



May 16, 2012

Dr. Stephen Crane
Solomon World Civilization Cyber Charter School

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Dear Dr. Crane,

Thank you for submitting your responses to the deficiencies noted in your application issued on January 30, 2012 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

After reviewing the resubmission of the **Solomon World Civilization Cyber Charter School** application, it is the decision of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to approve your application.

However, there are deficiencies that still must be addressed prior to your opening of your school for the 2012-13 school year. Please submit the requested documents within 60 days of opening school in August 2012.

In addition to the decision, all of the board members must sign the accompanying the Solomon World Civilization Cyber Charter School charter agreement and return the charter to the Department for final signature from the Secretary of Education. Please accept our congratulations and best wishes for a successful cyber charter school.

If you have any questions, please contact Marlene Kanuck at (717) 783-9294 or at mkanuck@pa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carolyn C. Dumaresq", written in a cursive style.

Carolyn C. Dumaresq, Ed.D.
Deputy Secretary

Enclosure

The Proposed Solomon World Civilization Cyber Charter School (SWCCCS) 2011 Cyber Charter School Application

Background

Amendments to the Charter School Law (“CSL”), 24 P.S. §§17-1701-A – 17-1751-A, that became effective July 1, 2002, include new Subchapter (c), which sets forth new provisions for the establishment and oversight of cyber charter schools. *See*, Act of June 29, 2002, No. 88, §14, adding 24 P.S. §§17-1741-A to 17-1751-A (“Act 88”). Pursuant to Act 88, the Department of Education (the “Department”) has the authority and responsibility to receive, review and act on applications for the creation of a cyber-charter school.

On October 3, 2011, the proposed SWCCCS submitted an application to operate as a cyber-charter school. The Department provided 30 days’ notice of a public hearing that was held on December 1, 2011. At the hearing, SWCCCS presented the Department with information about its application. Department personnel who had reviewed the application posed questions to the SWCCCS representatives.

On January 30, 2012, the Department denied SWCCCS’s application because of deficiencies in the application. Pursuant to Charter School Law, the applicant had the opportunity to revise and resubmit the application to the department. The proposed SWCCCS submitted a revised application on April 2, 2012. The Department has 60 days after receipt to grant or deny the revised application.

Detailed Decision of the Pennsylvania Department of Education

Based on a thorough review of the resubmitted application, the Pennsylvania Department of Education is approving the application of the SWCCCS.

However, the following deficiencies were still noted and must be addressed within 60 days of opening in August 2012.

- While SWCCCS's resubmission provides a description of an ESL Program that addresses identification and placement, staffing and resources, includes the Pennsylvania required exit criteria, and a plan for monitoring the progress of exited former ELLs, the ESL Program is deficient in the following areas:
 - Limited evidence of an instructional model based on sound educational theory. The resubmission states that pull out, co-teaching, and consultative models will be used, but it then provides the research basis for content-based ESL. The instructional model and rationale are not clear. There is no evidence of an instructional model based on sound educational theory. It states "up to 90 minutes of customized ESOL Live lessons per day," but doesn't address how this instruction will be delivered.
 - Limited evidence of daily ESL instruction using curriculum aligned to the Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency standards (ELPS) and academic standards. The resubmission provides the ELPS, but no scope and sequence, content, or lessons were found to demonstrate alignment. The resubmission provides a chart of ESL instruction time by proficiency level and grade, which appears to be a Department of Defense resource. However, the proficiency levels do not align with PA/WIDA proficiency levels—no level 4 or level 5 is addressed. Also, there are references to the NCSCOS (North Carolina Standard Course of Study) which do not seem relevant. It's not clear how these resources result in an ESL curriculum aligned to standards.
 - No evidence of procedure to ensure ELLs are administered the annual English language proficiency assessment or to ensure ELLs appropriate participation in the PSSAs.

Please submit corrected ESL program documents.

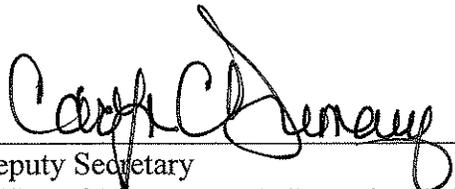
- The resubmitted application contains the SWCCCS's professional education plan. However, the plan is not complete in the following:
 - The planning committee must include two educational specialists (school counselor, school nurse, school psychologists, etc.) chosen by educational specialist, two community representatives, two business representatives, and two parents all of whom must be appointed by the board of school directors. Upon the hiring of teachers, they must choose their representation as well.

- There was no evidence of how the school will assess the professional development education needs. Although the professional goals were stated, the professional development action plan was not outlined. The action plan should include the person responsible; timeline of implementation; and resources along with the professional development activity information which includes number of hours per session, total number of sessions per school year, knowledge and skills, research and best practices, designed to accomplish, follow-up activities, and evaluation methods. There were no examples of a pre or post test as stated in the hearing before the Department.

Please submit a revised Professional Education Plan that addresses missing information.

- Although SWCCCS has indicated that they will institute technology protection measures in accordance with Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and have created policies to address the acceptable and safe use of technology, in order to provide better clarity and compliance with the FCC’s most recent changes to CIPA, SWCCCS must amend the language that delineates their process for educating minors about appropriate online behavior, interacting with other individuals on social networking websites/chat rooms, and cyber bullying awareness and response.
- SWCCCS must establish a minimum connectivity standard considered acceptable for the delivery of content and instruction and exhaust all possible avenues before using a “mailed DVD” which will result in disparate and inequitable educational opportunities.

Please submit revised AUP and ISP policies in accordance with CIPA. Please submit documentation that a minimum conductivity to access instruction will be provided for all students.


Deputy Secretary
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education

5/16/12
Date