



State Public Charter School Commission 2014 Initial Proposal Recommendation Report

Charter Application for
IMAG Academy

Academic Performance Evaluators
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Introduction

In 2012, the Hawaii State Legislature passed a new charter school law, which instituted a rigorous, transparent accountability system that at the same time honors the autonomy and local decision-making of Hawaii's charter schools. The law created the State Public Charter School Commission ("Commission"), assigned it statewide chartering jurisdiction and authority, and directed it to enter into State Public Charter School Contracts ("Charter Contract") with every existing charter school and every newly approved charter school applicant.

The 2014 Request for Proposals ("RFP") and the evaluation process are rigorous and demanding. The process is meant to ensure that prospective schools have a plan with a high likelihood of success and operators that possess the capacity to implement sound strategies, practices, and methodologies.

Initial Proposal Evaluation Process

The Commission examined feedback from its 2013 Application Cycle and researched the application processes from several states to develop a new, multiphase charter school application evaluation process. This recommendation report reflects only the evaluation results from the Initial Proposal phase.

Academic performance evaluators reviewed Initial Proposals, which focus on the academic plan portion of the application, against the minimum quality thresholds contained within the Initial Proposal Evaluation Criteria.

The duty of the evaluators is to recommend whether each applicant should, based on its Initial Proposal, proceed to the Final Application phase or withdraw voluntarily from the current application cycle. The authority and responsibility to decide the Commission's official recommendation to each applicant rests with the Commissioners. Ultimately, each applicant elects whether to proceed to submit a Final Application or withdraw voluntarily from the current application cycle.

Report Contents

Initial Proposal Overview

Basic information about the proposed school as presented in the Initial Proposal.

Recommendation

An overall judgment regarding whether the Initial Proposal meets the minimum quality thresholds.

Evaluation

Analysis of the Initial Proposal is based on five primary areas of the academic plan as presented: (1) Curriculum and Instructional Design; (2) School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure; (3) School Culture; (4) Special Populations and At-Risk Students; and (5) Academic Plan Capacity.

Using the Initial Proposal Evaluation Thresholds, evaluators identify responses that do not meet the minimum quality threshold and deemed them "Substantially Inadequate." A response is "Substantially Inadequate" if it: (1) fails to address the RFP requirements or criteria for approval; (2) presents unreasonable plans or ideas; (3) lacks essential information; or (4) raises significant concerns about the applicant's capacity.

If an Initial Proposal does not receive a "Substantially Inadequate" rating in any of the five primary areas of the academic plans, evaluators will recommend that the applicant proceed to completing and submitting a Final Application.

Initial Proposal Overview

Proposed School Name

IMAG Academy

Mission and Vision

Mission: The IMAG Academy will be a school with high social and academic expectations. Community centered projects ensures our students experience how their knowledge and skills bring life to their surroundings, triggering their innate curiosity and creativity regardless of socioeconomic background or language challenges.

Vision: The IMAG Academy will provide a positive view of the world as we give our students and staff the permission to dream, environment to thrive, confidence to succeed, skills to act and the expectation to create a collaborative and peace-filled society.

Our students will be creators of innovative, mindful, and creative solutions to unpredictable situations as they transfer, adapt, and act upon their thinking, knowledge and skills obtained through The Academy's high expectations and rigorous academic standards.

Our student's will have a deep understanding that everyone and everything is connected and that innovation, collaboration, and mindfulness are pillars to sustainable and successful communities. They will excel in their social and academic abilities and they will be well-prepared and confident to make important decisions and succeed throughout their life; college, career or business ownership.

Geographic Location

Waipahu spans across six square miles from Leeward Community College to the entrance of Ewa. Although our exact location is not known at this time, we are hoping to locate our school in the area of the Filipino Community Center and the YMCA. This affords us the opportunity to partner with these centers for possible cafeteria services, auditorium and classroom space, and athletic and fitness activities.

