

Red Clay Consolidated School District

Delaware Military Academy

2015 Accountability Committee Report

Criterion 1.

The individuals and entities submitting the application are experienced and qualified to start and operate a charter school, and to implement the school's proposed educational program. Certified teachers, parents, and members of the community in which the school is to be located must be involved in the development of the proposed charter school. At the time at which the school commences its instructional program and at all times thereafter, the board of directors must include a teacher at the school and a parent of a student enrolled at the school as members.

Committee Summary:

The individuals and entities of DMA are qualified to operate a charter school and implement the educational program. The school's website lists the board of directors, a group which embodies all the necessary requirements of a Charter Board.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 1.

Criterion 2.

The chosen form of organization, identified in the articles of incorporation and bylaws, or the membership agreement, conforms to the Delaware General Corporation Law.

Committee Summary:

The chosen form of organization, as identified in DMA's Certificate of Incorporation and bylaws, conforms to the Delaware General Corporation Law.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 2.

Criterion 3.

The mission statement, goals, and educational objectives are consistent with the description of legislative intent set forth in 14 Del.C. §501 and the restrictions on charter school operations set forth in 14 Del.C. §506.

Committee Summary:

Delaware Military Academy (DMA) is a non-profit, 501-c-3, charter school located in Wilmington, Delaware. It is the first successful NJROTC Military Charter School supported by the Navy in the United States. DMA is a military themed high school that uses military values to teach ethics, personal and civic responsibility and leadership. This strong value system promotes and develops integrity, citizenship, service, fitness, patriotism, leadership, teamwork, and self-esteem. The program offers Delaware high school students, in grades 9 through 12, a tuition-free, four-year, college preparatory curriculum. The Academy has consistently met or exceeded Annual Yearly Progress under NCLB. The United States Navy has consistently rated DMA's

Corp of Cadets as a 'Distinguished Unit with Academic Honors' which entitles the Academy to nine nominations to service academies (3 each to the Naval Academy, West Point and the Coast Guard Academy) each year for qualified applicants.

The Academy introduced the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) program into the Red Clay Consolidated School District. NJROTC programs have been part of America's high school curriculum since 1916, and have consistently received national acclaim for their innovative approach to public education. DMA strives to impact future generations by providing an exceptional educational program with an emphasis in science and mathematics. There are no requirements for cadets to commit to the armed services upon graduation. Currently, 86% of the graduates pursue a two or four year post-secondary program of study. Additionally, approximately 12% choose to serve in one of the branches of armed service. For these graduates, successful completion of a JROTC program affords them the opportunity to graduate from boot camp at a higher pay level and rank than their fellow graduates.

The Delaware Military Academy contravenes the traditional concept of a high school or junior college level "military academy" as a rigorous, live-in, full immersion educational facility that serves both students motivated for future military service and those who need a military setting to correct behavioral deficiencies. To the contrary, this academy caters to the motivated student who has the potential to attend a national service academy and wants a challenging educational program. Cadets attend this military-themed high school and benefit from instruction from both civilian teachers, certified in their core content area, and from retired military personnel certified for Naval Science instruction.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 3.

Criterion 4.

The school has set goals for student performance and will utilize satisfactory indicators to determine whether its students meet or exceed such goals and the academic standards set by the state. The indicators shall include the assessments required for all students in other public schools, although the charter school may adopt additional performance standards or assessment requirements, and shall include timelines for the achievement of student performance goals and the assessment of such performance.

Committee Summary:

The committee reviewed the Academic Performance Framework, from the Delaware Department of Education for 2011 through 2014, the latest available. DMA met Adequate Yearly Progress and their overall rating met the standard all four years. Out of 17 areas, in 2014, DMA received a "D" (does not meet) in 2 areas, an "M" (meets standard) in 12 areas, and an "E" (exceeds standard) in 3 areas. The two areas DMA did not meet standard were 1) DCAS growth target in mathematics and 2) SAT college readiness (juniors). The committee noted that performance for meeting growth target in mathematics (55.8%) approached the target and was comparable to district results. DMA's percentage of students receiving a 1550 or better on the SAT (30.8%)

was much higher than the state's results (20%). Other reports examined showed 2015 SAT (juniors) college readiness at 28% compared to the state at 19%. The three areas DMA exceeded standard was 1) proficiency compared to district in mathematics 2) proficiency compared to district in ELA, and 3) graduation rate.

