

# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## First State Montessori Academy

PRELIMINARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APPLICATION TO OPEN A CHARTER SCHOOL

OPENING DATE: September 2013

GRADES: K - 6

LOCATION: New Castle County, Delaware

DATE OF REPORT: 12 March 2012

## Background Information

Name	First State Montessori Academy	
Projected Enrollment	2013 – 2014	241
	2014 – 2015	276
	2015 – 2016	312
	2016 – 2017	325
Mission	The mission of the First State Montessori Academy is to nurture successful, contributing, life-long learners in a Montessori public educational program for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The proposed school seeks to instill in students the positive habits of inquisitiveness, intrinsic motivation, perseverance, creativity, innovation, cooperation, kindness, confidence, adaptability, critical thinking, understanding of diverse cultures, and independence.	

Over one-hundred years ago, Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, developed a curriculum, philosophy, and set of educational materials. She based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. Guided by her observations, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate activities and materials.

Montessori education supports the natural development of children and helps them to develop creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, and time-management skills. The basis of Montessori classroom practice is mixed age groups that result in communities in which the older children share their knowledge with the younger ones. The intent is that the learning process promotes concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and the love of learning.

Also, the Montessori classroom is characterized by individual choice of research and work, learning through all five senses, and uninterrupted concentration. Students learn at their own individual pace and have considerable choice in activities. Sometimes teachers provide group lessons.

Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee and staff from the Charter School Office reviewed the application. Additionally, content area experts from the Delaware Department of Education reviewed the application based on their area of expertise.

The Charter School Accountability Committee met on 29 February 2012 for its Preliminary Meeting with the applicant team. A copy of attendees is in Appendix A. In considering the application, the Committee reviewed the following approval criteria listed in 14 *Del. C.* §512.

## Evaluation of Each Statutory Criterion

- (1) Applicant Qualifications.** 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 from at least 1 of the charter schools

operated by the board and at least 1 parent of a student enrolled in a charter school operated by the board.

Mr. Cruce stated that this criterion calls for an overview of the applicants' qualifications and that he has confidence that the applicants have the appropriate experience and qualifications. He recommended that this criterion be considered met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion One be considered met.*

**(2) Form of Organization.** The chosen form of organization, identified in the articles of incorporation and by-laws, or the membership agreement, conforms to the Delaware General Corporation Law.

Mr. Hindman said that he had several concerns based on his reading of the Certificate of Incorporation and the by-laws. He said that the word "founder" in the application includes those entities and persons who assisted in the formation, application process, approval, and opening of the school. He believes that the word "entities" ought not to be included in the definition of "founders."

Additionally, he raised a concern about the by-laws, specifically, Section 6.06 (Article VI, Meetings of the Board of Directors, Section 6.06, Action Without Formal Meeting). This section reads, "Any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Board, if any, may be taken without a meeting if a consent or consents in writing setting forth the action so taken is signed by all of the directors then in office."

Mr. Hindman noted that the mere presence of such a statement in the by-laws does not necessarily make the by-laws non-compliant; however, acting in accordance with the statement would constitute a violation of the open meeting law.

Mr. Cruce said that the applicants must address these two issues in their response to the Preliminary Report: the use of "entities" in the definition of founders and the possibility of a violation of the open meeting law.

Thus, he made a motion that this criterion be considered met with conditions.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Two be considered met with the specified conditions.*

**(3) Mission, Goals, Educational Objectives.** The mission statement, goals and educational objectives are consistent with the description of legislative intent set forth in § 501 of this title and the restrictions on charter school operations set forth in § 506 in this title.

Mr. Carwell noted that this criterion requires the Committee to determine if the applicants' mission statement, goals, and educational objectives are consistent with *Delaware Code*, Title 14, Chapter 5, Section 501 (Legislative Intent) as well as the restrictions placed on charter school operations in *Delaware Code*, Title 14, Chapter 5, Section 506.

He said that the mission of the First State Montessori Academy is to nurture successful, contributing, life-long learners in a Montessori public education program for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. He indicated that the mission statement is clear and compelling; focuses on improving education outcomes; and that the applicant sets goals and priorities that are meaningful, manageable, and measurable.

However, Mr. Carwell noted that there are concerns relative to the restrictions on charter school operations as set forth in *Delaware Code*, Title 14, Section 506.

