

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**2013 CHARTER SCHOOL APPEAL
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-108, sponsors proposing to open new charter schools may appeal the denial of their amended applications by a local board of education to the State Board of Education (State Board).

On January 16, 2013, a hearing was held at the Shelby County Board of Education in Memphis, Tennessee, to consider Global Leadership Academy's appeal of the denial of its application by the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education.

Based on the following procedural history and findings of fact, I believe that the decision to deny Global Leadership Academy's application was not "contrary to the best interests of the pupils, the school district, and the community", and therefore recommend that the Board affirm the decision of the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

1. On October 30, 2012, the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education unanimously denied Global Leadership Academy's initial application, following the unanimous recommendation of the Shelby County Schools charter school review committee.
2. Global Leadership, Inc. amended and resubmitted its application.
3. On December 18, 2012, the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education voted to deny Global Leadership Academy's amended application, following another unanimous recommendation of the review committee.

4. Global Leadership, Inc. then appealed the decision to deny the application of Global Leadership Academy by email to the State Board, received December 18, 2012.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Shelby County Schools Charter School Review Committee included the following individuals, who reviewed the application submitted during this application window:

- a. Michael Lowe, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Shelby County Schools
- b. DeAnna McClendon, Director of Elementary Education, Shelby County Schools
- c. Andrea Crafford, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- d. Kristy Ford, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- e. Donna Jones, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- f. Todd Goforth, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- g. Karen Woodard, Director of Secondary Education, Shelby County Schools
- h. Laurie Butler, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- i. Clark Knight, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- j. Steve Baade, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- k. Relzie Payton, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- l. Tim Jones, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- m. Dedric McGhee, Instructional Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- n. Rochelle Douglas, Research Planning and Transition, Shelby County Schools
- o. Dionne Williams, Research Planning and Transition, Shelby County Schools
- p. Marty Redding, Department of Exceptional Children, Shelby County Schools
- q. Laurie Henderson, Department of Exceptional Children, Shelby County Schools
- r. Carol Ann Hudgens, Department of Exceptional Children, Shelby County Schools
- s. Anita Hays, Chief Financial Officer, Shelby County Schools
- t. Teresa Winter, Director of Finance, Shelby County Schools
- u. Mike Macklin, Director of Purchasing, Shelby County Schools
- v. Miracle Meeks, Accountant, Shelby County Schools
- w. Karen Naccarato, Director of Employee Benefits, Shelby County Schools
- x. Angela Hargrave, Director of Student Services, Shelby County Schools
- y. Felicia Turner, Student Services Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- z. Andy Clayton, Student Services Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- aa. Lois Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Shelby County Schools
- bb. Jeff Mayo, Director of Human Resources, Shelby County Schools

- cc. Regina Payne, Human Resources Supervisor, Shelby County Schools
- dd. Michael Simpson, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Shelby County Schools
- ee. Debbie Rike, Shelby County Schools
- ff. Marsha Landstreet, Shelby County Schools
- gg. James Aldinger, Director of Federal Programs, Shelby County Schools
- hh. Gina Bennett, Federal Programs Supervisor, Shelby County Schools

2. Shelby County Schools employs a rigorous screening process based on the Principles for Quality Authorizing of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA).

3. Using the Tennessee Department of Education’s (TDOE) scoring criteria for the application, the review committee scored the application in each of the fourteen domains outlined on the TDOE scoring sheet: Vision and Mission Statements, Academic Program, Assessment and Evaluation, Students with Special Needs, Budget and Finance, Operations and Governance, Student Discipline, Personnel, Transportation and Food Service, Facilities, Waivers, Insurance Coverage, Parent and Community Involvement, and Final Evaluation.

4. To be recommended for approval to the Memphis/Shelby County Unified Board of Education, applicants must score at least “meets” or “exceeds” in twelve (12) of the fourteen (14) domains.

