

DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT



2014-2015

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Mission:

The mission of Early College High School at Delaware State University is to provide highly motivated students with a curriculum concentrating on science, technology, engineering and mathematics that is integrated with the relevant curriculum at Delaware State University such that all students graduate with one to two years of college credits and are in a favorable position to graduate from college. The school shall provide a safe, caring and nurturing environment that develops students' academic, social skills and personal character traits necessary for successful college completion, with a special focus on high school students who will be the first generation in their families to become college educated.

Vision

The vision of Early College High School at Delaware State University will be a nationally recognized early college, STEM-focused high school that increases access to higher education and produces students who have the expectations and skills to make a significant impact in the global community.

Academic Program:

In partnership with Delaware State University (DSU), a Historically Black College and University in Dover, Delaware, the Early College High School at Delaware State University was designed to be a dynamic high school where students will be engaged, motivated, and supported by the unique learning environment that is created by the early college high school model. The

curriculum for the school is focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The school will replicate the nationally recognized early college high school model and will seek to serve particularly first generation college attendees in grades 9-12. To meet these academic and cultural goals, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Early College High School at Delaware State University (ECHS@DSU) has selected EdWorks as a partner and will use their early college model design. In the tradition of early college high schools across the nation, students at ECHS@DSU will have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma *and* up to 60 hours of college credit during their four-year high school career, and will develop the drive and focus necessary to succeed at all levels of education and in their chosen careers.

Innovation, curiosity, and intellectual risk-taking are at the heart of ECHS@DSU, and each of these concepts align with the 21st century skills that students will need as future leaders in STEM professions. The early college high school model sees mastery of core subjects and 21st century themes as essential to ensuring that all students are able to thrive in a complex, connected world.

The school began its journey with 125 students in grade 9 during year, 2014-2015. Moving forward the school will add one grade level composed of approximately 100 students in each of the following three years, the ECHS@DSU will expand to include 425 students in grades 9 through 12 in its fourth year of operation. Students who participate in this program will graduate with an important combination of 21st century skills in the STEM areas, a high school diploma, and up to 60 college

credit hours that will help them to transition successfully into the next steps of college and career.

Key Accomplishments:

- All 9th grade students completed at least two college classes, University Seminar and Micro computing.
- Increased demand for the school after year one resulted in the need for a lottery- 9th grade.
- State approved CTE course Animal Science I was offered as a dual enrollment college course. The 9th grade students who elected to take this class followed the same syllabus as college freshmen and sophomores taking this class.
- Students completed dual enrollment college math classes, Intro to Algebra and College Algebra. The ninth grade students who completed these courses followed the same syllabus and used the same materials as the college student taking the classes.
- Ninth grade students at the ECHS@DSU earned 488 hours of college credits, credits that are transferable to any university in the country.
- All students took a dedicated STEM course in the fall of 2014. This integrated course introduced students into the various fields of study that follow under the “STEM” title. Students were also shown how these fields are so closely interrelated and got a better understanding of why you cannot study one without the other.

Tier 2

What are the school’s academic performance outcomes that will demonstrate student growth, proficiency, and college and career readiness levels as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

<i>Academic Performance Outcomes</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Opportunities for Growth</i>
<i>Student Growth</i>	The school did participate in the Smarter Balanced practice assessments with all students.	During the 2014-2015 school year, the school did not have any students that were required to participate in any of the state assessments. School only had 9 th graders last year -no Smarter Balanced, State End of Year exams or SAT assessments were required for this grade level. Results are not available because taking the test was elective.	The school should continue to participate in all State Assessments: SBAC Interim Tests PSATs for 9 th and 10 th
<i>College & Career Readiness</i>	Students were required to take the Accuplacer assessment in both math and reading prior to participating in Summer Bridge in July of 2014.	This assessment was meant to show the student’s readiness for college level course work. Any student who was not at the Summer Bridge took the assessment in August. The data from these assessments were used to determine skills, strength and growth areas for the students. The school purchased My Foundations to supplement the Accuplacer assessment so that students could work on their weak	The goal and plan is for the school to test students with the College Accuplacer each year to track their college readiness and growth. A measurement for College and Career Readiness needs to be created.

		skill areas during intervention periods. The school realized that the Accuplacer used during the first year was targeted at HS skills and not college level skills	
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What are the school’s performance expectations in meeting its organizational responsibilities including, but not limited to, administrative operations, reporting, and legal responsibilities as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

<i>Performance Expectations</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Opportunities for Growth</i>
<i>Administrative Operations</i>	During the 2014-2015 school year, the school implemented the essential term of the charter’s education program. The school’s calendar ensured enough instructional minutes for the 2014-2015 school year as well as enough instruction minutes per course for awarding Carnegie Units. The school worked closely with EdWorks to make sure students were able to earn both High School and College Credits during the school year. All students were able to earn up to eight HS credits during their freshman year. The school adopted promotion requirements that included having earned six HS credits as well as passing at least one HS math class and 9 th grade English.	A material weakness noted in the audit was the lack of a formal financials closing process.	Develop a process for formal financials
	All classes taught were aligned to the Delaware state Common Core standards,	As a school that only had 9th graders there	Students should take the SBAC Interim Assessments, 9 th and 10 th