Mr. Hindman said that Section 506 addresses restrictions but also contains the provisions relative to preferences in subsection (b). He believes that Criterion 3 is the appropriate section in the application relative to the issue of preferences in student admissions.

Mr. Hindman said that the applicants must demonstrate and comply with the statutory provisions relative to preferences in student admissions. He said that his impression was that the applicants were willing to work collaboratively with the DDOE to assure understanding of this section and to create a system of preferences that would meet the needs of the applicants' program as well as comply with the statutory provisions. He referenced two sections of the FSMA application regarding preferences.

Page 95 of the application contains this statement, "For students entering FSMA at the kindergarten, first and second grade levels, a demonstrated interest in the Montessori method is preferred, but not required. However, for students entering FSMA at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade levels, a demonstrated interest in the Montessori method will be required."

Additionally, on page 96, there is statement, "In the first two years of operations, FSMA will run a summer program for students with no Montessori background to help students entering 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade acclimate to the new environment.... This program will help facilitate getting enough students in the first year and allow for FSMA to reach a broader number of interested families." At the Initial Meeting, the applicants indicated that the summer school program would be free of charge to families.

Mr. Hindman noted that the differences in the K - 2 preferences and those for grades 3 – 6 are not clear in that both reference an interest in the Montessori method on the part of the child. The school could grant a preference for prior experience in a Montessori program but it could not be a condition for acceptance to a free and public school. Further, the application does not sufficiently explain how the interest preference would be implemented. The use of a free summer program as an alternative means to demonstrate the interest preference should be continued so long as an interest preference is used. The Committee is seeking greater clarity as to how the interest preference would be implemented (see questions below).

- Are there any other ways by which to demonstrate an interest in the Montessori method?
- Is interest indicated by the families of the prospective students or by the students themselves?
- Will transportation to the free summer program be provided at no cost?
- What obstacles to attending the summer program has the applicant considered (e.g., provision for meals, etc.) and how would the school address them?

Additionally, the date by which parents must submit applications to a charter school would occur well before the summer program. Thus, the school would have to accept students in the same window as all currently operational charter schools. Given the statutory timeline for admissions, Mr. Cruce wanted to know how the school would address the preference issue and if attendance at the summer program might be a condition of enrollment.

Mr. Cruce made a motion that Criterion Three be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Three be considered not met.*

- (4) Goals for student Performance.** 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 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.

**(5) Evaluating Student Performance.** 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.

Criteria Four and Five were combined for the voting.

Ms. McCrae noted that the First State Montessori Academy application included a robust performance and assessment narrative. However, she noted inaccuracies in disaggregating mathematics and English language arts data.

She stated that in describing achievement goals (pages 30 – 31) for disaggregated populations, the applicants indicated significant gains for all ethnicities but a persistent achievement gap exists between African American and Hispanic populations relative to other ethnicities included in the projections. She noted that the applicants need to revisit the disaggregated data relative to Criteria Four and Five.

Ms. McCrae noted a fundamental lack of understanding in data analysis. She wanted clarification about how the school specifically will help all students achieve to high standards. The response indicated a misunderstanding of how to address achievement gaps.

On page 35 of the application, a description of the integrated science/social studies and cultural curriculum, Ms. McCrae noted this statement, “[w]hile First State Montessori will use any required state assessments in these areas to evaluate the program and alignment of the curriculum, the nature of this curriculum relies on specific classroom performance-based formative and summative assessments.”

She said that it is important that science and social studies programs be monitored for success over time because they are required content areas. She noted that although the measures described are likely to be sufficient, specific targets for success are requested to ensure programmatic oversight.

Ms. McCrae noted that there are classroom assessment procedures described in the response to Criterion Five, but there is not a coherent plan for how the data will be used to improve student performance. She said that there are no specified rubrics or goals for achievement that will systematically alert the school staff about issues that need to be addressed.

Additionally, she noted that information such as a schedule of specific meetings or discussions among key staff members to review the academic progress of each child at regular intervals and the use of rubrics relative to important diagnostic aspects of student achievement were not included with the narrative.

She recommended that the applicants review the ESEA Flexibility information available at the DDOE website.

Mr. Cruce said that DDOE staff were available to work with the applicants to assist them in understanding what is required in the response.