In addition, this area also provides a number of other leasing opportunities to be creative with our initial space and facility requirements, as well as our growth over time. Lease rents in this area are also much lower and their spaces much larger in comparison to other business locations in the Waipahu zip code.

In addition, this area provides easy access from both Waipahu Street and Farrington Highway. It would also be located in the middle of two of the largest elementary schools, hopefully providing relief to their campuses.

Academic Plan Summary

The applicant proposes a school that will start in year one with a kindergarten class and a 7th and 8th grade class. It will expand to K-4 and 7-12 by year five and K-12 at full capacity in 2022 (seven years later). The proposal is for a school based on academic rigor, real world relevance, and a safe and nurturing family environment. There will be individual learning and achievement goals. There will also be Value-added projects based on real world experiences, which will have application in the areas of business, art, science, and engineering.

Enrollment Plan

Grade Level	Number of Students											
	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Capacity	
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2022	
Brick & Mortar/ Blended vs. Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual	B&M/ Blended	Virtual
K	60	--	60	--	60	--	60	--	60	--	60	--
1			60		60		60		60		60	
2					60		60		60		60	
3							60		60		60	
4									75		75	
5											75	
6											75	
7	75		75		75		75		75		75	
8	75		75		75		75		75		75	
9			75		75		75		75		75	
10					75		75		75		75	
11							75		75		75	
12									75		75	
Subtotals	210	0	345	0	480	0	615	0	765	0	75	0
Totals	210		345		480		615		765		915	

Executive Summary

IMAG Academy

Recommendation

Voluntarily Withdraw from the Application Process

Summary Analysis

The academic performance evaluators recommend that the applicant voluntarily withdraw from the application process because the responses within the Initial Proposal are “Substantially Inadequate” in meeting the minimum quality threshold in all five areas.

Overall, the proposal lacks essential information explaining how the numerous educational components and models proposed will be integrated to form a cohesive academic plan. This was the primary reason for “Substantially Inadequate” ratings for the Curriculum and Instructional Design and School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure areas.

In the School Culture area, the applicant fails to explain how the student and professional culture will be created, implemented, and maintained. The Special Populations and At-Risk Student area lacks essential information regarding addressing the academic needs of certain students, like students performing below grade level.

Finally, it appears that the two individuals who will play a substantial role in the implementation of the academic plan do not have the collective qualifications necessary.

The serious deficiencies in every area of this proposal warrant a strong recommendation that the applicant voluntarily withdraw from the application process this year.

Summary of Threshold Ratings

While applicants have an opportunity to make minor amendments to their academic plans through the Initial Proposal Amendment contained within the Final Application, changes that would need to be made to address minimum quality threshold deficiencies would typically be major amendments.

In order to receive a recommendation to proceed, the Initial Proposal must not be Substantially Inadequate in any of the five primary areas of the academic plan.

1. Curriculum and Instructional Design

Substantially Inadequate

2. School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

Substantially Inadequate

3. School Culture

Substantially Inadequate

4. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Substantially Inadequate

5. Academic Plan Capacity

Substantially Inadequate

Analysis

Threshold 1: Curriculum and Instructional Design

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should provide a framework for rigorous, quality instructional design that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and a cohesive plan for educating the proposed school’s target population, including appropriate curriculum.

The applicant’s response is “Substantially Inadequate” because it does not present a framework for rigorous, quality instructional design or a cohesive plan.

The applicant’s response lists a number of educational components and models (including, but not limited to, V-base projects, real world relevance, rigor relevance framework, School Family Framework, thinking continuum, and action continuum) but does not provide a cohesive plan for integrating them. There is no organization of the educational models and components or a description of how the various models and components interact with each other.

Further, the response does not present a framework for rigorous, quality instructional design. Disorganization in the curriculum detracts from the rigor and quality of the instructional design, and it is unclear how the various parts of the curriculum will demonstrate alignment from year to year.

Threshold 2: School Calendar, Schedule, and Staff Structure

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should present a school calendar and daily and weekly schedule reflecting the needs of the academic plan and also a demonstration of the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to collective bargaining agreements and their impacts on the proposed school’s calendar, schedule, and staffing.

