



December 15, 2014

Ms. Piper Phillips Caswell
7010 Braddock Road
Annandale, VA 22003

Dear Ms. Phillips Caswell,

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 2014 Application Review process. I regret to inform you that at its public meeting held on November 17, 2014, PCSB did not approve your application to establish Phillips as a 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 capacity interview, the public hearing, and site visits to existing Phillips schools. The following findings were the basis for denial:

1. Lack of a curriculum or curriculum plan for the proposed school’s opening in 2015-16, admitting, in the capacity interview and public hearing, that it would not have a curriculum in place in time for the start of school;
2. Lack of an identified potential leader for the school and of comprehensive plans to find a leader;
3. Lack of sufficient detail around the proposed school’s discipline policy, particularly related to students with disabilities;
4. Little to no evidence of how (or if) the applicant would set individual academic goals for its students;
5. Absence of a clear Child Find policy and insufficient processes in place to identify and screen for potential disabilities among students in a timely fashion;
6. Concern about the applicant’s ability to ensure full adherence to IDEA at the proposed school;
7. After site-reviews, concerns about the operation of the applicant’s existing non-public schools, specifically:
 - Poor learning environments with no evidence of a curriculum or standards, little to no academic rigor or individualization for students, and classroom environments characterized by misbehavior or a complete lack of student engagement; and
 - Little to no evidence of elements written about in the application, such as differentiation, individualization of learning, and positive youth development.

Should you choose to file a petition again, that petition must meet the requirements of the School Reform Act. See D.C. Code § 38-1802.02. Specifically, it should appropriately resolve the deficiencies cited above and demonstrate: (a) a demonstrated need for the school; (b) sufficient progress in developing the plan; (c) alignment of the entire school program with the school’s mission and philosophy; (d) inclusion of and adequate support for

Phillips Letter

Page 2

November 18, 2014

special populations; and (e) the founding group's capability to ensure that the school can meet the educational objectives outlined in the application.

Should you want to appeal the denial of your application, you may seek review of this decision pursuant to D.C. Code §38-1802.03(j).

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

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Naomi Rubin DeVeaux.

Naomi Rubin DeVeaux
Deputy Director
DC Public Charter School Board