



May 30, 2013

Ms. Arielle Etienne  
3511 24<sup>th</sup> St, NE  
Washington, DC 20018

Dear Ms. Etienne,

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 (“PCSB”) has completed the 2013 Application Review process and I regret to inform you that at its public meeting held May 20, 2013, PCSB did not approve your application to establish DC VOICE Empowerment Public Charter School in the District of Columbia.

The Board’s decision was based on a thorough evaluation of the written application and information gathered from the applicant interview and the public hearing. The following findings were the basis for denial:

- The application presented evidence addressing the need for a “one-stop” school for teen parents and their children; however, the proposed instructional model did not adequately detail the academic methodology for its Upper or Lower School students. Specifically, while the early childhood program included standards around which its inquiry-based early childhood program would be developed, it did not discuss a curriculum or provide measurable academic goals.
- Critical to the academic success of Upper School students is the school’s blended learning model, in which high school students will spend anywhere from 40% to 60% of their time accessing core content through APEX. In the application itself and during the capacity interview, the applicant group provided unclear, and sometimes inconsistent, descriptions of the structure of blended learning classes. Specifically, the group did not clearly address which parts of the learning day would be taught on-line and which would be taught in-person.
- Related to the previous point, the applicant group provided insufficient descriptions of how the blended learning model would support students whose performance is significantly below grade level and exactly how differentiation and individualized learning would take place beyond the use of APEX online curriculum for low-achieving students or students with disabilities.
- Low academic goals were proposed for the Upper School students, which stood in direct contrast to the school’s proposed mission, which is to prepare students for college and careers in the 21st century and no academic goals for the early childhood program.
- It was unclear in the application how the blended learning approach would serve students requiring special education services. The application proposed that students with disabilities would receive services exclusively in a “pull-out” setting, which is out of compliance with federal special education laws that require schools to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible.

Should you choose to file a petition again, we recommend that, to the extent you borrow any content from an existing school, program, applicant, institution, or other source, you credit it as belonging to the third party.

We recognize the hard work and effort that went into the development of your application and there were many positive parts of the application that are not mentioned in this letter. If you wish to receive additional feedback as it relates to the Board's denial decision, please e-mail Monique Miller at [mmiller@dcpcsb.org](mailto:mmiller@dcpcsb.org) by Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup> to schedule an appointment. This feedback can be useful should you decide to revise your application for submission in upcoming review cycles.

Thank you for your interest in public charter schools and your commitment to improving public education in Washington, DC.

Sincerely,

  


John H. "Skip" McKoy  
Chair  
DC Public Charter School Board