

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name: Gateway Lab School

Mailing Address: 2501 Centerville Road
City/State/Zip: Wilmington, DE 19808

Email: catherine.dolan@gls.k12.de.us
Telephone: 302-633-4091
Fax: 302-633-5680
Website: www.gatewaylabschool.org



Head of School, Catherine Dolan

9/30/14

Date

Head of School

Date



Board President, Joyce Henderson

9/30/14

Date

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 1st (September 30th for renewing charter schools)

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Academic Performance	3
Financial Performance	4
Organizational Performance	6
Status of Conditions Placed Upon Charter	7
Student Retention Goals and Targets	8
Innovation	10

ABSTRACT

Gateway Lab School (GLS) currently operates as a charter school authorized by the Delaware Department of Education. GLS, modeled on the Lab School of Washington D.C. was granted its charter in 2011 and continues to be managed by an Operating Governing Board and By-Laws, as established within the prescribed guidelines in the DDOE Regulations for Charter Schools. Gateway Lab School is located at 2501 Centerville Road, Wilmington, Delaware. Gateway Lab School was granted a charter modification in fiscal year 2014 to use the Alternative Framework for Assessment, taking effect FY 2015. The Alternative Framework will more equitably assess the growth of Gateway's unique population.

Gateway currently serves 208 students in grades Third through Eighth. Our student population is 64.4% White, 26.4% African American, 6.7% Hispanic, 1.4% Asian, 0.5% American Indian, and 0.5% Multi-racial. 27.9% of our student population is considered "low-income." 58.7% of our student population is classified as Special Education students.

Mission Statement

The mission of Gateway Lab School is to provide an extraordinary educational opportunity for children who are struggling to achieve academic success in a traditional school environment, utilizing research-based intervention strategies and a highly tailored, arts-based learning environment that seeks to identify and capitalize on a student's strengths and interests.

To become a resource to the community as a center for the professional development and education of teachers, parents and students by providing access to the latest research-based curriculum, technology and training.

Vision Statement

The vision of Gateway Lab School is to prepare children who have struggled academically in the traditional classroom for success in high school and beyond. We do this by using an academically rigorous, arts-infused curriculum aligned to Common Core standards in an atmosphere that values each student's individuality and unique gifts, and helps them to articulate their learning styles, which will lead to self-advocacy.

The Gateway Lab School philosophy is based on the belief that children, who have struggled to achieve academic success in the traditional school environment and learn differently, have the capacity to achieve academic success and to realize individual learning potential. The teachers and staff of Gateway Lab School are committed to developing a sense of inquiry and love of learning in each student. This is accomplished by focusing on providing interventions in the areas of reading, oral and written language, math and motor skills.

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.

Gateway Lab School's (GLS) overall academic rating is Does Not Meet Standard on the Academic Performance Framework. (See Appendix A)

The nature of each student's progress at Gateway Lab School is very individualistic. Through our model, we seek to provide our teachers with the tools and training they require to meet the needs of our neuro-diverse population. We are confident that our dedicated, talented, and highly qualified teachers are making an impact that positively influences student performance. Academic performance targets are being addressed school wide with small group instruction and teacher professional development in Common Core standards. The faculty began implementing the RTI model with the goal of using data to inform instruction.

STRENGTHS

Gateway Lab School has demonstrated continuous incremental gains over the past three years related to the percent of students meeting growth goals in the areas of Math and ELA as measured by the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). The SY 2014 gain in math (19%) even outpaced the previous year's gain in ELA (11%).

A noted strength of Gateway Lab School is the ethic of constant improvement that permeates all levels from the Board of Directors to the faculty. To this end, the administration, with the board's encouragement, sought a Comprehensive School Review (CSR) through the Delaware Academy for School Leadership, University of Delaware, to identify and address the needs of the school and its students.

The findings of the CSR specifically recognized, "a positive school environment that supports students' emotional and social needs." The administration of Gateway Lab School has ensured that all classroom teachers received extensive training in the Responsive Classroom™ model. The board acknowledges that implementing the Responsive Classroom model with fidelity as specified in the charter has led to the creation of this positive environment. The administration also conducts weekly student assemblies to build community and character values. Staff and students have embraced the "Gladiator Values" of honor, loyalty, truth and courage to address conflict resolution and bullying. Gateway continues its commitment to address the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral goals of each student in an integrated approach.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

As Gateway Lab School grows and develops its own identity, the need to revisit the guiding principles adopted from The Lab School of Washington has arisen. The administration and board is already beginning to address this issue. The leadership team of GLS is stronger than ever, but there is a need to clearly define roles and responsibilities, especially when it comes to the instructional focus. The board and administration is seeking to eliminate time and procedural inefficiencies.

The administration is looking to plan and support implementation of rigorous, standards-based curriculum and instruction practices through ongoing professional development. The administration has recognized that para-educators are not being utilized effectively. Plans to address this are being considered. Gateway is moving toward an instructional focus with the goal of raising the level of academic rigor for all students.

