

CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Great Oaks Charter School - Wilmington

Charter Renewal

Initial Report

November 7, 2023

As is required, Great Oaks Charter School (Great Oaks) submitted an application to renew its charter for a term of five years. The purpose of the initial meeting is for the Charter School Accountability Committee (CSAC) to review the renewal application in light of the relevant statutory criteria for renewal.

The following were in attendance at the initial meeting of CSAC on October 31, 2023:

Voting Committee Members

- Kim Klein, Associate Secretary, Operations Support
- Aimee Beam, Education Associate, School Support
- Gregory Fulkerson, Education Associate, Academic Support
- Tiffany Green, Education Associate, Workforce Support
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Operations Support
- Joyce Leatherbury, Education Associate, Academic Support
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Academic Support
- Ted Molin, Community Member
- Tierra Fair, Community Member

Ex-Officio Members (Non-voting)

- Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter School Network
- Deb Stevens, Delaware State Board of Education

Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)

- Leroy Travers, Director, Charter School Office
- Alicia Balcerak, Administrative Secretary, Charter School Office
- Faye Schilling, Education Specialist, Charter School Office
- John Carwell Jr., Education Associate, Charter School Office
- Carla Jarosz, Deputy Attorney General

Representatives of Great Oaks Charter School

- Angela Perry, Board Chair
- Laretha Odumosu, Head of School
- Edward Emmett, Board Member
- Michelle Lambert, Financial Consultant
- Angela Parana, Special Education Coordinator
- Tamara Price, Principal

Great Oaks was given time to provide an overview of the school.

Ms. Perry reflected on the challenges and responsibilities of serving the Great Oaks community. She stated that the work is deeply personal for her and her team. The Great Oaks team is viscerally reminded of what is at stake for Great Oaks' students and how they show up as members of society. The leadership team envisions a school that rises to the challenge of a changing demography. Ms. Odumosu introduced a [video](#) about the school.

Initial Charter School Accountability Questions

Finance

1. The school's financial performance has been inconsistent over the past charter term, as measured by the annual financial performance framework. Over the past year, under the current leadership, the school's finances have become more stable due to significant reductions in expenditures during fiscal year (FY) 2023. Have any of the budgeting and spending controls implemented over the past year changed since the formal review in October through December of 2022?

[A- Budget and spending controls implemented in October 2022 remain effective and stable at an enrollment 148 students.](#)

2. Given the reduced enrollment (145) this year, is the school able to further reduce its footprint in the Community Education Building (CEB) and potentially renegotiate the lease terms to reduce the rent?

[A - The current footprint at CEB is appropriate for the school's current needs but reevaluation is ongoing.](#)

3. Keeping in mind that future revenues will be lower due to the decreased enrollment/units in the 2023-24 school year (several state funding sources are based on prior year enrollment/units), how does the school intend to rebuild cash reserves to comply with the requirements of the financial performance framework?

[A - The five-year projection reflects the impact of anticipated state revenue decreases.](#)

- a. Are there specific goals or benchmarks the school will use to help achieve increased reserves?

[A- The five-year budget shows year over year surpluses and the school is on-track to meet the 60 days cash requirement FY27 and the 75 days cash requirement by FY28.](#)

4. The school's submitted major modification application requests a reduction in authorized enrollment to 148 students. Given that future state funding revenues will be lower, provide a five-year projected budget based on this enrollment.

[A - The five-year projection budget was provided and shows year-over-year surpluses \(appendix A\).](#)

5. Due to recent enrollment trends, provide an 80% budget for the 148-student enrollment request (118 students).
 - a. Include any staffing changes and cuts for the 80% budget.
A -The 80% budget was developed based on 118 students and reflects any staffing changes (appendix B).
 - b. Include details of any programmatic reductions that may need to be made.
A - Any programmatic reductions will be based on the needs of students.
6. At what enrollment level would the school's leadership and board determine that the school is no longer financially viable?
A – It is difficult to give a hard number because each year may look different for financial viability.
 - a. What actions would be taken if enrollment were to reach that level?
A – The board would seek reductions in fixed costs such as rent, insurance, etc.
7. The “Board Priorities” document notes that the board will begin “targeted large-dollar fundraising efforts” beginning in phase three during the 2025/2026 school year. Are there any plans to pursue other funding sources in the next year and over the next two years to bolster the school's financial position?
A – Great Oaks currently partners with the CEB on various grants. It takes 12-18 months to cultivate philanthropic funding. The budget is based only on state and local revenues.
8. There is a budget line (55031) for \$10,000 for “student social and emotional support”. List the specific programs or positions that are supported by this line item.
A- This cost is for the Data Service Center (DSC) iTracker program.

