



Comments on the New 2020-21 New Charter Application for the Proposed Philadelphia Collegiate School for Boys

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Public Citizens for Children and Youth**

January 29, 2021

My name is ML Wernecke and I am the Director of the PA Charter Performance Center, a new initiative of Public Citizens for Children and Youth. The Center is dedicated to producing unbiased, accurate, and timely information to advance sound state-level charter school policy and I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the application for the proposed Philadelphia Collegiate School for Boys. My comments fall into three areas.

First, the application does not sufficiently demonstrate that the Philadelphia Collegiate School for Boys will provide comprehensive learning experiences to students or that its programs will enable students to meet the academic standards under 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4.

The applicant has operated the Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys (BCSB) since 2015 with a current enrollment of 477 students in grades 4 to 8. The applicant is seeking a charter for a K-12 school in Philadelphia with 1,268 seats (K-8 with 740 seats in the first five years). At scale, the Philadelphia school would be over 2.5 times larger than the existing school in Baltimore.

The applicant's vision of a much larger school in Philadelphia is concerning in light of the BCSB performance on academic and growth measures. According to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), BCSB earned 73.3 out of 176.5 total points on overall school performance which, in comparison to other schools, gives it a two-star rating out of five and a percentile rank of 4 (for Elementary) and 19 (for Middle). In fairness, it is laudable that 98% of BCSB's elementary and middle school students were *not* chronically absent. However, students at both levels underperformed in reading and math despite strong attendance. MSDE's 2018-19 BCSB School Report Card is attached to these comments.

The best predictor of future performance in Philadelphia is BCSB's current performance in Baltimore. Based on the MSDE data, it appears unlikely that the applicant would be able to achieve the academic goals outlined in the proposal, especially given that they are proposing opening a much larger school in a new city on a tight timeline.

Second, the proposed school risks destabilizing established schools that are already demonstrating high academic growth.

The applicant states that it is currently recruiting students in six zip codes: 19119, 19126, 19138, 19140, 19144, and 19150. As shown below, 17,704 students attend 34 charter and traditional public schools in these neighborhoods. Adding new seats at a new school will inevitably reduce enrollment at existing public schools, destabilizing schools that are making progress.

Pennsylvania’s PVAAS growth measures are reliable and validated indicators of improved school performance. PVAAS uses PSSA test results to gauge student academic growth and assess whether schools are making more progress than other schools in the commonwealth. As the table below shows, *three out of four of the schools (76%) in this applicant’s recruitment zone are at or above the norm for the state.* This means students in these schools are progressing at or more than would be expected based on statewide trends. Authorizing new schools at the expense of schools that are already making progress does not support the goal of enabling students to meet academic standards.

	Enrollment	Number of Schools			Total Number of Schools
		Exceed PA Standard for Growth	Meet PA Standard for Growth	Below PA Standard for Growth	
19119	1223	2		1	3
19126	1221		3		3
19138	2469	2		2	4
19140	7830	9	2	3	14
19144	3701	4	3		7
19150	1260		1	2	3
Total	17704	17	9	8	34
Share		50%	26%	24%	

Source for Growth Tiers: Philadelphia Schools Partnership, *K-8 School Quality, Choice & Access in Philadelphia*, January 13, 2021 and author calculations

Finally, the applicant lacks strong local leadership and sustainable support.

Note: Appendices to the application are not posted on the Charter School Office website, complicating efforts to evaluate leadership qualifications. PCCY has previously requested that appendices be posted on the website and we respectfully renew this request.

Based on the summaries in the narrative, it appears that only two of eight founding members (Sellers and Justice) and one of five board members (Spain) reside or have significant work experience in Philadelphia. None of these individuals appear to have an educational background. The lack of local connections and experience will complicate efforts to bring up a

new school, especially when problems arise. For example, the application describes how BCSB was required to move three times in its first five years. While this is an accomplishment, it would be more difficult to achieve outside of their hometown of Baltimore and raises the question of whether the applicant has demonstrated sufficient sustainable support.

If the Board of Education chooses to authorize new seats in any new charter schools, we urge you to do so in a manner that will not result in a net increase in total charter school seats as this would negatively affect the availability of funding to educate students attending schools operated directly by the District.