Mr. Cruce made a recommendation that Criteria Four and Five be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criteria Four and Five be considered **not met**.*

6. **Educational Program.** 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 § 153 of this title. 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.

Ms. Hansen said that the curriculum staff reviewed the Scope and Sequence documents that the applicants had submitted. Mathematics, science, and visual/performing Arts met approval. English language arts, social studies, health, and physical education did *not* meet approval (see Appendix B).

The reviewers expressed concern about timelines. That is, in the Montessori educational program, the learning is primarily child-directed; however, this approach could well be not aligned with the timeline of the instructional benchmarks established by the DDOE. For example, social studies is tested through DCAS (Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System) at grade four. It is imperative that the school staff understand that students have to be prepared so that they will be successful on the test.

The reviewers noted similar concerns relative to timelines for ELA, health, and physical education. For example, more detail about the number of units per grade level, more specifics about what is being taught, and the timing or sequencing of the units would be helpful.

Additionally, the reviewer for instructional technology encouraged the school to consider strengthening the inclusion of instructional technology in all classrooms and that technology ought to be included in the professional development plans for teachers.

Mr. Cruce reiterated his comments for Criteria Four and Five relative to assistance from the DDOE. Members of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development Work Group are available to clarify the comments in the Preliminary Report and to assist the applicants in understanding what is required in their response to the Preliminary Report.

Mr. Cruce made a recommendation that Criterion Six be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Six be considered **not met**.*

7. **Students with Special Needs.** 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.

Ms. Jones said that her comments are meant to provide clarification relative to accommodations and interventions. Accommodations allow students alternate modes of access to instruction and assessments. Accommodations, based on identified needs, are a necessary part of *some* children's Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) whereas interventions are for *all* students regardless of ability level.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student needs that will remediate deficit skills; monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals; and applying child response data to important educational decisions.

The interventions through RTI must be based on scientific research. Ms. Jones wanted to know how the school will follow State and Federal regulations, specifically, the required additional instructional time/ interventions based on the child's level of need. Additionally, there are requirements relative to Universal Screening and Program Monitoring in the school-wide RTI system.

Ms. Jones indicated that Criterion Seven is met. Mr. Cruce made a recommendation that Criterion Seven be considered met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Seven be considered met.*

8. **Economic Viability.** 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 3 years, the plan for starting the school, and the major contracts planned for equipment and services, leases, improvements, purchases of real property and insurance.

Mr. Kessel said that there are two concerns relative to this criterion: the facility and the proposed student-teacher ratios.

The first concern is the identification of a site for the school. Based on the facility information, there is the appearance that the school is a conversion of a private school to a public charter school. Such a conversion is not allowed in Delaware law. On page 82 of the application, the applicants indicated that the proposed school will lease a facility for \$140,000 annually for the first four years. The facility is located at 1400 Harvey Road and this site is the current location of the Wilmington Montessori School, a private school.

Mr. Kessel indicated that in this opinion, he is not convinced that the applicants could find a facility in the area for \$140,000. The projected enrollment is 325 in the fourth year of operation. He said that Prestige Academy, located in the City of Wilmington, has 315 students. The Prestige Academy facility costs approximately \$291,000 a year and this school is located in a considerably different area than the Harvey Road site that is mentioned in the application.

Teacher-student ratios are the second major concern. The applicants propose a 1:12.5 ratio and that all classrooms would have a teacher and a paraeducator. He observed that one typically sees this ratio in classes that have a considerable number of children with special needs; however, there is no indication from the application that this would be the situation.

He said that he is not convinced of the school's economic viability because he has not seen a comparable situation in the State. The enrollment also gives the appearance of a conversion because the first year enrollment includes sixth graders (the highest grade in the proposed school). In a K-6 school, one typically does not see many sixth graders in the first year of operation. In the enrollment section of the application, there are 17 sixth graders projected for year one of operation and 16 in year two; 26 in year three; and 39 in year four. Often, elementary schools start with the lower grades, such as K-3, and then add one or two new grades a year until the full complement of grades is reached.

Mr. Cruce said that the application makes reference to a search for a new location. If the applicants are searching for a new location, the Committee would need to see another budget to show the associated costs and how the budget would be economically viable.

