

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process

Name of Charter Applicant: Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School

Name of Review Team Reviewer: Dalhart Dobbs – Chair, Susan Wiegand, Melvin Hubbard EI, Tracey Gilliard, John Garrow, Daryl Saunders, Toni Kendrick, Linda Jerome, Vidya Patil

Date of Score Submission: January 19, 2007

<u>Section</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Actual Points</u>
Part I: Mission, Purpose and Needs, and Marketing Data:		
a) mission statement	18	<u>12</u>
b) purpose and needs	18	<u>8</u>
c) marketing data	18	<u>6</u>

Notes:

The mission statement is clearly stated and aligns with the Applicants' rationale and preliminary assessment and rationale. However, The Three Rivers Youth Leadership Charter School makes no mention of leadership in the mission statement, which is the core reason for the Applicant's claim of innovation in their charter application.

The Applicant provides statement of needs, but does not indicate the strengths.

The Applicant has not defined the process for teaching leadership and has no quantitative way of measuring to determine if leadership has been learned. During the interview process there was mention of gender issues, self-awareness, diversity, situational leadership, team dynamics, and personal mission statements. It was stated that classroom activities would be incorporated around leadership, but there were no specific plans on how this was going to be accomplished. When asked how leadership benchmarks were going to be measured, there was a reference to academic achievement, doing homework, and assignments.

One of the Applicant's statements is, "school districts do not welcome students from residential group home settings with open arms" (pg. 12), but the Applicant provides no substantiation to support this comment.

The Applicant is not clear on how their proposed charter school will provide expanded opportunities beyond those currently provided by Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS). PPS and/or its existing charter schools already offer all of the items that the Applicant lists as being unique:

- (1) extended school day and year—not evident in the application. City Charter High School currently provides an extended school day and year.
- (2) gender based design for life and leadership – There is no program in the application supporting this. PPS offerings include, but are not limited to, Best Friends, Best Men, etc.
- (3) leadership development – This is not evident in the application. PPS offerings include, but are not limited to, leadership and student government, community service and leadership activities, student clubs—such as Family Career Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA),
- (4) strengthening of core academic skills – This cannot be attested to without the presence of a curriculum, which the application lacks. PPS offerings include, but are not limited to, extended day programming, and tutoring partnerships such as the Career Literacy for African American Youth Program.
- (5) coordinated curriculum aligned with state standards – The application did not contain a curriculum. PPS' curriculum is coordinated and aligned. All public school entities, including charter schools, are required by law to coordinate and align their curriculum with state standards.

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- (6) more coordinated social services that will address physical and mental issues for students. PPS provides coordinated social services that by law include all public school entities and charter schools, all of which are required to provide services to students who are identified with physical and mental issues.
- (7) more intimate school with smaller class sizes. PPS currently provides sheltered, small learning environments and small classes for special needs students at a ratio of 1 teacher to 17 students.
- (8) community partnerships that strengthen the concept (of the proposed charter) – This was not evident in the application. PPS has a wealth of community partnerships that strengthen our district's academic and social goals for students, including leadership.
- (9) expanded professional development of teachers – No evidence of this was provided in the actual application or during the site visit. PPS currently has a wide array of in-house professional development, as well as active partnerships with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) Education Research and Dissemination Program (ER&D), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the Pittsburgh Teachers Institute (PTI), among others.

PPS already offers all of the above items that the Applicant lists as being unique. Therefore, these will not be an expanded choice to the student.

The Applicant's target audience is students who are affected by poverty, violence, abuse and neglect. The Applicant also states it will serve "youth who do not live in safe homes, have been bouncing from one foster home to another and who have not had the advantage of attending one school for even one complete school year, youth who have well-meaning parents struggling to meet the demands of everyday, struggling with public schools to accept and/or kept their children and attempting to keep them safe and away from the negative culture in their neighborhood" (pg. 13). The Applicant indicates it will give preferential enrollment to those students who are already part of Three Rivers Youth Council. The Applicant could not explain during the site visit how it would attract a student, who is not a part of their stated target audience or who is already an excellent student academically.

When asked about enrollment of students from outside of Three Rivers Youth Council programs the Applicant stated that, "parents would probably not want to send their child to the school because of the types of children who would be attending the school." The admissions policy states that it will give preference to students who attend Three Rivers Youth Council programs and services. (p 27)

Application contains the scope of the backing for the charter and its founding coalition. A brief description of founding member's background is included along with mention of their areas of expertise and role in planning team.

The breadth of East Liberty community support is not evident. Support hails from Brighton Road, Three Rivers Adoption Council, PACE, Senator Orie, Council on Accreditation, PCCYFS, ABC. Support is directed towards Three Rivers Youth Council as an organization and not a Charter School.

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There are deficiencies regarding the lack of broad community support. First, none of the letters are support from the community in which the charter will be located. All the support letters are from organizations/agencies that provide services to at-risk youth, which currently provide services to Three Rivers Youth Council. There are also no letters of support from parents or institutes of higher learning. Second, the Applicant submitted as support a sheet entitled "Three Rivers Youth Corporate Council Leadership, October 30, 2006, Rivers Club." It is not clear if this was simply a sign-n sheet for a Three Rivers Youth Council meeting or if indeed these corporate leaders were signing a petition to show their support for the proposed charter. The third piece of support that the Applicant submitted is a list of eight (8) individuals who live at the same address and most of them have the same phone number. This appears to be women who are in one of Three Rivers Youth Council's group homes. Another document that was submitted as support was results from a survey. The Applicant surveyed 100 stakeholders and received results from 20 people. It appears that the Applicant surveyed students but it's hard to confirm. Additionally, there were no teachers or parents present at the public hearing to give testimony of support for the proposed charter school.