The committee also reviewed grade 11 Smarter assessment results for 2015, grade 10 DCAS science results, grade 10 PSAT results, and AP exam results . Smarter proficiency in ELA was 54%, higher than the state. Smarter proficiency in mathematics was 28%, higher than the state. Proficiency in DCAS science declined from past years (45.83% in 2015 compared to 54.68% in 2011) but was slightly higher than the state (43.53%). Smarter proficiency among students in the gap group (African American, American Indian, Hispanic, English language learners, students with disabilities, or low income) showed a 30 percentage point gap in ELA (slightly higher than the state) and 26 percentage point gap in mathematics (comparable to the state). The percentage of 10th graders meeting the college-ready benchmark on the PSAT was higher in 2014 (43%) than 2015 (32%) but DMA remained higher than the state (28% in 2015). The percentage of AP exams passed juniors and seniors was 57% in 2015, 67% in 2014, 49% in 2013.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 4.

Criterion 5.

The school proposes a satisfactory plan for evaluating student performance and procedures for taking corrective action in the event that student performance at the charter school falls below such standards which are reasonably likely to succeed.

Committee Summary:

The DMA evaluation plan utilizes the required state the Academic Performance Framework. A detailed analysis of the framework was done in criterion 4, as well as an analysis of results from the new state test (Smarter assessments), DCAS Science, PSAT, and AP exams.

Additionally the committee reviewed student performance components of the Middle States Accreditation Report. DMA is to be commended for undergoing the Middle States accreditation process and setting reasonable, achievable targets for improvement by 2020 focusing on improvements in state test results (will need to be updated from DCAS to Smarter), average SAT superscores among seniors, and AP exam "pass" rate (score 3-5). Middle States noted these targets are supported by stakeholders, and the school has "sufficient energy to support implementation of the action plans and achievement of the objectives". In the action plan DMA identifies readiness metrics, tutoring and intervention, as well as targeted instructional strategies for all, to reach these targets. Middle States provided some feedback on how to address burden and timeline issues in the action plan.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 5.

Criterion 6.

The school's educational program, including curriculum and instructional strategies, has the potential to improve student performance; and must be aligned to meet the Delaware Content Standards and state program requirements, and in the case of a charter high school, state graduation requirements. High school programs must provide driver education. The educational program at all charter schools must include the provision by the school of extra instructional time for at-risk students, summer school, and other services required to be provided by school districts pursuant to the provisions of 14 Del.C. §153. A previously approved charter school may continue to operate in compliance with the terms of its current approval, but its charter shall not be renewed unless the school shall submit an application for renewal in full compliance with the requirements of this subsection.

Committee Summary:

DMA's educational program meets state guidelines and has been accredited by Middle States. Their programming and curriculum are consistent with Delaware high school programming. They have advanced coursework and college prep coursework. They have high standards for academic achievement and the renewal packet indicates they meet their student's needs. They are compliant with state requirements, have low drop-out rates, and adequate post secondary results. It is noted that minimal information indicates what or how they serve special education students, or their RTI process.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 6.

Criterion 7.

The school's educational program sets forth appropriate strategies to be employed to accommodate the needs of at-risk students and those needing special education services.

Committee Summary:

There are currently 22 students with IEPs and 47 students with 504 plans attending Delaware Military Academy. Services are offered in an inclusive setting, and IEP development is provided by a certified special educator utilizing IEP Plus. DMA's most recent DOE Annual Determination for Special Education was "Meets Requirements."

Minimal evidence was provided in the renewal application regarding the referral and evaluation process for special services including the problem solving team required by regulation (14 DE Admin. Code 923.11.9).

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 7.

Criterion 8.

The plan for the school is economically viable, based on a review of the school's proposed budget of projected revenues and expenditures for the first three years, the plan for starting the school, and the major contracts planned for equipment and services, leases, improvements, purchases of real property, and insurance.

Committee Summary:

Based on the current student population at local and state funding sources, Delaware Military Academy has sufficient revenues to meet current expenditures. Student enrollment remains stable with enrollments numbers reported to DOE was 569 and 564 for FY 2015 and FY 2016 respectively. Delaware Military had an ongoing debt service commitment issued in 2008 in variable rate demand bonds that was refinanced in December 2014 to secure a fixed rate. The principal balance was increased \$500,000 at the time of refinance to secure funds for development of newly acquired land and the terms extended through September 2049. The principal and interest payment are approximately \$776,000 annually, or approximately 13% of annual operating revenues. The ongoing debt service commitment will require careful fiscal management of state and local resources to meet obligations without deficit spending. The FY 2016 budget is anticipated to leave an estimated \$230,000 cash balance to begin FY 2017. The carryover balance has remained constant over the last three years although it is significantly less than FY 2011 when their ending cash balance was approximately \$1,000,000 to start FY 2012. This is due to the purchase of land for future development.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 8.