CSAC Follow-up for Finance

Aimee Beam – Great Oaks left a large amount of unexpended 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) funding which could affect future 21st CCLC funding. Was this part of the programmatic cuts made?

A – 21st CCLC funding is separate and the program for which it funded was eliminated. This was not included in the most recent budget.

Gregory Fulkerson – Elaborate on the scaled down operations of the school based on the 80% budget.

A – This budget includes a scale down of staff, contracts, and insurance. The types and amount of reductions would be based on actual enrollment.

Brook Hughes – Does the school have an idea of the minimum funding that would be needed to operate?

A - The minimum enrollment level varies based on which students are enrolled. A range of enrollment would be more appropriate. The range would be based on a number of factors such as overhead and other fixed costs such as rent. A minimum enrollment range would also be dependent on student demographics and needs. The current budget is very lean and allows for effective operation.

Kim Klein - Last year, the school presented to CSAC the idea that 200 students was the optimal student enrollment. It is concerning that the school cannot provide a number at which the school would no longer be financially viable. Other schools in similar situations have provided a minimum threshold enrollment number for financial viability.

A – Providing a range for enrollment would be more appropriate, based on a number of different factors that affect revenue.

Kim Klein - Why has the school not yet explored budget reductions such as insurance?

A - The insurance policy was put out to a broker to explore reduced costs. There are schools with higher enrollment paying less for insurance. Great Oaks has prioritized items within the budget due to being under formal review and insurance reductions were not a priority at the time.

Kim Klein – Why has the board not yet begun fundraising efforts?

A - The current operating budget is financially viable. Any fundraising revenue would be on top of local and state operating revenue and cannot be counted on when building a budget. Additionally, the CEB has applied for grants that will support Great Oaks.

Kim Klein - It is concerning that the school will not reach 60-days cash reserves until FY27. Cash reserves is an indicator of financial viability and, though you would not build a budget around fundraising, it could help towards achieving 60 days of cash reserves quicker.

A – The financial performance framework rates school for having one year of positive cash flow. In FY22, the school had a significant deficit of \$922,000 and now it is operating at a surplus. The school will increase to 45 days cash reserves by FY26.

Staff / Licensure and Certification / Evaluations

9. Great Oaks' current professional growth plan completion rates are as follows (the recommended time for completion is October 15th):

- professional growth goals – 0%
- student improvement goals – 0%
- a. Share the school's experience with completing professional growth and student improvement goals. Have there been any particular challenges in completing either?
A – There are no challenges with completing professional growth and student improvement goals.
- b. Describe Great Oaks' plan for completing professional growth and student improvement goals.
A – These goals are complete.
- c. Have the three Delaware Teacher Growth and Support System (DTGSS) observations been scheduled to ensure that each observation is completed in a timely manner? The recommendation is to complete round one before December 1st, round two before March 1st, and round three before May 15th. Explain the schedule or plan for scheduling and completion.
A – These observations have been scheduled for this year.

