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# **Charter School Application Review Team Findings and Recommendations for**

**Leadership Academy for Math and Science Charter School  
Three Rivers Charter School for Public Service  
Propel Charter School – Northside  
Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School**

**Education Committee Meeting  
February 7, 2011**

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## Why are we doing this?

The Board will vote on new charter applications on February 8, 2011, because new charter school applications received by the November 15, 2010 deadline must be voted on no later than February 18, 2010.

## What are we seeking to gain from this presentation?

1. Understanding of charter school application review criteria from PA charter school law
2. Review teams' findings and recommendations for four new charter school applications
  1. Leadership Academy for Math and Science Charter
  2. Three Rivers Charter School for Public Service
  3. Propel Charter School – Northside
  4. Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School

# Charter School Application Review Criteria

**Per PA Charter School Law, charter school applications are to be evaluated based on criteria including, but not limited to:**

- 1. The demonstrated, sustainable support for the charter school plan by teachers, parents, other community members and students, including comments received at the public hearing**
- 2. The capability of the charter school applicant, in terms of support and planning, to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students pursuant to the adopted charter**
- 3. The extent to which the charter school may serve as a model for other public schools**

# Charter School Application Review Criteria

## 4. The extent to which the application considers the information requested in section 1719-A and conforms to the legislative intent of the law

### Among the criteria included in Section 1719-A:

- Proposed governance structure of the charter school, including a description and method for the appointment or election of members of the board of trustees
- The mission and education goals of the charter school, the curriculum to be offered and the methods of assessing whether students are meeting educational goals
- The financial plan for the charter school and the provisions which will be made for auditing the school under section 437
- A description of and address for the physical facility in which the charter school will be located and the ownership thereof and any lease agreements

# Charter School Application Review Criteria

## Legislative Intent of Charter School Law

1. Improve pupil learning.
2. Increase learning opportunities for all pupils.
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
4. Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
5. Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
6. Hold the school established under this act accountable for meeting measureable academic standards and provide the school with a method to establish accountability systems.

# PPS Charter School Application Review Criteria based on Charter School Law

1. Mission, Purpose and Needs, Marketing Data
2. Strategic Planning
3. Management Plan
4. Education Plan
5. Operations
6. Personnel/Leaders

# Final Checklist for Compliance Under Charter School Law

| Criteria  | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parents, students and the community?   |     |    |
| 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?   |     |    |
| 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?                       |     |    |
| 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?  |     |    |
| 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?                                  |     |    |
| 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?  |     |    |
| 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students? |     |    |
| 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?   |     |    |
| 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?  |     |    |
| 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?   |     |    |

# I. Leadership Academy for Math and Science Charter School

## Review Team Findings and Recommendation

# Application Review Team For Leadership Academy for Math and Science Pittsburgh Charter School

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Chief Architect

# Application Review Process

- Application submitted on 11/1/2010
- Public hearing held on 12/13/2010
  - 11/17/2010 certified letter - returned
  - 11/18/2010 email – response received 11/18/2010
  - 11/22/2010 email – no response
- Applicant failed to show for interview scheduled for 01/14/2011
  - Several attempts were made to contact applicant
    - 12/22/2010 email – no response
    - 12/30/2010 email – no response
    - 1/3/2011 letter – no response
    - 1/3/2011 telephone – number disconnected
    - 1/7/2011 email – no response
    - 1/11/2011 email (correct address requested) – no response
    - 1/14/2011 email – response received 1/14/2011
    - 1/14/2011 certified letter – returned
    - 1/24/2011 certified letter - returned
- Recommendation presented to Board 2/7/2011
- Board votes on application on 2/8/2011

# Background Information

## Proposed Grade Levels – Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

|                | Projected Enrollment |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Year 1: (K-8)  | 450                  |
| Year 2: (K-9)  | 500                  |
| Year 3: (K-10) | 550                  |
| Year 4: (K-11) | 600                  |
| Year 5: (K-12) | 650                  |

## Proposed Focus – Single gender (all boys); Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

# Background Information

## Proposed Location

- No site has been identified

## Communities to be served

- Applying as a regional charter school serving Penn Hills, Pittsburgh Public, Wilkinsburg and Woodland Hills school districts

## Scheduling

- Saturdays component
- Extended School Year and Day – 191 school days

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parent and students and the community? 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?**
  - Lacks current letters of support
  - Petition signatures primarily from Wilkinsburg
  - No support at public hearing
  
- 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?**
  - Proposed curricula do not provide specific or expanded educational opportunities for a science and math focus
  - Proposed curricula lack a STEM focus in the middle, senior and collegiate academies

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

### **3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?**

The proposed governance structure is in compliance.

