

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

Minutes

April 21, 2015

The Board of Education Charter School Committee met at the James Monroe State Office Building in Richmond, Jefferson Conference Room, 22nd floor, with the following members present: committee chair and Board member, Mrs. Darla Edwards; Mr. Sal Romero and Mr. James Dillard from the Board; Dr. Rosa Atkins, Mr. David Cline, Ms. Linda Hyslop, Mr. Dean Kern, Mr. Walter Cross, Dr. Rick Richardson, and Ms. Bobbi Snow from the education community. Also present was Mr. Chris Braunlich, Board president. Representatives from Campbell County Public Schools were Dr. Robert Arnold, assistant superintendent of instruction, and Dr. Nick Pontius, director of pupil personnel.

Mrs. Edwards called the meeting to order at noon.

Mrs. Edwards described the steps of the review process and reviewed the committee's task of examining the Philadelphia Charter School Academy public charter school application as stipulated in the *Code of Virginia*. The purpose of the meeting was for the committee to discuss the application, meet with the applicant, and decide if the application met the Board's approval criteria. Mrs. Edwards explained that it was not the responsibility of the committee or Board to approve or disapprove an application.

An opportunity for public comment was provided but no comments were made.

Before the examination of the application, Mrs. Edwards introduced the applicant, Mr. Russell Lomax. He, in turn, introduced Ms. Dorothy Smith, Ms. Patricia Green, Reverend Gary Harmon, and Mrs. Janet Lomax.

Mrs. Edwards confirmed that the applicant information (Part A) was complete; an executive summary provided an overview of the proposed charter school; and the assurances (Part C) were signed. Mrs. Edwards then gave the Philadelphia Charter Academy team the opportunity to address the educational (Sections II.-VI.), logistical (Sections VII.-X.), and business (Sections XI.-XV.) components of the application. The applicant presented the information.

The committee asked the applicant to clarify the reason for focusing on African American male youth in Campbell County and cautioned about attracting these youth without stereotyping them. The applicant indicated the Campbell County Public Schools report card shows that African American male youth were not doing as well as other youth. The school wants to close the achievement gap, not with just African American students, but with all at-risk students.

The committee discussed the lottery process for enrollment, how students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) could not be excluded from the application process, and encouraged the applicant to clarify language in the application that Philadelphia Charter Academy would follow state and federal law.

The committee asked how the applicant intended to make a summer program a full-year curriculum with an academic setting. Mr. Lomax explained they would continue with a structured environment similar to the summer program throughout the year. The committee discussed transportation and encouraged the applicant to include in the budget line items for the purchase of three buses or to clarify that the buses are already in place for transportation.

The committee discussed that the applicant would need to clarify the insurance coverage for employees and students in the facilities and while on school buses. The committee encouraged the applicant to clearly define how the accounting would be handled, to describe what collateral would be used if a loan was necessary, and noted that the applicant should describe other planned fundraising efforts. The committee noted that federal grant awards are competitive in nature and not guaranteed.

The committee noted there should be a clear delineation between the non-profit Piedmont Impact Organization, Inc. and Philadelphia Charter Academy business structures, financials, accounts, governance, etc. This delineation would avoid all real or appearances of conflicts of interest, mismanagement, diversion of taxpayer funds, etc.

The committee encouraged the applicant to clearly define how the governing council would be established and suggested the applicant include in the budget the explanation for the food service program, facility, equipment, teacher salaries, and information technology being reduced or no cost. The committee advised the applicant to provide more detail in the budget, clarify how it will work with Campbell County Public Schools, and how the curriculum will be different than what the division already has in place.

Mrs. Edwards called for a vote on whether the applicant met the criteria for the components in the application. The following chart outlines the results of the vote:

Required Application Components		Met the Criterion	Yes	No	Consensus Met Components Yes/No
I.	Executive Summary	Yes	10		
II.	Mission Statement	Yes	10		
III.	Goals and Educational Objectives	Yes	10		
IV.	Evidence of Support	No	2	8	
V.	Statement of Need	No	1	9	
VI.	Educational Program	No		10	
VII.	Enrollment Process	Yes	10		
VIII.	Displacement	Yes	8	2	
IX.	Transportation	Yes	10		
X.	Residential Charter School	N/A			
XI.	Economic Soundness	No	4	6	
XII.	Management and Operation	No		10	
XIII.	Employment Terms and Conditions	No	1	9	
XIV.	Liability and Insurance	No	4	6	
XV.	Disclosures	Yes	10		
Overall Consensus					No

The seven application components that met the criterion were:

I.	Executive Summary
II.	Mission Statement
III.	Goals and Educational Objectives
VII.	Enrollment Process
VIII.	Displacement
IX.	Transportation
XV.	Disclosures

The seven application components that did not meet the criterion were:

IV.	Evidence of Support
V.	Statement of Need
VI.	Educational Program
XI.	Economic Soundness
XII.	Management and Operation
XIII.	Employment Terms and Conditions
XIV.	Liability and Insurance

The committee reached unanimous consensus that the application overall did not meet the Board's approval criteria.

Mrs. Edwards thanked Mr. Lomax and his team for providing the summary and responses. Mrs. Edwards explained that following the meeting, Department staff, on behalf of the committee, will prepare a consensus report with the determination from the committee as to whether the application meets the Board's approval criteria.

Based on the consensus report, the Philadelphia Charter Academy has ten days to notify the Department of Education whether the decision is to:

- 1) Withdraw the application with the option of resubmitting it at a later time; or
- 2) Present the report to the Board of Education
 - First review on May 28, 2015
 - Applicant will be requested to attend to answer questions and make comments; and
 - Board will make an initial determination as to whether the Philadelphia Charter Academy application overall meets the approval criteria.
 - Final action on June 25, 2015
 - Action 1: The Board will accept the Charter School Committee's recommendation that the application meets all the Board's approval criteria; or
 - Action 2: The Board will accept the Charter School Committee's recommendations that the application does not meet all of the Board's approval criteria.

The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 1:30 p.m.