The Applicant describes its short-term marketing plan for the school. However, the long-term marketing plans are simply to continue the short-term plans. The Applicant states, "in order to grow and sustain school enrollment and publish school success we will continue our marketing efforts on an ongoing basis" (pg. 17). There is no mention of community engagement in the long – term planning process.

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<u>Section</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Actual Points</u>
Part II: Strategic Planning:		
a) measurable goals and objectives	18	<u>1</u>
b) best practices and habits of practice	18	<u>0</u>
c) school improvement planning	18	<u>6</u>

Notes:

The proposed plan includes goals that are associated with the mission statement but are very vague and not measurable. There are no target dates for MAG (measurable annual goals). The application gives assurances but no details of such. Data collection for goals is not evident (do not include the when/how). No specific measurement devices available. The Applicant did not explain the charter school exams or include dates for the exams. "Leadership" terminology is not clearly defined.

The goal of students maintaining positive behaviors outcome is vague. The Applicant expects no more than 15 incidents requiring a behavioral referral the first year and continuing with a 20% rate annually. This goal is unrealistic and term positive behavior needs to be better defined to be measurable.

The proposed plan includes goals that are associated with the mission statement and preliminary assessment. However, there are two deficiencies. First, one of the goals states "students will meet the charter school's established leadership benchmarks" (pg. 21). These benchmarks were not evidenced in the application. Second, another goal states the charter will "create new professional opportunities for teachers being responsible for the learn program at the school" (pg. 21). However, the professional development calendar (pg. 80) does not identity what professional development will take place. The calendar also does not include any professional development days prior to the opening of school and there is a new leadership curriculum, differentiated instruction, special education issues that have to be taught to a new staff of teachers and staff before the opening of school.

Planning process for key stakeholders is not clear. Plan for parent engagement is very vague. There is no evidence of communication with parents in multiple languages if needed. Plan includes parent teacher conferences but no PFO, PTO or parent volunteerism in the classroom (albeit it is mentioned in after school tutoring capacity). During the interview there was mention of "intense parent involvement" and it is stated as a goal on page 20 that "Parents and students will maintain an 80% attendance at family nights", according to the Three Rivers Youth Council panel 50% of their residents are from the Philadelphia area and a vast majority of the parents are not involved in the lives or their children. This goal is unrealistic given the circumstances. During the interview the Three Rivers Youth Council staff claimed that they will use phone and technology messaging services to help parents stay involved, which are not realistic strategies for the population the Applicant wishes to serve.

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The Applicant states it is the Board's responsibility to ensure active participation by key stakeholders. Some ways they will do this include using surveys, regular communication with parents, and annual reviews. (pg. 24)

The Applicant does not describe how it plans to incorporate and/or investigate specific strategies of the listed best practices and habits of practice identified by the Commonwealth of PA. The Applicant doesn't address the following best practices: rigorous and engaging curriculum, innovative, unique and effective instruction, artful use of infrastructure, deep partnerships with community organizations, universities, businesses, and/or regional and national organizations, intensive teacher and leadership training and meaningful continuous assessment that is aligned with standards.

The Applicant describes the improvement process the school will use and how it will serve as the basis for the development of the school's strategic plan. The Applicant states the goals and objectives will be reviewed and revised each year of a five-year plan. The Board will receive a comprehensive monthly written report of the status and progress on strategic goals (pg. 24).

Applicant describes its plan for involving business partners and community organizations. However, the Applicant didn't include local institutions of higher education. (pgs. 53-55).

The Applicant provides the necessary assurances in regards to School Improvement Status II and its intent to comply with grounds for non-renewal or immediate revocation. (Appendix B)

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<u>Section</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Actual Points</u>
Part III: Management Plan		
a) admissions policy and criteria	18	<u>9</u>
b) student discipline and expulsion criteria	18	<u>6</u>
c) governance (board)	18	<u>15</u>
d) plan for involvement of the community and the general public life of the school	18	<u>0</u>
e) description of how the charter will manage and administer the school	18	<u>7</u>
f) description of staff conditions, work, and professional development	18	<u>3</u>

Notes:

Admissions policy and criteria state that enrollment is open to PPS students; however there is mention of preference enrollment given to the youth who attend Three Rivers Youth Council's programs and services, (p 27). Over 50% of these students are from the Philadelphia area living in Three Rivers Youth Council's shelters. When asked about enrollment of students from outside of Three Rivers Youth Council programs the Applicant stated that that, "parents would probably not want to send their child to the school because of the types of children who would be attending the school."

The Applicant has reasonable student population goals and details the growth of the population over a 5 year period.

The Applicant provided no evidence or plan to raise the parent's awareness of the special education services or a plan for systematic screenings as required by the Commonwealth.

PA Code Chapter 711.21. states, to enable the Commonwealth to meet its obligations under 34 CFR 300.125 (relating to child find), each charter school shall establish written policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities that are enrolled in the charter school, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated. The charter's written policy shall include the following:

(1) Public awareness activities sufficient to inform parents of children applying to or enrolled in the charter school of available special education services and programs and how to request those services and programs.

(2) Systematic screening activities that lead to the identification, location and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled in the charter school.

