

Red Clay Consolidated School District

Delaware Military Academy

2019 Accountability Committee

Report and Recommendations

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 that 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 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 10% 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:

Delaware Military Academy State Report Card/ Delaware Student Success Framework (DSSF), new in 2018, was reviewed from the past 2 years.

2019 and 2018 DSSF results show DMA earned the highest status "Exceeds Expectations" overall and in each category: Academic Achievement, School Quality/Student Success, and Graduation Rate.

- *Academic Achievement is based on SAT scores. DMA's SAT performance exceeds that of the state and nation, among schools administering School Day SAT.*

- *School Quality/ Student Success is based on attendance, percentage of 9th graders on track to graduation according to credits earned in content areas, and percentage of students college or career ready.*
- *In 2019, DMA's graduation rate was over 99%, up from 98% in 2018.*

DSSF performance was not calculated for any sub-groups in academic achievement (grade 11) except for "white" based on student counts below 15. However, the following subgroups had enough students in one or more area of the School Quality/Student Success category and all earned "Exceeds Expectations": African-American or Black, Hispanic or Latino, Students with Disabilities, Low Income. DMA does not have enough English Learners to qualify for English attainment category of performance.

DMA also provided PSAT results for grades 9 and 10 following a cohort of students based on graduation year. Results show based on averages the school met their goal of growing PSAT and SAT scores 20 points in each subject for class of 2020 and is on track for the class of 2021 which will test in SAT in the upcoming school year. The goal was not met for the class of 2019 so it is a realistic and meaningful goal.

DMA's dropout rate is low, at 0.2%.

DMA noted that AP exam scores and participation were down because more students were taking newly offered dual enrollment courses. Since they are exceeding expectations in DSSF for college or career preparedness which uses both metrics of AP exam scores and grade of B or higher in dual enrollment, the committee is not concerned about the change in AP scores.

Also notable is DMA's recognition as an Exemplary High Performing National Blue Ribbon School for 2019.

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:

Through the Middle States Accreditation process, Delaware Military Academy has established the following objective and performance targets to ensure that students demonstrate growth:

- *By the year 2020, cadets at the Delaware Military Academy will demonstrate improved academic performance, as measured by:*

- *Each cohort will show 20-point average increase every year in both math and ELA portions of the College Board test. This will result in an average 80-point overall increase between PSAT 8/9 in 9th grade and the SAT in 11th grade.*

This data is tracked by student cohort providing school leaders insight into student performance and the opportunity to take corrective action should the data indicate a need. Below is the data for the class of 2020 cohort, which illustrates student growth in math and ELA:

<i>Test Name/Grade</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>ERW</i>	<i>Math</i>
<i>PSAT 8/9 (Fall 2016)</i>	<i>890</i>	<i>451</i>	<i>439</i>
<i>PSAT 10 (Spring 2018)</i>	<i>967</i>	<i>494</i>	<i>473</i>
<i>SAT/11 (Spring 2019)</i>	<i>1019</i>	<i>518</i>	<i>501</i>

School leaders use this data, along with state accountability to prioritize areas in need of support at Delaware Military Academy. As a result of lower performance on both SBAC and PSAT/SAT in the area of math, school leaders have identified the following as an academic focus for their five year plan:

- *“Improve cadet outcomes in mathematics”*

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:

The Delaware Military Academy has a well rounded educational program which requires students to earn a minimum of 28 credits to graduate. Requirements include the following:

- *Completion of 4 credits in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies/Social Sciences*
- *Completion of 3 credits in World Language*
- *Completion of a 3 credit CTE Pathway*
- *Completion of a minimum of 3 credits in Naval Science*
- *Completion of a minimum of 3.5 in elective credits*
 - *1 credit must be in Gym/Fitness*
 - *1/2 credit must be in Health*

Additionally, Delaware Military Academy offers 17 honors level courses, 5 AP level courses, and 6 dual enrollment level courses to provide options for students seeking rigorous coursework. The course catalog is evaluated annually to ensure that course offerings meet the needs of the cadets.