Mr. Kessel added that if another building is identified that will accommodate 325 children for an approximate cost of over \$175,000, the current budget would not be viable and could adversely affect the budgeted amounts for salaries.

Mr. Cruce said that the issue is if there is a location other than the one at 1400 Harvey Road, the Committee will need to know the specifics about the budget and the class sizes. Mr. Kessel expressed concern about finding a facility that will work within the current budget. Mr. Cruce indicated that if the applicants have more information about the facility during the time in which they will write a response to the Preliminary Report, that information would provide more details and specifics.

Mr. Kessel expressed a concern about the Committee approving the application with a condition relative to the facility. For example, on December 15<sup>th</sup>, the deadline for securing a facility, the applicants indicate that the facility will be 1400 Harvey Road, the location of Wilmington Montessori School. What would the DDOE response be, considering that the school has an approved charter?

Mr. Cruce said that these issues will likely be part of the conversation that will be held at the Final Meeting when the Committee has had the opportunity to read the applicants' response to the Preliminary Report.

Mr. Cruce made a recommendation that Criterion 8 be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Eight be considered **not met**.*

9. **Administrative and Financial Operations.** 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 systems, 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 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 within 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.

Dr. Bigelow summarized the comments of the reviewers for this section. One reviewer questioned if the charter school has the right not to pay an employee for earned vacation days if the employee resigns during a contract period. Also, the reviewer noted that the FSMA-initiated termination section states that the school may terminate for any cause whatsoever.

In Subsection (g), the reviewer reminded the applicants that all Title I, instructional, and service paraeducators require a permit through DDOE.

The reviewer had a number of comments relative to Exhibit N, Personnel, Finance Policies and Procedures. The non-discrimination statement ought to include the contact information for the school leader. It is unclear if the grievance procedures apply to discrimination grievances (ADA, sexual harassment, etc.). The harassment section did not include the investigation process. The reviewer wanted to know if this section also applies to sexual harassment.

The reviewer found at least one reference to Maurice J. Moyer Academy in the document and all such references ought to be eliminated. The reviewer determined that the sick leave policy does not comply with State Code, such as only two of the ten sick days may be used for personal leave and the school proposing a limit of 90 sick days whereas the Delaware Code does not provide for this limit. Also, the



reviewer pointed out that the number of days might be an omission in the statement, “the teacher may be absent without loss of pay for a period of days.”

In the handbook (Appendix N), the reviewer stated that the FMLA policy ought to be expanded and that it is now in two places in the application. Additionally, there are certain policy decisions regarding FMLA that ought to be in the handbook. Also, if the harassment policy covers sexual harassment, the information needs to be in the handbook. If the policy does not, the applicants need to develop a sexual harassment policy that includes the title and contact information of their Title IX Coordinator. Finally, the handbook should include an anti-discrimination statement as well as the title/contact information for the person(s) serving as the Title II, Title IX, and ADA coordinators.

The reviewer for Subsection (g) asked for clarification regarding the school’s policy about certification: are all teachers to be dual certified (Montessori and Delaware certified)? If not, what is the proposed percentages of Montessori-only certified; Delaware-only certified; and dual-certified?

The reviewer for the DPAS II wanted clarification for subsection (i) that states:

Beginning with the current school year, the end-of-year Job Analysis will include a quantifiable rating for each teacher based on multiple indicators. The Job Analysis is done after reviewing ... the DPAS II lesson analysis; parent Survey Responses; combined input from all administrators regarding employees’ non-teaching responsibilities (e.g., punctuality, participation the life of the school, collegiality, communication, etc.).

Specifically, the reviewer requested information about how the provisions cited above will affect the use of DPAS II for administrators, teachers, and specialists.

In the application, the response states that “FSMA’s plan for applying the Delaware Performance Appraisal System into its teacher and staff evaluations is described in the FSMA Personnel and Finance Policies and Procedures Manual which is attached in Appendix N.”

Appendix N contains a list of Performance Indicators Supporting the Standards of Performance. It appears that these may be supplemental to DPAS II; therefore, clarification is requested about the use of these performance indicators.

The response gives the appearance that DPAS II could be ancillary to an existing staff evaluation system. Clarification regarding any additional Montessori-specific requirements and the intent to implement the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II) with fidelity ought to be part of the applicants’ response to the Preliminary Report.

