DC
PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOL
BOARD

A Note for Completing the Virtual Program
Charter Agreement Amendment Application

Overview
This application is for a school seeking approval from the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) to operate a hybrid or full-time distance learning program (within an existing campus) on a routine basis.[1, 2] This application is not relevant to a school providing situational distance learning.[3] Further, this application is not relevant to adult education public charter schools or schools with a competency-based learning waiver with respect to any courses subject to the waiver.[4]

Standard for Approval
DC PCSB staff will generally recommend that its Board approve a school's request to operate a virtual program provided it satisfies all requirements below.
- The proposed virtual program must follow the distance learning guidance the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) issued.[5]
- The proposed virtual program must align with the mission and/or goals and academic achievement expectations (charter goals) in the school's charter agreement. In some instances, a school may seek to amend its mission and/or charter goals at the same time it seeks to launch a virtual program.[6]
- The school must demonstrate that virtual student outcomes will meet or exceed the outcomes of students learning in-person.
- The proposed virtual program must 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.

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[1] The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) defines "distance learning" as "academic instruction offered by a District local education agency to a student [who] is not physically present in their enrolled school where student supervision is not transferred to the school. Distance learning may be synchronous or asynchronous." See OSSE's guidance for virtual schools here: https://bit.ly/3wAzXVk.
[2] Schools authorized to serve students in grades kindergarten through 12 may request to offer virtual programming. In school year 2022 – 23, DC PCSB will not authorize routine distance learning for pre-kindergarten students.
[3] OSSE defines "situational distance learning" as "the use of distance learning by a school otherwise providing in-person instruction on a routine basis to address a temporary, emergency need."
[4] Adult education public charter schools and public charter schools with a competency-based learning waiver with respect to any courses subject to the waiver are already permitted to educate students virtually.
[5] Again, see OSSE's guidance for virtual schools here: https://bit.ly/3wAzXVk. Bear in mind, per the guidance, that virtual programs "must maintain the same standards as in-person schools for content standards (including PE), assessments (administered in person), accountability, graduation/promotion/retention requirements, residency, and immunization" (p. 6).
[6] See the mission amendment application here: https://bit.ly/3PTYkpF. See the charter goals amendment application here: https://bit.ly/37RAFoS.

- The school must demonstrate that its staff and families support the proposed virtual program.

Submission Deadline
DC PCSB staff will process virtual program amendment requests using the same timeline it processes mission amendment requests. As such, per DC PCSB's *Charter Agreement Amendment Petition Submission Policy,*[7] a school must submit its virtual program amendment 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 changes. Please also contact Melodi Sampson if you have general questions about the charter agreement amendment process.

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[7] See the *Charter Agreement Amendment Petition Submission Policy* here: https://bit.ly/34ORPBZ.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) NAME: Paul Public Charter School (Paul PCS)

BOARD CHAIR NAME: Erin Albright

SUBMISSION DATE: April 19, 2023

SUBJECT: Addendum to June 2022 Virtual Program Amendment Request

SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Campus name(s): Paul PCS – Middle School, Paul PCS – International High School

Year(s) opened: SY 2000 – 00, SY 2013 – 14

Grade(s) served: 6 – 12 (beginning in SY 2023 – 24, Paul PCS will also serve fifth graders)

Year the school will undergo its next charter review or renewal: SY 2024 – 25

Proposal summary: Paul PCS seeks approval to permanently offer virtual programming after piloting the "Virtual Fridays" program in SY 2022 – 23.

Year the school plans to implement the proposed changes: SY 2023 – 24

When did the school's board approve the proposed changes? *Please attach minutes from the meeting and vote results.*

May 24, 2022; see the June 2022 application for meeting minute excerpt.

VIRTUAL PROGRAM - Addendum

1. **Describe the school's experience offering the virtual program in SY 2022 – 23.**

In the spring of 2022, the leadership of Paul PCS submitted a request to amend its charter to offer the traditionally scheduled weekly half-day in a virtual format. Students had the opportunity to participate in remote learning on Fridays from the school building or from their homes. Below you will find a brief overview of each component of virtual Fridays and the implementation experience the organization has had.