The administration and board recognizes that many traditional pre-service teacher programs do not prepare teachers to implement arts-based methodologies as outlined in the charter. Steps are being taken to adequately train staff in this alternative way of delivering instruction. Along with this comes the need to develop and monitor implementation of daily lesson plans based on formative assessment data, and incorporating research-based instructional practices that ensure multiple checks for understanding. Faculty requires training in coordinating instructional strategies, developing common assessments and analyzing student data to inform instruction. Formalizing an annual professional development plan will assist in this.

Finally, the board and administration recognizes the need to prioritize and clearly articulate instructional expectations to faculty as the first step towards greater accountability.

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.

Based on the 2013-2014 Delaware Financial Performance Framework, GLS has been rated as Meets Standard. (See Appendix B)

The following governance and reporting requirements have been and continue to be met by GLS:

- Budget oversight committee—Del Code, Title 14, Section 1508
- Monthly financial reporting—Del Code, Title 14, Section 509(k)
- Audit—Del Code, Title 14, Section 513
- Web posting of check register—Del Code, Title 14, Section 1509
- Web posting of 990—Del Code, Title 14, Section 509(k)
- Annual report—Del Code, Title 14, Section 513

External auditors have audited school finances annually and have found them to be sound and healthy. It is anticipated that this performance will continue into the future. The school's financial future is secure.

The school's budget is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors on an annual basis. A monthly financial report is reviewed by the Citizens Budget Oversight Committee (CBOC) and the Board of Directors. The school operates with the required contingency and a financial surplus to ensure fiscal viability and security.

Appendix L

Gateway Lab School is using the services of Neely & Spence Financial Consulting Services, LLC to assist with budgeting and planning. They prepare reports for weekly review by the school's Finance Committee, which include monthly expenditure detail reports, staffing models based on enrollment, preliminary budget reports, and cash flow reports. This careful review of the school's finances is helpful in preparation for CBOC and Board meetings. Those involved in the school's leadership make financial decisions that are well informed as they cast vision and plan for the school's future. Both the Board of Directors and the CBOC are involved in financial decision-making.

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.

Based on the 2013-2014 Delaware Organizational Performance Framework, GLS has been rated as Meets Standard. (See Appendix C)

Educational Program

Due to GLS’s high percentage of students with IEP’s, there is a higher than average number of students who require accommodations when taking the ELA DCAS test. One of these accommodations is the use of an electronic or live reader. In SY 2014, 11 students at GLS were given a reader for the DCAS, and these students were flagged as “non-participants”, which caused GLS to fall short of the 95% statutory requirement for participation. All of these students have this particular accommodation written into their Individual Education Plans (IEP), which are federally protected by law. GLS administration is working with the Delaware Department of Education to take this issue under consideration.

Measure 1b of the Organizational Performance Framework (see Appendix C) assures that GLS is compliant with legal requirements for students with disabilities and English Language Learners

Governance and Reporting

GLS was rated “Meets Standard” for Governance and Reporting according to the Organizational Performance Framework. There are several items that GLS is addressing to ensure continued compliance.

In school year 2013-2014 GLS did not have the minutes of CBOC meetings posted on its website. That error has been corrected, and the minutes have been posted.

In school year 2013-2014 GLS did not meet the statutory requirement to post board meeting agendas on its website. Contributing to this was the sudden illness of the GLS board president, who required significant time away from the board for convalescence. The addition of a technology coordinator to the faculty has assured that the website is kept up to date.

Students and Employees

GLS received “Meets Standards” in 2013-2014 for protecting the rights of all students, meeting all staff credentialing requirements, and respecting employee rights. The area of attendance goals was rated Meets Standard as well. There are several items GLS is addressing to ensure continued compliance.

The board has adopted a policy to address bullying. Board Policy 05.3 “Policy on Prohibiting Bullying and Cyberbullying” has been posted to the GLS website

On Measure 1c, GLS received a “Does Not Meet” rating. The percentage of highly qualified teachers was 82.5%. This was due to a single teacher who did not obtain the necessary

certification for the content area in which she was teaching. This educator was responsible for teaching six classes a week, which affected the school average disproportionately.

School Environment and Additional Obligations

GLS received “Meets Standard” on all applicable criteria for the 2013-2014 school year. The school is in compliance with facilities and transportation requirements, complying with health and safety requirement and all other obligations.

STATUS OF CONDITIONS PLACED UPON THE CHARTER:

Gateway Lab School did not have any conditions imposed on its charter for the 2013-2014 school year.

STUDENT RETENTION GOALS AND TARGETS:

The percentage of students who re-enrolled from the prior year according to ESEA demographic categories:

	Attrition	% Re-enrolled
Caucasian	9	92%
African-American	7	84%
Hispanic	1	93%
Multiracial	1	0%
Native American	N/A	100%
Asian	1	75%
Total	19	89%

A total of 19 students withdrew from GLS at the end of the school year. 4 students moved out of state or out of the area, 7 transferred to a different public or charter school, 1 transferred to private school, and 1 transferred to homeschool. Of these 19 students, there are two sets of siblings, bringing the number of families that did not re-enroll down to 17.