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Applicant has basic understanding of Chapter 711 regulations in its application. IEP provisions page 30 Section 4, does not indicate if charter Applicant has made contact with IU 2 to form an alliance for provision of specially designed instruction. During the interview process the Applicant was unsure of many of terms and procedures of Special Education within their plan and their perception of how services are delivered in public school systems. The Applicants made numerous references to pulling students out of their schools and sending them to other schools. There was evidence that their knowledge of accommodations for children with disabilities was lacking. They made reference to many technological devices such as computers, laptops, blue tooth as if they were the ideal way of working with all children with disabilities; i.e., computers for blind students would not be appropriate as a single strategy.

The Applicant describes the application procedure and includes a copy of the application. (Appendix C)

The Commonwealth requires that during the enrollment process and prior to admission to a charter school, the parent, guardian or person having control of a student shall provide a sworn statement stating whether the student was previously or is presently suspended or expelled from any public or private school for any offense involving weapons, alcohol or drugs or for the willful infliction of injury to another person or for any act of violence committed on school property. The school from which the student was suspended or expelled and the dates of the suspension or expulsion must be provided. Any willful false statement shall be a misdemeanor of the third degree. However the Applicant does not address this in its proposed student application process.

Charter schools should make certain they obtain this statement during the enrollment process. If a charter school accepts a suspended or expelled student, the student's school district of residence is not required to pay the charter school for that student's enrollment until the suspension or expulsion period has passed and the student has met all the conditions imposed during the suspension or expulsion. However, the suspending or expelling school and the charter school may enter into an agreement for providing an education for a student less than 17 years of age or older, up to age 21. There is no mention of this in the application or in the enrollment process as outlined by the Applicant.

Expulsion and suspension process is defined for "typical" youth and includes board hearing (due process) and appeal. However, alternative placement procedures are not specific, and during the interview process there was reference made to not suspending students due to the type of relationship the school hopes to have with the students. When asked to about the necessity of alternative placement for students who might be a threat to others there was not a plan for alternative placements.

Compulsory attendance is defined somewhat, however there is not a procedure discussed for truancy and how they would share truancy data with the PPS as mandated by Commonwealth. Applicant could not demonstrate even minimal knowledge of due process procedures and requirements as mandated by PA.

The Applicant describes policies for dealing with incidents involving drugs, alcohol, weapons and criminal violations occurring on school grounds.

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A clear description of the governance structure is present, including board selection and a basic description of what parent and community participation will be. A parent and community member will be seated on the Board. The team of parents and community members is projected at this time and there is no evidence of advanced planning on their part.

The Board evaluates the Principal. However, the Applicant did not include “specific” criteria for the evaluation. It was vague. The Applicant stated, “the school board will follow best practices in evaluating the Principal” (pg. 46). The Applicant goes on further to say “this includes but is not limited to an annual statement of goals and direction, ongoing monitoring of progress, constructive feedback, and an annual performance evaluation” (pg. 46). The Applicant failed to explain who would evaluate the principal, how this evaluation would occur and the “best practices” his/her performance would be judged by.

The board’s meeting processes are described, and there is a statement about the frequency of board meetings, but no dates are mentioned. The board’s policies and procedures are included in the application, and there is a statement concerning ethics and conflicts of interest, as well as the policy for accepting gifts and gratuities. There is no mention of how the board’s policies and procedures will be made visible and communicated to the students and parents.

The Applicant provides a complete description of the bylaws, including financial oversight and administrative and staff supervision. The following discrepancies exist between the application and the Bylaws (Appendix D):

Application: “The Board shall elect four officers consisting of: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary shall serve a term of two years.” (pg. 45)

Bylaws: “The school directors annually, during the first week of December, elect individual oral vote from Their members a Chair and Vice Chair who shall serve for one (1) year.” (Appendix D, pg. 10)

Bylaws: “The school directors shall annually, during the month of June elect a Treasure who shall serve for one (1) year.” (Appendix D, pg. 10)

Bylaws: “The school directors shall, during the month of June in every fourth year, elect a Secretary who shall serve a term of four (4) years.” (Appendix D, pg. 10)

Application: “The Board shall hold monthly meetings.” (pg. 45)

Bylaws: “Regular Board meeting shall be public and shall be held at specified places at least once every two (2) months.” (Appendix D, pg. 3)

The Bylaws also do not state that two of the Board members must be a parent and a community member. The Bylaws also do not state that of the 15 board members, “five members shall be elected from the board of founding Board of Directors of Three Rivers Youth, one of which will include the President and CEO of Three Rivers Youth.” (pg. 45)

There is a description of the founding group membership and a list of professional skills. There is no mention of parental involvement in the planning and there are no community members listed from the East Liberty area, the location of the physical building.

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The Applicant describes how the management organization and governance structure of the school will be consistent with the mission and purpose of the school's aims and goals. "The Board will receive a comprehensive monthly written report of the status and progress on strategic goals. The report will be aligned with strategic directions/goals and will provide corrective action and next steps to demonstrate forward movement." (pg. 24)

The Applicant provides templates of policies and procedures that are from Three Rivers Youth Council in order to address many of the aspects of both the management and education plans within this application. These documents from Three Rivers Youth Council are not designed for a charter school and contradict policies and procedures of the proposed school, as well as requirements of the Public School Code.

