



**THE DISTRICT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL (SIAC)**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

TO

**The Board of Education
Regarding
Charter School Renewal Applications**

November 2013

Background

For many years, the District School Improvement and Accountability Committee (District SIAC) has reviewed applications for new charter schools and provided the Board of Education with recommendations on the granting of the requested charters, thereby establishing a new DPS school.

A school created by this process is established for a set term, usually three years, and at the end of such term may continue in existence only if its charter is renewed by the Board of Education. The District SIAC has taken on the additional responsibility of reviewing and making recommendations to the Board of Education regarding the renewals of the charters for schools whose contractual term is expiring at the end of a designated school year.

Process

To complete the review in a timely fashion, the District SIAC formed a committee from its membership that included:

Sherry Eastlund, Community Person
Valentina Flores, Ed.D, Community Person
Dorolyn Griebenaw, Community Person
Don Griebenaw, Community Person
Rita Montero, Community Person
Jacqui Shumway, DPS Parent
Jesse Sutherland, M.D., Community Person
Kristen Tourangeau, DPS Parent, *District SIAC Co-Chair*

The Office of School Reform and Innovation provided the committee with Part A and Part B of the charter school renewal applications and the 2011, 2012, and 2013 School Performance Frameworks (SPF's) for each school with supporting Source Data Reports. The School Performance Frameworks and CSAP/TCAP information were also used as tools for evaluating each of the charter schools. The committee met to consider each school and reach consensus on the recommendations.

On October 29, the committee presented the District SIAC with a progress report including an overview of its recommendations for the charter school renewal applications. The District SIAC adopted a resolution supporting the work of the committee to be sent to the Board of Education.

Criteria for Renewal

As in the past, the primary focus of the District SIAC's evaluation of the charter renewal applications was student achievement. The committee also took into consideration the School Performance Framework rating developed by the District. The school's response to the elements of Part A and Part B of the renewal application contributed supplemental material to the review.

Specifically, the committee examined the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on TCAP for reading, writing, and math for the years 2011, 2012, and 2013. Any trends that the data revealed were also part of the focus.

Renewal Recommendations:

Denver Justice High School

2013 SPF Rating – Accredited on Priority Watch

2012 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2011 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 1-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

Denver Justice High School services students who have historically had serious truancy behaviors. The school has a State designation of Alternative Educational Campus. This means that at least 95% of the school's student population meets one or more of the at-risk criteria, as determined by the State. These students have failed in traditional schools and might not be in school if they were not in an alternative school.

Although students in Denver Justice High School are not performing academically at an acceptable level, other indicators such as attendance, student satisfaction, parent satisfaction, and an increase in accreditation rating show growth or maintenance. The District SIAC determined that the school is making progress in its endeavor to serve a unique student population and should be renewed for at least one year.

Denver Science & Technology – Cole Middle School – DSST Cole Middle School

2013 SPF Rating – Distinguished

2012 SPF Rating – Distinguished

2011 SPF Rating – N/A

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 2-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

DSST Cole Middle School received ratings of Distinguished on its Student Performance Frameworks for the past two years. Although some TCAP scores had a slight dip in 2013, the scores were still above those of the District.

With regard to schools that have not completed the grade level build out, the District SIAC recommends shorter renewal terms until all grades are filled. We recommend a two-year renewal in this instance, as the two-year renewal will allow the school to have additional years of data.

Denver School of Science & Technology – GVR Campus High School (DSST-GVR High School)

2013 SPF Rating – Distinguished

2012 SPF Rating—Distinguished

2011 SPF Rating – N/A

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 2-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

DSST-GVR High School has had Distinguished ratings on the SPF for the first two years of its operation.

With regard to schools that have not completed the grade level build out, the District SIAC recommends shorter renewal terms until all grades are filled. We recommend a two-year renewal in this instance, as the two-year renewal will allow the school to have additional years of data. The next renewal will include data for 9th through 12th grades.

