



June 4, 2018

Monica Green
Executive Director
Capital Village Academy

BY EMAIL

Dear Ms. Green,

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 (DC PCSB) has completed the Spring 2018 Application Review process. As you know, at its public meeting held on May 21, 2018, DC PCSB did not approve your application to establish Capital Village Public Charter School. Please know that many of the existing public charter schools in DC applied a second time, with revisions to the application made in response to the reasons for the initial denial. We encourage you to consider reapplying in the future.

DC PCSB's decision was based on a thorough evaluation of the written application and information gathered from the capacity interview and the public hearing. Your application was reviewed by a special education expert, an English learner expert, a financial expert, and members of DC PCSB staff with expertise teaching and/or leading schools. While there were some strong aspects of the application, the following findings were the basis for denial:¹

- Instructional Capacity – The education plan is not adequately supported by the staffing model. Each lead math and humanities teacher is responsible for instructing two grade-level cohorts or “pods” of up to 40 students each day for three hours, thereby resulting in a student to teacher ratio of 40:1. The lead teacher will teach a small group of students using direct instruction while a paraprofessional or Urban Teacher Center Fellow is responsible for monitoring the remaining 25-30 students on a yet-to-be chosen blended learning platform while also pulling out small groups for intervention. This is a tremendous task for an experienced teacher, let alone a paraprofessional. An Instructional Specialist (special education) or Inclusion teacher (special education/English language learners) may push-in or pull-out students as needed but may have more than one class at a single time period. Social studies and science are taught primarily through Expeditionary Learning (EL) expeditions with a 20:1 class size. The teacher is supported by the same paraprofessional or Urban Teacher Center Fellow who is also supporting and English or math teacher for three hours in the morning. DC PCSB is concerned about the feasibility of this student to

¹ A more detailed assessment of the application, along with all application materials, can be found in the Board proposal at <https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2371589?tabid=d2ee073f-2497-ccd4-b5a2-50e203790d5d>.

teacher ratio and the proposed workload for inexperienced paraprofessionals and/or fellows. To meet the standard for approval, the applicant must:

- choose a proven blended learning platform;
 - provide explanation about how social studies and science content would be taught through expeditions and/or humanities;
 - clearly articulate a plan to recruit, develop, support, and retain the high-quality educators needed to implement the school's program (specifically, the educators must have the ability to differentiate learning for homogeneous groups, facilitate blended learning, manage large numbers of students, facilitate expeditionary learning, and manage individualized student goals); and
 - revise your staffing plan, job descriptions, and budget as needed to accommodate for an appropriate, mission-aligned student to teacher ratio in all core content settings, including expeditions.
- Financial Adaptability – Capital Village's finance plan has a small margin for error given the micro-school model of 40 students per grade, grades 5-8. The applicant's financial forecasting allows for two students per grade to withdraw each year without replacing them, resulting in graduating classes of 34. The school plans to work with community organizations to offset the cost of expeditions. To meet the standard for approval, the applicant must develop a budget contingency plan that accounts for a realistic re-enrollment rate or allows for students to enter into upper grades. The model must also either support the student to teacher ratio discussed throughout the application (13:1) or provide alternative methods of instruction that conform to the current 40:1 ratio allowed for in the budget.
 - Plan to Serve Special Populations – The plan for serving students with disabilities and English Language Learners is not sufficiently developed to ensure these populations would be well served by the school. The school intends to use inclusive practices, create Individualized Learning Plans for all students, use personalized learning software, and provide Response to Intervention as needed; nonetheless, this plan does not adequately respond to the unique needs of each of these special populations. To meet the standard for approval, the applicant must describe how the school will provide specially-designed instruction to address the needs that result from a child's disability or lack of English language proficiency and ensure access to the general education curriculum, as well as to revise its written procedures to adequately address special education compliance.

Should you choose to file a petition again, that petition must meet the requirements of the School Reform Act, D.C. Code § 38-1802.02. Specifically, it should appropriately resolve the deficiencies cited above and meet the standards for approval in each component of the application rubric: (a) a demonstrated need for the school; (b) sufficient progress in developing the plan; (c) alignment of the entire school program with the school's mission and philosophy; (d) inclusion of and adequate support for special populations; and (e) the founding group's capability to ensure that the school can meet the educational objectives outlined in the application. If you would like, DC PCSB staff would be happy to discuss with you in more detail your application's strengths and weaknesses.

Should you want to appeal the denial of your application, you may seek review of this decision pursuant to D.C. Code § 38-1802.03(j).

We recognize the hard work and effort that went into the development of your

application and would like to acknowledge the many positive aspects 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.

Best,



Scott Pearson
Executive Director
DC Public Charter School Board