The Applicant proposed Three Rivers Youth Council as its external management agency. "These services include but are not limited to facility and physical plant management, human resources development and support, resource development, financial management and leadership support." (pg. 50) This was addressed at the site visit/interview. Employees of Three Rivers Youth Council will be working for the proposed charter but will be paid as Three Rivers Youth Council's employees. The Applicant did not submit a proposed operating agreement between the proposed charter and Three Rivers Youth Council. This too was addressed at the site visit/interview and the Applicant stated that such an agreement did not exist.

The Applicant describes its process for ensuring productive relationships between administrators and teachers. "Productive relationships will be encouraged through the following process: (1) board policies and procedures will lay the foundation for productive and collaborative relationships between administrators and teachers and (2) teachers and administrators will be *evaluated on teamwork*." (pg. 51) Teamwork is a laudable goal, but effective school leadership is combination of complex traits and skills. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards list 6 standards that begin to quantify the level of skill necessary to be a successful school principal

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, and mobilizing community resources.
5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

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The relationship of the proposed charter to the surrounding community and the community of the school is alluded to; however, nothing has actually been developed. Although the "founding group represents a broad range of community leaders and professionals" (pg. 47), it is not evident that the Applicant involved the community in which the charter will be located, in the planning process. The Applicant did not demonstrate knowledge of NCLB parent involvement requirements:

(a) Local Educational Agency Policy

(1) IN GENERAL- A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs assisted under this part consistent with this section. Such programs, activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

(2) WRITTEN POLICY- Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy. The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establish the agency's expectations for parent involvement, and describe how the agency will —

(A) involve parents in the joint development of the plan under section 1112, and the process of school review and improvement under section 1116;

(B) provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;

(C) build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement as described in subsection (e);

(D) coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as the Head Start program, Reading First program, Early Reading First program, Even Start program, Parents as Teachers program, and Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs;

(E) conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this section; and

(F) involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part.

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(g) INFORMATION FROM PARENTAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTERS- In a State where a parental information and resource center is established to provide training, information, and support to parents and individuals who work with local parents, local educational agencies, and schools receiving assistance under this part, each local educational agency or school that receives assistance under this part and is located in the State shall assist parents and parental organizations by informing such parents and organizations of the existence and purpose of such centers.

The Applicant did not demonstrate any instances of parent involvement in planning the policy as stated in (A) of the NCLB statute. There is also no policy regarding Information and Resource Centers as part of the NCLB mandate.

The Applicant vaguely describes its parent complaint process and parent dispute resolution process. "Parents will be encouraged to communicate their concerns to the school's staff. This may be done verbally or in writing. Any concerns or complaints of a parent(s)/guardians will receive prompt attention from the appropriate staff member. If the parent is not satisfied with the resolution, they may address their concerns to the principal." (pg. 55) It is not clear who the parent should submit their complaint to and the process that will take place.

The Applicant describes how performance information will be disseminated to parents. The proposed charter will utilize "e-mail, send home with the student, phone calls and parent teacher meetings." (pg. 55) However, the Applicant fails to include how parents will receive technical support and/or training on interpreting performance information. The Applicant simply provides an assurance statement that "attention will be given to ensure that parents understand the meaning of the scores and ways that they can continue to support and encourage their child to perform at a higher level." (pg. 55) But again, this does not explain how the Applicant will do so.

The Applicant describes the process for ensuring teachers and staff are afforded meaningful opportunities to have voices in school governance and decision making. One teacher will serve as chair of the academic planning team and will be asked by the Board to attend board meetings on a regular basis. (pg. 53)

The Applicant describes the process for ensuring parents of the children and the community-at-large are afforded meaningful opportunities to have voices in school governance and decision-making. There will be at least one parent and one community representative on the Board. (pg. 53)

The Applicant describes the school's volunteerism policy, including provisions for obtaining the necessary clearances so they would be specific to the proposed charter school or a public school in general. The Applicant adopted the policy from Three Rivers Youth. Some examples of improper alignment to the proposed charter include: (1) the effective date of the policy is August 10, 1998, (2) the revised date is July 1, 2004, (3) the policy includes board volunteers who serve on the "agency" Governing Board and Advisory Board but there is no mention of this in the Bylaws, (4) the Applicant uses the word "agency" instead of charter, (5) under the procedures for direct service volunteers, a volunteer would go through Three Rivers Youth to complete an application and not the proposed charter and (6) positions/individual that are not within the proposed charter's budget are included as individuals to whom someone would need to give their volunteer Applicant to (i.e. a program supervisor, human resources director, and the vice president of human resources). Also, the handbook that the Applicant provided was not updated/changed to be specific to the proposed charter. The welcome letter has such language as "welcome to

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Three Rivers Youth” and “our residents will definitely benefit from your time and commitment.” Then it goes on to explain the mission, physical layout and history of Three Rivers Youth Council without including information about the proposed charter. Are individuals volunteering at Three Rivers Youth Council (language in basic guidelines for conduct refer to Three Rivers Youth Council’s residential homes) or are they volunteering at and for the proposed charter?

The Applicant provided a description of the how the school will be managed and by whom. There is a lack of clarity regarding a few issues with staffing. Three Rivers Youth Council (TRYC) employees will also be responsible for staffing the charter school. Aside from actual teachers, there will not be a separate staff for the charter. Some non-teaching positions—such as the school counselor—require specific certification to work in a school. The Applicant does not express an understanding of these requirements.