Mr. Cruce made a recommendation the Criterion 9 be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Nine be considered **not met**.*

(10) **Insurance.** The assessment of the school’s potential legal liability, and the types and limits of insurance coverage the school plans to obtain are adequate.

Mr. Cruce said that there were no concerns relative to this criterion. He made a recommendation that Criterion 10 be considered met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Ten be considered **met**.*

- (11) **Student Discipline and Attendance.** 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.

Ms. Jones noted that the applicants need to include how the school staff will report inappropriate behavior to parents, law enforcement, and the DDOE. There are statutory and regulatory requirements for reporting such behavior. She also asked for information about how the school staff will be adequately trained to implement these requirements. The DDOE sponsors training on how to report mandatorily reportable school crimes.

Ms. Jones also expressed concern about the inconsistency and/or appropriateness of discipline for students whose behavior may be a manifestation of their disability. The applicants must understand the procedural safeguards that apply to students with disabilities.

Mr. Carwell said he had comments from another reviewer about attendance policies. The description of *how* attendance policies will be distributed to students at the beginning of the school year is inadequate. Detail needs to be added to the response for subsection (e).

The reviewer also recommended that the applicants include the level of attendance and actions to be taken to ensure that students meet the expectation. He also suggested that the school provide information about the point at which truancy proceedings will begin. All of this information ought to be in the code of conduct.

Mr. Cruce made a recommendation that Criterion 11 be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Eleven be considered not met.*

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

*Concerns about school transportation.*

The reviewer for this section had no comments; the responses were acceptable.

*Concerns about facilities.*

The reviewer provided comments relative to the facilities for the school.

Subsection (d). The review offered guidance relative to requirements, such as providing DDOE with a site layout/floor plan, the need for a site visit, required permits, certificate of occupancy, etc.

Subsection (e). The review included an overview of required compliances.

Subsection (f). The review cited requirements for contractual services.

Subsection (g). The reviewer noted that once a site has been identified, a floor plan shall be provided that includes the physical education locations(s) and that DDOE will need to perform a site visit of the final site to review and assess.

The reviewer also provided related project information and references relative to asbestos.

*Concerns about school health and safety.*

Mr. Carwell shared comments from the reviewer for this section. He noted that the school has identified hiring criteria and job responsibilities for the school nurse; however, this section needs additional clarification relative to the qualifications and responsibilities listed in Criterion 8. Page 90 of the application indicates two part-time RNs whereas there is a reference to one on page 106. The reviewer strongly recommends that the RN have a BSN and complete the Delaware Basic School Nursing coursework or receive training in aspects of school nursing such as vision screening.

He asked for information about how the charter school will address the mental health of children, including their social and emotional needs, and inquired if the school plans to review or incorporate guidelines from the DDOE health and safety regulation and the school nursing technical assistance manual.

He shared a concern about TB testing requirements and wanted to know how the school staff will support the school nurse if children are non-compliant with health requirements, such as providing an emergency card or documentation of a physical examination. He stated that emergency plans are needed for when the nurse is not available and if this frequently would happen, the reviewer wanted to know what action the school would take to ensure an adequate substitute nurse.

Mr. Carwell also said that the reviewer advised the applicants to become familiar with the immunization requirements. Students without immunizations may not attend school without an exemption.

He mentioned that the applicants were undecided about participation in the National School Lunch/Breakfast Programs; however, the DDOE School Nutrition staff would be available to provide information and technical assistance about the programs as well as for vended meals.

Mr. Carwell said that further clarification is needed relative to the concerns expressed by the reviewers and he recommends that Criterion 12 be considered not met.

Mr. Cruce made a recommendation that Criterion 12 be considered not met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Twelve be considered not met.*

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

Mr. Cruce said that there were no concerns relative to this criterion and he recommends that Criterion Thirteen be considered met.

*By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends to the Secretary that Criterion Thirteen be considered met.*

14. **Management Companies.** The school's board of directors shall annually certify to the Department, on a form to be provided by the Department, 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 to the proposed school.

### **Summary Recommendation**

Mr. Cruce made a motion that the Charter School Accountability Committee's recommendation to the Secretary of Education is that the application be considered not approved for the purpose of the Preliminary Report.

By a unanimous vote, the Charter School Accountability Committee recommends to the Secretary that the application for the First State Montessori Academy be considered ***not approved*** for the purpose of the Preliminary Report.