Escuela Tlatelolco

2013 SPF Rating – Accredited On Probation

2012 SPF Rating – Accredited On Probation

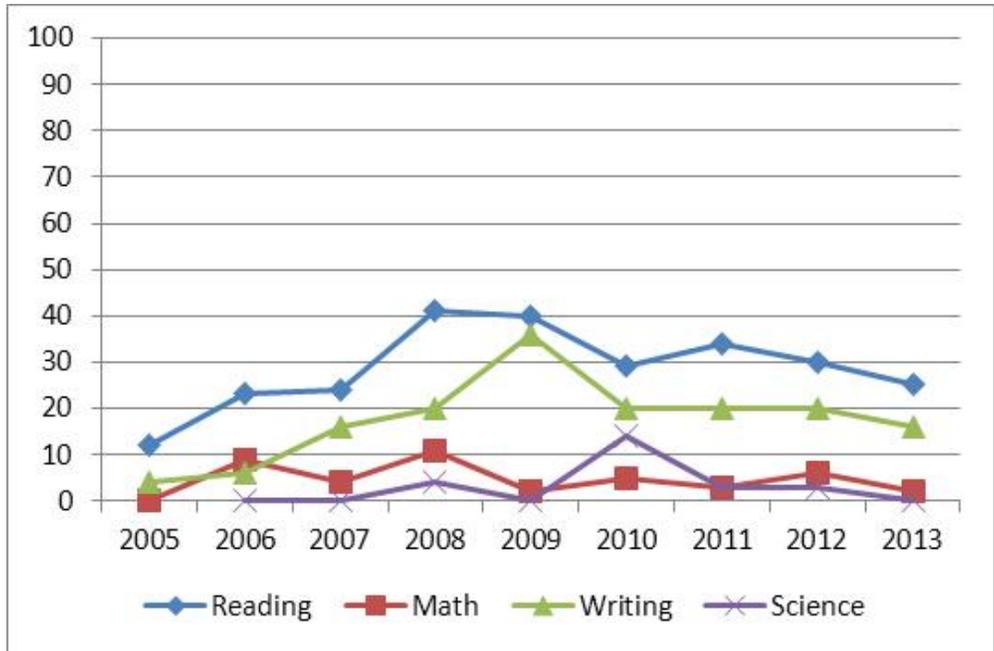
2011 SPF Rating – Accredited On Priority Watch

District SIAC Recommendation – Non-renewal of Contract

Rational for Recommendation:

Over the last **nine** years, most areas of student achievement at Escuela Tlatelolco have been unacceptable and **below** district schools (see graph below). This school does not have an Alternative Education Campus status. It also appears that the school continues to have financial problems that its leadership attributes to the District, but which are, in actuality, problems related to the terms of its established status as a contract school.

The last time Escuela Tlatelolco went through the District’s renewal process, the District SIAC made the following recommendation: **“After taking into account Escuela Tlatelolco’s seven-year relationship with DPS, the school’s student achievement regression, the financial insolvency issues, and the fact that they are not designated as an Alternative Education campus, District SIAC recommends that Escuela Tlatelolco’s contract NOT be renewed.”** In the current renewal process, the District SIAC still stands by its prior recommendation for closure.



% Proficient and Advanced for Escuela Tlatelolco

KIPP Montbello College Prep

2013 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2012 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2011 SPF Rating – NA

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 2-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

KIPP Montbello has received Meets Expectations ratings the past two years. Based on the School Performance Framework data, it appears the school is in process of meeting its goals. However, the District SIAC did note with concern that the suspension rate in 2013 increased, and parent satisfaction decreased at the same time. This may be the result of the school’s adding an additional grade level. The teacher retention rate was 62% which was also a cause for concern.

With regard to schools that have not completed the grade level build out, the District SIAC recommends shorter renewal terms until all grades are filled. We recommend a two-year renewal in this instance, as the two-year renewal will allow the school to have additional years of data.

Pioneer Charter School

2013 SPF Rating – Accredited On Watch

2012 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2011 SPF Rating – Accredited On Watch

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 2-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

Pioneer is in the process of turnaround by its own choice. In 2013 Pioneer earned an Accredited On Watch rating with 50% of total points, down from a Meets Expectations rating by 2 points. While the student achievement is low, it has increased from the pre-turnaround scores.

The District SIAC believes the school has developed and is in the process of implementing turnaround strategies and should be given appropriate time to fully implement the turnaround. The committee recommends a 2-year renewal.

Ridge View Academy

2013 SPF Rating – Meets Expectation

2012 SPF Rating – Meets Expectation

2011 SPF Rating – Accredited On Watch

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 3-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

Ridge View Academy serves a unique population of adjudicated males that have been assigned to the school by the Colorado judicial system. As such, it meets the requirements of an Alternative Education Campus status. The school has met expectations for the last two years and continues to make a difference in its students' lives. The District SIAC recommends that Ridge View Academy be renewed for 3 years.

SOAR at Oakland

2013 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2012 SPF Rating – Accredited on Probation

2011 SPF Rating – NA

District SIAC Recommendation – Non-renewal of the Charter

Rational for Recommendation:

Although the District SIAC does not have the data for Oakland Elementary School before the turnaround process, the committee believes that the turnaround effort at SOAR Charter School has not been enough to bring about the positive academic achievement level to meet the needs of the

students who attend this school. The total points earned on the SPF for the last two years went from 28% to 8% resulting in a rating of Accredited On Probation. Student achievement is unacceptable, student satisfaction is 75%, and the parent satisfaction dropped from 82% to 67%.

