

# DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

## CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name: Academy of Dover Charter School

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Noel Rodriguez  
Head of School

November 27, 2013  
Date

Head of School

Date

Kimeu Boynton  
Board President

November 27, 2013  
Date

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 1<sup>st</sup> (September 30<sup>th</sup> for renewing charter schools)**

All schools submit one (1) signed copy (PDF via email preferred) to the DDOE Charter School Office

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## ABSTRACT

The Academy of Dover (AOD) Charter School opened in September 2003, following the approval of its charter in 2000 by the Delaware Department of Education (the Department). Initially chartered as a K-6 school, the 2007 charter renewal reduced the school's grade configuration to serve students in Kindergarten through Grade 4.

Since its inception in 2003, AOD has been on a road of continuous improvement. While the school experienced notable challenges during its first charter period (2003-2006), its charter renewal was conditionally approved in 2007. Since that time, AOD has made significant changes that have positioned it to truly fulfill its mission, provide a stronger academic program to the community it serves, and increase the school's financial viability.

The Academy of Dover Charter School has undergone a number of beneficial changes and transitions since its inception, notably in relation to the Board and School Leader (Principal). The Board was completely reorganized in 2007 and the current school leader, Noël Rodriguez, is new since July 1, 2008. Mr. Rodriguez has worked vigorously to address the conditions placed upon the charter renewal, and has maintained a strong commitment to the school's success.

The Department – as a condition of the 2007 charter renewal – required AOD to terminate their Charter Management Organization (CMO) agreement with Mosaica. Since that time, AOD has not had a CMO, but has contracted with Innovative Schools for “Back Office Support” in the form of managing the school's budgets, preparing financial reports, and handling accounting functions with First State Financials (FSF); human resources support and accounting with Payroll Human Resource Statewide Technology (PHRST); and, support with information technology.

AOD has also reached out to Innovative Schools to support improvements around curriculum alignment, instructional staffing (Instructional Culture Survey, Part I of Model Staffing Initiative through Innovative Schools), and the preparation of the current 2011 Charter Renewal Application which included a comprehensive Gap Analysis. The Gap Analysis employs a strategy that works with the Board, school leadership and teaching staff to review the original and renewal charter, identify gaps with current performance, and identify strategies for closing these gaps.

Since the last renewal, significant strides have been made with increasing student performance; instituting an integrated Art program, and implementing a locally-recognized Family Passport Program which has enhanced parent involvement and commitment to school success.

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:**

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL’S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE STUDENT GROWTH, PROFICIENCY, AND COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS LEVELS AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

The Academy of Dover continues to make forward progress and academic growth. During the 2012/13 school year, the Academy of Dover made AYP, and exceeded the State average in the critical cells of Special Education (16% of our population), Title I (second highest in the State), and African American (which consist of 86% of our population). AOD continues to recognize our deficiency in Math, but continues to show increases in academic performance. In the cells mentioned above, the Academy of Dover exceeds the State average by as much as 15% (3<sup>rd</sup> grade African American), 65% (4<sup>th</sup> Grade Special Education Reading), 13 % (4<sup>th</sup> Grade Special Education Math), 15% (4<sup>th</sup> Grade African American Reading), and 13% (4<sup>th</sup> Grade African American Math)

	Reading 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Math 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Special needs Reading	Special Needs Math	Title I Reading	Title I Math	African American Reading	African American Math
State	71%	73%	31%	35%	65%	68%	57%	57%
AOD	72%	70%	55%	56%	71%	70%	77%	73%

	Reading 4 <sup>th</sup>	Math 4 <sup>th</sup>	Special needs Reading	Special Needs Math	Title I Reading	Title I Math	African American Reading	African American Math
State	73%	74%	35%	67%	67%	72%	62%	60%
AOD	79%	71%	100%	50%	79%	71%	77%	73%

The school recognizes that Mathematics continues to be an area of concern, so in collaboration with Innovative Schools, and the Department of Education's Curriculum Office, the Academy of Dover has developed a new Mathematics Curriculum with its foundation rooted in Real Math. We are also working with Innovative School in providing our staff professional development geared towards improving their Math Instruction Skills. All teaching staff has been participating in the creation of this new curriculum to insure they have a strong foundation. Students continue to be continuously tested under the RTI program; the following chart reflects student gains:

**DIBELS Data from Benchmark I – Benchmark II**  
**2012-2013 School Year**

**Kindergarteners' average growth in each skill area:**

- Letter Naming Fluency DIBELS (**LNF**) from **Sept - March +37**
- Phoneme Segmenting Fluency DIBELS (**PSF**) from **Dec - March +20**
- First Sounds Fluency DIBELS (**FSF**) from **Sept - Dec +37**
- Nonsense Word Fluency DIBELS (**NWF**) from **Dec – March +20**

