that POCS has aligned their curricula to the Common Core Standards and they adopted new math and English Language Arts curricula which is aligned to the Common Core Standards and effectively supports the diverse need of POCS students. He noted that the Big Picture Learning model provides authentic learning by providing students with learning experiences outside of the school. Mr. Norman also stated that POCS balances rigor with supports.

Ms. Baker-Sheridan commented that the instructional model places significant demands on the educators Ms. Baker-Sheridan asked the school to describe how they design and organize professional learning to improve the quality and effectiveness of core content teachers. Mr. Norman stated that the school have a number of resources. He added that the school has implemented the Teaching Excellence Framework and he conducts classroom observations numerous times throughout the school year which helps drive educator effectiveness. Mr. Norman stated professional learning opportunities are developed based on any identified trends noticed during the classroom observations.

Ms. Neugebauer asked if he could explain its implementation of additional classrooms in order to provide all students with their least restrictive environment (LRE). Mr. Norman stated that students are identified for Tier II supports and based on progress monitoring, benchmarking, and state testing data. He added that teachers are brought together in support teams to identify additional resources and supports. Mr. Norman noted that small classrooms for English Language Arts and math have had an impact on growth and student progress.

Dr. Noble asked the school to provide additional information regarding their efforts to raise proficiency levels on state assessments. Mr. Norman stated that test anxiety and stress is an ongoing factor that the school is working to address. He added that the school prepares students for state assessments by breaking up the content but it's challenging when students have to test and it is not broken up. Mr. Norman also stated that the school provides socio-emotional supports.

Ms. Massett asked the school to describe whether the testing experience for students was different under the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). Mr. Emmett stated that was a better system for POCS students because they had a pre-test and were more motivated to work hard to raise their achievement levels because they had another opportunity. Mr. Saylor asked the school if they were using any of the Department's IAB assessments. Mr. Emmett stated that they are not currently using them but they will be a focus point this year.

Dr. Noble asked the school to discuss its performance in college and career preparation. Mr. Emmett noted that this metric is tied to growth to proficiency and it varies based on each cohort of students. He added that one student can skew the data sharply based on the small size of the school. Mr. Emmett stated that the school is working to improve this performance area but the metric is tied to participation in Advanced Placement (AP) coursework, International Baccalaureate (IB), which is simple to apply to POCS.

Dr. Noble commended the school for its progress on its graduation rate. Mr. Emmett noted that six years ago POCS was placed on the state's Partnership Zone and successfully exited that status. Based on that work, he added, the school has improved its graduation rate and more students have enrolled in college. Dr. Noble commented that it was impressive that 48% of graduates enroll in college and expressed interest in how the other graduates are doing. Mr. Emmett reported the rates vary every year but some students enlist in the military and others find employment. He added that many graduates leave the area upon graduation which makes tracking more difficult.

Mr. Carwell asked the school if there has been a noticeable increase in the socio-emotional needs of the students. Mr. Emmett introduced Ms. Landis, the school's Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Ms. Landis stated that POCS has a high population of students that come to the school with diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health needs and/or socio-emotional deficits. She added that most students come to the school struggling with emotional regulation. Ms. Landis stated that she provides individual and group services directly with the students. She added that she collaborates frequently with outside service providers. Ms. Landis also noted that the school has a speech and language therapist. She also noted that the school's advisory curriculum has a significant focus on socio-emotional learning, team building and emotional regulation. Mr. Norman stated that teachers receive a lot of professional development that is aligned to Ms. Landis' work.

Ms. Pitts stated that the video was very compelling. She asked the school if it had any plans for

expansion. Mr. Emmett stated that the school's current facility does not have the capacity to serve more students. He noted that the school has grown over the years from 40 students, 60 students, 100 students and now they have 120. He stated that when the school was identified as a Partnership Zone School, applications soared. He added that although recruitment starts in November, a bulk of the students come to them between April and August when parents are looking for alternatives when their children are struggling at other schools. He mentioned they received a call today from a 7th grader struggling and wanted to get into their school and the answer was yes as long as I have a spot we would still bring students in. Mr. Emmett stated that, at some point, the school would like to expand and serve other counties.

Section 3: Organizational Performance

Mr. Moore commended the school for its success with at-risk students. He also commended the school for its discipline data, cutting its out of school suspensions in half in one year to less than 15, which is the lowest number of any charter school in the state which is remarkable based on the student population. He added that the in-school suspension rates are impressive. He encouraged the school to share its effective practices with other schools.

Mr. Moore noted that the all staff completed the suicide training but some staff have yet to complete the other non-academic mandatory training. He noted that the school has completed all of its lockdown drills but he did not see where they completed fire drills. Mr. Emmett confirmed that the fire drills were completed and would provide evidence.

Mr. Saylor thanked Mr. Emmett and Mr. Norman for being both informal and formal mentors to new administrators at charters across the state. He asked them to describe their administrative professional development. Mr. Norman state that he is currently working on a doctorate in school leadership and the Big Picture Learning network provides professional development. Mr. Emmett stated that he received most of this administrative professional development through Big Picture Learning and leadership conferences.