The District SIAC recommends non-renewal based on the low performance of SOAR at Oakland.

STRIVE – Federal Campus

2013 SPF Rating – Distinguished

2012 SPF Rating – Distinguished

2011 SPF Rating – Distinguished

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 3-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

STRIVE – Federal Campus, a school serving a high percentage of low-income students, has consistently had Distinguished ratings on its Student Performance Frameworks. Although student achievement is commendable, student achievement growth for students continuously enrolled is slightly down, and the parent response rate on the satisfaction survey dropped significantly from 97% to 58%.

Nevertheless, District SIAC believes that the successful student achievement track record of the STRIVE Federal Campus outweighs our concerns, and recommends a 3-year renewal for this school.

University Prep

2013 SPF Rating – N/A

2012 SPF Rating (Unofficial) – Meets Expectations

2011 SPF Rating – N/A

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 2-Year Term

Rational for Recommendation:

At the time of the renewal application submittal, University Prep only had data for students in grades K, 1, and 2. The school does not have an official School Performance Framework, as it has not yet served students in grade 3 who have taken the TCAP for two years. However, University Prep presented the results of Terra Nova Assessment for K, 1, and 2 in reading, writing, and math. These results indicate that, overall, 76% of the students scored above 50% percentile in the nation, 27% scored at or above the 90th percentile, while 3% scored below the 10th percentile. Also, the school presented data using the STEP assessment which was positive and showed growth. According to the information presented, it appears student achievement parent satisfaction and enrollment data are trending in the right direction.

District SIAC recommends University Prep be renewed for a two-year term.

With regard to schools that have not completed the grade level build out, the District SIAC recommends shorter renewal terms until all grades are filled. We recommend a two-year renewal in this instance, as the two-year renewal will allow the school to have additional years of data.

Venture Prep High School

2013 SPF Rating – Accredited On Watch

2012 SPF Rating – Meets Expectations

2011 SPF Rating – N/A

District SIAC Recommendation – Renew Charter – 2 Years

Rational for Recommendation:

In 2013 Venture Prep earned an Accredited On Watch rating with 49% of the total points, down from a Meets Expectations rating by 3 points. The school's TCAP scores were above those of similar schools in reading, writing, and science; however its math scores are unacceptable. Both parent satisfaction and student satisfaction are above 80% and are acceptable.

The committee recommends that Venture Prep be given a 2-year renewal and should be watched as its rating suggests, especially in the area of math.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The District SIAC would like to emphasize that Denver Public Schools must have an effective strategy for transitioning students from a school that will be closed to a new school. School closures are extremely detrimental to a student's well-being, and often result in the student's belief that he, himself, is a failure, as proven by the failed school.

From the closure of Manual High School in 2006 to date, we have not heard of a successful school closure where all students are assisted with care and concern and transitioned to a better situation. 'Students First' should be the guiding principle.

District SIAC – Charter Renewal Recommendation Summary

School Name	Year Found-ed	Grades (Grades in 2012-2013)	Enroll-ment 2012-2013	SPF 2011	SPF 2012	SPF 2013	Recommendation
DSST-Cole Middle School	2011	6-8 (6-7)	282	N/A	Distinguished	Distinguished	Renew – 2-year Term
DSST – GVR – High School	2011	9-12 (9-10)	296	N/A	Distinguished	Distinguished	Renew – 2-year Term
Escuela Tlatelolco	2002	K-12	135	Accredited on Priority Watch	Accredited on Probation	Accredited on Probation	Non-renewal
KIPP Montbello College Prep	2011	5-8 (5-6)	177	N/A	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Renew – 2-year Term
Pioneer Charter School	1997	ECE-8	476	Accredited on Watch	Meets Expectations	Accredited on Watch	Renew – 2-year Term
SOAR at Oakland	2011	ECE-5	479	N/A	Accredited on Probation	Accredited on Probation	Non-renewal
STRIVE Prep – Federal	2006	6-8	353	Distinguished	Distinguished	Distinguished	Renew – 3-year Term
University Prep	2011	ECE-5 (ECE-2)	186	N/A	N/A	N/A	Renew – 2-year Term
Venture Prep High School	2009	9-12	223	N/A	Meets Expectations	Accredited on Watch	Renew – 2-year Term

School Name	Year Founded	Grades (Grades in 2012-2013)	Enrollment 2012-2013	SPF 2011	SPF 2012	SPF 2013	Recommendation
Denver Justice High School	2009	9-12 AEC	128	Accredited on Probation	Accredited on Probation	Accredited on Priority Watch	Renew – 1-year Term
Ridge View Academy	2001	9-12 AEC	256	Accredited On Watch	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Renew – 3-year Term