



DAC Recommendation for Stargate School December 19, 2018

Members of the Review Committee

- Josh Bastian - community member
- Brian Cohen - business community
- Michelle Zeles-Hahn - parent/charter school
- Shelly Hora - parent/charter & district managed school
- Radhika Prout - parent/district managed school

Renewal Application Review Process



Important to note:

- **20 hours** of actual time spent at our District Accountability meetings.
- Between meetings, the DAC sub-committee reviewed additional documents they've requested in order to make an informed and thoughtful recommendation. They were contributing at a minimum **5 hours of weekly 'homework' over the course of the 16 week process.**
- Most of the DAC sub-committee participated in a 2 hour site visit to ACAF
- DAC members used the renewal rubric provided by CDE to score the application.
- The DAC members strongly believe in the Adams 12 district and community

DAC Recommendation

After months of thoughtful evaluation of the Stargate School renewal application, the Adams 12 District Accountability Committee for charter review provides the following recommendation for the Adams 12 Board of Education members to consider when making their decision for reauthorization:

It is the recommendation of the DAC that the Adams 12 Board of Education authorize the charter for Stargate Charter School a Charter Renewal agreement for two years with conditions.

Strengths

- Solid Academic Performance
- Very Strong Budget & Financial Record – clean audits
- Beautiful school with great furniture and equipment
- Engaged Student Learning
- The Adroit Program and Maker Space - with workshop, kitchens, sewing machines, and more.
- Application was organized and Stargate was very accommodating by providing all additional request information
- Stargate is a highly regarded charter school with a long, successful history in the area.

Areas of Concern

- OCR's
 - Title IX
 - Special Populations
 - School Goals
- Leadership
- Lack of Diversity
- IQ Testing
- Social/Emotional Education
- Gifted Endorsed Teachers

Concerns – Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

- Received seven OCR Complaints that exposed weaknesses centered around Title IX issues (sexual harassment), special populations, retaliation/favoritism, and bullying.
 - Many policies have changed as required by the OCR
 - Board of Directors approved a goal for elementary principal to refine SPED procedures.
 - No goals to refine procedures with Title IX or community culture.
 - Due to the lack of goals set by administration and approved by the board, there could be a perception that the leadership of Stargate does not take the OCR process seriously and is attempting to paper over the complaints rather than make lasting cultural changes at the school.

Concerns - Leadership

- Student, parent, and staff surveys paint a bleak picture of administration and the board:
 - 15% of parents are aware of the “retaliation environment”
 - 38% of classified staff believe administration does not “make decisions based on what’s best for Stargate students and staff”
 - 17.2% of all staff have “either witnessed or been retaliated against by an administrator, colleague, or other”
 - 69% of elementary staff do not “have adequate technological support and access to necessary materials and services to perform my job”
 - 30% of classified staff do not “feel trusted and respected”
 - In 2016-2017, 8% of all staff would not “recommend Stargate to a friend for employment”, that jumped to 20% in 2017-2018

Concerns - Leadership

- With no Executive Director at the beginning of the 2018 – 2019 school year, the duties have been shared by the Secondary and Elementary School Principals.
- The Board has made the decision to plan to hire an executive director
- Moving forward, the board and administration need to work to heal these problems in their community.

Concern - Lack of Diversity

- The percentage of minorities and special populations is lower than the surrounding schools.
- The entrance exam policy is cost prohibitive to FRL families.

	2017-2018 FRL Population	Distance from Stargate
STARGATE CHARTER SCHOOL	3%	-
ROCKY TOP MIDDLE SCHOOL	12%	1.6 miles
HUNTERS GLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	27%	1.8 miles
SILVER CREEK ELEMENTARY	12%	2.4 miles
WESTGATE CHARTER	16%	2.5 miles
CENTURY MIDDLE SCHOOL	34%	2.5 miles
ARAPAHOE RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	43%	3.1 miles

Concern - IQ Testing

- The IQ test can cost from \$250 and up.
- Entrance requirement included a valid IQ test with a score above 125.
- This is not legal according to “The Charter Schools Act [C.R.S. 22-30.5-104 (3)] and State Board Rule, 1 CCR 301-88, Sections 2.02(D)&(E)
 - “prohibits discrimination based on academic ability. Diagnostic or placement exams may be given to students after they have been officially enrolled. As with all public schools, a charter school may create eligibility thresholds for enrollment that are consistent with their area of focus or grade levels, but the school’s methods for determining eligibility cannot be designed, intended, or used to discriminate on the basis of a child’s knowledge, skills, or disability.”

Concern – Social/Emotional Education

- ***Mission Statement***

- *Stargate School will provide a differentiated program designed specifically to meet the needs of identified intellectually gifted learners in order to challenge each student's academic abilities, **support their unique emotional needs**, promote individual character development and encourage a life-long love of learning.*
- Connect course starting in middle school, no significant curriculum start in elementary school
- 33% and 27% of elementary and classified staff, respectfully, do not feel the social/emotional curriculum and program meet the needs of students

Concern – Gifted Endorsement

- *Focused on gifted education with all students at a 125 or higher IQ score*
- *Only 20% of teachers are gifted endorsed*
 - Only one of five Principals & Assistant Principals
- Expect most of the staff to have significant training in this topic to further meet the needs of all gifted students

DAC Recommended 7 Renewal Conditions

1. Stargate must maintain their outside Title IX coordinator until the HR director obtains her title IX certification to maintain consistency, to follow through on finalizing OCR complaints, and to monitor and train the HR director until she receives appropriate certification
2. Hire an “Ombuds” type person to address concerns and help the community regain trust and heal. Track the efficacy of this position with student, parent, and staff surveys
3. Create policy to increase diversity (especially FRL population) throughout the school and provide data to support the policy

DAC Recommended 6 Renewal Conditions

4. Adhere to the Law requiring entrance criteria to a public school
5. Create a school wide year long social/emotional curriculum (not just secondary), track effectiveness using discipline, attendance, extra curricular activity, and student survey data
6. Work in earnest with Adams 12 to create formal processes to document that all special populations receive appropriate services.

DAC had some disagreement regarding one Renewal Condition but felt obligated to include this while acknowledging not all DAC were in agreement

- The executive director search committee needs to include a representative from Adams 12 and an outside charter school leader (administrator or board member).

DAC Statement

- The Adams 12 DAC would like to thank Stargate and the Adams 12 staff for providing all the information to make a clear, informed decision.
- It is our due diligence to make sure the Stargate staff and families have a successful future for many more years to come.
- We believe that all the above concerns are fixable through clear communication, accountability, and transparency.

THANK YOU

District staff would like to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following:

Stargate School

The Stargate School staff and board members graciously welcomed the DAC and staff to the school for the site visit. In addition, the Stargate School staff has been accommodating to the data and information requests.

The DAC Charter Review Committee

District staff would like to recognize the efforts of this citizen committee. This group came fully prepared, they did their regular homework, were willing to engage in discourse and were thoughtful in making their final recommendation. Ultimately, they took their role very seriously in making their recommendation to the Adams 12 BOE, by giving hours of their own time over a 16 week period. Their dedication to the process and to our district should be commended.