

May 11, 2012

Ms. Julie Stapleton-Carroll Achieving Community Transformation Academy Charter School

## **DELIVERED VIA EMAIL**

Dear Ms. Stapleton-Carroll,

Thank you for submitting your responses to the deficiencies noted in your application issued on January 30, 2012 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

After reviewing the resubmission of the Achieving Community Transformation Academy Charter School (ACT) application, it is the decision of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to approve your application.

However, there are deficiencies that still must be addressed prior to your opening of your school for the 2012-13 school year. Please submit the requested documents within 60 days of opening school in August 2012.

In addition to the decision, all of the board members must sign the accompanying the Achieving Community Transformation Academy Charter School charter agreement and return the charter to the Department for final signature from the Secretary of Education. Please accept our congratulations and best wishes for a successful cyber charter school.

If you have any questions, please contact Marlene Kanuck at (717) 783-9294 or at mkanuck@pa.gov.

Sincerely.

Carolyn C. Dumaresq, Ed.D

Deputy Secretary

Enclosure

## The Proposed Achieving Community Transformation Academy Charter School (ACT) 2011 Cyber Charter School Application

## Background

Amendments to the Charter School Law ("CSL"), 24 P.S. §§17-1701-A – 17-1751-A, that became effective July 1, 2002, include new Subchapter (c), which sets forth new provisions for the establishment and oversight of cyber charter schools. *See*, Act of June 29, 2002, No. 88, §14, adding 24 P.S. §§17-1741-A to 17-1751-A ("Act 88"). Pursuant to Act 88, the Department of Education (the "Department") has the authority and responsibility to receive, review and act on applications for the creation of a cyber-charter school.

On October 3, 2011, the proposed ACT submitted an application to operate as a cyber-charter school. The Department provided 30 days' notice of a public hearing that was held on November 29, 2011. At the hearing, ACT presented the Department with information about its application. Department personnel who had reviewed the application posed questions to the ACT representatives.

After the decision to deny the application based on deficiencies, the applicant was given the opportunity to revise and resubmit a denied application to the department. The proposed ACT submitted a revised application on March 19, 2012. The Department has 60 days after receipt to grant or deny the revised application.

## Detailed Decision of the Pennsylvania Department of Education

Based on a thorough review of the resubmitted application, the Pennsylvania Department of Education is denying the application of the ACT.

The following deficiencies were still noted and not addresses.

- ACT's resubmission provides a description of an ESL Program that minimally addresses
  the Pennsylvania's required exit criteria which included a basic plan for monitoring the
  progress of exited former ELLs, and procedures for administering annual academic and
  English language proficiency assessments. However, the ESL Program is deficient in the
  following areas:
  - O No evidence of an instructional model based on sound educational theory. It states "up to 90 minutes of customized ESOL Live lessons per day," but doesn't address how this instruction will be delivered.
  - No evidence of curriculum that is aligned to Pennsylvania English language proficiency and academic standards. No scope and sequence, content, or lessons were found.
  - Limited specifics on how academic content classes would provide meaningful, comprehensible access to instruction and standards.
- The revised application provides insufficient plans for students who are performing below grade level. The goal of the school is to have their students make one year of academic growth per school year.
  - There is insufficient evidence in the resubmitted application that the school is prepared to accelerate, beyond one year, the growth of students needing that acceleration. Although a tiered intervention plan is in place for students who are academically lagging, the goal for growth remains one grade level per year. A plan such as this will not bring students who have fallen behind to their appropriate grade levels. (Appendix D, Table B, Row 2.)
- ACT did not provide a complete Professional Education Plan in its revised application.
  - O The Professional Education plan currently has a temporary planning committee consisting of the school's founder, executive director of language and literacy, and assistant director of program and development. This temporary committee will orient the permanent committee as the work begins. There was no indication as to when the permanent committee will be established.
  - o The representatives stated in the public hearing that the Principal and Director of Curriculum would observe classrooms and conduct parent/teacher surveys.

However the plan in the revised application identified the Director of Instruction and the Director of Learning would conduct evaluations. The plan did not state if the Director of Instruction and Director of Learning would conduct parent/teacher surveys. In addition, the plan gave no examples of parent/teacher surveys. <u>Please submit revised Professional Education Plan addresses missing and inconsistent information.</u>

- Technology for all students across the state must be provided and equitable
  - o Minimum hardware, software, and operating system requirements were provided and appear to align with the requirements to effectively deploy the instructional resources to be used by the students, teachers, and parents. An area of concern is the statement that "Families with more than one student enrolled in the program usually receive one computer, but in some cases are eligible for more." (Page 14) Effective cyber education and, more importantly, the Charter School Law (CSL) requires that every student have access to their own computer, regardless of the number of students in one household. This ensures equitable access to all instructional materials. ACT revised application does not comply with this provision of the CSL. Please submit a revision of the statement that will indicate that every student will be provided with all instructional materials, all equipment, including but not limited to, a computer, computer monitor and printer and will be provided or reimbursed for all technology and services necessary for on-line delivery of the curriculum and instruction. (24 PS 17-1743 A (12) ((e))

While the items listed above must be addressed prior to the opening of the Achieving Community

Transformation Academy Charter School, the application submitted to the Department is

approved.

Deputy Secretary
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education

Date