10. According to information in the mentoring center there are zero educators in year one of the comprehensive induction program (CIP), three educators in year two, one educator in year three, and two educators in year four.
- When will year two mentees be assigned a mentor for the 2023-2024 school year in the mentoring center?
A – Year two and year three staff have been assigned mentors.
 - Has mentoring begun for them? The recommendation is that all mentees are assigned within 30 days of employment and that they are all assigned in the mentoring center by October.
A – Mentoring has started for these teachers.
 - Have the year three and new to state mentees started mentoring requirements with the lead mentor’s guidance? If not, when will they begin?
A – These teachers have started mentoring.
 - Is Great Oaks’ mentoring site coordinator attending required meetings to stay informed about the CIP and able to communicate with school leadership?
A – The mentoring site coordinator is attending required meetings.
11. Does Great Oaks have year-long teacher residencies?
- If so, how many?
A – Great Oaks does not have teacher residencies.
12. Does Great Oaks have a para-educator to teacher program or pipeline?
- If so, have any participants been hired?
A – Great Oaks does not have a para-educator to teacher pipeline.
13. What is the school’s staff to student ratio?
A – The staff to student ratio is 1:7.
14. When was the staff recruitment plan last revisited?
A – Staff recruitment was not necessary this year due to the grade re-configuration resulting staff downsizing. Great Oaks uses the Delaware Jobs platform and other methods to fill vacancies.
15. How many current vacancies does the school have?
A – Currently, four positions are filled with long-term substitutes that will ideally be filled with full-time teaching staff.
16. Submit a full staff listing with each staff member’s current assignment and current licensure and certification status (including initial or continuing license).
- A – See appendix C.
- For each educator that is not licensed and certified, submit the school's plan to ensure that they become licensed and certified.
A – Currently, there are two educators that are not licensed or certified and the plan for those individuals will be provided.

17. Great Oaks does not have a registered nurse on staff. Who administers required vision, hearing, and postural/gait screenings?

A – Great Oaks has a licensed nurse practitioner (LPN) who is supervised by Kuumba Academy’s registered nurse (RN) in the facility’s shared health center.

a. Who administers medications that require a registered nurse (Epinephrine, Albuterol, Naloxone, etc.)?

A – Great Oaks has an LPN who is supervised by Kuumba Academy’s RN in the facility’s shared health center.

18. Submit Great Oaks’ salary schedule / table.

A – Great Oaks operates on the Christina School District’s salary scale.

CSAC Follow-up for Staff / Licensure and Certification / Evaluations

Aimee Beam – The school’s foster care liaison did not attend mandatory training. Additionally, a best interest meeting was not held for a student who exited foster care.

A – The liaison did not receive communication regarding the mandatory training. The training information was sent via the weekly Principal’s Memo from the Department of Education (DOE). Foster care liaison meetings that take place throughout the year are not mandatory. Great Oaks’ liaison had a competing meeting during the first of these. The school will need more information to address the concern around student that did not have a best interest meeting and will reach out to DOE for further detail.

Tiffany Green – When were the student and professional growth goals completed?

A - They were completed and logged into DSC on October 30, 2023.

Tiffany Green - Are the DTGSS observations on track? Provide a copy of the schedule.

A – DTGSS observations are on track and Great Oaks can provided a schedule.

April McCrae – Many Great Oaks students have experienced inconsistency in their lives. How is the school addressing staff turnover?

A – Substitute teachers have provided a good pipeline via alternative routes to certification (ARTC). The teachers are invested in the community. This school year, the majority of teachers are returning teachers. Some teachers could not be retained because of the school’s new grade configuration (formerly grades eight through twelve; currently, grades nine through twelve). Regarding leadership succession, Great Oaks serves a small community and currently needs an executive director and a principal. The school is set up for success to continue its positive trajectory.

Kendall Massett – Requested the federal requirement regarding the mandatory foster care liaison training.

Kendall Massett - Noted that charter schools are not required to have salary schedules.

Deb Stevens – Does the school currently have staff still working towards certification?

A – Currently, there are two staff members (down from four earlier this year) working towards certification.

Deb Stevens - What are the school's plans to certify the remaining staff?

A – One staff member needs to register for the Praxis exam and one needs to complete the reciprocity process with the State of Pennsylvania, which can take up to three years.

Deb Stevens – While long-term substitutes may be qualified, it is still a disruption to creating a Great Oaks culture within the building as staff stability has an effect on the culture. Is there a recruitment plan that would exclude long-term substitutes?

A – Currently, the school has four long-term substitute teachers. Ideally, these positions will be filled with full-time teachers, however, an educator shortage is affecting the hiring of these teachers.

Deb Stevens - Additionally, the governor raised teacher salaries by 9%. Will you pass that on to teachers?

