



A Note for Completing the Mission Statement and Educational Approach Charter Agreement Amendment Application

Overview

This application is for a school seeking approval from the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) to amend its mission statement. Material mission statement changes include adding or removing components of the mission, such as the target population, the educational focus, the school's aims, and the needs it seeks to fill. Immaterial changes are revisions in syntax.

This application is also for a school seeking approval from DC PCSB to amend the educational approach (i.e., educational philosophy, instructional methods, curricula) articulated in its charter application and agreement. DC PCSB staff will evaluate whether the proposed educational approach is consistent with the school's proposed mission and with its goals and academic achievement expectations (goals). A school need only amend its educational approach when a change in curriculum or instructional methods results in a change in the mission or goals.¹

- A school seeking an **immaterial change** to its mission statement need only **complete questions 1 and 2** of this charter agreement amendment application.
- A school seeking a **material change** to its mission statement need only **complete questions 1 – 5** of this charter agreement amendment application.
- A school seeking a **material change** to its **mission statement** and a **modified educational approach** must **complete** this charter agreement amendment **application in its entirety**.

Standard for Approval

DC PCSB staff will generally recommend that its Board approve mission statement changes provided that the proposed mission statement identifies the school's target population (the "who"), its educational philosophy or focus (the "how"), and its general aims or what educational needs it will fill (the "why"). Additionally, the proposed mission must be inclusive of all students, including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level. The school must demonstrate that its proposed

¹ See the goals charter agreement amendment applications here: <https://bit.ly/3pMAXTX>.

mission is supported by the school's curriculum, instruction, and school day. Finally, the school must demonstrate that its students,² staff, and families support the proposed mission statement.

DC PCSB staff will generally recommend that its Board approve educational approach changes provided they are aligned with the school's proposed mission and goals. DC PCSB staff also expect the proposed changes to enable inclusive programming for all students, including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level. Finally, the school must demonstrate that its staff, students,³ and families support the proposed educational approach.

Submission Deadline

Per DC PCSB's *Charter Agreement Amendment Petition Submission Policy*,⁴ a school must submit its mission amendment application no later than April 1 before the school year in which the proposed changes are to be implemented. Likewise, a school seeking both a mission statement and an educational approach amendment must submit its application no later than April 1 before the school year in which the proposed changes are to be implemented.

Contact

Before completing the application, please contact Melodi Sampson at msampson@dcpcsb.org to discuss the proposed change. Please also contact Melodi Sampson if you have general questions about the charter agreement amendment process.

² Demonstrating student support for the proposed mission is only required for schools enrolling young adult and adult students.

³ Demonstrating student support for the proposed educational approach is only required for schools enrolling young adult and adult students.

⁴ See the *Charter Agreement Amendment Petition Submission Policy* here: <https://bit.ly/34ORPBZ>.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) NAME: DC Scholars Public Charter School

BOARD CHAIR NAME: Jacquelyn Lendsey

SUBMISSION DATE: March 14, 2024

SUBJECT (choose one):

Mission Statement Amendment Request

Mission Statement and Educational Approach Amendment Request

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Campus name(s): DC Scholars Public Charter School

Year(s) opened: 2012

Grades served: PS3 – 8th grade

Year the school will undergo its next charter review or renewal: SY2026-2027

Proposal summary: DC Scholars PCS seeks to modernize our school mission statement. After engaging with community members, families, staff, and students and completing a three-year strategic plan, DC Scholars has drafted a new mission statement that more accurately reflects our programmatic vision and commitment to students. We will not be making dramatic changes to our educational approach. However, we have identified three core program elements that define who we are. We seek to graduate true, well-rounded scholars and want our program elements to reflect what we hope to instill in our graduates:

1. Academic Knowledge and Skills;
2. Community-Mindedness; and
3. Individual Passions.

Year the school plans to adopt the proposed changes: SY24-25

- A) **When did the school's board approve the proposed changes?** The Board approved the Strategic Plan in January 2024, which included the Mission statement. We also had a distinct vote for the Mission statement revision in March 2024.

MISSION STATEMENT

1. **In the table below, write the school's current and proposed mission statements.**

Current Mission Statement	Proposed Mission Statement
DC Scholars Public Charter School, serving grades PS through 8, prepares students for the path to college, and provides students with the foundation of life skills to become productive members of their community.	DC Scholars Public Charter School, serving grades PS through 8, develops life-long scholars who have the academic knowledge and skills, individual passions, <i>and</i> community-mindedness necessary to succeed in and contribute to an ever-changing world.

2. What is the school’s rationale for changing its mission statement?

The new, modernized mission statement more accurately reflects who we are as a school. We want prospective families, prospective staff, and the wider community to understand who we are and how we develop our scholars.

