

Red Clay Consolidated School District
The Charter School of Wilmington
2014 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:

As stated in the 1995 Charter School of Wilmington (CSW) charter application, the “application was prepared and is supported by a diverse group of local and multinational businesses and parents, teachers, and community members.”

The SY 2013–14 board of directors includes a teacher at the school and a parent of a student enrolled at the school as members.

The CSW 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 the CSW’s Certificate of Incorporation and bylaws, conforms to the Delaware General Corporation Law. As stated in the CSW’s 1995 charter application, the CSW was incorporated on September 29, 1995 as a non-profit corporation pursuant to the provisions of the general corporation law of the State of Delaware. One purpose of the corporation is “to organize and run a charter school under the Charter School Act of 1995 (14 Del.C. §§501 et seq.).”

The CSW 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:

According to the CSW website, the mission of the CSW is “to engage highly motivated high school students with an interest in math and science by providing a challenging college-preparatory curriculum in a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment that integrates practical learning opportunities, sets high expectations, develops social responsibility, and promotes a global perspective.”

As described in the CSW's 1995 charter application, the goal of the CSW is "to enhance the quality of public education in Delaware by developing a unique, model school that utilizes the most effective educational techniques and ensures equal educational opportunity, thus meeting the needs of students, the business community, and society."

The educational objectives identified on the CSW website are "to prepare students who are thoroughly educated in mathematics and science, to prepare students who are broadly educated in the humanities, to prepare students who are technologically literate and understand the operation and use of computers and laboratory instruments, to prepare students who are able to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, and to prepare students who are firmly grounded in character development."

The CSW's mission statement, goals, and educational objectives are consistent with the description of legislative intent set forth in 14 Del.C. §501, which is "to improve student learning; encourage the use of different and innovative or proven school environments and teaching and learning methods; provide parents and students with measures of improved school and student performance and greater opportunities in choosing public schools within and outside their school districts; and to provide for a well-educated community." The CSW's mission statement, goals, and educational objectives are consistent with the restrictions on charter school operations set forth in 14 Del.C. §506.

The CSW 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 CSW's Academic Performance Framework Charter Report was reviewed. The Academic Performance Framework utilizes multiple indicators for student performance, including graduation rate, SAT scores, and results from the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) for growth, proficiency and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The Academic Performance Framework examines 17 metrics. High performance on these metrics has been noted in the three year period of the report. In 2013, the CSW earned the highest rating for each metric and earned an overall rating of "Exceeds Standard". The Academic Performance Framework report indicates that 98% of students graduate within 4 years. In 2013, 89% of students earn SAT scores of 1550 or greater, an indicator of college readiness. In regards to 2013 DCAS scores, 93% of all students met their instructional scale score growth target in Reading, 95% in Math. Among students in the lowest performing quartile, 84% met their growth targets in Reading, 82% in Math. In addition, greater than 99% of all students met proficiency in Reading

and Mathematics; greater than 97% in each demographic subgroup. It is notable that not only is proficiency high, so is growth from fall to spring.

The CSW Department of Education 2013 School Profile reports 1,124 AP exams were taken last year, of which 1,018 passed (91%). The School Profile also shows that the average SAT score for the class of 2013 exceeded the district, state, and national average in each subject area. The average overall score was 1855.

The CSW continues to receive national recognition for its programs and performance: National Blue Ribbon School (2013), ranked #5 nationally in the Best High Schools for STEM rankings (science, technology, engineering, math) by U.S. News & World Report (2012) and is currently ranked #62 in Newsweek's Best High School's List (2013).

The CSW 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.

Staff members at the CSW regularly identify students who are struggling and may need additional support based on grades and class performance. The CSW utilizes a daily activity block where identified students meet with teachers and peers for tutoring in areas of need. In addition, teachers make themselves available to students for extra help after school as needed. In the area of English Language Arts, teachers develop individualized learning plans for students needing remediation using an online program called Study Island.

