



DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

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November 30, 2015
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I. CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

MOT Charter School's mission is to provide a challenging curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment where all children learn and flourish. By utilizing diverse teaching techniques and exposing students to a wide variety of educational experiences, we ensure that each child participates in, understands, and enjoys the process of learning.

Our goal is to help every student reach his/her academic potential by setting high expectations and fostering a school-wide growth mindset. We encourage and expect our families to partner with us and we provide our teaching faculty with common planning time to innovate, collaborate and create meaningful learning experiences.

A. Key Components of Our Educational Program

1. Rigorous Instruction

At MOT Charter School, classrooms are student-centered and lessons are designed to challenge and engage students in thoughtful inquiry, problem-solving, and analysis. Based on the Common Core standards for math and language arts and the NGSS standards for science, instruction guides students to increasingly deeper levels of understanding. Classroom experiences include classroom discussions, independent and group research, collaboration with peers, presentations, projects, and real-world learning opportunities. While we expect all students to work to their potential, we accept that all students do not begin at the same place. We have a variety of supports in place to ensure that all students continue to excel.

2. Responsive Curriculum

Rooted in national content standards and best practices, and anchored by well-respected instructional resources, MOT Charter's curriculum is a living and evolving organism. Each year, the instructional staff analyze student achievement results from the prior year as well as information about the students in the current year to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to

student needs. Using daily common planning time and ten professional development days throughout the year, our faculty constantly look for innovative ways to engage and challenge students and to integrate learning across content areas.

3. A Supportive and Friendly Environment

At MOT Charter, we place a heavy focus on our environment and the student and family experience. Students are empowered to be advocates for themselves and others in need. Kindness and respect make up two of our core values. We celebrate students and actions that contribute to a warm and friendly school environment. We employ a problem-solving approach to student discipline that builds understanding and good relations.

Our environment begins with students feeling supported in their academics, but extends well beyond the classroom. Students are provided with many opportunities to find success and enjoyment in extracurricular activities. We celebrate diversity by encouraging students to share about their customs and cultures throughout the year and with our annual Multi-Cultural Fair where families come together to share food, traditions, and customs of the wide range of cultures represented in our student body.

4. Involved Parents

Involved parents are a key ingredient to our success. Logging over 3,000 volunteer hours annually, parents help the school in many traditional ways such as providing support to classroom teachers, chaperoning field trips and dances and sending in items requested by teachers. However, their involvement reaches much further than this. We have a terrifically active PTO that sponsors many schoolwide events that build on our school's sense of community. The PTO also fundraises to provide technology resources and/or provide necessary repairs to our building. Parents coach athletic and academic teams, serve as club advisors, and as

members of interview panels in our hiring process. Parents help at recess and support other important schoolwide functions such as the winter concert, graduation, and open house. Parents serve as members of the P.O.S.S.E. (Parents Offering Support Services in Education) to provide small group instruction to students who need extra help and those who need additional challenge. Parent volunteers staff our library.

5. Early Intervention

Whether it is for academic performance or conduct, we are committed to intervening early when a student is struggling. Interventions begin with the teacher and the student (with the students' parents) jointly creating a plan for success. The plan would incorporate a variety of supports and resources available to students – including RTI services, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, online supports, and weekly check-ins. When necessary, we also hold comprehensive early intervention meetings where the parents, students, teachers, administrators and support faculty meet to problem solve ways to help the student get back on track.

6. Well-Rounded Arts Program Beginning In Kindergarten

We believe that a well-rounded education includes study in the arts. MOT's educational program provides students with the opportunity to participate in music, art, and drama beginning in kindergarten. As they enter middle school, students may choose to concentrate in one area of the arts. High school students have the ability to further concentrate in one area of the arts in our Academy of the Arts.

7. K-12 Continuous Course of Study

Now configured as a K-12 school, MOT Charter students have the opportunity to experience continuity from grade level to grade level for 13 years. Students become a part of a small school

community where teachers and administrators get to know each and every student and their families. This is one of the reasons that MOT Charter has enjoyed extremely low student attrition year to year and above-average daily attendance. Because students progress through a continuous, vertically aligned curriculum with teachers who communicate and collaborate across content areas and across grade levels, we are better able to monitor and support student academic achievement and deliver instruction targeted to our students' needs.