A – The state portion of these increases will be passed on to teachers, however, not all employees are included in the increase.

Deb Stevens - The Public Education Commission Committee is proposing additional increases each year to raise the starting salary to \$60,000. Will the school's budget allow for this?

A –Great Oaks plans to keep salaries competitive with its district of residence, Christina School District.

Kim Klein - Clarified that the State's commitment is 70% of the \$60,000 starting salary. If Great Oaks plans to remain competitive with Christina School District, there will need to be increases to the local side of the salaries.

Deb Stevens - Has Great Oaks considered joining the Wilmington Learning Collaborative?

A – The school has considered this. The question is, will the Wilmington Collaborative accept Great Oaks.

Kim Klein - How much times does Ms. Odumosu spend onsite at the school, as there have been issues over the past year with timely responses to DOE requests?

A – Ms. Odumosu stated that her time at the school varies based on meetings and other commitments, as well as the needs of the school. Ms. Odumosu noted that she is not running the day-to-day operations which are the responsibility of Ms. Price. Time onsite does not dictate effectiveness of leadership. A successful school has systems that are not reliant upon a single person. It is not uncommon for charter school staff to wear multiple hats. There have also been cases where requests from DOE have been sent to the wrong contact person, which could explain any response issues.

Ms. Perry requested a listing of any specific incidents in which the school did not respond to DOE requests. Regarding leadership time and succession planning, she and Ms. Odumosu have worked intentionally to create internal capacity. Ms. Perry added that Ms. Odumosu's time spent on Great Oaks truly varies. It is unrealistic to assume that seeing someone onsite equates to job effectiveness. Ms. Perry asked if there is a state requirement for time spent in the building? A team of thoughtful, strategic people run a school and create opportunities for greatness.

Kim Klein - Noted that there were anonymous claims from staff that Ms. Odumosu was not often onsite last year. She asked Ms. Odumosu to provide the number of days, on average, she spends at Great Oaks.

A – Ms. Odumosu stated that her time on-site varies. The broader question is, what does the school need? Ms. Price can attest that they communicate daily. Ms. Odumosu requested specifics regarding any concerns raised about her presence onsite and would welcome a conversation.

Kim Klein - Has the school considered conducting a staff survey?

A – Staff feedback is always welcomed. Generally, it is optimal to conduct one or two surveys per year. The optimal time to administer a survey would be midway through the school year.

Student Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

19. The school notes that new student applications increased by 52% this year. How many new applications were received, in total, for the 2023-24 school year?

A – Seventy total applications were received.

20. Has the school made any changes to their student recruitment plan for the upcoming school choice application period?

A – There have been no changes to the plan provided to DOE as monthly written updates and meetings with the Charter School Office.

a. What steps will be taken to maintain or increase the number of student applications?

A – This year the school has started recruitment early. Last year, the implementation of the recruitment plan began in February.

b. Which recruitment strategies seem to generate the most applications?

A – The school launched a partnership with Voice for Impact, a social media company that utilizes targeted marketing strategies. Additionally, the staff will continue its grassroots efforts to target specific neighborhoods. It is also important to note that the leadership team worked with staff to ensure that all messaging was clear and consistent.

21. During the initial formal review meeting on October 25, 2022, a representative of the school stated, “There has been a realization that this school needs to be small as the needs of these particular students would benefit from a small school environment. The budget will be reset around a much smaller enrollment. The right size of the school is around 220 students.” The school has now settled on an enrollment of 148. What has changed over the past year that shifted the right size of the school from 220 to 148 students?

A – In October 2022, the leadership team based its estimate of 220 students on the September 30th Unit Count. However, the new leadership team was not involved in the tracking nor the assumptions used to arrive at the estimate. The 148-enrollment level is based on data-driven assumptions, the new grade configuration, and the student-to-teacher ratio that leadership and staff believe is optimal for the students at Great Oaks.

CSAC Follow-up for Student Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention

Tierra Fair – What recruitment strategies have been employed to market the school and improve its image?

A – The school provided a plan to DOE with monthly written updates and meetings with the Charter School Office. The most recent update is attached as appendix D.

