

CHARTER SCHOOL APPEAL ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

THE BELIEVER'S SCHOOL OF LEARNING VS. BRADFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURAL TIME LINE

DATE	ACTION
October 1, 2002	Charter School Application submitted to the Bradford County School Board by Believer's School of Learning Charter School
(Document not dated)	Reviewer's Comments prepared by Bradford County School Board and sent to the Believer's School of Learning Charter School
November 5, 2002	Letter from Eugenia Whitehead, Director of Curriculum, Bradford County School Board, to Rellen Clark stating that the recommendation was to deny charter school application. Also, offering a date certain of November 18, 2002, for revisions to charter school application.
November 19, 2002	Ms. Whitehead and Ms. Clark meet to discuss application. Ms. Clark's application withdrawn for consideration allowing her to make changes based on recommendation for denial. New date certain for submittal of revised application – December 13, 2002.
January 13, 2003	School Board votes to deny Believer's School of Learning Charter School application.
January 21, 2003	Letter from Superintendent Paterson to Rellen Clark stating 2 reasons for denial.
February 20, 2003	Notice of Appeal received by Agency Clerk for the Department of Education.
March 20, 2003	Response of School Board received by Agency Clerk, Department of Education.

**SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DENIAL BY THE ABC COUNTY
SCHOOL BOARD**

REASON #	* AREA OF CONCERN	SUMMARY OF REASON FOR DENIAL
1	Curriculum	The application fails to adequately explain how the charter school would provide an educational program that is unique and innovative.
2	Finance	The application fails to provide a plan that exhibits a sound financial management system.

- i.e., mission, curriculum, assessment, finance, governance, etc.

Section 1002.33(6)(a)2., F.S., requires that the school board shall within 10 calendar days articulate in writing the specific reasons based upon good cause supporting its denial of the charter school application. The letter from Superintendent Paterson to Believer's School of Learning only stated the two reasons above as reasons for denial. However, the response to the appeal submitted to the Department of Education by Superintendent Paterson listed 7 reasons relating to the instructional program and 9 reasons relating to the budget as reasons for denial. These reasons are not addressed in this analysis, as they were not provided to the applicant in accordance with Section 1002.33(6)(a)2., F.S.

**EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT AND/OR REFUTE OBJECTIONS RAISED BY
THE BRADFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD**

For each of the district school board's reasons for denial, it is essential that **good cause as evidenced by charter school application and/or Charter School Statute** be identified.

The application fails to adequately explain how the charter school would provide an educational program that is unique and innovative.

Section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, does not require that charter schools provide educational programs that are unique and/or innovative. Section (2)(a)4., states that charters schools shall "encourage the use of innovative learning methods."

The "Response to Review Comments" submitted by Ms. Clark states that the pupil/teacher ratio will be 1:10. This in itself is unique in that the average class size (per the Florida School Indicators Report) in Bradford County elementary schools for 2001-02 was 20.6. In addition, a review of the school grades for the elementary schools in Bradford County does not indicate that improvements are being made in the five existing schools, with the exception of one which increased from a C to a B. The other four dropped at least one letter grade; one school stayed the same (C).

The application fails to provide a plan that exhibits a sound financial management system.

The Application states (page 12) that "under the supervision of the administrator an experienced person in bookkeeping, payroll, and non-profit tax and accounting matters will assist with all financial matters." The budget does not include a salary for a CPA or other financial staff person.

A full-time teacher and part-time non-professional employee (paraprofessional/clerk) will not meet the stated teacher to student ratio of 1:10 for 17 students; however it will meet the stated adult/teacher to student ratio included in the application (page 15).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the available evidence to support and/or refute the objections outlined in the School Board's "Written Reasons for Denial" and its "Arguments in Response to Notice of Appeal," summarized findings are:

Florida Statute does not mandate that educational programs be unique and innovative; however the 1:10 student/teacher ratio in this county is unique (Bradford County's average class size is 20.6).

A full-time teacher and part-time non-professional employee (paraprofessional/clerk) will not meet the stated teacher to student ratio of 1:10 for 17 students.

There is no allocation for a bookkeeper or financial staff person included in the budget with the exception of the CPA (audit).

Note: While the objections raised in the school district's response to the application were not raised in the letter of denial, the applicant did address in writing each of these concerns. However, the response did not fully address the identification and/or method of development of a scope and sequence curriculum which would be aligned with the Sunshine State Standards.