DMA provides Response to Intervention (RTI) supports for students who are demonstrating academic or social/emotional needs. RTI supports include tutoring, mentoring, study skills support, guidance check-in program and counseling as well as specific reading and mathematics interventions. DMA utilizes online learning programs to support credit recovery and other supplemental learning opportunities.

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:

DMA employs a full-time Dean of Instruction/Special Education Coordinator to facilitate IEP and 504 Plan meetings and work with staff to ensure student IEPs and 504s are implemented with fidelity. The committee reviewed the DOE Annual Determination for Special Education (IDEA) made public in April 2019, and DMA received a rating of “Meets Requirements.”

DMA reported that students with disabilities and English learners receive services within the general education setting in small, mixed ability groups. As required under DE Admin Code 923.11.9, DMA has established a Problem Solving Team to address students’ academic and social/emotional needs after referral from teachers, parents, counselors or school administration. The team meets every other week to recommend specific strategies to address concerns and monitor student progress. DMA contracts with outside agencies to complete evaluations to consider special education eligibility as needed.

Out of 579 total students, DMA has twelve students with IEPs (2.1%) and fifty-five students with 504 Plans (9.5%) currently enrolled. In the 2015 accountability review, DMA enrolled 22 students with IEPs and 47 students with 504 Plans. Overall, the number of students with IEPs has decreased and the number of students with 504 Plans has increased slightly.

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:

The Committee reviewed audited financial statements, monthly financial reports and current and prior year operating and capital budgets. DMA maintains a sufficient operating fund balance of approximately \$2.5 million as of the close of the last audited fiscal year (June 30, 2019). DMA's budgeted operating expenditures, including debt service, match available revenues. Salary expenditures, the largest expenditure item in the budget, maintain a consistent percentage in the overall budget. DMA has outstanding bonds of \$18,431,513, primarily for the initial purchase of the school facility. The most recent capital project of the athletic stadium resulted from two significant private donations.

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:

DMA operates within the State's financial system and employees are members of the state pension and benefits plans. The Committee reviewed the last three years of the DMA's annual audited

financial statements (FY 2016, 2017 and 2018) as well as current financial documentation. The auditors concluded “no material reportable conditions” in their review and preparation of DMA’s Basic Financial Statements. DMA remains fully compliant with posting audits, annual budgets and monthly reports of the Citizens Budget Oversight Committee.

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 DMA and determined it has adequate types and limits of 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 review of Delaware Military’s student handbook revealed that guidelines, procedures and policies comply with Red Clay Consolidated School District and Delaware Department of Education. The discipline procedures that are in place support a safe environment for students, staff, parents, and community members.

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:

Delaware Military Academy complied with the Emergency Response Information Portal for school year 2018-2019, which is required by the Omnibus School Safety Act. DMA is currently conducting drills required to be compliant for the 2019-2020 school year. The school also has an updated school safety team and school medical team. The schools safety plan follows

guidelines set forth by Delaware Emergency Management Agency, Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

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:

DMA has no outstanding complaints from the Department of Education regarding record keeping. The Committee reviewed several documents outlining DMA's procedures regarding record keeping. Delaware Military Academy is professional in their handling of Red Clay and Delaware Department of Education paperwork requests. The distribution of responsibilities at the school works well in completing assigned tasks.

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 three years.

Committee Summary:

Delaware Military Academy administration proved that all veteran Board Members complied with governance trainings. Training is scheduled for three new Board Members.

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.

Committee Summary:

Delaware Military Academy will utilize the Red Clay Consolidated School District closure protocols in the case of closure or dissolution. Those protocols are publicized on the Red Clay Consolidated School District website and they have been made available for DMA leadership.

Delaware Military Academy has met the standards of Criterion 16.