Tierra Fair - Are there specific social media strategies that garner attention around the marketing video provided during the school's overview?

A – Social media has not led to families completing applications to enroll but it is a strategy they will continue to consider.

Gregory Fulkerson – The majority of Great Oaks students are Black and brown boys. Is this through intentional recruitment or is it organic?

A - This has been organic and came to the attention of leadership through data analysis. Great Oaks also serves a significant percentage of adjudicated youth. Schools are an outgrowth of society. Black and brown boys are over arrested and over adjudicated. The reality is that they are being turned away by districts and told to try Great Oaks. The enrollment may not be by design, but it is emblematic of societal and demographic factors.

Brook Hughes – Of the 70 applications received last year, how many were accepted for enrollment and are attending school?

A – Of the 70 applications, 55% were enrolled.

Brook Hughes - Currently, there are 29 seniors who need to be replaced next year to maintain current enrollment. Last year's reenrollment rate was 77%. Next year, Great Oaks will need to recruit 58 students to maintain current enrollment. Does the school feel confident about meeting this target?

A – Retention for high school grades is higher (85%) than it is for middle school grades. The longer students are with Great Oaks the more likely they are to stay. Over time, the school is trending at 40 new students per year.

Brook Hughes - What if the enrollment trend reverses and the school receives more applications than seats, would Great Oaks consider requesting an increase to authorized enrollment?

A – The school's success is based on the low student-to-staff ratio. Any prospective programmatic scale up would be considered similar to the programmatic scale down that was implemented based on the needs of the students and providing the right amount of support.

Joyce Leatherbury – What is the student-to-staff ratio?

A – The staff-to-student ratio is 1:7 and the teacher to student ratio is 1:10.

Joyce Leatherbury - How many special education or dual-certified teachers are on staff?

A – Currently, there is one special education teacher, one long-term substitute, two paraprofessionals, one special education director, and one school psychologist.

Deb Stevens – How does Great Oaks craft its messaging for student recruitment?

A – The messaging focuses on a small family and community driven environment and student and parent testimonials. Students are the most effective recruits.

Leroy Travers – What is the percentage adjudicated youth currently served by the school?

A – Fifteen percent of Great Oaks students are adjudicated. This is four times higher than the average school.

Kim Klein – Has the school explored the reasons why the 45% percent who did not enroll chose not to?

A – Students apply to multiple schools as part of the school choice process. The conversion rate is higher than other schools. This conversion rate is not necessarily specific to Great Oaks.

Kim Klein - Is there outreach to prospective students who ultimately chose not to enroll?

A – Tracking and following up with applicants is essential and part of the systems and processes put in place by leadership. Voice for Impact has supported this process. The process has three distinct phases and outreach must occur throughout the process (interested /applying /attending). Multiple touch points are imperative. Based on national trends, 35-45% would be an acceptable matriculation rate.

Kim Klein - Last year, Great Oaks settled on an enrollment of 200 students. The major modification requests an enrollment of 148 students. Is 148 the anticipated enrollment for next year?

A – Based on Unit Count data and the enrollment trends to date, the anticipated enrolment for next year will be in the range of 148.

Academic Performance and Framework

22. In 2023, Great Oaks had the following participation rates among high school students:

- English / Language Arts (ELA) – 68.75%
- Math – 68.75%
- Essay – 56.25

What is the school doing to ensure that participation rates meet the state required 95% participation rate?

A – The participation rate for school year 2022-23 increased by 21% compared to the prior school year because of strategic and consistent efforts to communicate with families. With continued implementation of the test participation plan the rate is expected to increase further.

23. In 2023 14% of Great Oaks students were proficient in ELA and 3% were proficient in math. What factors contributed to these low proficiency rates?

A – Factors affecting proficiency include the COVID-19 pandemic, institutionalized racism and implicit bias within standardized testing, and socio-economic disparities. Despite these factors, there is no justification for low proficiency or failure. The Great Oaks team is committed to work incredibly hard to overcome these factors and ensure that students meet high standards of academic success on par with their peers.

a. What is the school doing to increase proficiency rates?