The continuity from year to year likewise supports and enhances our school environment. Starting in kindergarten, students begin to build strong relationships with teachers, support staff, administrators and volunteer parents. High staff retention allows us to get to know our students and build strong relationships with our students and families. Over the years, students develop a profound sense of belonging and acceptance.

Further, right from the start students are held to high standards of conduct and expected to demonstrate kindness and respect throughout the community. As this expectation is reinforced year after year, students gain an increasingly deeper understanding and appreciation for what it means to work together to build a community.

B. Key Accomplishments in 2014-2015

1. High School

- a. **Successful Opening of the New High School Campus.** In June 2015, we opened our new high school campus that includes the construction of a state of the art 78,000 sq. ft. building in just 9 months. When full, the building will serve 750 students. Divided into an Academy of Science & Technology and an Academy of the Arts, the building includes an engineering lab, four science labs, a computer lab, a digital design lab, art

room, dance studio, and a black box theater. The \$18 million project came in under budget and was completed in time for fall 2015 classes.

- b. The Successful Expansion to Grade 10. In 2014-2015, we successfully added 10th grade to our high school. In doing so, we integrated an additional 165 students from 36 different middle schools into our high school community and added 12 new staff members. In addition to expanding our instructional program to 10th grade, we also expanded our athletic program to include volleyball, basketball, field hockey, cross country, soccer, lacrosse, baseball and softball. Among other new extracurricular activities, we added a Mock Trial team.
- c. Implementation of Dual Enrollment Courses for 9th and 10th Grade Students. All 9th grade and 10th grade students have the opportunity to enroll in 2-3 dual enrollment courses offered through Wilmington University. We are currently in discussions to expand our dual enrollment partnerships with Wesley College.
- d. Successful implementation of a 1-to-1 technology program and an authentic blended learning experience. Every high school student enrolled at MOT Charter is provided with a laptop and online access to all of their instructional materials. Using Schoology as our learning platform, students and teachers engage in true blended learning experience.

2. School Wide Implementation of Schoology

In 2013-2014, MOT Charter implemented the free version of Schoology as the learning platform to support our blended learning model at the high school. In 2014-15, we implemented Schoology schoolwide. At the high school, Schoology is the primary tool used by students and teachers to collaborate and communicate about the learning. In grades K-8, Schoology is primarily a communication tool and an instructional support

system. However, as technology becomes more available, we hope to bring the blended learning model to the middle school.

3. SmarterBalanced

MOT Charter's first year performance on SBAC demonstrates that MOT has a solid foundation upon which to improve the academic program. MOT's proficiency rates (75.4% ELA and 71.1% Math) far exceeded the state proficiency rates (51.9% ELA and 38.8% Math) as well as the proficiency rates of our resident district (61.5% ELA and 47.4% Math). Further, the number of students achieving the highest level of mastery (4) is also significantly higher than the state average or those of the resident district.

II. PERFORMANCE REFLECTION (TIER 1 NARRATIVE)

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
"Meets Standard" overall ratings on all of the following: - 2013-14 and 2014-15 Org Frameworks - 2013-14 and 2014-15 Financial Frameworks - 2013-14 Academic Frameworks	"Meets Standard" overall Ratings on one or more Performance Framework reports during 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years OR Opened in 2014-15 School Year, Never on Formal Review	At any point during 2014-15 school year: - Renewed with Conditions - Placed on Formal Review - Earned "Falls Far Below Standard" on any Framework Report

A. What Are the Successful Academic Practices At Your Charter School that Other Schools Can Replicate?

Please see the responses to Section I.A.

B. What Are the Successful Organizational Practices at Your Charter School that Other Schools Can Replicate?

1. Strong Site-Based Leadership

MOT Charter's Board of Directors is diverse and well-balanced with a good mix of stability provided by long-standing members and fresh energy and ideas provided by newer members. Three of the original four founding board members remain active on the board. An additional

two board members have been on the board for 10 years or more. The large majority of board members are parents of currently enrolled students. Two teachers serve on the board.

A dedicated and very active Board of Directors establishes the vision and provides guidance and oversight for school operations. The Board's members come with legal, financial, operational and marketing expertise. The Board of Directors and the Head of School work collaboratively, each understanding and respecting the roles and responsibilities of the other.