The Applicant provided an organizational chart that defines lines of authority to deliver services effectively and efficiently. The Applicant needs to include the Student Advisory Council. (Appendix G).

The Applicant describes that employees of TRYLC (Vice President Human Resources and Administrative Services) will annually assess the effectiveness of the organizational structure and the measures it will use. The Vice President of Performance Management will mail surveys quarterly and conduct focus groups. (pg. 57)

The Applicant describes the criminal clearance procedures for staff. (pg. 57)

The Applicant describes it plans to fulfill the highly qualified teacher requirements by hiring teachers who: (1) have a bachelor’s degree in secondary education, preferably with a math, science or English 6-12 teaching certification and (2) have passing scores on the PA certification test. The proposed charter does not understand that teachers must demonstrate subject matter competency for the core content area they teach. It is not a preference. (pg. 57)

Although the Highly Qualified Teacher mandate is more flexible with charter schools, allowing 25% non-certified teachers—with 100% of special education teachers being highly qualified—it is important to note that the Applicant has proposed a wide variety of course offerings to its students (pg. 63- 72), which require specific teacher content knowledge. To properly teach Chinese, Spanish, or other romance languages and Physics, Chemistry will require teachers certified in those content areas. This is not addressed in their plan.

The Applicant fails to provide a comprehensive staff development plan. This is of grave concern that no staff development is in place. There are 5 days scheduled prior to the opening of school and 5 days after each period. However, the professional development has not been identified. It is also not evident as to the professional development that will take place prior to school in regards to the curriculum. This was addressed at the site visit/interview. The Applicants stated that there would be rigorous staff development in the Leadership Curriculum, differentiated instruction, and IDEA regulations. The Applicant has 5 days scheduled prior to school starting to accomplish these tasks. During this intensive training scheduled for July 16 – 20, the applicant has also scheduled Orientation & Assessment Testing for the students July 16 – 20, and Orientation for the parents from July 18 – 20. It is not clear how the key personnel are going to be involved in the Staff Development process and also assess the students and orientate them and their parents. (pg. 78)

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Date of Score Submission: January 19, 2007

The Applicant states that evaluations will take place but fails to state who will evaluate the staff. (pg. 58) The Applicant does not provide an example of the instrument that will be used for these evaluations or the criteria for determining proficiency.

The Applicant states the Vice President of Human Resources will have oversight of the human resource function. This is an employee of TRYLC. TRYLC is running the school and not the proposed charter board. (pg. 58) The Vice President of HR is responsible for the supervisory and evaluative duties expected of a school administrator.

The Applicant includes the necessary assurances in regards to maintaining personnel and confidential records. (pg. 58)

The Applicant includes a description of the employment/labor relations program. Again, this is a template from Three Rivers Youth Council there is very little mention of the word "Principal" or "Teacher" in the document. The language and dates are consistently incorrect throughout the document. (Appendix H) The document is not designed for the charter school and it contradicts policies and procedures of the proposed charter school and some of the policies are not applicable to teachers it wishes to employ. Appendix H, page 8 states that the responsibility of hiring rests with the Chief Executive Officer a responsibility that belonged to the principal in another section. (pg. 57) Appendix H, page 12, Conditions of Employment states:

"Employees must be able to stand/walk for up to four hours per shift, push/pull up to 175 pounds during a physical restraint, and bend, stoop, reach as needed. Manual dexterity is required. Ability to see, hear, speak, smell, and touch is required. Must be able to exercise independent thinking and good judgment under all circumstances. Must be able to drive a motor vehicle."

The Commonwealth's Certificate Eligibility:

§ 49.12. Eligibility.

In accordance with sections 1109, 1202 and 1209 of the act (24 P. S. §§ 11-1109, 12-1202 and 12-1209), every professional employee certificated or permitted to serve in the schools of this Commonwealth shall:

(1) Be of good moral character.

(2) Provide a physician's certificate stating that the Applicant, with or without reasonable accommodation, is able to perform successfully the essential functions and duties of an educator. A qualified Applicant who has tuberculosis or another communicable disease or a mental disability, will not be deemed to pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others unless a threat to health or safety cannot be eliminated by a reasonable accommodation.

(3) Be at least 18 years of age.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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(4) Except in the case of the Temporary Permit, Vocational Instructional Intern Certificate, and Vocational Instructional Certificate, have earned minimally a baccalaureate degree as a general education requirement.

Appendix H, pages 21 – 34, Staff Development, list all of the staff development activities and orientation training. A read of the section doesn't include any training on Leadership curriculum instruction, differentiated instruction, special education, lesson planning. Page 25 also states that all new employees will go through a 2 – 4 week orientation which is not scheduled on the employee calendar nor mentioned during the interview.

The Applicant lists the proposed positions and the job descriptions. However, no job description exists for a paraprofessional, nurse, or Title I tutor, Chinese teacher and the Principal's job description includes 1 – 3 teaching period per day. (Appendix I)

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Part IV: Education Plan

a) education program	18	6
b) accountability, student assessment, and evaluation	18	6
c) meeting the needs of at-risk students, bilingual students, and students with disabilities	18	3

Notes:

The Applicant's plan is to use "Universal Design for Instruction," which is not connected to the what the Applicant refers to as a "curriculum". The Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University is a group of architects, product designers, engineers, and environmental design researchers they have established the seven principles of universal design listed on pages 60 – 61 of the application. These principles were meant to create ideal environmental conditions that are accessible and conducive to the optimum learning and comfort of all individuals. Once the physical structures are built and designed there is very little that is under the teacher's control and has nothing to do with Leadership or Academic Standards. An actual curriculum aligned to PA Standards is not included.