The applicant’s response is “Substantially Inadequate” because it raises significant concerns about the proposed school’s daily and weekly schedule reflecting the academic plan as well as the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to collective bargaining agreements.

Because it is not clear how the various educational components and models will be integrated into a cohesive plan, it is also not clear whether the schedule reflects the needs of the academic plan. While possible, it seems unlikely that the schedule reflects the needs of the academic plan as currently described, primarily because of the sheer number of components and models described in the academic plan. Similarly, there are significant concerns with the applicant’s understanding of collective bargaining agreements and their impacts on the school calendar, schedule, and staffing.

Threshold 3: School Culture

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should describe the shared beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and behaviors that will promote high expectations and a positive academic and social environment; explain how that culture will be created, implemented, and maintained for students, teachers, parents or guardians, and administrators; and describe the professional culture of the proposed school.

The applicant’s response is “Substantially Inadequate” because it raises significant concerns about the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to school culture or ethos that will promote high expectations, a positive academic environment, and intellectual and social development for all students.

The applicant does not appear to understand or be committed to school culture, specifically how to create it. The proposal describes a positive, safe culture that would foster social and academic development. However, describing the culture is not enough, and the applicant fails to explain how it will create, implement, or maintain that culture or provide a plan for doing so. The proposed school’s professional culture is also described, but similarly, there is no plan or explanation of how it will be created, implemented, or maintained.

Threshold 4: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of all special populations (students with an Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 plan, English Language Learner students (“ELL”), students performing below grade level, etc.). The response should include a description of how the curriculum, instructional strategies, and resources are designed to meet the diverse needs of all students and the supports in place that will support underperforming students in meeting and exceeding standards over time.

The applicant’s response is “Substantially Inadequate” because it lacks essential information about the applicant’s understanding of and commitment to meeting the needs of all special populations.

While the proposal includes supports that address the social and emotional needs of all students, including special populations, the proposal lacks essential information regarding addressing academic needs for certain students. There appears to be support structures in place for the academic needs of special education and ELL students but not for other special populations (like students performing below grade level), outside of a kindergarten summer transition program.

Threshold 5: Academic Plan Capacity

Rating

Substantially Inadequate

A response to this section of the proposal should present evidence that the proposed school’s leadership and management team has the collective qualifications to implement the proposed school’s academic plan successfully. The response should also identify the key members of the applicant’s team that will play a substantial role in the successful implementation of the academic plan.

The applicant’s response is “Substantially Inadequate” because it lacks essential information and raises significant concerns about the collective qualifications of the applicant’s team to implement the academic plan successfully.

While there are a number of individuals mentioned or named in the proposal, most of them appear to be playing a marginal role as consultants or advisors. Even if the other individuals mentioned or named in the proposal were to play more of a part in implementing the plan, the roles of these individuals have not been identified. The two team members that will play a substantial role in the implementation of the academic plan and actually have identified roles do not appear to have the collective qualifications necessary. Neither have qualifications in the areas of school leadership, instruction, and assessment nor do they have any K-12 academic experience.

Evaluator Biographies

Beth Bulgeron

Before joining the Commission, Ms. Bulgeron was an administrator in charter schools in Chicago, Illinois and Santa Cruz, California. She has developed standards-based curriculum and assessments for public school districts and charter schools and has served as a curriculum consultant. Prior to that, she taught for five years in charter high schools. She earned her BA at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and her JD and LL.M. in Education Law and Policy at the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

Kirsten Rogers

Ms. Rogers is an Evaluation Specialist in the DOE's Accountability Section, which administers the public school system's statewide accountability program with a focus on developing and implementing educational indicators on school performance. She formerly served the Commission as its Academic Performance Specialist. She has experience as a middle school teacher at both a charter school in Tennessee and at Wheeler Intermediate, a DOE school in Hawaii. She is a Teach for America alumnus, a former corps member advisor, and former content community leader for the organization. She also holds a Master of Education in Teaching from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.