	<p>and the school participated in Next Gen science training.</p> <p>Throughout the year the school held monthly Citizens Budget Oversight Committee (CBOC) meetings where a teacher and parent were part of the committee. At these meetings, the school's monthly financials were reviewed and questions were answered with clarity.</p> <p>The Board met all required governance and reporting standards. The Board met with Innovative Schools during the school year to discuss their performance and address areas of concern. During this meeting, Innovative Schools (IS) made adjustments as the Board requested and the Board continued to have direct conversations with IS about any performance issues. The Board ensured that there was no conflict of interest between members of the Board and various vendors used by the school. The Board made sure that all required materials were posted on the school website.</p>	<p>were no state assessments to be completed.</p> <p>An area of weakness for the 2014-2015 school year was improper coding of student suspensions. The school ensures that the students' rights were being protected.</p> <p>The school did not meet the standard for average daily attendance by students (93.3% v. 95% standard) for the HQT status for teachers (59.1% v. 100% standard). Although the teachers at the school had the necessary credentials, they were not properly entered into e-School and matched to the school schedule.</p>	<p>PSATs</p> <p>The school should utilize attendance reports to reach out to parents of students who are not attending regularly and follow up with appropriate truancy actions. Monthly average attendance should be reported to the Board in order to monitor compliance and to ensure that all families are aware of attendance at the school daily.</p> <p>HQT management should be overseen by the school's Program Manager who is reporting monthly to the school leader relative to the school's compliance in terms of the HQT. The percentage of HQT will be shared monthly at the Board Meeting by the school leader.</p>

Legal Responsibilities	<p>The school was compliant with legal requirements for students with disabilities and ELL learners.</p> <p>The needs of the special education population were met by having a case manager for the students who arranged for and tracked contracted services for OT, PT and speech as well as a certified special education teacher delivering instructional minutes of service. All students completed a home language survey as part of their enrollment packet. These were reviewed to determine need for services and testing.</p>	<p>Monitor students as the population grows</p>	<p>Monitor students as the population grows</p> <p>As the population grows and more special education students are enrolled, more supports will need to be in place to assist students.</p>
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What are the school’s financial performance expectations that will demonstrate viability and sustainability as measured by the Performance Framework? Provide an analysis of strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth in these areas.

<i>Financial Performance Expectations</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Opportunities for Growth</i>
Current Ratio:	<p>The school was able to keep students enrolled throughout the 2014-2015 school year where they hit 103% of their target enrollment. This was due to the Board following all registration and disenrollment requirements.</p>	<p><i>Audited Financial Statements Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities – 1.0</i></p> <p>The school was evaluated as not meeting overall financial performance standards because it did not meet standards in three of</p>	<p>Since school enrollment increased significantly without a corresponding increase in cost, the current ratio will be improved for year two. For example, the fit out of the building and the purchasing of classroom furniture and equipment were all completed during the first</p>

All students who applied to the school were offered acceptance, after they accepted they came into the school to complete enrollment papers. Parents and Guardians were given the first year agreement along with an explanation of what they were signing. All students who wished to be released were brought to the board and good cause was reviewed.

The school also employed skilled financial techniques to meet its needs in the first year. As a first year school with a limited enrollment (125 in one grade) and with a school model that involves large upfront costs, the Board knew that the first year's operations would result in a deficit. The school arranged for a \$1 million line of credit prior to opening to ensure the financial obligations would be met for the first year with an understanding that increased enrollment in the subsequent years would

the five ratio tests evaluated: Current Ratio, Days Cash and Debt to Asset ratio. The first two ratios were not met because the first year limited enrollment and high start-up costs (both as expected) required the school to draw on a line of credit to meet its cash needs. The school could have simply drawn a small additional amount on its line of credit on June 30 (\$39,000) to increase its cash on hand and it would have met the first two ratio tests and would have therefore been evaluated as meeting financial performance standards overall.

year; therefore, no additional fit out monies are needed during year two. Because the school had to add only one bus route for year two, transportation costs only increased by 20% while the funding almost doubled. The school also received a NON SEA grant that provides an additional \$600,000 of revenue into the school through July 2018.

It should also be noted that the school has a balanced budget for year two (without any borrowing) and is slightly ahead of the 5-year budget approved by the Board and the DSU Board of Trustees.

	<p>permit that initial debt to be repaid positive cash flow to result over a 5 year planning horizon. The school's operations are actually ahead of that 5 year plan. Start-up expenses that were recognized as being costly but necessary to deliver the program;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Bridge; including transportation of the students from across the entire state • College Textbooks; college course textbooks are significantly more expensive than K-12 textbooks • Transportation; bringing students from across the state made daily school transportation cost higher than the state allotment. 		
Days Cash:		<i>Audited Financial Statements</i>	
		<i>Unrestricted Cash divided by</i>	

		<p><i>(Total Expenses/365) – 25</i></p> <p><i>See above.</i></p>	
Debt to Asset Ratio:		<p><i>Audited Financial Statements Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets 1.56</i></p> <p>As a first year charter school, the amount of fixed assets is low and because of the overall 5 year plan of finance (see above), the amount of debt is relatively high; thus, the deb to asset ratio is high. However, the 5 year plan of finance projects that this ratio will be in line with standards during that planning horizon.</p>	<p>Surpluses projected in the coming years will enable the reduction in debt and an improvement in the debt to asset ratio.</p>

As a first year school, the school was not evaluated on all the performance ratios. These ratios will be monitored during the 2015-2016 school year to make certain the school is on track to meet or exceed these standards and to ensure long time sustainability.