Thank you for the opportunity to add this statement to the record.



Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys

2018 - 2019 School Report Card



2 OUT OF 5 STARS

Percentile Rank: 4 (Elementary), 19 (Middle)

Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys (0375)
Grade Levels: Elementary/Middle
County: Baltimore City

900 Woodbourne Ave
Baltimore, MD 21212
Phone: 443-642-5320

HOW DID MY SCHOOL DO OVERALL?

Overall school performance is determined by a combination of academic and school quality indicators. The total earned points percent is provided as well as a percentile rank and a star designation.

INDICATOR	POSSIBLE POINTS	EARNED POINTS*	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT
Academic Achievement (E/M)	20.0 / 20.0	5.7 / 5.2	⊗ / ⊗	✓ / ⊗
Academic Progress (E/M)	35.0 / 31.5	10.1 / 12.4	na / na	⊗ / ⊗
Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (E/M)	na / na	na / na	na / na	na / na
School Quality and Student Success (E/M)	35.0 / 35.0	20.2 / 19.8	na / na	✓ / ✓
TOTAL POINTS:	90.0 / 86.5	35.9 / 37.4		

$$\frac{\text{Total Earned Points: } (35.9 + 37.4) \text{ 73.3}}{\text{Total Points Possible: } (90.0 + 86.5) \text{ 176.5}} =$$

41%

TOTAL EARNED PERCENT

* Earned points may not equal total points due to rounding. ✓ =Met ⊗ =Not Met

ELEMENTARY GRADE SPAN

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT E

HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM ON STATE TESTS?

The academic achievement indicator is a combination of the percent of students scoring "proficient" or higher on state tests in Math and English Language Arts, and the average performance level of students on state tests.



MEASURE	RESULTS	EARNED POINTS*
Percent Proficient Mathematics	14.4%	0.7 out of 5.0
Percent Proficient English Language Arts	11.4%	0.6 out of 5.0
Average Performance Level Mathematics	2.3	2.3 out of 5.0
Average Performance Level English Language Arts	2.1	2.1 out of 5.0

5.7
EARNED POINTS

ACADEMIC PROGRESS E

HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM ON OTHER ACADEMIC MEASURES AND GROWTH?

The academic progress indicator consists of multiple academic measures. Schools are measured on the growth of students over time on Math and English language arts state tests, and on earning credit for a well rounded curriculum.



MEASURE	RESULTS	EARNED POINTS*
Percent Proficient Science	2%	0.1 out of 5.0
Student Growth Percentile Mathematics	43	5.5 out of 12.5
Student Growth Percentile English Language Arts	36.5	4.5 out of 12.5
Credit for Well Rounded Curriculum	0%	0 out of 5.0

10.1
EARNED POINTS

PROGRESS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

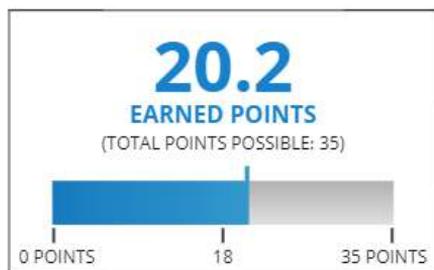
HOW MANY ENGLISH LEARNERS ARE MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH?

The Progress towards English language proficiency indicator measures school success of English learners on track toward achieving proficiency in the English language.

There is insufficient data to provide accountability results for this school.

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT?

This indicator includes the percent of students not absent 10 percent or more school days during the year, a school survey, and the percent of students enrolled in a well rounded curriculum.



MEASURE	RESULTS	EARNED POINTS*
Students not chronically absent	98%	15 out of 15.0
School Survey - Student	4.3	3 out of 7.0
School Survey - Educator	3.9	1.2 out of 3.0
Access to Well Rounded Curriculum	10%	1 out of 10.0

20.2
EARNED POINTS

Educator and Student school survey results range from 1 to 10.

HOW DID MY SCHOOL DO ON ACADEMIC MEASURES?

16
EARNED POINTS
(TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 55)

0 POINTS 28 55 POINTS

ALL TARGET(S) MET

✘

IMPROVEMENT

✘

ACADEMIC MEASURES ARE A COMBINATION OF:

- Academic Achievement
- Academic Progress

HOW DID MY SCHOOL DO ON MEASURES OF SCHOOL QUALITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS?