Criterion 9.

The school's financial and administrative operations meet or exceed the same standards, procedures and requirements as a school district. If a charter school proposes to operate outside the state's pension and/or benefits system, a specific memorandum of understanding shall be developed and executed by the charter school, the approving authority, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Controller General and the secretary of Finance to assure that the state's fiduciary duties and interests in the proper use of the appropriated funds and as a benefits and pension trustee are fulfilled and protected, the state's financial reporting requirements are satisfied, and the interests of charter school employees are protected. All charter schools shall operate within the Delaware Financial Management System (DFMS) and be subject to all of the same policies and procedures which govern other agencies operating with such system, except that any charter school previously approved to operate outside of the DFMS may continue to so operate subject to the terms of its memorandum of understanding until such time as the school's charter is renewed pursuant to this chapter.

Committee Summary:

The committee reviewed the last two years (FY 13 and FY 14) of Delaware Military Academy's annual audited financial statements as well as current financial documentation provided by the school (FY 15 audited statements were not yet available). The auditors have concluded "no material reportable conditions" in their review and preparation of the Basic Financial Statement. The audit findings in the FY 13 audit were addressed and noted as complete in the FY 14 audit and FY 14 had zero findings. The committee has verified that the school is operating within the state's First State Financials system and determined that the financial and administration operations meet the same standards, procedures and requirements as a school district. Delaware Military Academy employees participate in the state pension and benefits system.

The DMA Chief Financial Officer was replaced at the start of FY 2014 and he worked with members of the Red Clay Consolidated School District administration to set up policies and internal controls to safeguard against mismanagement of funds and excessive personal credit card use by staff. These internal controls are documented, revised as necessary due to changes in practice issued at the state level, and continue to be enforced. The CFO provides extensive monthly financial reporting to the DMA board.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 9.

Criterion 10.

The assessment of the school's potential legal liability and the types and limits of insurance coverage the school plans to obtain are adequate.

Committee Summary:

The committee reviewed the insurance policy of Delaware Military Academy and determined it has adequate types and limits of coverage. Employment-related practices are provided under the coverage.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 10.

Criterion 11.

The procedures the school plans to follow to discipline students and ensure its students' adherence to school attendance requirements comply with state and federal law.

Committee Summary:

The committee reviewed the materials submitted by the Delaware Military Academy regarding attendance and discipline. Guidelines are consistent with the Red Clay Student Code of Conduct. It is noted that DMA has worked hard to establish a system where the school takes ownership of their student discipline issues. This is an improvement over past administrations.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 11.

Criterion 12.

The procedures the school plans to follow to assure the health and safety of the students, employees, and guests of the school while they are on school property are adequate and that the charter school will comply with the applicable provisions of local, state, and federal law, including the provisions of 11 Del.C. Ch. 85.

Committee Summary:

The Delaware Military Academy has updated their emergency plan and recorded their drills in the Emergency Response Information Portal as required by the Omnibus School Safety Act. Additionally, the school has complied with Mandatory Reporting of Bullying, with three documented and substantiated cases.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 12.

Criterion 13.

The school shall have a satisfactory plan for timely transferring student data and records to the Department of Education.

Committee Summary:

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 13.

Criterion 14.

The school's board of directors shall annually certify to the Delaware Department of Education, on a form to be provided by the Delaware Department of Education, that prior to the payment of any fees or other sums to any management company employed by the board, the board will insure that sufficient revenues of the school are devoted to adequately support the school's proposed educational program. Such form of certification may require documentation of all actual or proposed expenditures by the school. Failure to provide sufficient funds to adequately support the school's proposed education program shall be grounds for revocation of the school's charter.

This criterion is not applicable since no management company is involved.

Criterion 15

The school shall have a satisfactory plan to ensure the effectiveness of its board of trustees, including governance trainings conducted for any new board members and at a minimum of once every 3 years.

Committee Summary:

DMA's Board of Directors complies with the necessary trainings, as per State Code.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 15.

Criterion 16

The school shall have a satisfactory plan for procedures it will follow in the case of the closure or dissolution of the school, including a plan to set aside sufficient funds to cover the salaries owed to those employees who are paid over a 12-month period. For a new applicant granted under this chapter, the application shall include a reasonable plan to establish sufficient available balances pursuant to § 516(1) of this title.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 16.