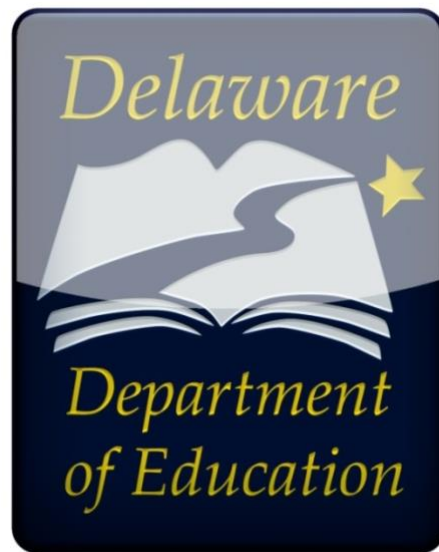


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DDOE)



Early College High School MAJOR MODIFICATION APPLICATION FINAL REPORT

CSAC Final Meeting: March 25, 2021
CSAC Final Report Published: April 1, 2021

By December 31, 2020, Early College High School (ECHS) submitted an application for a major modification of its charter. The following individuals attended the final meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) on March 25th:

Voting Members

- Kim Klein, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Associate Secretary of Operations Support, DDOE
- April McCrae, Ed.D. Education Associate, Science Assessment, DDOE
- Brian Moore, Education Associate, School Climate and Discipline, DDOE
- Catherine Oravez, Education Associate, Federal Funds and Cost Recovery, DDOE
- Gregory Fulkerson, Ph.D., Education Associate, World Languages and International Education, DDOE
- James Pennewell, Education Associate, Capital Project Management, DDOE
- Joyce Leatherbury, Education Associate, General Supervision IDEA, DDOE
- Tiffany Green, Education Associate, Mentoring and Induction, DDOE
- Tierra Fair, Community Member
- Ted Molin, Community Member
- Charles Taylor, Community Member

Ex-Officio Members (non-voting)

- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network
- Vincent Lofink, Delaware State Board of Education

Staff to CSAC (non-voting)

- Leroy Travers, Lead Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Alicia Balcerak, Administrative Secretary, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Finance Office, DDOE
- John H. Carwell Jr., Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Darryl Parson, Deputy Attorney General

Representatives of ECHS

- Dr. Marsha Horton, Board President
- Dr. Evelyn Edney, Head of School
- Dr. Nyia McCants, Assistant Principal
- Dara Savage, Instructional Coach

Discussion

Ms. Klein shared that this was the final meeting of CSAC relative to the major modification application submitted by ECHS, which included requests to:

- Change grade configuration from nine through twelve to include grades seven and eight.
- Increase enrollment by a total of 200 students (an increase of 47%).
- Change locations.
- Alter the name of the school.

The proposed modifications would begin on July 1, 2022.

Ms. Klein stated that the initial CSAC report was issued on February 6th and the school submitted a timely response to that report. The initial public hearing was held on February 16th. Ms. Klein announced that a final report would be issued no later than April 2nd.

Ms. Klein stated that the purpose of the meeting was for CSAC to continue its review of the major modification application with the applicant, review any areas of continued concern through a discussion with the applicant, and issue its recommendation on the application.

Ms. Klein stated that, in the initial report, CSAC requested the following information:

1. Revised embedded assessment prompts for grades seven and eight in English/Language Arts (ELA).
2. Revised scope and sequence documents addressing gaps in Springboard to demonstrate alignment to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics, including the content and math practice standards and the instructional shifts for mathematics.
3. Confirmation of membership in the Social Studies Coalition or social studies curriculum alignment documents, scope and sequences documents and units of instruction
4. Visual and performing arts scope and sequence documents
5. A description of how high school standards will be aligned within middle school, and how they will vertically articulate to the high school program and onward to the college course availability.
6. Data related to the interest in a middle school program at ECHS.
7. A structure of what the mentoring program will look like, including a description of how new teachers will be paired.

Ms. Klein asked if there were any additional questions or comments regarding the items submitted by the school or any further questions regarding the application that require discussion.

Dr. Fulkerson gave the following overview of the curriculum information submitted by ECHS:

The ELA documents submitted meet all expectations. The school revised their culminating writing activities, or embedded assessments, for the middle school grades to reflect the criteria.

ECHS has provided a revised scope and sequence for the seventh and eighth grade level mathematics courses, providing more time for teachers to cover major work of the grade – as identified in Ed Reports. Therefore, the evidence meets expectations for alignment.

Early College has submitted a signed memorandum of understanding with the Social Studies Coalition. This evidence meets expectations for alignment.

ECHS submitted both scope and sequence and standards documents for visual and performing arts. It is recommended moving forward that the standards be integrated into the scope and sequence to see how students are learning through the standards. The use of “I can” statements as offered on the www.deartsstandards.org website can assist with this process as well as help students understand the standards and on what they are being assessed.

Dr. McCray stated that the expectations for students in seventh and eighth grades in Delaware should meet seventh and eighth grade standards. ECHS's acceleration program asks students to meet high school standards. Dr. McCray stated that planning for vertical alignment for an acceleration program requires a very strong theoretical understanding of learning progressions and cognitive development in each of the content areas in order to determine key overlaps. An understanding of academic development and scaffolding is important as well, in order to allow for acceleration in any content area. This is specifically important in the areas of math and science. Dr. McCray expressed concern that these understandings were not listed in the school's plan. Specifically, a plan for conducting an overlap analysis is missing from the school's plan. Dr. McCrae stated that the school would benefit from partnership and collaboration with the DDOE and the researchers at Delaware State University in developing their acceleration program.

Ms. Green asked that Dr. Edney attend a meeting on April 21st for mentoring site coordinators. Ms. Green reminded the school that there is a different mentoring program for nurses.

Ms. Oravez asked about the data that the school provided showing interest for the middle school program. This data showed many positive responses in regards to adding a middle school, however, there were several responses that were in opposition to the addition of grades seven and eight. Ms. Oravez asked how the school planned to address the non-supporting survey respondents.

Dr. Edney stated that the school held a question and answer session during which she addressed some of the concerns from students and families. ECHS will also be forming subcommittees with families and students to work through some of the concerns throughout the next year.

There were no items that required further discussion.

Ms. Klein asked if there was a motion to recommend approval of ECHS's major modification application. The motion was made and seconded to recommend approval without conditions and was carried unanimously. Ms. Klein reminded ECHS that the CSAC's recommendation was just that, a recommendation to the Secretary of Education on the application to modify its charter.

Conclusion:

The criteria for approving a modification to a charter are set forth in 14 Del. C. § 512. The criteria include that the charter school's educational objectives are consistent with the legislative intent of and restrictions set forth in 14 Del. C. c. 5; the charter school's educational program has the potential to improve student performance; the plan for the charter school is economically viable; the charter school's financial and administrative operations meet or exceed the same standards, procedures, and requirements as a school district; and the charter school's procedures to assure students', employees', and guests' health and safety are adequate.

Next Steps

- The public comment period ends on April 9th.

- The Secretary of Education will announce her decision at the April 22nd State Board of Education meeting and ask the State Board for assent.