20
EARNED POINTS
(TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 35)

0 POINTS 18 35 POINTS

ALL TARGET(S) MET

n/a

IMPROVEMENT

✔

SCHOOL QUALITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS MEASURES ARE A COMBINATION OF:

- Students not chronically absent
- School Survey - Student
- School Survey - Educator
- Access to Well Rounded Curriculum

Achievement (E/M/H) ELEMENTARY GRADE SPAN	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	MATH			ELA		
	PERCENT	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT	PERCENT	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT
Black/African Amer.	13.8 %	✘	✔	11.3 %	✘	✔
Students w/Disabilities	7.1 %	✘	✔	0 %	✘	✘
Econ. Disadvantaged	11.1 %	✔	✔	8.5 %	✘	✔
All Students	14.4 %	✘	✔	11.4 %	✘	✔

* Only Student Groups with 10 or more students are reported. Student Groups include the following; American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino of any Race, White, Two or More Races, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, or English Learners. ✔ =Met ✘ =Not Met

MIDDLE GRADE SPAN

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT M

HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM ON STATE TESTS?

The academic achievement indicator is a combination of the percent of students scoring "proficient" or higher on state tests in Math and English Language Arts, and the average performance level of students on state tests.



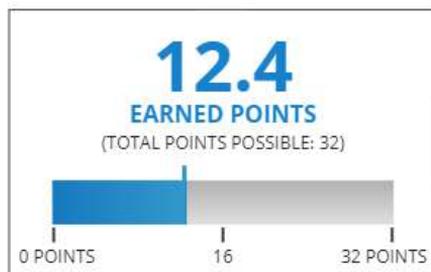
MEASURE	RESULTS	EARNED POINTS*
Percent Proficient Mathematics	7.8%	0.4 out of 5.0
Percent Proficient English Language Arts	11%	0.6 out of 5.0
Average Performance Level Mathematics	2.1	2.1 out of 5.0
Average Performance Level English Language Arts	2.2	2.2 out of 5.0

5.2
EARNED POINTS

ACADEMIC PROGRESS M

HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM ON OTHER ACADEMIC MEASURES AND GROWTH?

The academic progress indicator consists of multiple academic measures. Schools are measured on the growth of students over time on Math and English language arts state tests, and on earning credit for a well rounded curriculum.



MEASURE	RESULTS	EARNED POINTS*
Percent Proficient Science	3.6%	0.1 out of 3.5
Student Growth Percentile Mathematics	41	5 out of 12.5
Student Growth Percentile English Language Arts	43	5.5 out of 12.5
Credit for Well Rounded Curriculum	60%	1.8 out of 3.0

12.4
EARNED POINTS

PROGRESS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

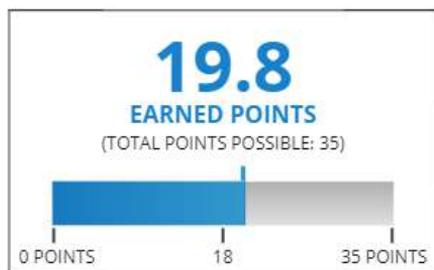
HOW MANY ENGLISH LEARNERS ARE MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH?

The Progress towards English language proficiency indicator measures school success of English learners on track toward achieving proficiency in the English language.

There is insufficient data to provide accountability results for this school.

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT?

This indicator includes the percent of students not absent 10 percent or more school days during the year, a school survey, and the percent of students enrolled in a well rounded curriculum.



MEASURE	RESULTS	EARNED POINTS*
Students not chronically absent	97.8%	15 out of 15.0
School Survey - Student	3.6	2.5 out of 7.0
School Survey - Educator	3.9	1.2 out of 3.0
Access to Well Rounded Curriculum	10.6%	1.1 out of 10.0

19.8
EARNED POINTS

Educator and Student school survey results range from 1 to 10.

HOW DID MY SCHOOL DO ON ACADEMIC MEASURES?