89% of students re-enrolled to GLS at the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

The number of students who left Gateway Lab School before the year was over or before the end of the charter school's grade configuration per ESEA demographic category:

A total of 6 students withdrew from GLS prior to the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Of those students, 3 relocated out of state, 2 moved to homeschool, and 1 returned to his feeder pattern school.

A summary of why students chose to leave:

Gateway's school-wide focus is on instruction through arts integration while providing socio-emotional support to all students. Although this model works well for most students, some require an environment that provides a program structured to address their profound instructional and clinical needs.

The percentage of students who did not pass from one grade to the next:

No students were retained at the end of SY 2013-2014.

Gateway Lab School's plan to improve student retention and average daily attendance if less than its stated targets:

Gateway's daily attendance goal has been met for SY 2013-2014.

INNOVATION:

Leadership

With new school leaders came a restructuring of the administration for the 2013-2014 school year. Gateway implemented an administrative model that utilized a Head of School and Assistant Head of School. In addition to extensive ongoing collaboration, each assumed responsibilities best matching their skill sets. Both made instructional leadership a priority and provided extensive support to staff. The Administration made use of a development coach to improve their implementation of DPAS II evaluations.

Instruction

Gateway Lab School contracted with the Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL), to conduct a Comprehensive School Review. During the 2013-2014 school year, Gateway began implementing a number of initiatives with regards to curriculum and instruction. The initiatives included RTI grouping for students in both reading and math and infusing instruction with higher level questioning. Gateway also increased instructional time by reorganizing the daily schedule and decreasing the time spend during class transitions. School leadership, in conjunction with a committee of teachers and board members identified the need for new math and ELA curricula.

Technology

Technology flourished in the building during the 2013-2014 school year. In an effort to increase student literacy and love for reading, Gateway applied for and was awarded a literacy grant, which allowed for the purchase of 100 mini iPads. Students utilize the iPads and the extensive Big Universe library on a daily basis for independent reading. Gateway also purchased several carts of Chromebooks. Teachers are able to bring the carts into their classrooms for the seamless integration of technology into instruction. Teachers also execute engaging lessons with their own iPads paired with Apple TV. The number of books read by students increased dramatically.

Gateway's expanding use of technology has tremendously benefited both general and special education students. Most notably, the number of children receiving assistive technology services increased throughout the year. Those students utilize a variety of devices for word processing, augmentative alternative communication, and managing executive functioning skills.

Extra-Curricular Programming

The 2013-2014 school year brought a number of additional extra-curricular activities to Gateway. Intramural soccer, tennis, and flag football were added to our already established running and basketball programs. Zentangle Club, Math League, and Chess Club provided students the opportunity to showcase their intellect, while Fishing Club fostered their love of the great outdoors. Additionally, Gateway added a Recording Club, where students practiced recording synthesized music, and a Reporting Club, which reported the school news on a weekly basis. Lastly, Gateway's music program became even more robust with the addition of a school band.

Parent Involvement

Gateway Lab School began holding its monthly Parent Advisory Council meetings immediately preceding the Gateway Friends and Family (parent volunteer organization) meetings, making it easier for parents to participate in both. Consequently, parents made themselves available to plan and/or assist with a plethora of successful and well-attended events, including the Back to School Nights, Meet and Greet, Field Day, Family Fun Night, and Fall Festival. Parents were also an intricate part of our Fishing and Chess Clubs, school band, and nutrition program.

School Climate and Culture

Gateway Lab School prides itself on having a nurturing school environment where students are valued and celebrated for their differences. This year, Gateway's new Head of School, Catherine Dolan, established the Gladiator Values – honor, loyalty, truth, and courage. The importance of these values was reinforced at engaging and community building weekly assemblies. Further support was provided to students through the Project Crossroads social skills program. In addition, Gateway reaffirmed its dedication to the Responsive Classroom approach by training all new staff members and retraining existing staff members. The CSR specifically noted Gateway's nurturing school climate as a strength.

Nutrition Program

Gateway's new nutrition program serves both breakfast and lunch. Students and staff have access to nutritious and freshly prepared meals daily. The nutrition program was well received by students, parents, and faculty, and Gateway looks forward to the growth of the program in the coming years.

Transition plan career interviews

The school guidance counselor meets with 8th grade students to plan future academic and career-oriented goals. Students are offered assistance in researching and applying to high schools.

Student Intervention Team (SIT) team

The Gateway Student Intervention Team, a panoply of faculty representing each department, meets on an ongoing basis to address issues related to specific students as identified by teachers. Once referred to the SIT team, research is done and a plan is implemented to address the identified academic or behavioral issue. The team continues to meet to monitor student and teacher response to the intervention.