A – Great Oaks is partnership with DOE and using the DTGSS model to create a stronger teacher evaluation and observation cycle resulting in higher quality instruction.

24. What strategies will you implement to increase student proficiency levels for students with disabilities?

A – The school has instituted significant changes to special education services. With the assistance of DOE, the school has conducted a deep dive into the data and completed a root cause analysis. An action plan has been created to reinforce the importance of state assessments and build a culture of assessment importance by providing short- and long-term incentives.

25. In 2023 Great Oaks had a chronic absenteeism rate of 41%. What is the school doing to improve chronic absenteeism?

A – Chronic absenteeism was reduced by 30% during the 2022/2023 school year. In the 2021/2022 school year the chronic absenteeism rate was 70%. Great Oaks has provided consistent communication with families utilizing student advocates and community partners (e.g., Born for Brothers) as well as wrap-around support. All of these initiatives contributed to the improvement and the school looks to build upon this success. Recently, an application has been submitted for the Safe and Supportive Schools grant to further these efforts.

CSAC Follow-up for Academic Performance and Framework

Gregory Fulkerson – What is the school’s professional learning plan to utilize high quality instructional materials (HQIM) to support increased proficiency.

A – Great Oaks has established weekly content-based professional learning communities (PLCs). Additionally, the school is planning to join DOE’s ELA content cadre meetings.

Tiffany Green – What is the school’s current chronic absenteeism rate?

A – The chronic absenteeism rate is not calculated until the end of the year, but the average daily attendance rate is above 85%.

Joyce Leatherbury – What strategies have been implemented to increase parent participation on the special education parent councils? Ms. Leatherbury recommended working with the Parent Information Center (PIC).

A – Ms. Parana created a schedule for meetings and a PowerPoint presentation. Participation was low last year. Meetings are advertised through a variety of avenues. This year, the focus will be on helping parents become better advocates. Last year, the school adopted the Parent Camp model which could help with increased participation.

April McCrae – Explained the difference between norm-referenced and criterion referenced assessments to set goals appropriately.

A – Ms. Odumosu stated that academic goals are based on content mastery.

Kendall Massett – Asked for a description of the role of student advocates and how they work with students to reduce chronic absenteeism?

A – Student advocates are a benefit provided by the CEB. They have a caseload of 12-15 students each and provide support with attendance, transitions from adjudication, and

wraparound support. Born for Brothers is another key partner providing support to adjudicated students, such as job placement.

Deb Stevens – Has the school explored high dosage tutoring to address low proficiency rates?

A – The primary lens is on quality instruction and student engagement. Without high quality instruction, tutoring could be counterproductive. High dosage tutoring improves results, but it should go hand-in-hand with quality instruction.

Kim Klein – How does the school’s chronic absenteeism rate compare with the statewide average?

A – The statewide average is 20%. A good comparison for Great Oaks would be other city high schools serving similar populations. Great Oaks chronic absenteeism rate is lower than other schools serving similar populations. The goal is to reduce it further toward the statewide average.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development

26. Describe, in detail, the enhancements that have been made to the school’s multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) process.

A – All tier 1 interventions are provided in the students’ math and ELA classes. This year, tier 2 interventions for ELA, math, social-emotional learning (SEL) are delivered daily during students’ homeroom block. ELA and math get two blocks per week and SEL gets one block per week. Students receiving tier 3 interventions receive direct intervention from special education teachers.

a. How do students move from tier 1 to tier 2 and from tier 2 to tier 3?

A – The student support team meets every six weeks to review MTSS data and determine whether students move to different tiers.

27. What resources and interventions are used to support students in tier 2 and tier 3?

A – ELA tier 2 interventions are delivered via the online platform, Quindew, which provides individualized reports on students’ strengths and challenges and how to target interventions accordingly. For math tier 3 interventions, Khan Academy is the resource that supports students. Social-emotional needs are being addressed through the SEE social-emotional curriculum. Tier 3 interventions are provided by special education teachers during that same block utilizing the resource-based interventions targeted to the students’ specific needs.

28. What resources and professional learning opportunities will you provide to general education teachers to increase their knowledge of inclusive practices?