16
EARNED POINTS
(TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 55)

0 POINTS 28 55 POINTS

ALL TARGET(S) MET

✘

IMPROVEMENT

✘

ACADEMIC MEASURES ARE A COMBINATION OF:

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HOW DID MY SCHOOL DO ON MEASURES OF SCHOOL QUALITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS?

20
EARNED POINTS
(TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 35)

0 POINTS 18 35 POINTS

ALL TARGET(S) MET

n/a

IMPROVEMENT

✔

SCHOOL QUALITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS MEASURES ARE A COMBINATION OF:

- Students not chronically absent
- School Survey - Student
- School Survey - Educator
- Access to Well Rounded Curriculum

**Achievement (E/M/H)
MIDDLE GRADE SPAN**

	MATH			ELA		
	PERCENT	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT	PERCENT	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT
Black/African Amer.	7.2 %	✘	✘	10 %	✘	✘
Students w/Disabilities	4.1 %	✘	✔	4.2 %	✘	✘
Econ. Disadvantaged	5.8 %	✘	✘	11.5 %	✘	✘
All Students	7.8 %	✘	✘	11 %	✘	✘

* Only Student Groups with 10 or more students are reported. Student Groups include the following: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino of any Race, White, Two or More Races, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, or English Learners. ✔ =Met ✘ =Not Met

what does my school rating mean?

Overall school star designations are determined by a combination of academic and school quality indicators that are used to differentiate and identify schools to ensure that all schools are meeting the needs of all students. Academic indicators are used to determine 65 percent of the possible points, while the school quality and student success indicator determines 35 percent of the possible points. Possible points vary by school and year, however school ratings are based on the total earned points percent. Percentile ranks of each school is reported and is based on the grades in the school (Elementary, Middle and/or High School).

How are star ratings determined?

STAR RATING

-  5 stars when a school has at least 75% of total earned points percent
-  4 stars when a school has at least 60% but less than 75% of total earned points percent
-  3 stars when a school has at least 45% but less than 60% of total earned points percent

STAR RATING

-  2 stars when a school has at least 30% but less than 45% of total earned points percent
-  1 star when a school has less than 30% of total earned points percent

What do the performance indicators mean?

Academic Achievement

The *Academic Achievement* indicator measures the performance of students in a school who demonstrated proficient skills and knowledge in a student's academic program. As measured by MCAP, this indicator is comprised of student achievement measures in math and English Language Arts. School points are determined by the percentage of students achieving proficiency, and the school's average performance level.

Academic Progress

The *Academic Progress* indicator measures the performance of students in a school who show meaningful relative growth in math and English Language Arts (Academic Growth) and who demonstrate proficient skills and knowledge in Science and Social Studies, and who pass transitional grade course requirements (Credit for Completion of a Well-Rounded Curriculum). School points are determined for Academic Growth by student growth percentiles, for science and social studies by the percentage of students achieving proficiency, and for credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum by the percentage of students passing 5th or 8th grade coursework requirements.

Graduation Rate

The *Graduation Rate* indicator measures the performance of students in a school who graduate with a regular high school diploma. This indicator is comprised of two measures of a cohort of ninth grade students graduating within four years or five years, respectively.

Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency

The *Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency* indicator measures the performance of students in a school who show meaningful growth toward or have attained English language proficiency as measured by the MCAP test for English language learners. The goal for English language learner students is to attain English language proficiency within six years. School points are determined by the percentage of English Learners achieving or making progress towards attaining proficiency.

Readiness for Post-Secondary Success

The *Readiness for Postsecondary Success* indicator measures the performance of students in a school who are on track for graduation and those students who have completed high school coursework along with a rigorous or comprehensive co-curricular standard. School points are comprised of a school's percentage of 9th grade students earning at least four credits in required coursework and percentage of graduating or exiting students achieving a rigorous or comprehensive co-curricular standard.

School Quality and Student Success

The *School Quality and Student Success* indicator measures the performance of students in a school who regularly attend school, report positive perceptions of their school, and have actively engaged in rigorous and/or co-curricular academic coursework outside of traditional English Language Arts and Mathematics (elementary) or Science and Social Studies (middle). School points are comprised of a school's percentage of not chronically absent students, school survey results, and measures of access to a well-rounded curriculum.