



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

Charter and/or Charter Agreement Amendment Application

Part I: General Information

All applicants must complete this section

SUBMITTED BY: Keith Whitescarver, Breakthrough Montessori

SUBJECT: Charter Amendment Request for: (Mark all that apply)

- Enrollment Ceiling Increase
- Program Replication of Grades Served
- Grade Level Expansion (Single Grade)
- Grade Level Expansion (Grade Band)
- Additional Facility or New Location
- Goals and Achievement Expectations
- Mission or Education Philosophy
- Curriculum, Standards or Assessments

- Name Change – Campus or Facility
- Campus Reconfiguration
- LEA Status for Special Education
- Special Education Enrollment Preference
- Governance Structure
(Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation or Management)
- Graduation Requirements
- Competency-Based Learning Application

SUBMISSION DATE: 6/7/2018

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Please address the following questions in their entirety. This information provides helpful background to the DC PCSB Board as it reviews these requests.

Overview of School Performance

1. Provide the following information about your Local Education Agency (LEA) by campus:

- a) Campus name(s) and location(s): **Breakthrough Montessori Public Charter School, 1244 Taylor Street NW, and 6856 Eastern Ave NW**
- b) Year opened: **2016**
- c) Grade levels served (Currently and at maturation of charter agreement, if applicable): **PK3, PK4 and K, presently; PK3 – Grade 6 at maturation**
- d) Date that charter will be eligible for possible renewal: **2020**

2. Please select the performance indicators below that describe the school's current performance*: (Mark all that apply)

- Currently rated Tier 1, or met at least 2/3 of targets on the most recent PK-only PMF or Alternative Accountability Framework.
- School is not currently under corrective action.
- Has historically met enrollment projections w/in 80% of target.

***Disclaimer:** While processing this application, DC PCSB staff may contact you later to request additional information for the Board's consideration. By submitting this application, you agree to cooperate with DC PCSB staff to ensure your application is processed in a timely manner. For questions, please contact DC PCSB staff person Laterica (Teri) Quinn at (202) 328-2660.*



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School has been in operation for 3+ years.

School is currently accredited.

*If the school has multiple campuses or varying PMFs, please describe the academic performance of each campus here: **We currently have just one campus, which has excellent academic performance.**



PROPOSAL

Breakthrough Montessori Public Charter School submits to the DC Public Charter School Board this application to amend its charter agreement by changing the item(s) selected above. If approved, this amendment will be effective on 28 August, 2018.

1. Please provide details on the selected amendment(s) above and describe the requested change(s), including the school's rationale for the proposed changes. Describe any planning that is already underway to prepare for the proposed amendment.

Next year, we intend to have three classrooms to serve our – as of now – 45 first grade students, making for a faculty to student ratio of 1:15. To be in alignment with best Montessori practice, we would like to have two adults dedicated to each classroom. However, our budget now only allows us to have a campus-wide floating staff member whose attention may be called to other classrooms occasionally. By increasing the ratio to 17:1 (and thereby increasing enrollment for next year by six students), we can afford to hire dedicated aides for each class, dramatically improving on the conditions for the students and the classroom teachers. Moreover, it allows us to serve six more students from our waitlist. Presently, 26 families are waiting for a first-grade placement.

2. How will the proposed amendment(s) support or enhance the school's mission?

First, it delivers a better experience for students (more adult support), and the teacher (more hands to help in a classroom where students are self-paced). Secondly, it helps us deliver on our equity principles by opening our doors to a larger cadre of students who may or may not have benefitted from Montessori pedagogy previously.

3. While considering this amendment request, DC PCSB staff may review the school's history of board actions, DC PCSB audits, community complaints, enrollment trends, and any relevant data used by DC PCSB to monitor equity in schools. Please describe any DC PCSB audits, notices of concern or other board actions issued against your school in the past 3 years. What was the outcome? Please explain what steps, if any, you've taken to address the concerns that prompted a DC PCSB audit, board action, or community complaint.

We had a minor notice of concern relative to the number of board members we had – we had an even number when it was required to be odd. We promptly added a new board member and brought ourselves into compliance.

4. DC PCSB will review the school's Financial Audit Reviews (FAR) and current financials to determine the fiscal health of the organization. If applicable, describe how the proposed amendment will impact the school's finances. Explain any anticipated expenses for the proposed changes and how the school will finance them. *[EXCLUDES the following amendments: Governance, Goals, Mission, Curriculum, Name Changes and Graduation Requirements. If not applicable, write N/A.]*

Note: *If applicable, in addition to your narrative please attach a proposed 5-year Operating Budget.*

Next year, because of the need to take on some debt to open our new facility, we operate at a slight loss for the year. Our budget as submitted was for an



income to debt ratio of 1.42. With the proposed changes, our position improves next year, moving our ratio to 1.52. We return to profitability in 2019-2020, and this change is projected to marginally increase profit in that year, too. Please see our attached five year budget projections.

5. How has the school informed its external stakeholders (e.g. local ANC commissioners, neighbors) and internal stakeholders (e.g. staff, parents) of the proposed amendment(s)? Please attach any written communication (e.g., meeting minutes). Describe any notable support for or opposition to the proposed amendment(s). If concerns have been brought to your attention, how do you plan to address them? *[EXCLUDES the following amendments: Governance, Goals, Mission, Curriculum, Graduation Requirements and Competency-Based Learning Credits. If not applicable, write N/A.]*

The administrative team took a unanimous vote in support of the amendment, and so we posed the question to our faculty – both current and those we’d newly hired for next year. All supported the change, as they felt it was important to give our first-graders dedicated aides. We then took the suggestion to our board, and to a few parents. The board unanimously supported the amendment in a 7-0 vote (minutes are attached), and no parents have yet expressed opposition.

6. When did your school’s board approve the proposed amendment(s)? Please attach minutes from the meeting and vote results.

29 May 2018; Minutes are attached; Result was a 7-0 vote of the board.