

Status Report on Opening Requirements for Delaware STEM Academy - April 2016:

Outlined below is the status of the major categories of preparation for the school's opening.

Academic Preparations: (Section A)

Current Status: The Academy has prepared its curriculum framework, curriculum maps and master schedules. The information also includes information on the Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Performance Agreement (submitted to DOE in December).

Since the Academy will be using the New Tech Network web-based platform called Echo, the instructional materials, texts, assessments and teacher guides are already built and accessible. Teachers will have direct access to the Project Library and curriculum resources in ECHO as they collaborate on developing scope and sequencing guides for each course. Each department determines what resources and supplies are needed to support project development as outlined with the planning process.

Next Steps: The Academy is undergoing its hiring of teachers for the next school year. Once the teaching staff is in place, each content area will work with the existing STEM focused curriculum maps and the ECHO project library to develop an updated curriculum map, along with a scope and sequence guide for implementation purposes. Teachers will be participating in intensive training components with the New Tech Network during the May, June, and July as part of the professional development plan.

Facility: (Section B)

Current Status: The Academy secured a lease for a 60,000 square foot facility at 109 Lukens Drive, New Castle, DE. The landlord will be providing full tenant improvements based on a school design prepared by Studio Jaed (see Section B). The renovations will be phased, with 25,000 square feet prepared for the first year. The remaining portion of the facility will be completed by September 2017. The Academy has received a variance from the City of New Castle to open the school at this location. The landlord will begin improvements by mid-May 2016.

Next Steps: Construction will occur between May and August. Most of the interior work is relegated to HVAC, floor and tile, electrical and drywall work. Exterior work will consist of sealing the roof. Temporary certificates of occupancy can be obtained by June 15; work will continue, however, through the summer. The Academy intends to procure outside maintenance and cleaning contracts in May.

Technology: (Section B)

Current Status: The Academy is waiting on finalization of the interior design of the facility at Lukens Drive to prepare a final technology design plan. The intent is to prepare wireless access for laptops and tablets and prepare technology labs for more robust applications such as computer aided design and 3-modeling technology.

The Academy has met with the Department of Technology and information, developed its specifications for digital access to the building and related switching and communication linkages and protocols. Our ERATE RFP has been created and advertised; proposals are due at the end of April. A consultant has been identified to assist with the technology planning. Two vendors – Dell and Microsoft – have provided quotes for the purchase of technology for student use (laptops or tablets).

Next Steps: Requests for proposals will be offered in May for selection of the classroom and student technology. Orders will be placed in June for a six-week delivery period. Installation, inventory and distribution of the technology will be done in June 2016.

Other technology such as the telephone, security and computer security protocols will be completed when we secure the location over the summer.

Finance (Viability): (Section C)

Current Status: The Academy has prepared 60-month cash flows to determine school financial viability at 250 students (100%) and 200 students (80%). (Section C). Both demonstrate financial viability. Adjustments were made in units and other student related expenses due to reduction of students. During the planning year, we received revenue from the State Performance Fund, Longwood Foundation, Welfare Foundation, DuPont and private donations. We have also received preliminary notice that the US Department of Education has awarded the Academy \$600,000 over three years in Non-State Educational Agency (Non-SEA) grant funding.

Next Steps: The Academy hired a fundraising consultant to assist with foundation, corporate and individual donations to provide sufficient cash flow through the end of the planning year (June 30, 2016). The necessary level of donations has not materialized. The Academy is in discussions with several institutions to obtain an operating line of credit to assist with cash flow before we receive the State allocation of funding. We will have this line of credit established by mid-May.

Finance: (Administrative): (Section C)

Current Status: The Academy has contracted with Innovative Schools to provide accounting, PHRST and FSF activities for the upcoming school year. They will also perform student registration and enrollment activities. The Academy has also contracted with Barbacane, Thornton to provide accounting services and with Saul Ewing for legal services.

Transportation: (Section C)

Current Status: The Academy has met with the Transportation Education Associate regarding the requirements for the procurement of transportation. The Academy delayed its solicitation of RFPs until it had a clearer picture of its student enrollment and geographic distribution. We participated in a Request for Proposal process through the Delaware Charter School Network to solicit a joint transportation contract. This process yielded no viable contractors. The Academy has met with one contractor (Advanced Transportation) to discuss availability

Next Steps: To ensure that we are getting the best price for transportation, we will be issuing an RFP in April to solicit proposals from three vendors. This contract should be closed by the end of May 2016.

Food Services: (Section C)

Current Status: The Academy met with the Education Associates responsible for school nutrition requirements for schools.

Next Steps: The Academy intends to vend meals from another School Food Authority (FSA), most likely Colonial or Christina. This contract will be completed by the end of May. Once we complete our location, we will have a warming kitchen and get permitting from the Department of Public Health. Lastly, once we have our student enrollment confirmed, we will identify the percentage eligible for free and reduced lunch programs and submit our application to the USDA. The timeframe for the entire process to be completed will be June 2016.

Fundraising: (Section D)

The Academy has hired a professional fundraiser to assist with the application for foundation grants and solicitation of grants and donations from private individuals and corporations. The fundraiser has been instrumental in obtaining grants, such as the Welfare Foundation grant.

Next Steps: We have prepared a case for support, a master prospect list and a donor solicitation package. We will be soliciting donations throughout the summer and into the school year.

Student Recruitment: (Section E)

Current Status: As of April 15, the Academy has 91 first year contracts signed by parents. We have 202 active applications (not withdrawn) from which we will continue to pursue closure of the contracts.

The Academy has included in Section E its marketing plan for the recruitment of students, updated for the post-April 1 period while under formal review. We have also included a list of marketing events held over the past year to demonstrate our efforts to recruit.

Next Steps: We continue to hold open houses, distribute information and post-card advertising the open houses, meeting with community leaders and community groups, and participate in student events. We have included these engagements in our marketing calendar in Section E.

We are holding a parent engagement event on April 20th for all parents who have enrolled students to update them on our progress. We are recruiting new students while also focusing on closing the outstanding applications we have received. We are making direct contact (phone calls, invitation to events and home visits) to obtain one year agreements.

Student Information Management: (Section F)

Current Status: Both the Executive Director and the Principal have been trained and have access to IMS, eSchool and the Data Service Center system. In addition, Innovative Schools has been working with the Academy on ensuring that the student files are inputted into eSchool.

Next Steps: Along with Innovative Schools, we are developing student files for recording residency and other student information, IEPs, and scheduling. Once we are through our recruiting period, we will be working with the parents and students to finalize scheduling and IEP requirements. Our principal has been holding individual enrollment meetings with parents and students to review records and determine the needs of each individual student.

Human Resources: (Section G)

Current Status: The Academy hired an Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer (Principal) in September to work on recruitment, academic and operational issues for the school. The Academy is now undergoing the hiring of its teaching complement for the 2016-2017 school year. We have advertised, solicited applications, screened applicants and are now in the interview process. The employee handbook is in draft form (see Section G).

Next Steps: We are interviewing candidates through April and will be making offers to teachers in early May. Once hired, they will participate in the New Tech Network training and the development of scope and sequencing guides to support the curriculum maps in place.