MOT Charter also enjoys a very stable administrative staff.

- Head of School (11 years; founding board member)
- High School Administrator (11 years; previously a K-8 Academy Dean and Principal)
- K-8 Principal of Students & Families (11 years; previously a lead mentor)
- K-8 Principal of Curriculum & Instruction (6 years; three children attend MOT)

2. Shared Accountability

MOT Charter embodies the phrase “it takes a village” not only in getting the job done, but in making sure the job is done well. The perspectives and input of all stakeholders informs all aspects of the life and program at MOT Charter. This includes families, students, teachers, staff and administrators. Decisions are never made in isolation; all stakeholders have the opportunity to engage in the decision-making process. Every stakeholder is accountable for, and shares equally in, our school's success.

- Parents ensure that their students regularly attend school, are prepared for each day, and support their children with homework and participation in extracurricular activities. Parents also volunteer to contribute to the overall good of the school.
- Teachers plan meaningful lessons to ensure the best learning outcomes for all students and lead the many extracurricular opportunities available to our students.

- Support staff members effectively and efficiently meet their job responsibilities to contribute to a safe, friendly and calm school environment.
- Administrators keep us mission-focused, support and guide the efforts of others, and maintain communication to all stakeholders throughout.
- Students are active participants in, and are accountable for, their own learning. Students also create and maintain the safe and nurturing learning environment by being their best and expecting the best from others.

3. Hiring Process Aligned with Our Mission

MOT's hiring process is a multi-faceted and thorough process designed to identify potential team members with the skills, knowledge, drive, and passion to be successful at MOT Charter School. For example, the hiring process for teaching staff includes the following steps:

- a. Resume Screen
- b. Telephone Interview
- c. Panel Interview. The panel is comprised of parents, teachers, administrators and board members.
- d. Writing Sample
- e. Lesson Presentation. Teaching candidates are asked to present a 10-15 minute lesson to group of MOT teachers and two other teaching candidates. At the conclusion of the presented lessons, the teaching candidates are asked to collaborate with each other regarding the three lessons.
- f. Head of School Interview

The candidate is evaluated by the participating committee members at each step of the process using a rubric that defines the specific qualities that successful teachers at MOT Charter demonstrate.

4. Exit Interviews

When a family or staff member departs from MOT Charter School, we conduct an exit interview to better understand their experience at MOT and, if applicable, gain feedback regarding ways to improve.

5. Satisfaction Surveys

MOT Charter annually conducts surveys to obtain feedback from parents, students and employees regarding their experiences. The feedback is used by the Board of Directors and the administrative team to make continuous improvements to our program.

6. Written Policies and Procedures

MOT Charter maintains written policies and procedures that govern key functions. Internal written policies, including but not limited to the Family Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, Employee Manual, Admissions, Anti-Bullying, Parental Involvement, Acceptable Use are regularly reviewed and updated.

C. What Are the Successful Financial Management & Stewardship Practices At Your Charter School that Other Schools Can Replicate?

1. Our annual budgets are based on conservative revenue projections.
2. We use actual employee and student data to project revenue and expenses versus estimates or averages which can vary widely.
3. We look at a three year history to more accurately project expenses.
4. In addition to the accrued salary reserve, we hold a reserve equal to 20% of revenues to protect against unforeseen financial impacts.
5. Our Business Manager and Head of School have a thorough knowledge of the unit count system and how funds are allocated to schools.
6. The Head of School and Business Manager ensure that there is full transparency in school operations, particularly use of school funds.

7. The Business Manager provides monthly financial reports to the Board of Directors and the CBOC. The reports include summary reports as well as source reports such as: P-card purchases, credit card account statements, and system generated reports that detail all deposits and expenditures. The Board of Director and CBOC members are trained in how to review the financial reports and ask probing questions.
8. We have implemented and documented financial processes and procedures that provide for checks and balances and which include strong internal controls to minimize the potential for fraud and material errors.
9. The Board of Directors has a working knowledge of the Financial Framework and regularly monitors the school's performance against the framework's benchmarks. The Board of Directors also considers the impact on the financial frameworks when making significant financial decisions.