Component 1: Deepening student learning through the provision of individualized, accelerated learning experiences. During Virtual Fridays, students will be assigned to small groups based upon their most pervasive academic and social needs. Small group types (synchronous) include:

- *Interventions- To address learning gaps and foundational skills*
- *Extension Activities- To enrich and anchor grade-level learning*
- *SAT, AP and/or Dual Credit Groups- To increase focus and preparation for postsecondary readiness assessments and courses*

- *Counseling Groups- To address the behavioral and psychological needs of students*
- *Specialized Clubs- To enhance the gifts and talents of Paul's children and provide opportunities to extend learning through non-core content areas*

Asynchronous learning opportunities will include:
- *Extension/ Practice of Skills- For students whose formative data from the week shows that they need additional opportunities to secure new learning*
- *Grade or Credit Recovery- To ensure students are able to improve work performance and complete missing assignments in a timely manner*

Strengths of the implementation experience:
- Able to offer uniquely tailored instructional and socio-emotional programming to address the needs of each student.
- Increases in the amount of support for students dually enrolled in ATC and/or other university programs. This has resulted in higher academic success rates for these students.
- Increase in pass rates across historically challenged grade levels (specifically grades 8, 9 and 12). This is partly attributed to the weekly opportunities students have to receive deeper instruction on skills not mastered during the week and to recover grades.

Challenges
- The coordination and progress monitoring of students in instructional groups was challenging, although necessary and successful.
- Reacclimating students to virtual learning expectations.
- Managing the learning curve (for students and staff) that comes with the implementation of new platforms. The two new platforms were Zearn Math and Achieve 3000 (for reading and math).

Component 2: Re-envisioning learning experiences that provide enrichment and contribute to overall student wellness. This includes:
- *Enhanced Homeroom- The focus during this block includes SEL lessons, engagement in data analysis, and reinforcing behavioral and conduct expectations*
- *Town Hall Meetings- Monthly grade level meetings that focus on SEL topics, student and staff celebrations, incentives, upcoming events, grade-level data trends, etc.*
- *Whole School/ Grade Level Excursions (at least 1x Advisory)- Opportunities for students to engage in external learning experiences through participating in field trips, college trips/tours, and community service*

Strengths of the implementation experience:
- The weekly meetings/sessions focused on student wellness and socio-emotional growth and development have had a major impact on the overall climate of the school. Weekly town hall meetings/crew sessions give adults the opportunity to check in with students, address concerning trends in behavioral data and to offer counseling/mentoring support where necessary.
- Students enjoyed grade level excursions, most of which were focused on college exposure.

Challenges
- The organization had to pivot early in the year to reduce the group sizes of full community meetings. Separating students into their assigned "houses" and homerooms increased students' engagement during these sessions.

Component 3: Increase professional development & collaboration time for staff to ensure all are prepared to address the comprehensive needs of our students and their families. This includes:

- *Increased Collaborative Planning Time- The increase in variance relative to student and familial needs necessitates an increase in time and focus on data analysis and planning*
- *Focused Professional Development- Content team, staff meeting, and planning time focused on refining instruction and wellness support*
- *Familial Engagement and Outreach- Concentrated, weekly efforts to stay connected with the broader needs of our students' families to ensure the proper wraparound services and home support*

Strengths of the implementation experience:
- The Virtual Friday format provided critical time for collaboration and planning for staff. The level of partnership, specifically amongst teachers serving EL and SWIEPs students, was more impactful than it had been in previous years. Scheduling these teachers to collaborate with their colleagues was difficult because of the number of "preps" they typically had. In previous years, the half day schedule did not offer enough time to do this critical work. The virtual Friday format allowed for scheduling that ensured teachers met weekly to plan and to discuss student progress.
- A standing expectation on Virtual Fridays was that parents were contacted to share good news and areas for improvement related to students' progress. Parent and family engagement increased, and the reported satisfaction of parents reflects the importance of this initiative.

Challenges
- The level of moving parts associated with Virtual Fridays added a layer of complexity related to weekly planning for instruction. Because many groups were focused on the recovery of skills that were often outside the normal scope and sequence teachers were focused on, it was an additional prep for them which was sometimes challenging to manage.