The Applicant next touches on Differentiated Instruction and is correct in recognizing that it is meant to meet the individual needs of each person. The ability to differentiate instruction will require several sessions of staff development and ongoing practice and refinement throughout the school year. Minimal time (5 days) has been provided for this staff development before the start of the school year. It is clear from the application that the Applicant has a rudimentary understanding of differentiated instruction. The model is more than additional instruction and modified assessments each lesson can include the following to ensure all of the students arrive at the same objective but in their own way.

Each lesson:

- has a definite aim for all students
- includes a variety of teacher techniques aimed at reaching students at all levels
- considers student learning styles in presentation of lesson
- involves all students in the lesson through the use of questioning aimed at different levels of thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy)
- recognizes that some students will require adjusted expectations
- provides choice in the method students will use to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts
- accepts that different methods are of equal value
- evaluates students based on their individual differences

Differentiated instruction is not a unique approach; teachers and administrators in the PPS are trained in differentiated instruction and are familiar with how to implement it in instruction.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Instead of providing an actual curriculum, the Applicant lists various strategies and programs mistaking these for a full curriculum. For example, the Applicant mentions Writing across the curriculum and gives an example of how a lesson could include English, social studies and science. The Pittsburgh Public Schools also utilizes the concept of Writing across the curriculum, but PPS actually provides a full curriculum to support the concept. PPS expects Writing Across the Curriculum in all classes and requires it to be evidenced by student portfolio entries showcasing writing from various subject areas. PPS teachers have been trained in using the Alice Greiner's *The Write Tools* system. This system provides all teachers in the building with a common method, common language, and common vision to teach writing across the curriculum. By contrast, the Applicant does not mention how they plan to instruct their teachers how to instruct the students in writing across the curriculum.

The Applicant mentions Gender Based Strategy and feels that is an effective tool to help reduce gender stereotypes. The Applicant states that girls in single sex education settings are more likely to take classes in math, science and information technology and boys in single sex education setting are more likely to pursue interests in art, music, drama, and foreign languages. They also state that there are a large number of African-American boys in special education. Studies have shown that African-American males perform better when they are educated in single-sex classrooms. However the Applicant does not intend to educate boy and girls in separate classrooms. They intend to approach gender issues in non-academic subject matter. Therefore, there is no evidence of a real plan to provide gender-based education. By contrast, PPS has many programs that address the specific issues that affect boys and girls throughout their lives, and provides these in both academic and non-academic settings. For example, many of these gender-based issues are addressed in various classes such as those found under the district's Family and Consumer Science classes, Health classes, and through service providers who work with small groups of students. The Applicant states that it will provide "ample professional development" on differentiated teaching and gender differences but does not provide detail demonstrating how this will occur.

Pages 63 – 72 outlines Three River Youth's academic plan. An examination of the plan shows that its offerings mirror the PPS course offerings, thus there is no expanded choice for students here.

The Applicant cannot demonstrate an alignment between its proposed curriculum and the PA and School District Standards, as there is no curriculum. There is no mention of leadership in any of the course descriptions. There is a course titled Technology and Leadership and lists 13 bullet points. The points do not give objectives designed to teach or measure leadership, but focus on social skills, research skills, and use of technology to prepare and display information. No evidence that Applicant addresses curriculum which is tied to formative and summative student assessments. Application puts burden of control on students for sorting prioritizing and assimilating before students have acquired basic foundational knowledge. Application assumes students are coming to them with grade—level skills.

The Commonwealth's graduation requirements are listed below. The Charter School's course of study is missing Health with at least 1 credit is required and there is no mention of a Graduation or Culminating Project as required.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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§ 4.24. High school graduation requirements. (a) Each school district, including charter schools, shall specify requirements for graduation in the strategic plan under § 4.13 (relating to strategic plans). Requirements shall include course completion and grades, *completion of a culminating project* and results of local assessments aligned with the academic standards. Beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, students shall demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics on either the State assessments administered in grade 11 or 12 or local assessment aligned with academic standards and State assessments under § 4.52 (relating to local assessment system) at the proficient level or better to graduate. The purpose of the culminating project is to assure that students are able to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding.

b) A school shall identify planned courses—§ 51.52 (relating to curriculum requirements) curriculum requirement—for which credit shall be awarded. The written planned courses shall be on file at the school and shall be available upon request for review by the Board or its designated representatives

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Student Leadership Development is mentioned briefly on Page 71. The Applicant mentions students being members of the School Based Planning Team, student council representatives, disciplinary hearings, mock trials, mediation and conflict resolution. The Applicant also characterizes leadership opportunities as a student having the opportunity to choose test questions, vocabulary and planning some learning opportunities. The Applicant also lists several opportunities for students to participate in "Extracurricular Leadership Activities". These "leadership activities" have not been explained, the benchmarks have not been revealed and a method of assessing growth has not been identified in the application. During the interview the Leadership curriculum was questioned and a member of the Three Rivers Youth Council team responded that they were looking at:

Gender issues

Self-awareness

Diversity

Situational Leadership

Team Dynamics

Personal mission statements

The Applicant indicated it planned on incorporating these issues into weekly activities. When questioned how they were going to measure the benchmarks, the Applicant stated that, achieving dreams, completing assignments, doing homework, Individual Academic Plans were indicators of leadership. The Applicant also mentioned a "rigorous training" around their leadership curriculum; however, nothing has been planned nor have materials been developed.

