



June 13, 2014

Mr. Seth Andrew



Dear Mr. Andrew,

Thank you for submitting an application to establish a public charter school in the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) has completed the 2014 Application Review process. I regret to inform you that at its public meeting held on May 19, 2014, PCSB did not approve your application to establish Washington Leadership Academy (“WLA”) as a public charter school in the District of Columbia.

The Board’s decision was based on a thorough evaluation of the written application and information gathered from the capacity interview and the public hearing. The following findings were the basis for denial:

1. The application lacked clarity and detail to fully understand how the proposed program would be implemented over time. The group plans to open the Upper Academy (grades 11 and 12) in year one and target students who are seeking an exceptional learning experience and are capable of taking advantage of the school’s high-level courses, and after four years of operation, open a Lower Academy that proposes to attract a different population to feed to the Upper Academy. The applicant group, however, did not establish demand for a residential school for the Upper Academy’s target population. While the applicant group stated that it was willing to reverse the opening of the academies at the public hearing, this willingness was not accompanied with detailed information regarding how this change would affect the application’s proposed program and what steps the applicant group would take to effectuate this change.
2. The applicant group’s plan to merge the two academies, discussed in Number 1, above, was not developed. For example, the group did not know if it would always have available spots of 11th graders after the first year nor did they know whether students who were not academically ready for the civics internships would stay in the Lower Academy or be part of the Upper Academy.
3. The application did not include sufficiently address the residential component of the Upper Academy and caused the board to question the program’s plan for the safe and appropriate day-to-day supervision of the students and operations of the student residence, especially during weekends.
4. The applicant group did not fully describe how the Upper Academy’s academic program would accommodate a wide diversity of learners, and did not have a sufficiently address providing instructional supports to students behind academically that would not impact the students’ ability to participate in of civic learning, which is central to the school’s mission..
5. The application relies on a relationship with Democracy Prep Public Schools (DPPS), the high-performing charter network started by the leader of the applicant group for curriculum but the applicant group did not provide or state that it had an agreement with DPPS to use its high school curriculum and the application did not include a letter of support from DPPS.

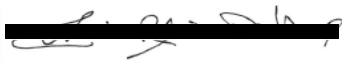
6. Revolution Schools, also created by leader of the applicant group, is a newly formed entity without a track record of academic and organizational performance but responsible for providing this to WLA. Being newly formed, Revolution Schools does not have a track record of success separate from the founder's history with DPPS and there was lingering confusion about whether WLA might contract with DPPS to provide human resources and other business operations services.
7. The application does not include the standards or specific curriculum the school will use for music, art, electives/integrals, health/physical education, world language, or computer science, with is a required course in the Lower Academy.
8. There are aspects of the school that were mentioned and not sufficiently developed in the application or addressed in depth during the capacity interview and public hearing, such as:
 - a. Creating the Massive Open Online Course and blended learning curricula;
 - b. Formalizing the relationships between the school, Congressional offices, Other internship opportunities, and Democracy Builders; and
 - c. Using the Alumni Revolution recruitment network to recruit students.
9. The job responsibilities of the Technology Manager is extensive and may be more than one FTE, particularly if this person is on call for technical support during residential evening and weekend hours.

Should you choose to file a petition again, that petition must meet the requirements of the School Reform Act. See D.C. Code § 38-1802.02. Specifically, it should appropriately resolve the deficiencies cited above and demonstrate: (a) that all components in the petition's Education Plan are comprehensively addressed demonstrate the ability to meet the needs of a diverse group of students; (b) that the residential component is fully developed; and (c) that Revolution Schools, as a new charter management organization, has the capacity, including personnel and finances, to provide the supports.

Should you want to appeal the denial of your application, you may seek judicial review in an appropriate court of the District of Columbia or review by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, pursuant to the procedures found in Chapter 5-A54 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations.

We recognize the hard work and effort that went into the development of your application and there were many positive parts of the application that are not mentioned in this letter. Thank you for your interest in public charter schools and your commitment to improving public education in Washington, DC.

Sincerely,



Naomi Rubin DeVeaux
Deputy Director
DC Public Charter School Board