### **4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?**

- The application lacks information on the manner in which community groups will be involved in the charter school planning process.
- A description of and address of the physical facility in which the charter school will be located and the ownership thereof and any lease arrangements are missing from the application.
- A professional development plan for the faculty is missing from the application.
- The application fails to deliver a plan that increases learning opportunities or offers expanded educational opportunities.

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

### 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?

- Proposed curriculum is not aligned to PA state standards.
- The application lacks a complete, comprehensive curriculum for a STEM focus.
  - Lacks technology course offerings
  - Lacks a science and math focus

### 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students?

The plan for meeting the individualized needs of students with disabilities is not in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- The application lacks a detailed intervention plan for students who require additional supports.
- No alternate curriculum for students with disabilities is defined.
- No detailed plans to provide special education supports and services to students with varying disabilities are described.

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

### 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?

The proposed charter school is financially viable.

### 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?

No site is identified for the proposed charter school.

### 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?

The proposed focus and single-gender configuration of the proposed charter school do not serve as models. PPS has a science and technology focused school and is opening two single-gender academies this fall.

# Final Checklist

| Criteria  | Yes                                 | No                                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parents, students and the community?   |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?   |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?                       |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?                                  |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?  |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students? |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?  |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?   |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

## Recommendation – Not Approve

Based on a thorough analysis of the Leadership Academy for Math and Science Charter School application, the Pittsburgh Public Schools review team recommends that the Board **not approve** the application.

## **II. Three Rivers Charter School for Community Service**

### **Review Team Findings and Recommendation**

# Application Review Team For Three Rivers Charter School for Public Service

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Chief Architect

# Application Review Process

- Application submitted on 11/15/2010
- Public hearing held on 12/6/2010
- Applicant interview conducted on 1/7/2011
- Post-interview meeting held on 1/21/2011
- Recommendation presented to Board 2/7/2011
- Board votes on application on 2/8/2011

# Background Information

## Proposed Grade Levels – 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

|                | Projected Enrollment |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Year 1: (9-12) | 150                  |
| Year 2: (9-12) | 200                  |
| Year 3: (9-12) | 200                  |
| Year 4: (9-12) | 200                  |
| Year 5: (9-12) | 200                  |

## Proposed Focus – Patriot Pathway, Civil Service Pathway, Guardian Pathway

# Background Information

## Proposed Location

- 5920 Kirkwood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

## Communities to be served

- All Pittsburgh communities with particular attention to East Liberty
- Grades 9 – 12, traditional and non-traditional students, such as diploma retrieval and alternative education

## Scheduling

- Summer component
- Will follow Pittsburgh Public Schools yearly calendar
- Extended school day

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parent and students and the community? 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?**

The school has current petitions and letters of support and had support from the community at the public hearing.

- 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?**

- The school does not provide the District with expanded educational opportunities.
  - PPS offers CTE courses, ROTC, Health Careers and Teaching
- Lack of an integration of Patriot, Civil Service and Guardian Pathways with proposed curriculum providers, A+ and K-12

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

**3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?**

The proposed governance structure is in compliance.

**4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?**

- Lacks a comprehensive professional development plan for general academics
- Lacks a professional development plan for implementing the Patriot, Civil Service and Guardian Pathways
- Lacks documentation for proposed faculty positions
- Fails to provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?**
- Lacks a complete, comprehensive curriculum for all grade levels and subjects proposed
  - Proposed curricula not aligned to PA state standards
  - Lacks an instructional technology plan to support instruction
- 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students?**

The charter school does not provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students.

- Plan simply restates procedural process as stated in the federal and state law for special education

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

## 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?

The proposed charter school is financially viable.

## 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?

A location is identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations.

## 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?

The proposed focus does not serve as a model. PPS offers courses across the high schools that correspond to the three pathways proposed by the charter school.

# Final Checklist

| Criteria  | Yes                                 | No                                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parents, students and the community?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?                       |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?                                  |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?  |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students? |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |
| 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?   |                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

## Recommendation – Not Approve

Based on a thorough analysis of the Three Rivers Charter School for Public Service application, the Pittsburgh Public Schools review team recommends that the Board **not approve** the application.