2. **Did the school implement the virtual program as initially proposed or did it make adjustments?**

Paul PCS implemented the virtual program as planned.

     a. **Did the school follow the instructional day it articulated in June 2022? If not, describe the adjustments.**
       The school implemented the schedule as planned

     b. **Did the school modify the curricular choices (e.g., resources, assessments, standards, and instructional strategies) it identified in June 2022? If so, describe the modifications.**

The organization used the curriculum choices identified in June 2022

3. **How did the school ensure all students—including students with disabilities, English learners, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students above or below grade level—could access and benefit from the virtual program?**

On Virtual Fridays, teachers and administrators (specifically the special education coordinators and EL coordinator) ensured students received accommodations and modifications as outlined in their IEP and/or as required in accordance with EL levels. All identified EL and SPED teachers were assigned to facilitate or co-teach during small group modules and the required asynchronous work was differentiated and modified according to student needs.

4. **What evidence demonstrates the virtual program was successful in SY 2022 – 23?**
   Submit 1) Fall 2022-to-Spring 2023 Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) outcomes in English language arts and math for grades 6 – 10 and 2)

Paul PCS students are scheduled to take the MAP assessment beginning the week of May 22nd. We will submit this data immediately following the administration. **Please advise how this impacts the decision timeline, if at all.**

5. **What evidence demonstrates family support for the virtual program?**
   The evidence should address indicators of staff and family support, including but not limited to, attendance, participation in the program, mid-year withdrawals, preliminary re enrollment, and community complaints. Submit the survey questions and results gauging family support for the virtual program.

<u>Family Perspective</u>

A parent survey was distributed to families in December of 2022. Data was collected for 359 of Paul's 694 students (~52% response rate). The survey question and results are below.

I believe my scholar is benefitting from the new Virtual Friday model.

- 75% of families agreed or strongly agreed that Virtual Fridays were beneficial
- 17% were neutral
- 8% of families had concerns about the program, mostly related to internet reliability and their student's/students' focus. Most of these students were brought into the school to better support their learning experience on Fridays.

A second family survey was conducted in May of 2023. We received responses for 193 enrolled students. The survey question and results are below.

I believe my scholar is benefitting from the new Virtual Friday model.

- 72% of families agreed or strongly agreed that Virtual Fridays were beneficial
- 15% were neutral
- 13% of families had concerns about the program, mostly related to internet reliability and their student's/students' focus. Most of these students were brought into the school to better support their learning experience on Fridays.

There have been no community complaints from families connected to Virtual Fridays.

Attendance rates are relatively consistent with attendance rates at this point in the year for SY21-22. The middle school's attendance rate as of 3/31/23 was 91.7% in comparison to 90.1% for SY 21-22. The high school's attendance rate as of 3/31/23 was 88.5% in comparison to 86.6% for SY 21-22.

There are no other abnormal data markers connected to Virtual Fridays (i.e. mid-year withdrawals, re-enrollment, etc.).

Staff Perspective

Data has been collected from staff throughout the school year to assess the perceived efficacy of the Virtual Friday program, to receive input on ways to improve it and to gauge continued buy-in. The mechanisms used to collect data from staff include Virtual Friday work group sessions, one-on-one staff meetings (held with 100% of the teaching and support staff) and the administration of a voluntary staff survey (at the beginning of Q2). The overwhelming response of staff is that Virtual Fridays is a worthwhile instructional tool, it is impacting students' learning in a positive manner and that it is not without its complexities and challenges (most of which connect to planning) that require continued refinement.

Data from the voluntary survey is below (participation rate was approximately 35%).

Virtual Friday is meeting our intentional focus on deepening and accelerating student learning?

- Strongly agree/Agree- 67%
- Somewhat Agree- 26%
- Disagree- 7%

Virtual Friday is meeting our intentional focus on enrichment through community building, strong SEL implementation, and field experiences outside of the classroom?

- Strongly agree/Agree- 70%
- Somewhat Agree- 23%
- Disagree- 7%

Virtual Friday is meeting our intentional focus on allowing a "think space" for teachers and leaders to collaborate and analyze data in a timely manner in preparation for the week ahead?

- ▪ Strongly agree/Agree- 81%
- ▪ Somewhat Agree- 4%
- ▪ Disagree- 15%