

FINAL APPLICATION REVIEW 2012-2013

Proposed School Name: Argosy Collegiate Charter School

Grades Served At Full Capacity: 5-12

Number of Students At Full Capacity: 585

Proposed School Location: Fall River

Proposed Opening Year: FY2014

Public Statement:

“Argosy Collegiate Charter School (“Argosy Collegiate”) equips Fall River scholars in grades five through twelve with the academic foundation, financial literacy, and ethical development necessary to excel in selective colleges, earn professional opportunities, and demonstrate positive leadership. Serving a community in Fall River with tremendous academic need and significant population of English Language Learners, Argosy Collegiate remediates academic gaps experienced in elementary school and accelerates learning in high school. We prepare students to succeed in college, access expanded professional opportunities, and manage their financial independence. We will open with 81 students in grade five, grow one grade annually, and at capacity educate 585 students.”

Mission Statement:

“Argosy Collegiate Charter School equips scholars in grades five through twelve with the academic foundation, financial literacy, and ethical development necessary to excel in selective colleges, earn professional opportunities, and demonstrate positive leadership.”

Proposed Growth Plan for First Five Years of Operation:

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
First Year	5	81
Second Year	5, 6	162
Third Year	5, 6, 7	243
Fourth Year	5, 6, 7, 8	324
Fifth Year	5, 6, 7, 8, 9	397

Mission, Vision, and Description of the Community(ies) to Be Served

Primary Strengths

- The mission statement defines the purpose and values of the school and is succinct. (Section I.A.)
- The application communicates a strong vision to create a highly structured school built on a rigorous college preparatory curriculum,

Primary Weaknesses

- Reviewers noted aspects of the mission and vision were inconsistently developed in the application, such as ‘positive leadership.’ At the interview, the applicant group stressed the primary goal of college entrance and completion. (Section I.A. and B.)

including a college skills program. (Section I.B.)

- The application describes the need for the proposed school, including evidence to support the demand for the school through a 600 signature petition in support of the proposed school. (Section I.C.)
- This charter application received letters and/or written testimony in support during the public hearing and public comment process, including but not limited to Senator Michael Rodrigues, Representative Alan Silvia, and Representative Patricia Haddad. See public comment. (Section I.C.)
- The charter application received letters and/or written testimony against the proposal, including but not limited to Fall River Superintendent Meg Mayo Brown. Additionally, two individuals have stated their support had been misrepresented in the final application. See public comment. (Section I.C.)

Educational Philosophy, Curriculum and Instruction

Primary Strengths

- The educational philosophy describes the founding group’s two core beliefs of integrity and accountability, as well as its seven values, including exceptional teaching and a clear code of conduct. The philosophy aligns with and builds on the school’s mission. (Section II.A.)
- The curriculum and instruction section are consistent with the mission and educational philosophy of the school. The application includes a well developed financial literacy curriculum. (Section II.B.)
- The proposed school leader seeks to replicate best practices from other “no excuses” schools. At the interview, the proposed school leader described working with other high performing schools during the planning year on curriculum development and alignment for the proposed school. (Section II.A.)

Primary Weaknesses

- The applicant group presented limited evidence of how the instruction and curriculum would be accessible and appropriate for all students at all levels. At the interview, the applicant group described how the school’s use of student assessment data would be used to develop specific strategies for struggling students. (Section II.B.)
- While in the interview, the applicant group explained in greater detail the process and procedures used to evaluate curriculum effectiveness, to inform professional development through “data days,” and to facilitate ongoing development, improvement, and refinement of curriculum and instruction, it remains unclear how this will be actualized. (Section II.B.)

Assessment System, Performance, Promotion, and Graduation Standards

Primary Strengths

- The promotion and graduation standards are based on high expectations, and aligned with the proposed school’s mission and vision. (Section II.C.)
- The application explains how achievement data will be collected and managed; it also describes a variety of internally and externally developed assessments used to measure student progress, including Achievement Network (ANet), and weekly quizzes. (Section II.D.)
- The use of interim and trimester summative assessments will allow the school to identify trends and respond quickly to student, grade level, and school wide performance data. (Section II.D.)

Primary Weaknesses

- The application describes the grading policy in terms of rubrics, letter, and percentage grading. At the interview, the group stated that the grading system was still evolving and that the mastery levels described in the application were a philosophical discussion. (Section II.C.)
- The application did not include adequate details of a meaningful and practical approach for measuring student progress towards attaining non-academic goals. (Section II.D.)
- The description of the assessment system provides limited information about the alignment of assessments to curriculum and state standards, as well as its use to make adjustments to the educational program and inform staff development, including the development of action plans for students and whole classes. (Section II.D.)