## **III. Propel Charter School - Northside**

### **Review Team Findings and Recommendation**

# Application Review Team For Propel Charter School – Northside

Susan Asti                      Tech Assist Consultant – Autism

Lisa Augustin                      Research Associate

Theresa Cherry                      Principal, Pittsburgh  
Manchester K-8

Michael Dreger                      Curriculum Coordinator

Stephen Packosky                      Budget Analyst

Daryl Saunders                      Chief of Design & Planning;  
Chief Architect

# Application Review Process

- Application submitted on 11/15/2010
- Public hearing held on 12/6/2010
- Applicant interview conducted on 1/11/2011
- Post-interview meeting held on 1/20/2011
- Recommendation presented to Board 2/7/2011
- Board votes on application on 2/8/2011

# Background Information

## Proposed Grade Levels – Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

|               | Projected Enrollment |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Year 1: (K-4) | 200                  |
| Year 2: (K-5) | 250                  |
| Year 3: (K-6) | 300                  |
| Year 4: (K-7) | 350                  |
| Year 5: (K-8) | 400                  |

# Background Information

## Proposed Location

- 901 Pennsylvania Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15233
- Some community members voiced concerns about location

## Communities to be served by proposed site listed in the application

- All Pittsburgh communities with particular attention to the 12 neighborhoods of the Northside

## Scheduling

- Extended school day and year – 190 days

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parent and students and the community? 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?**

The school has current petitions and letters of support and had support from the community at the public hearing.

- 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?**

- The school does not provide the District with expanded educational opportunities.
- No specific focus is provided in the application.

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?**

The proposed governance structure is in compliance.

- 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?**

- Limited professional development plan
- Does not detail levels of coverage in different insurance policies
- Fails to provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?**
- Lacks a complete, comprehensive curriculum for all grade levels and subjects proposed
  - Lists PA standards in lieu of a curriculum
  - Nothing provided for science and social studies
- 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students?**

The charter school does not provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students.

- No plan for meeting IDEA was submitted.

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

## 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?

The proposed charter school is financially viable.

## 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?

A location is identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations.

## 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?

No focus, course of study or instructional innovations are proposed that could serve as a model for other schools in the District.

# Final Checklist

| Criteria  | Yes                                 | No                                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parents, students and the community?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students? | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

## Recommendation – Not Approve

Based on a thorough analysis of the Propel Charter School - Northside application, the Pittsburgh Public Schools review team recommends that the Board **not approve** the application.

## **IV. Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School**

### **Review Team Findings and Recommendation**

# Application Review Team For Urban Pathways K-5 College Charter School

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Liberty K-5

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Chief of Design & Planning;  
Chief Architect

# Application Review Process

- Application submitted on 11/15/2010
- Public hearing held on 12/6/2010
- Applicant interview conducted on 1/10/2011
- Post-interview meeting held on 1/19/2011
- Recommendation presented to Board 2/7/2011
- Board votes on application on 2/8/2011

# Background Information

## Proposed Grade Levels – Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade

|               | Projected Enrollment |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Year 1: (K-3) | 160                  |
| Year 2: (K-4) | 200                  |
| Year 3: (K-5) | 240                  |
| Year 4: (K-5) | 240                  |
| Year 5: (K-5) | 240                  |

## Proposed Focus – Academic Excellence and Social Justice

# Background Information

## Proposed Location

- 914 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

## Communities to be served by proposed site listed in the application

- All Pittsburgh communities

## Scheduling

- Calendar will provide for at least 180 days or 900 hours of instruction
- School hours will be 8:15 a.m. – 3:15 p.m., Monday through Friday

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parent and students and the community? 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?**

The school has current petitions and letters of support and had support from the community at the public hearing.

- 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?**

- The use of Core Knowledge as the curriculum of choice, provides the District with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered.

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

- 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?**

The proposed governance structure is in compliance.

- 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?**
  - Lacks a comprehensive professional development plan

## Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

### 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?

- Lacks instructional strategies to be used with early childhood and elementary grade population
- No technology plan to support instruction

### 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students?

The charter school does not provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students.

- No mention of possible alternative placements for students
- No mention of how student needs outside of the general curriculum will be met

# Findings Based on Checklist Criteria

## 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?

The proposed charter school is financially viable.

## 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?

A location is identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations.

## 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?

The course of study proposed could serve as a model for other schools in the District.

# Final Checklist

| Criteria  | Yes                                 | No                                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1a. Does the charter school have current petitions and letters of support from teachers, parents, students and the community?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 1b. Did the charter school have support from the community at the public hearing?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2. Does the charter school provide the School District of Pittsburgh with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities currently being offered?                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3. Is the governance structure of the charter school in compliance with all federal, state and local regulations and the PA school code?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 4. Does the application consider all the information requested in section 1719-A and conform to the legislative intent outlined in section 1702-A?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the curriculum complete and comprehensive; aligned to state standards?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 6. Does the charter school provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and at-risk students? | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is the proposed charter school financially viable?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 8. Is a location identified that can comply with all federal, state and local health and safety regulations?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 9. Can the charter school serve as a model for other schools in the District?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

## Recommendation – Qualified Approval

Progress on the following to be evaluated prior to the start of the 2011-2012 school year:

- Professional Development schedule that includes plans for providing on-going training on the implementation of the new curriculum
- Plans that detail how the school will provide a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students