A – Great Oaks prides itself on inclusivity. Most students receive specialized instruction in an A-setting learning environment. To support its commitment to inclusive practices the special education department conducts direct consultation with teachers regarding supporting students with disabilities in their classrooms. Additionally, professional development is provided in the areas of understanding student individual education plans (IEPs), providing accommodations and co-teaching models, and strategies to support general education teachers.

- a. How will Great Oaks know if special education services and inclusive practices are being implemented?

A – Inclusive practices are the focus of many of the special education department PLCs which focus on methods of support for specific students and staff caseloads. One of the benefits of a small school environment is the ability to meet the needs of the students in the general education environment. Class sizes are significantly smaller than larger comprehensive high schools which provides greater opportunity for direct support. Additionally, classroom check-ins and observations are another strategy to ensure inclusivity. The special education department has made a concerted effort to teach students about their IEP's and advocate for the support that they're entitled to receive and will meet with their case managers accordingly.

29. In response to question 28, Great Oaks described enhancements and changes that have been made for at-risk students. What measures will be used to evaluate the impact of the services and strategies that have been implemented and how will you know if they are improving student outcomes?

A – The student support team (SST) is designated to plan and monitor interventions for at-risk students. The SST meets weekly to discuss student referrals and every six weeks to review MTSS data. Regarding the referral process, teachers can refer students to the SST for academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. The SST determines next steps which might include additional interventions, supports, or possible evaluation for special education services. During the MTSS data review the SST determines whether students move to different tiers.

30. How are students earning all four mathematics credits, including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II? (The course sequence identifies Geometry and optional Algebra II during the same year when prerequisites from Geometry are required for Algebra II – not simultaneous to Algebra II).

A – Great Oaks offers four math courses: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and Precalculus.

31. In visual and performing arts, what does it mean for students to “independently” use their learning to meet the artistic processes?

A – In addition to performance-based tasks, summative assessments can include the grading of students' portfolio of work, research papers relating to visual and performing arts and/or formal presentations with topics related to visual and performing arts.

- a. What do the summative assessments look like for all students after the performance?

A – Individual portfolios, projects, and presentations are used to assess student progress.

- b. How can all students be assessed individually?

A – See the response to question 31.

- c. Are there ways to assess, in a summative manner, in different ways outside of the performance?

A – See the response to question 31.

32. Does the school have a virtual program for students?

- a. If so, how many students are served by the virtual program?
- b. What curriculum is used for the virtual program?

A – Great Oaks no longer has a virtual program.

33. Great Oaks refers to itself in the application as a “small trauma-informed high school” however, there is no mention of trauma informed practices. Which trauma-informed practices are utilized by the school?

A – Great Oaks has adopted the National Child Traumatic Stress Network’s framework which states that: “a trauma-informed school promotes a safe and welcoming climate; seeks to create a structured and predictable learning environment that minimizes unnecessary trauma and loss reminders; focuses on building positive and attuned relationships between teachers and students, and among school staff; has anti-bullying and suicide prevention programs; and uses a balanced restorative justice (a.k.a. restorative practices) approach to conflict and conflict mediation with appropriate disciplinary action.” These practices are woven into the fabric of the school.

34. The school did not meet the standard for curriculum in ELA, social studies, science visual and performing arts, world language and health and physical education. Continue to work with the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development (CIPD) workgroup to address all expectations.

A – No response is required.

CSAC Follow-up for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development

Gregory Fulkerson – How long is the homeroom block dedicated for students in tier 2 and 3?

A – The homeroom block is 25 minutes.

Gregory Fulkerson - If a student is deemed to need tier 3 interventions, will this be provided during the homeroom block? How would they receive tier 2 supports?

A – Tier 3 students will be pulled from their homerooms by their special education teacher. Students do not receive tier 2 supports at the same time but they use ELA and math programs in their ELA and math classes.

Gregory Fulkerson - Based on the course sequence provided, it appeared that students were not getting the prerequisite skills needed for Algebra 2 if they did not complete Geometry prior to Algebra 2. Based on the Illustrative Math curriculum provided, the progression is Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2.

