

Freddie Woodson, Deputy Superintendent
District/School Operations

SUBJECT: REQUEST SCHOOL BOARD DENIAL OF CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR TRIUMPHANT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY, INC., ON BEHALF OF TRIUMPHANT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As established in School Board Rule 6Gx13- 6A-1.471, Charter Schools (K-12), Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has received charter school applications from individuals and/or organizations in the community.

Proposal

Triumphant Leadership Academy Charter School (Applicant) proposes to serve a maximum of 348 students in kindergarten through grade five, with a maximum of 216 in its first year of operation in kindergarten through grade three, and opening in 2011-2012. Triumphant's mission is to create a challenging learning environment that encourages high expectations for success through development-appropriate instruction designed to promote richness in cultural arts, leadership, and technology to ensure academic success for all students.

Applicant

The members of the Founding Board are: Dr. Leronardo Stringer, Former Deputy Director, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue; Dr. Wylamerle Glover Marshall, Former School Principal, Miami-Dade County Public Schools; Dr. Charles Phillips, Director, Caldera Consulting Services; Mr. Karls Paul-Noel, Assistant Chief, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department; and Ms. Sandra Stringer Ahmad, Program Coordinator, D.A. Dorsey Educational Center, Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Evaluation

Pursuant to School Board Rule 6Gx13- 6A-1.471, Charter Schools (K-12), two reviews of the application were conducted using the required Florida Department of Education's Model Application Evaluation Form (Evaluation). The second review includes an applicant interview. Only applicants who have presented a quality plan with no material weaknesses and have demonstrated the capacity to operate a quality charter school are recommended for charter approval. On October 8, 2010, M-DCPS' Charter School Technical Assistance Team (TAT) reviewed the application and identified a number of significant concerns that were forwarded to the M-DCPS' Charter School Application Review Committee (ARC) for final review and recommendation to the Superintendent.

On October 19, 2010, the ARC reviewed the application and provided the applicant the opportunity to clarify noted deficiencies and concerns. Representatives of the charter school attended the meeting but did not satisfactorily clarify the concerns. The ARC identified deficiencies in 15 of the 21 sections of the Evaluation. By a unanimous vote, the ARC made a recommendation to the Superintendent for denial of the application.

Triumphant failed to satisfactorily meet the following statutory requirements:

- Provide a detailed curriculum plan that illustrates how students will be provided services to attain the Sunshine State Standards. [§1002.33(6)(a)(2), F.S.]
- Provide goals and objectives for improving student learning and measuring that improvement. The goals and objectives must indicate how much academic improvement students are expected to show each year, how success will be evaluated, and the specific results to be attained through instruction. [§1002.33(6)(a)(3), F.S.; §1002.33(7)(a)(7), F.S.]
- Provide an annual financial plan for each year requested by the charter for operation of the school for up to 5 years. The plan must contain anticipated fund balances based on revenue projections, a spending plan based on projected revenues and expenses, and a description of controls that will safeguard finances and projected enrollment trends. [§1002.33(6)(a)(5), F.S.]

In addition, reviewers also identified the following deficiencies in the application which are required elements of the Florida Model Charter School Application:

- Application did not demonstrate a set of priorities that are meaningful. There was a lack of evidence of the alignment of the mission throughout the application.
- Application did not provide a clear and coherent framework for teaching and learning, one that is researched base and will enable students to attain Sunshine State Standards and receive a year's worth of learning for each year enrolled.
- Application did not have measureable educational goals and objectives that set high standards for student performance and/or, promotion and graduation standards based on high expectations and provide clear criteria for promotion from one level to the next.
- Application did not demonstrate an understanding of state and federal requirements regarding the education of exceptional students. In addition, applicant did not demonstrate the capacity to meet the school's obligations under state and federal law regarding the education of exceptional students.
- Application did not demonstrate a commitment to serving the needs of English language learners. The application lacked a sound plan for educating English language learners that reflects the full range of programs and services required to provide all students with a high quality education.
- Application did not provide a clear, sensible delineation of roles and responsibilities in relation to governance and school management.
- Application did not provide legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal and recommendation for expulsion.

- Application did not provide a sound plan for recruiting and retaining qualified and capable staff.
- Application did not provide a sound plan for the recruitment, selection and evaluation of the school leader.
- Application did not include policies and procedures that hold staff to high professional standards.
- Application did not provide meaningful partnerships with parents and the community that further the school's mission and programs.
- Application lacked evidence that the school would have access to the necessary resources to fund the facilities plan.
- Application did not demonstrate knowledge related to providing a food service plan that will serve all eligible students.
- Application did not provide budgetary projections consistent with all parts of the application, specifically the school's mission, educational program, staffing plan and facility.
- Application did not provide a realistic assessment of projected sources of revenue and expenses to ensure financial viability of the school.

The Applicant was notified of the intent to recommend denial to the School Board and provided a copy of the final evaluation. Pursuant to section 1002.33(6)(c), F.S., should the School Board approve this recommendation, the applicant may appeal to the State Board of Education no later than 30 days after receipt of the School Board's decision.

Copies of the application and evaluation, which are incorporated by reference in this board item, will be transmitted to the School Board Members under separate cover and will be available for inspection by the public in the Office of Board Recording Secretary, Room 924, and in the Citizen Information Center, Room 158, 1450 N.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida deny the charter school applications submitted by Triumphant Leadership Academy, Inc., on behalf of Triumphant Leadership Academy Charter School.

FW:elg