3. Describe the school’s philosophy for educating students. Include how the school ensures all students—including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level—benefit from the proposed mission statement and the school’s educational philosophy.

Through the stakeholder engagement activities in our strategic planning process, DC Scholars learned that families and students want well-rounded academic programming, including science and social studies. They also want students to have the opportunity to engage in extra-curricular activities and electives that allow them to explore passions outside of core academics.

Citywide academic data shows that we are not yet meeting the learning needs of all students, particularly at-risk students residing in Wards 7 and 8. Our historic emphasis on math and ELA to the exclusion of all other activities has not yet produced results. DC Scholars wants to upend that trend by providing a holistic academic program coupled with research-based academic interventions and high dosage tutoring for at-risk students, students below grade level, English language learners, and students with disabilities.

We seek to graduate true, well-rounded scholars and want our program elements to reflect what we hope to instill in our graduates:

1. Academic Knowledge and Skills: Robust curriculum in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies; Research-based interventions (including high dosage tutoring);
2. Community-Mindedness: Small PS-8 community; Family Engagement (including Flamboyan partnership); Socio-emotional learning; and
3. Individual Passions: Thematic field trips aligned to units of study; Robust extracurricular programming.

These program elements are not new. DC Scholars currently offers science, social studies, socio-emotional learning, extracurriculars, field trips, and tutoring, but we want to invest in the quality of each element and identify outside partners that advance these objectives.

4. Will the proposed mission statement impact curricular choices, including resources, assessments, standards, and instructional strategies?

DC Scholars will continue to teach Common Core Standards and will continue to utilize Eureka Math and EL Education for ELA. In science, DC Scholars follows the Next Generation Science Standards and uses the Amplify Science curriculum. All assessments, including ECR, CLASS, Common Interim Assessments, curricular assessments, iReady, and DC CAPE remain the same.

If so, complete questions 4a and 4b.

a. Identify the new curricular choices the school will adopt and provide a rationale for the curricular shift.

In our three-year strategic plan, DC Scholars outlined the following steps to enhance our current educational program offerings:

1. Review and select a social studies curriculum aligned to the newly adopted DC social studies standards.
2. Update our approach to social emotional learning – consider adopting the CREW program used by EL Education schools.
3. Develop a plan to broaden the extracurricular program by 1) defining the intended goals, 2) soliciting community input, 3) securing funding, 4) securing partners, and 5) building a plan to launch.

b. Describe the long-range plan for curriculum implementation and professional development. How will the school ensure implementation fidelity?

In our strategic plan, DC Scholars has identified leaders to select and evaluate curriculum for social studies and social emotional learning. They are tasked with leading curriculum selection processes during SY24-25 with an intended launch in SY25-26.

- Social Studies: We currently have one social studies teacher. Our social studies teacher will be trained on the new curriculum in August 2025 in preparation for launch in SY25-26. His instructional coach will provide ongoing support with module digestion, intellectual prep, pacing, observation-feedback, assessments, and student data analysis.
- Socio-Emotional Learning: All teachers will be trained in our updated socio-emotional learning program in Summer 2025. Our Assistant School Director and instructional coaches will be responsible for monitoring implementation and providing ongoing coaching and observation-feedback on the new program.

5. How did the school engage its internal community in revising the mission statement? Include evidence demonstrating student, staff, and parent support for the proposed changes.

DC Scholars partnered with Bellwether Education Partners to develop a three-year strategic plan. This process included robust stakeholder engagement, including: community interviews, student focus groups, family surveys, and staff focus groups. Staff members gave final feedback to the revised mission statement in December 2024. Then, the revised mission statement was adopted by the DC Scholars PCS Board in January 2024, as part of the strategic plan, and distinctly in March 2024. We look forward to unveiling the updated mission statement to our families once approved by PCSB at the launch of SY24-25.

EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

6. Describe the school's proposed educational approach and philosophy for educating students.

7. How does this approach differ from the educational philosophy or methods the school articulated in its charter application and/or agreement?

- 8. What is the rationale for the educational shift?**

- 9. How will the proposed educational approach impact curricular choices, including resources, assessments, standards, and instructional strategies?**
 - a. Identify the new curricular choices the school will adopt and provide a rationale for the curricular shift, if applicable.**

 - b. Describe the long-range plan for curriculum implementation and/or professional development. How will the school ensure implementation fidelity?**

- 10. How will the school ensure all students—including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level—benefit from the proposed educational approach?**

- 11. How will the school ensure its proposed educational approach will result in successfully meeting its charter goals and academic achievement expectations?**

- 12. How did the school engage its internal community in redeveloping its educational approach? Include evidence demonstrating staff, student,⁵ and parent support for the proposed changes.**

⁵ Schools that do not enroll young adult and adult students need not demonstrate student support for the proposed changes.