A – Based on how the courses are designed, geometry is not a prerequisite for Algebra 2.

Joyce Leatherbury – What is the caseload for each of the special education teachers?

A – Each special education teachers serves 27-28 students. One teacher is assigned grades nine and ten and the other teacher is assigned grades eleven and twelve. In addition to the three paraprofessionals who support their work, the leadership team is exploring additional supports.

Joyce Leatherbury - Do the special education teachers only participate in special education PLCs or do they also participate in content area PLCs?

A – Special education teachers participate in content area PLCs as well as special education PLCs.

Joyce Leatherbury - Is the school on a trajectory to have all evaluations completed, IEPs reviewed, revised, or adopted, and new IEPs started for this year?

A – All required meetings for new students with IEPs have been completed.

Leroy Travers – How many transfer students had IEPs?

A – Nineteen new students have IEPs.

School Culture / Climate

35. The school noted that 15% of the school population has been previously incarcerated. What measures does the school take to ensure a successful transition when students are returning to school from incarceration?

A – Great Oaks has established a system to support students returning from incarceration. Prior to their return a transition meeting is scheduled with the student, the family, and probation officer to ensure the school is prepared with all of the supports needed for the student's success. Supports include daily check-ins from either the school psychologist or other trusted adults. Great Oaks collaborates with outside agencies such as Born for Brothers, and the CEB student advocacy program. Additionally, Great Oaks establishes frequent contact and communication with the student's probations officer in order to provide consistency and support systems.

36. Provide a legend for the suspension data chart that was submitted. It is unclear what the different colors represent.

A – This chart originated from the Delaware State Report Card. [That graphic can be found at this link.](#)

Other

37. What is the current status of Great Oaks special education compliance agreement?

A – Great Oaks has successfully completed prong one of the compliance agreement and is currently working through prong two.

38. The school notes that they intend to submit another modification in summer 2024 to modify the school's name. Great Oaks also noted that they intend to modify the school's vision and mission. With so many changes, is it possible this is considered a new charter application?

Below is section 9.4 from Regulation 275:

- 9.4 The following are considered applications for a new charter and shall not be processed or considered as a modification application:

- 9.4.1 An application to collectively change the mission, goals for student performance and educational program of the charter school.

A – The intent is only to change the school’s mission statement, not goals for student performance or the educational program.

Great Oaks Closing Remarks

Ms. Perry requested a list of any emails or requirements that Great Oaks missed and any concerns reported to DOE, anonymous or otherwise. Ms. Perry stated that there is no such thing as a clean slate but, going forward the school has an opportunity to go against what has been the norm and consider what the last 20 years of education in Wilmington has been like. Families have chosen this school because it is an extension of their own families.

Ms. Lambert stated that Great Oaks will realize a positive cash by the end of this year and the school is close to meeting the 45-days cash requirement. On the financial framework, Great Oaks is approaching standard for this metric and within a couple thousand dollars of meeting standard for next school year.

The follow items were requested as follow-ups to this meeting:

1. Consult with the DOE Education Associate, Jennifer Davis, regarding the mandatory training for foster care liaisons.
2. Consult with the DOE Education Associate, Jennifer Davis, regarding the student who exited foster care without a best interest meeting.
3. Provide a list of completed DTGSS observations and a schedule for the remainder of the year.
4. Provide the minimum enrollment range at which the school would remain financially viable.
5. Provide a plan for any uncertified or unlicensed educator to become certified and/or licensed.
6. Provide a list of CEB supports and grants that currently benefit Great Oaks or will in the future.
7. Provide a list of any additional grants and/or community supports that financially benefit Great Oaks.
8. Continue to work with the CIPD workgroup to ensure that all curricular areas meet standard.

Next Steps:

- An initial public hearing will take place on November 6th at 5:00 p.m. (3rd Floor Conference Room, DDOE, 401 Federal Street, Dover, DE 19901)
- The applicant will have the opportunity to submit a written response to the CSAC initial report, which is due by close of business November 22nd.
- A second and final meeting of CSAC will be held on November 28th.
- On or before December 5th CSAC will issue its final report including its recommendation on the renewal.