School Characteristics

Primary Strengths

- The proposed school will implement an extended year of 185 days and an extended day, with a shortened day on Fridays for teacher professional development. (Section II.E.)
- The application describes the proposed school’s culture and a clear plan to establish and reinforce the culture, including advisory, and community meeting. It includes an extensive behavioral philosophy and disciplinary plan that is aligned with the proposed school’s mission and vision, including implementation for a paycheck token economy at the

Primary Weaknesses

- The review panel noted concerns with the structure of the schedule for students in the proposed hour prior to dismissal. The application noted it could be spent as enrichment time, tutoring, homework completion time, or detention for grades 5-8. In grades 9-12, the blocks at the end of the day are for tutoring and homework, and enrichment and college skills programming. It remains unclear how the proposed programming would be supported and implemented for all students. (Section II.E.)
- The application provides limited

<p>middle school grades. (Section II.E.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While it is not clear the exact methods or strategies that might be used to support students with a wide range of needs, in the application and in the interview, the applicant group emphasized that structured tutoring and enrichment provide individualized support. (Section II.E.) 	<p>information on the school’s plans to involve parents/guardians as partners in the education of their children and the potential external programs that will be brought into the school. (Section II.E.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While reviewers noted that the teacher and student school day descriptions were provided a full sense of the proposed school in great detail, the panel noted concerns about teacher expectations, including riding the school bus provided by the district with students in the morning. (Section II.E.)
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Special Student Populations and Student Services

Primary Strengths

- The application provides generalized information on the policies and procedures for serving students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). The application demonstrates knowledge of the requirements to implement a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program. During the interview, the applicant group clarified the use of the appropriate assessments to be used with ELLs. (Section II.F.)

Primary Weaknesses

- In the application and interview, the applicant group provides insufficient information to establish their capacity to adequately serve students with disabilities and ELLs, and lacks an individual with professional expertise in implementing an English Language Development or special education program. (Section II.F.)
- While in the application, the applicant group provides limited information about the qualifications of individuals who will implement the ELD program, during the interview, the applicant group indicated the intent to hire reading and writing teachers who were dual licensed in ELL instruction. The staffing chart indicated for the first year of operation: one ELL (ESL) teacher, and one part time individual performing the administrator and teacher responsibilities for the special education program. During the interview, the applicant group indicated that the special education staffing plan has evolved to have one

full-time special education teacher during the first year supported by the Director of Academic Achievement. (Section II.F.)

Enrollment and Recruitment

Primary Strengths

- At the interview, the group clearly articulated the need for slow enrollment growth as integral to the successful implementation of the school model. The proposed growth model maintains consistent enrollment per grade over time and allows for attrition in the upper high school grades. (Section III.A.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the application narrative contains some of the required elements, the submitted draft enrollment policy does not reflect the most recent Department guidance (August 2011) on required elements of enrollment policies and implementation practices. (Section III.A.)

Capacity and School Governance

Primary Strengths

- The proposed board members have a range of experience and qualifications, including management, health care, real estate, and law. (Section III.B.)
- The governance model presents a clear workable structure and encourages an appropriate relationship between the board of trustees, school leader, and administration regarding governance and management of the school. (Section III.C.)
- The application identifies criteria for the selection and evaluation of a school leader. At the interview, the proposed board was able to articulate the reasons for the selection of the proposed leader, Kristen Pavao. (Section III.C.)
- BES' "Connect to Excellence" program will provide three levels of support for board development: ensuring that there is a process for recruiting new board members;

Primary Weaknesses

- The proposed board lacks a member with an education background to assist in monitoring the proposed school's academic performance and the school leader's effectiveness in developing and implementing the proposed academic program. (Section III.B.)
- The submitted draft bylaws do not reflect the most recent Department guidance (February 2011) on required elements of board of trustee bylaws. The draft bylaws omit a number of the required elements and indicate the use of prohibited practices such as proxy voting. (Section III.C.)

assisting with strategic planning; and general board development. (Section III.C.)

Management

Primary Strengths

- The application provides a clear reporting structure narrative. General teaching goals are articulated, and teacher supervision and evaluation procedures are outlined in the application. (Section III.D.)
- Professional development is clearly described in this section with two focus areas: classroom, and school culture; and curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The professional development schedule includes a 3 week summer institute, weekly Friday afternoons, and 12 full days during the school year. (Section III.D.)
- There are descriptions of clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for the school leader and other administrative staff. (Section III.D.)
- BES' "Connect to Excellence" program will provide on-going support for school leadership including but not limited to the development of the hiring process for staff; cultural audits; and review of assessments. Additionally, the fellowship has provided the proposed leader with access to a network of schools to assist in curriculum development. (Section III.D.)

Primary Weaknesses

- While the proposed school leader has not previously held a school leadership position, Ms. Pavao possesses professional qualifications in both elementary and secondary education, and possesses six years of experience as a middle school teacher in both a district and charter school in Fall River. Ms. Pavao has previous management experience in retail, and hospitality industries. (Section II.E.)
- The application provides limited information regarding the teacher evaluation system beyond the schedule of observations. (Section II.E.)

Facilities, Transportation, and Finances

Primary Strengths

- The application provides a structure and process for managing school finances with a specific outline of fiscal controls. There is a clear plan for how the school will track finances in its daily business operations. (Section III.E.)
- At the interview, the proposed board indicated their commitment to fundraising. The applicant group has the financial support of the Amelia Peabody Foundation for the planning year if federal charter school planning grants are unavailable. (Section III.E.)
- The applicant group has identified a number of potential buildings for the location of the school in the desired neighborhood. (Section III.F.)

Primary Weaknesses

- The proposed budget was written without any proposed board input or review. The proposed budget used incorrect sources of information for calculating the per pupil tuition, resulting in a significant overestimation of revenue. During the interview, the applicant group was able to explain what adjustments would be made to address the significant discrepancies in funding. However, in order to do so, staffing and materials to support the proposed school design were significantly impacted. (Section III.F.)