## **Appendix A**

### **List of Attendees**

#### **Meeting of the Charter School Accountability Committee**

**29 February 2012**

#### **Application to Open a Charter School**

##### **Voting Members of the Committee**

- Daniel Cruce, Deputy Secretary/Chief of Staff, Chair of Accountability Committee, Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)
- Karen Field Rogers, Associate Secretary, Finances Reform & Resource Management
- Debora Hansen, Education Associate, Visual and Performing Arts, Charter Curriculum Review
- Karen Jones, Education Associate, Curriculum Access and Differentiation of Instruction
- April McCrae, Education Specialist, Science Assessment

##### **Non-Voting Members**

- John Hindman, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Donna R. Johnson, Executive Director, Delaware State Board of Education

##### **Members of the Charter School Office**

- John Carwell, Charter School Officer, Charter School Office
- Patricia Bigelow, Education Associate, Charter Schools Office
- Scott Kessel, Education Associate, Charter School Finances

##### **Representatives on Behalf of the First State Montessori Academy**

- Victoria Hostin, Co-chair
- Courtney Fox, Board member
- Oliver Yeh, Co-Chair
- Sean Boyd, Treasurer

##### **Also in Attendance**

Melissa Browne, Innovative Schools  
Patrick McKeon, Office of Management and Budget



Teaching and Learning Branch

APPENDIX B

January 31, 2012

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Dan Cruce, Deputy Secretary/Chief of Staff  
John Carwell, Education Associate for Charter Schools

Thru: Marian Wolak, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development

From: Debora Hansen, Education Associate for Visual & Performing Arts

RE: First State Montessori Charter School - new charter school application curriculum review

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These documents serve to provide feedback and recommendations from curricular reviews completed for First State Montessori Charter School by content specialists at the Delaware Department of Education. The reviews were conducted in the following areas: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health Education, Physical Education, World Languages and Visual & Performing Arts.

**English Language Arts- Does Not Meet Approval**

- The timeline is not clear. Please provide detail on units per grade level.
- More detail will provide clarity on use of formative and summative assessment measures.

**Mathematics- Meets Approval**

**Science- Meets Approval**

- A very comprehensive scope and sequence document...
- Does the school intend to join the coalition? We would like clarity in the plan to train teachers and who will coordinate this.
- Consider storage needs for hazardous chemicals when designing the school.



Teaching and Learning Branch

APPENDIX B

**Social Studies- Does Not Meet Approval**

- The document is not fully aligned to the Delaware Recommended Curriculum
- Plans reflect instruction in benchmarks that are intended for other grades by the Delaware Recommended Curriculum for Social Studies. Please see the following link for a table that specifies benchmarks by grade for the DRC.  
[http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content\\_areas/files/ss/DCAS\\_Benchmarks\\_2-10.doc](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content_areas/files/ss/DCAS_Benchmarks_2-10.doc)
- Since the DCAS (Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System) assessment is given to students at the end of grade 4 for a defined set of benchmarks, this may negatively impact student scores.

**Health Education- Does Not Meet Approval**

- Lacks clarity in time and exactly what is being taught.

**Physical Education-Does Not Meet Approval**

- Lacks clarity in time. Needs clarity in the coding system and where it comes from i.e. 4.21. Physical Education Standards are not cited.

**World Languages- N/A**

- It appears that there was no scope and sequence document submitted for review

**Visual & Performing Arts-Meets Approval**

- The school is commended for providing meaningful learning opportunities for students in all four arts disciplines.

**Music- Meets Approval**

- It appears (and is stated ) that the standards cited were a compilation of Delaware Content Standards for Music and some other learning targets from researched based curriculum. A numbering system would be helpful to distinguish.

Teaching and Learning Branch

APPENDIX B

- Kudos for including audiation as a developmentally appropriate practice for instruction.

**Visual Art- Meets Approval**

- A comprehensive and thoughtful plan for visual arts. Kudos for utilizing children's literature as stimulus material for art making.

**Dance and Theatre- Meets Approval**

- A comprehensive and thoughtful plan for student learning in and through and about movement and theatre.

**Meets Approval - Mathematics, Science, Visual & Performing Arts**

**Does Not Meet Approval - English Language Arts, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education**