5. On the initial application, Global Leadership Academy’s scores were labeled according to the scoring criteria developed and promulgated by the TN Department of Education. Global Leadership Academy earned “meets” in one (1) domain, “partially meets” in nine (9) domains, and “does not meet” in four (4) domains:

Vision and Mission Statement	Partially Meets
Academic Program	Partially Meets
Assessment and Evaluation	Partially Meets
Students with Special Needs	Does Not Meet
Budget and Finance	Partially Meets
Operations and Governance	Does Not Meet
Student Discipline	Does Not Meet

Personnel	Partially Meets
Transportation and Food Service	Partially Meets
Facilities	Partially Meets
Waivers	Does Not Meet
Insurance Coverage	Meets
Parent and Community Involvement	Partially Meets
Final Evaluation	Partially Meets

6. After the Memphis/Shelby County Unified Board of Education voted to deny Global Leadership Academy’s initial application, Shelby County Schools review committee sent Global Leadership Inc. the recommendation report of the committee, the average scores from the committee, and overall reasons for denying Global Leadership Academy’s application.

7. Global Leadership Academy’s amended application earned “meets” in three (3) domains and “partially meets” in eleven (11) domains :

Vision and Mission Statement	Partially Meets
Academic Program	Partially Meets
Assessment and Evaluation	Meets
Students with Special Needs	Partially Meets
Budget and Finance	Partially Meets
Operations and Governance	Meets
Student Discipline	Partially Meets
Personnel	Partially Meets
Transportation and Food Service	Partially Meets
Facilities	Partially Meets
Waivers	Partially Meets
Insurance Coverage	Meets
Parent and Community Involvement	Partially Meets
Final Evaluation	Partially Meets

8. After review of the application, the committee unanimously recommended denying the amended application. Ultimately, the Board determined that the authorization of the charter would be contrary to the best interests of the students of Shelby County Schools. The committee had the following specific concerns:

a. Mission and Vision Statement- The review committee found that the vision and mission did not demonstrate a compelling, measurable purpose. Specifically, it found that

Global Leadership’s focus on service learning was not supported by data to demonstrate that its focus would yield high academic success and college preparation.

b. Academic Program- In evaluating the application, the committee noted that the focus in service learning was unsupported by the proposed instructional practices. Further, the committee found in some instances, where particular courses were named, no curriculum was provided nor personnel assigned to support the named courses.

c. Student Discipline- The committee found that infractions and penalties for behavioral issues did not align with state law, particularly the provisions that require due process rights for students.

d. Personnel- Among the deficiencies cited in this application was the failure of the application to address staffing plans for special populations. The committee particularly noted that while the application purported to provide special education services from the school’s inception, a special education teacher was not planned for hire until three years after opening. Additionally, the committee noted that many of the positions named had so many job responsibilities that it would make it impracticable for the individual to be successful in that role. The committee also found that there was no clear plan identified to evaluate teachers in accordance with State Board Policy¹.

e. Facilities- While the committee noted that a facility was identified in the document, they found that the letter of intent contained no signatures. This was insufficient to evaluate whether the facility was actually secured.

f. Community Involvement- The review committee was not convinced by the submitted application that the stated plan would recruit a diverse student body.

¹ Teacher and Principal Evaluation Policy, State Board of Education Policy 5.201 (updated 8/13/12), http://www.state.tn.us/sbe/Policies/5.201_Teacher_and_Principal_Evaluation_Policy_Revised_9-28-2012.pdf


Specifically, the committee found that, though the application stated a focus on educating an at-risk population, there was no specific plan detailing how that population would be recruited. Further, the committee noted that where the application touted that several town hall meetings were held, further inquiry uncovered that no such meetings had occurred.

g. Budget and Finance- The review committee regularly found instances in which the budget narrative was not consistent with the actual budget. Additionally, the committee found that many expenditures listed were insufficient to carry out the school’s mission.

CONCLUSION

State law requires the State Board of Education to review the decision of the local board of education and determine whether the denial of the charter school was in the “best interest of the students, school district, and the community.”² During the January 16th hearing, Shelby County Schools clearly demonstrated that they had employed a rigorous process for screening applications and they provided concrete and objective reasons why denying Global Leadership Academy was in the best interest of the students, district, and community. Global Leadership, Inc. provided no concrete evidence to show that the deficiencies cited by Shelby County Schools’ review committee were erroneous.

Based on the above findings, I do not believe that the decision to deny Global Leadership Academy’s charter application was contrary to the best interests of the students, the school district, and the community. Therefore, I recommend that the State Board of Education affirm the decision of the Memphis City/Shelby County Unified Board of Education.



Dr. Gary L. Nixon, Executive Director
State Board of Education

1-28-2013
Date

² T.C.A. § 49-13-108(a)(3).