The PPS curriculum which is aligned with the Commonwealth's standards includes many opportunities to learn leadership skills, analyze leadership, and learn the successes and failures of historical leaders. A few examples are listed below from the State Standards:

Standards for Civics and Government

5.2.9 Analyze political leadership and public service in a republican form of government.

5.2.12 Evaluate political leadership and public service in a republican form of government.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Career Education and Work Standards

Evaluate conflict resolution skills
as they relate to the workplace:

- Constructive criticism
- Group dynamics
- Managing/leadership
- Mediation
- Negotiation
- Problem solving

13.3.8 Explain and demonstrate conflict resolution skills:

- Constructive criticism
- Group dynamics
- Managing/leadership
- Mediation
- Negotiation
- Problem solving

13.3.11 Evaluate conflict resolution skills as they relate to the workplace:

- Constructive criticism
- Group dynamics
- Managing/leadership
- Mediation
- Negotiation
- Problem solving

Family and Consumer Science Standards

Leadership skills: The ability to:

- Use resources
- Delegate authority
- Communicate effectively
- Assess composition of group
- Determine and rank goals
- Evaluate consequences.

11.2.9 Assess the effectiveness of the use of teamwork and leadership skills in accomplishing the work of the family.

11.2.12 Analyze teamwork and leadership skills and their application in various family and work situations.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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History Standards

Political and Cultural Contributions of Individuals and Groups

- Inhabitants (cultures, subcultures, groups)
- Political Leaders (monarchs, governors, elected officials)
- Military Leaders (generals, noted military figures)
- Cultural and Commercial Leaders (entrepreneurs, corporate executives, artists, entertainers, writers)
- Innovators and Reformers (inventors, philosophers, religious leaders, social change agents, improvers of technology)

PPS currently offers leadership opportunities as part of its academic curriculum or as an extracurricular activity at a majority of its high schools, as listed below, therefore, the Applicant does not provide expanded choice in this area:

Allerdice: Leadership and Student Government;

Brashear: community service and leadership activities

Carrick: Family Career Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)

Oliver: Law & Public Service, JROTC

Peabody: Public Safety

Perry: Student government

CAPA: Entrepreneurial Planning

Page 73, discusses learning opportunities for students having academic difficulties. These may include SES and EAP. There is no discussion to support strategies or interventions to be utilized within the classroom setting. Meetings set up for every six weeks with in-services to address student deficiencies is present but vague. Differentiated instruction is mentioned, but is not defined. Therefore, it is not clear as to whether the Applicant fully comprehends differentiated instruction.

Application identifies a formative assessment, but does not describe what this assessment is or why it is going to be used. Does use ITBS, ITED, Learning Style Assessment, Study Skills Assessment, and Occupational/Interest Inventories.

The application is lacking in a definite professional development plan. Professional development is mentioned throughout the application and there are ample amounts of professional development days built into the schedule (34 days). However there is no plan for what is going to be the focus of the development and no mention of who is going to conduct the professional development and what exactly is going to be presented to the staff. Appendix H pages 23 – 34 address many staff development issues, but nothing related to curriculum planning, teaching methods, lesson planning or anything having to do with instruction of students. The dates and policies are unclear, the application specifying professional development for 5 days before the start of school and the Appendix H policy mentioning a 2 – 4 week orientation. (pg. 25) This training is supposed to occur while students are undergoing assessments and parents and students are receiving orientation to the school. There is no concrete plan to analyze and determine educational soundness.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Applicant does not clearly describe 13 disability categories under Chapter 14 and Federal Regulations. Understanding of Section 504 Agreement and IEP is not evident. Page 110 refers to students with disabilities benefiting from a special education program. There is no mention as to how they are to benefit from the regular education environment to the maximum extent with accommodations, modifications, and adaptations. Students with IEPs do not necessarily need to have progress measured on goals alone. They can be evaluated through the regular education curriculum, depending upon their individual needs. SPED supervisor is mentioned on page 111, but nowhere else in the plan. Accommodation strategies such as large lectures for students with disabilities would be very rare. There is discussion about use of computer technology programs and large print for hearing impaired and visually impaired. There are many more accommodations and modifications which are available, but they are not mentioned by the Applicant. Provisions are made for ELL students for assessment in their native language.

There is a copy of the Applicants proposed school calendar showing a total of 192 school days, which is not an expanded choice within the current system since City Charter High already provides an extended school year for high school students. Thus, the Applicant would not be providing expanded choices above and beyond what is already available to Pittsburgh students. The proposed length of school day is from 8:30 – 3:05, actually ½ hour shorter than the school day of students in PPS High Schools, or a total of 2.5 less hours of education per week. There is a period of time from 3:05 – 4:30 scheduled for “after school”, extra curricular activities, which is also not an expanded choice, as extra curricular and after school activities are also provided to PPS high school students. There is no evidence of the charter having an extended day as stated in the interview. There is also no mention of weekend activities or family in-home counseling also mentioned in the interview.

The Applicant does not describe the student requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities and athletics. The Applicant describes the technology plan on pages 101 – 102, there is mention of having a computer lab with wireless capabilities. There is no mention of educational programs that might assist students in the learning of concepts or provide an alternative way of remediation. Some programs used by the PPS are: Compass Learning, NOVANET, A+ and Academy of Reading. Students will be using the technology as a way of preparing presentations and doing research.