Section 4: Financial Performance

Mr. Longfellow provided the following feedback:

- The school continues to meet the measures in the Financial Framework report. They have met standard on every measure each year, with the exception of cash flow in FY17. This was due solely to their decision to purchase their building/property, which will ultimately help their financial position. They used a portion of their cash reserves as a down payment on the property.

Ms. Massett commended the school for providing financial management and back office support to other charter schools such First State Military Academy and Early College High School at Delaware State University.

Section 5: Five-Year Planning

Mr. Longfellow asked the CSAC if they had any comments or questions regarding the Five-Year Planning section of the school's renewal application. There were none.

Conclusion

Mr. Longfellow asked voting members of CSAC whether there was any additional information that it required to inform its decision-making.

The following information was requested:

Organizational Performance

- A list of the school's completed fire drills

Next Steps:

- The CSAC will provide the school with an Initial Report no later than November 1, 2018.
- The applicant will have the opportunity to submit a written response to the CSAC Initial Report, which is due by close of business on November 16, 2018.
- The final meeting of the CSAC will be held on November 26, 2018, 2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Townsend Building, Dover.
- A second public hearing will be held on December 10, 2018, 2nd Floor Cabinet Room, Townsend Building, Dover.
- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the December 20, 2018, State Board of Education meeting and, as necessary, seek the consent of the State Board of Education



CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

RENEWALS 2018

POSITIVE OUTCOMES CHARTER SCHOOL				
Grades	ELA	Math	Science	SS/Hist.
6-12	Meets	Meets	None submitted	None submitted

This document reflects the results of the Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning work group's review of submitted curriculum material in preparation for the initial meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee on October 25. We invite you to review the set of Commendations, Recommendations, Expectations to inform future work. While it may appear that there are no changes in curricula during a five-year renewal cycle, there may indeed have been changes that occurred at the national and/or state level. Feedback from the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning workgroup is to ensure that there is a plan for aligning curriculum to the adopted state standards.

The work group has no additional requests of Positive Outcomes Charter School in advance of the final meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee meeting.

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Delaware Department of Education: Academic Support Team

Charter Renewal Curriculum Review

School: Positive Outcomes Charter School

Date: 10/31/18

English/Language Arts:

A representative attends monthly Literacy Cadre meetings semi-regularly. Positive Outcomes adopted the *Collections* curriculum materials in grades 6-12. These materials are uneven in terms of alignment to the standards between the grade levels.

Overall Evaluation:(select one by highlighting yellow)

- ↓ Meets expectations
- ↓ Partially meets expectations
- ↓ Does not meet expectations

Commendations:

- Each unit targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.
- Anchor texts are of publishable quality and worthy of careful reading and consider a range of student interests.
- Performance tasks include a balance of on-demand and process writing, and short, focused research projects.
- Unit documents provide suggestion for supplemental readings in addition to the anchor pieces.
- Culminating tasks integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. There is a balance of text-based, synthesis, and text-inspired prompts.

Recommendations:

- Curate the text-dependent questions provided by the resource to be sure they lead to success on the culminating task whenever possible. Find opportunities to ask questions that require students to make connections across texts. (See expectation #1.)

Expectations:

- There is no evidence of an independent reading based on choice and interest to build stamina, confidence, or motivation. There is no indication of how students would be held accountable for that reading.

Math:

Positive Outcomes adopted the Big Ideas textbook series for grades 7-12. While these materials are uneven in terms of alignment to the standards between the grade levels, and not meeting the expectations for focus and coherence and/or rigor at the varying grade levels, supplemental resources are used to present a balance of mathematical procedures and deeper conceptual understanding.

Overall Evaluation:(select one by highlighting yellow)

- ↓ Meets expectations
- ↓ Partially meets expectations
- ↓ Does not meet expectations

Commendations:

- Each unit targets a set of grade-level CCSS Mathematics standards
- Evidence of students demonstrating the standards of mathematical practice..
- Additional resources and materials address the big ideas and main focus for each grade level, providing students with extensive work at grade-level problems.

Recommendations:

- Include detailed day to day plans to demonstrate experiences for students' conceptual understanding of the CCSS math standards.

Expectations:

- Scope and sequence documents are sparse, listing textbook pages only. The textbook alone does not devote a majority of the time to the major focus of the grades.

Social Studies:

Overall Evaluation:(select one by highlighting yellow)

- ↓ Meets expectations
- ↓ Partially meets expectations
- ↓ Does not meet expectations

Recommendations:

- Join and send a representative to the Social Studies Coalition to access information and resources.

Expectations:

- Provide written curriculum for review.

Science:

Overall Evaluation:(select one by highlighting yellow)

- ↓ Meets expectations
- ↓ Partially meets expectations
- ↓ Does not meet expectations

Recommendations:

- Please send a representative or call into Science Coalition Meetings when possible.