Committee Summary:

The CSW 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 special focus of the CSW is math, science, and computer education. At least 10 of the required 24.5 credits must be earned in these areas. A minimum of 24.5 credits is required for graduation, compared to the state requirement of 24 credits or the Red Clay Consolidated School District requirement of 24 credits. Primary differences are in math (4 credits) and science (4.5 credits) as well as a junior research project (0.5 credits). Driver education is integrated into the curriculum for all 10th-grade students. The school offers a challenging, college preparatory curriculum which includes a wide range of AP courses.

Course offerings across the curriculum are aligned to state and national standards. The number and variety of math/science elective offerings exceed those typically found in the comprehensive high school. All courses within the core curriculum are offered at three different levels/phases: Phase 3 – College prep, average to above average ability, 75th to 84th percentile nationally; Phase 4 – College prep, above average ability, 85th to 92nd percentile nationally; and Phase 5 – College prep, highest ability, Honors, 93rd to 99th percentile nationally.

The latter allows a student's program to be custom tailored, thereby encouraging maximum growth and academic achievement.

See the Charter School of Wilmington Performance Framework with student achievement data.

The CSW 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:

Seven students with disabilities and seven-teen students with 504 accommodations are currently enrolled.

CSW shares an educational diagnostician with Cab Calloway School of the arts. The educational diagnostician facilitates IEP meetings and works with staff to ensure student IEP's are followed. The CSW guidance counselors are responsible for implementation of the 504 accommodation plans. CSW also uses the on-line program "Study Island" to assist students with remedial education needs.

The Committee recognizes that CSW in their 2009 accountability review enrolled zero students with disabilities and are now enrolling seven.

Committee Recommendations:

The Committee recommends that the CSW continue its effort to inform prospective applicants that the school is open to students with disabilities and that their disability will not be a factor in determining their admission to the school. It is also recommended that the CSW continue to actively attempt to attract students from an economically disadvantaged background to mirror the percentage of such students enrolled in the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

The CSW 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 and current and prior year budgets. The CSW maintains a sufficient and healthy fund balance of approximately \$2.5 million as of the close of the last audited fiscal year, which is expected to grow slightly in the current fiscal year. CSW's budgeted expenditures match available revenues. Salary expenditures, the largest expenditure item in the budget, maintain a consistent percentage in the overall budget. The facility lease with Red Clay Consolidated School district will expire June 30, 2014 and will need to be renegotiated for the next fiscal year.

The CSW 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:

CSW 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 CSW's annual audited financial statements as well as current financial documentation. The auditors have concluded "no material reportable conditions" in their review and preparation of the CSW's Basic Financial Statements. CSW remains fully compliant with posting audits, annual budgets and monthly reports of the Citizens Budget Oversight Committee.

The CSW 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 the CSW and determined it has adequate types and limits of coverage. CSW is working with Red Clay Consolidated School District on coordinating coverage where students from Cab Calloway and CSW overlap so as to provide sufficient coverage without duplicating.

The CSW 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 school climate data as reported to the Delaware Department of Education and the policies and procedures as outlined in the student handbook. CSW has incorporated a cyber-bullying policy as part of its overall Bullying Prevention Policy as required under Delaware Code 14 Del. C. Sec 4112D. The Committee reviewed the relevant professional development information to insure compliance with the mandatory Youth Gang Activity and Bullying Prevention annual refresher training requirement.

The CSW 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 Committee reviewed the information submitted by CSW to the Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security to insure compliance with the Omnibus School Safety Act. CSW has submitted all of the appropriate school and Incident Command Team information as well as attended the mandatory Emergency Response Information Portal training through the DSHS.

Committee Recommendations:

The Committee recommends that all staff members review the Emergency Response Plan as outlined in the Emergency Response Information Portal at the beginning of each school year and document that they have reviewed and understand the contents of the Emergency Response Plan.

The CSW 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:

The Committee reviewed several documents outlining CSW's procedures regarding record keeping. The CSW 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.

The CSW has accurate written policies and procedures for the preparation of the September 30th Unit Count, which were implemented as early as the 2003-2004 school year.

The CSW 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 met standard on all three Delaware State Performance Frameworks.
(Academic, Organizational, Financial)**