**First Graders' average growth in each skill area:**

- Nonsense Word Fluency DIBELS (**NWF**) from **Sept - March +43 correct letter sounds & +18 whole words read (with complete & correct blending)**
- Oral Reading Fluency DIBELS (**ORF**) from **Dec - March +22**

**Second Graders' average growth:**

- Oral reading Fluency DIBELS (**ORF**) from **Sept - March +29**

**Third Graders' average growth in each skill area:**

- Oral reading Fluency DIBELS (**ORF**) from **Sept - March +19**
- **Daze (DIBELS Cloze assessment) from Sept. –March +10**

**Fourth Graders' average growth in each skill area:**

- Oral reading Fluency DIBELS (**ORF**) from **Sept - March +27**
- **Daze (DIBELS Cloze assessment) from Sept. –March +14**

Data collected from the previous year's DCAS scores were used to develop plans to work on individual areas of needs. After school, "DCAS Boot Camp," was conducted for students who were struggling.

**FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:**

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

Economic Viability

Academy of Dover continues to provide the Department of Education monthly financial updates as required by conditions set forth in the 2007 renewal. The Academy of Dover continues to be independently audited and the results of this audit are forwarded to the Department of Education.

The Academy of Dover continues to work with Innovative Schools in ensuring that financial reporting is conducted and budget plans are strictly adhered to. Mosica continues to be a challenge, but does not affect our financial viability. With the addition of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the Academy of Dover has seen an increase in enrollment, which exceeds our chartered enrollment maximums.

**ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:**

WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS IN MEETING ITS ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS, REPORTING, AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS MEASURED BY THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK? PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THESE AREAS.

Organizational Performance Framework: 2012-2013 Overall Rating: Meets Standard

The Academy of Dover continues to struggle with meeting attendance goals as the issue is directly related to our extended school year. Note: AOD has a 200 day school year. The Academy of Dover has attempted to modify its charter to reflect a 190 day school year, which we believe will directly impact our attendance issue, but was disapproved by the Accountability Committee.

**STATUS OF CONDITIONS PLACED UPON THE CHARTER:**

Include:

- A status update of any conditions imposed upon the school's charter,
- Your plan to meet any conditions that are currently "not met".

Academy of Dover has met all conditions placed on it during its last renewal.

## STUDENT RETENTION GOALS AND TARGETS:

Include:

- The percentage of students who have re-enrolled from the prior year according to ESEA demographic categories,
- The number of students who have left your school before the year is over or before the end of the charter school's grade configuration per ESEA demographic category,
- A summary of why students chose to leave,
- The percentage of students who did not pass from one grade to the next,
- Your plan to improve student retention and average daily attendance if less than your stated targets.

The Academy of Dover retains approximately 90% of its students from one year to the next. The Academy of Dover loses approximately 15 students after the school year begins. Some of these losses are due to acceptance in other Charter School where they have siblings, or are leaving the area. On the average 1% of students are retained, many of which are special needs students who have not met their goals.

We have given the staff additional training in working with Special Needs Students, and have started a Special Needs Parents Support Group to better assist parents in working with their Special Needs Students.

## INNOVATION:

Include:

- A discussion of innovation occurring at the school in areas including, but not limited to, curriculum development, instructional strategies, school culture and climate, community and parent engagement, professional development, operations and management practices, and extra-curricular programming.

The Academy of Dover has created a Math Curriculum that does not prescribe to a single Scientifically proven method, but takes best practices from multiple methods i.e. Singapore Math. We have put a great deal of emphasis on teacher collaboration and training in effective methods of teaching math.

Through the use of newsletters, AOD night, and our, "passport" program, we continue to increase the level of parent involvement.

Through the use of Title II monies, we are able to assist with teacher educations, and have given monetary incentives to quality staff.

AOD continuously focuses on professional development and training. Teachers are sent to professional development to better enhance their teaching skills.

The Academy of Dover has excellent programs such as: Art, where students are exposed to all mediums of art. Students are exposed to mediums like pottery as early as kindergarten. Music: AOD continues to have the only elementary marching band in the State, students can begin learning an instrument as early as Kindergarten. We also

provide additional music lessons in guitar, piano, and violin after school. Our chorus continues to thrive and was recently highlighted the Delaware Annual Charter School Network Awards.

We have implemented a technology program for all students to place emphasis on computer skills and an Entrepreneurship Program were students create avatars that are presented with fiscal challenges.