Assessment issues include no specific “quarterly formative (benchmark) assessments (in Reading, Math, Science, Social studies and Foreign Language)” are identified and “Data based test selection will be developed by teachers”, as well as “TerraNova, Iowa (pre- and post-test full battery), PSSA (Reading, Math, Writing and Science), Unit / Block / Term Exams 6 times during the year, SAT and PSAT and NOCTI” (Page 104). Prescribed “over-testing” indicates a lack of assessment knowledge and knowledge of compliance reporting in general.

The leadership Curriculum that is mentioned on pages 81 – 83 of the application is largely taken from a non-cited article titled Bringing Leadership Experiences to Inner-City Youth. Most of the pages 81 – 83 have been taken reproduced exactly as the paper appeared in the Journal of Extension August 2001 Volume 39 Number 4. The paper deals with service learning and experiential learning as a way of developing leadership skills. No actual leadership curriculum is provided. PPS has leadership skills embedded in many programs--both as part of its academic program and as extracurricular activities that use service and experiential learning. The Applicant does not exceed what PPS offers currently in this area.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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<u>Section</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Actual Points</u>
Part V: Operations		
a) budget and fiscal operations	18	<u>12</u>
b) facilities, transportation, and food services	18	<u>6</u>
c) liabilities, insurance, and risk management	18	<u>6</u>
d) legal issues	18	<u>6</u>

The Applicant in addition to the PDE-2028 includes a detailed line item budget for five years. The Applicant includes a five year financial plan that is based on realistic assumptions. The plan provides for all items required in the charter school legislation. The plan includes an equity position, cash flow for essential and non-essential operations, financial management history/record template, operating efficiency and contract to revenue alignment. The financial staff for the proposed charter school are already employees of Three Rivers Youth. This was verified at the site visit/interview.

The Applicant describes its financial software, Peachtree. (pg. 116) The Applicant describes its budget planning process and timeline as well as its process for amending its budget. The Applicant describes its plan for maintaining an appropriate level of unreserved fund balance. The Applicant provides evidence that provision are in place for annual auditing of the school by a certified public accounting firm.

The transportation plan cites the State code, but there is no information on how transportation is going to be coordinated, how determination on which student who receive transportation will be made and who will coordinate with the PPS transportation department. The Applicant doesn't show how it is going to transport students for extended day programs which is to be part of their daily program.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Food services plan shows evidence of awareness of state, federal and local regulations. Staffing levels and serving periods not clearly outlined in application.

An on-site inspection of the proposed facility was conducted on January 4, 2007. The following deficiencies were noted:

- Existing configuration is for a business, not a school.
 - * The first year of operation would require at least 5 classrooms for projected 15 students per classroom.
 - * Rooms on second floor slated for offices and small group work were small.
- Plans submitted show inadequacies that would still need to be reviewed by the Bureau of Building Inspections regarding code compliance. Pending that outcome, significant renovations will have to be made before this building could be endorsed as a school.

Description of liability policy and procedures and effective risk management is outlined. Assurance included abiding by Sunshine Law and Public Officials Act. Understanding of clearances and criminal record process requirements is evident.

Applicant provides assurances to abide with all state, local and federal regulations and laws as well as with requirements set forth in NCLB. Charter is non-profit and non-sectarian. Applicant demonstrates some knowledge of the Safe Schools Act.

Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter Application Review Process (continued)

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Part VI: Personnel/Leaders

a) information on key personnel

18

7

Notes:

Information presented on key personnel was thorough. Application sorely lacking in special education consultation and input as well as proposed community member input.

TOTAL

360

125

What the score means:

- components scoring at 18 meet the full requirements of the application
- components scoring at 12 meet some of requirements of the application
- components scoring at 6 fail to meet the requirements of the application

Page Two: Scoring Sheet: Pittsburgh Public Schools Charter School Review Process

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FINAL CHECKLIST FOR COMPLIANCE UNDER ACT 22

Charter schools must meet the following criteria under this Act. Please indicate whether or not each individual criterion has been met.

Is the charter school nonsectarian and nonprofit?

X Yes No

Does it have sustained support from teachers, parents, students, and the community?

 Yes X No

Does it agree to enroll all students who wish to attend, conduct a lottery if the school is oversubscribed, and only give preference to students whose parents have been involved in the process to plan the school?

X Yes No

Does the charter provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered by the school system, and is it able to serve as a model to other schools in the system?

 Yes X No

Does the charter have plans to meet the needs of students with disabilities, bilingual students, and at-risk students?

 Yes X No

Does the charter comply with all federal state and local regulations pertaining to the health, safety, civil rights, and education of students?

 Yes X No

Use the space below for any additional comments concerning the application:

Do you think this application should be approved? Yes X No

Use the space provided below to state your reasons. Why do you think that this application should or should not be approved? Use additional space if necessary.

- ✓ Charter does not have sustained support from teachers, parents, students, or the community.
- ✓ Charter Applicant does not provide expanded choice and cannot serve as a model for Pittsburgh Public Schools.
- ✓ Charter Applicant does not have plans to meet the needs of students with disabilities or bilingual students.
- ✓ Charter Applicant does not comply with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the health, safety, civil rights and education of students.
- ✓ Charter Applicant failed to complete the requirements of the application as required by PA Charter School Law, sections 1717-A and 1719-A.