



## RUTHERFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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**Marvin D. Odom, Director of Schools**

2240 Southpark Drive  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128  
Phone (615) 893-5812 Fax (615) 898-7940

August 27, 2013

Dannelle Walker, Esq.  
General Counsel  
Tennessee State Board of Education  
9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Andrew Johnson Tower  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37243

**RE: Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy Appeal**

Dear Ms. Walker,

Enclosed are the documents you requested regarding the above listed appeal. Please feel free to contact me if you should need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angel McCloud".

Angel McCloud  
Staff Attorney

Enclosures

Charter School Review Committee  
May 3, 2013

Members Present:

Tim Tackett, Committee chairman  
Don Odom, Director of Schools  
Richard Zago, A.S. Instruction  
Paula Barnes, A.S. Human Resources  
Jeff Sandvig, A.S. Budget and Finance  
Shirley Bell, Special Education Coordinator  
James Evans, Community Relations Coordinator  
Dr. Bob Bullen, community member at-large

1. Mr. Tackett introduced the committee members and gave an overview of the role of the committee.
2. Mr. Tackett explained that the district had received its first Charter School application from an organization called The Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy.
3. Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the application and the review process.
4. Mr. Tackett assigned portions of the application to specific committee members for further review.
5. The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for May 20, 2013, at 9 a.m. to further discuss the application, adopt a review criteria, establish a timeline and develop questions for the applicant.
6. The meeting was adjourned.

**Charter School Review Committee**  
**May 20, 2013**

**Members Present:**

Tim Tackett, Chairman  
Richard Zago, A. S. Instruction  
Paula Barnes, A.S. Human Resources  
Jeff Sandvig, A.S. Budget and Finance  
James Evans, Community Relations Coordinator  
Shirley Bell, Special Education Coordinator  
Angel McCloud, staff attorney  
Dr. Bob Bullen, Community Member at-large

1. Mr. Tackett called the meeting to order and asked Paula Barnes and Richard Zago to report on their visit to Metro Nashville to discuss their charter school review process.
2. Paula Barnes outlined the review timeline that needs to be used. The committee discussed what type of process should be used for reviewing charter school applications.
3. The committee adopted the scoring tool provided by the state for reviewing charter school applications.
4. The committee scheduled the interview for the The Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy for Friday, May 31, 2013 at 9 a.m. at the Rutherford County Board of Education. Paula Barnes will contact the applicants immediately to notify them of the interview date and the categories for questions that will be answered.
5. Mr. Tackett asked committee members to submit questions to him by Thursday, May 23, 2013.
6. The committee intends to have a recommendation to the Rutherford County Board of Education by its June 12, 2013 meeting.
7. The meeting was adjourned.

Charter School Review Committee  
Candidate Interview - The Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy  
May 31, 2013

Review Committee members present:

Tim Tackett, chairman

Paula Barnes, assistant superintendent for Human Resources and Student Services

Richard Zago, assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Jeff Sandvig, assistant superintendent for Budget and Finance

Shirley Bell, special education coordinator

James Evans, community relations coordinator

Dr. Bob Bullen, community member

Angel McCloud, staff attorney

Candidate board members present:

Dr. Terrance D. Lawless Sr.

Regina Lawless

Mark Neal

Ernest Johnson

Elaine Palmore

1. Mr. Tackett made opening remarks, asked for both groups to identify their members and explained the procedures for the meeting.
2. Mr. Zago explained the decision making process and Ms. Barnes explained the timeline for the process.
3. Dr. Terrance Lawless made opening remarks about their application.
4. Committee members asked a series of questions concerning the specifics of the candidate's charter school application and operation plan.
5. Members of the review committee and the applicant board of directors made closing remarks.
6. The applicant was reminded of the decision-making timeline and the meeting was adjourned.

Charter School Application - Review

5/3/13

- 1 J.L. Jan
- 2 J. Sandvig
- 3 [Signature]
- 4 [Signature]
- 5 Bob Bullen
- 6 Paul Spaeuer
- 7 Shirley Bell
- 8 Don Odum

Chapter School Meeting  
Session 2

5/20/13

1. Paul Starnes


2. Jeff Sandvig  
Bob Bullen

Connie Mack

Adge MacLeod

Paul Zieg

Shirley Beel



May 31, 2013

Meeting with Charter School Applicant Board

- 1 Paul Banner RCBOE
- 2 ~~Paul Zee~~ RCBOE
- 3 ~~John~~ RCBOE (James Evans)
- 4 ~~John~~ RCBOE
- 5 ~~Bob Bullen~~ City of New York
- 6 Shirley Bell RCBOE
- 7 Ernest Johnson
- 8 Mr. Neal
- 9 Dr. Senoue Palms
- 10 Regina Lawless
- 11 Elaine Palms RCBOE
- 12 J.L. Jones RCBOE

Aug 2, 2013

9:00 AM

Charter School Committee - review

Paula S. Barnes

HR

J. Sandvig

Acad. Prog.

J. R. Jantz

School Bd.

Angel McCleod

Staff attorney

John Ballen

Public rep.

Bob Ziegler

Curr. / INSTRUCTION

John

Community Relations

Shirley Bell

Sp. Ed. Com.



## Letter of Intent to Apply for Public Charter School - 2012

In order to provide timely notice, accurate information and effective technical assistance to all public charter school applicants, please fill out this form. All applicants must file a Letter of Intent at least 60 days prior to the application deadline set by the local board of education. **Please contact the local board of education to determine that deadline.** Since a local board's application window must end no later than October 1, all letters of intent must be received at the State Dept. of Education no later than August 2.

Send via email to [rich.haglund@tn.gov](mailto:rich.haglund@tn.gov), fax (615.253.5706) or via mail:

Director of Charter Schools  
 State Department of Education, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, AJT  
 710 James Robertson Parkway  
 Nashville, TN 37243

**Proposed District for Charter School:** Rutherford County School System

**Name of Proposed Charter School:**  
Tracy Darnell Academy

**Name of Sponsor/Sponsoring Agency**  
Learning Athletics and Wellness Foundation Sports Academy (L.A.W. Foundation)

**Primary Contact Person:** Dr. Terrance D. Lawless, Sr.

**Telephone:** (615) 491-6102 **Email:** drterrancelawless@gmail.com OR terrance.lawfoundation@yahoo.com

**Mailing Address:**  
2825 Hydes Ferry Road Nashville, Tennessee 37218

**Proposed Opening, Grade Levels and Student Enrollment:**

Proposed year of school opening	2013-2014	
	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
Year One	1 <sup>st</sup>	60
Year Two	2 <sup>nd</sup>	35
Year Three	3 <sup>rd</sup>	35
Year Four	4 <sup>th</sup>	35
Year Five	5 <sup>th</sup>	35
Year Six		
Year Seven		
Year Eight		
Year Nine		
Year Ten		

**Please use this page to provide a one-page, single-spaced abstract for your proposed school citing perceived need for school; potential target population; school concept and design; and individual or organizational history of success/accomplishments in education.**

### **Perceived need for school**

Tennessee ranks consistently in the bottom 10 states academically. In addition, nearly two thirds (2/3) of African American youth will drop out of school before entering high school. The alarmingly high statistics yields evidence for the need to incorporate the proposed charter school to bring change in diversity practice, educational attainment/retention, early intervention as well as training educational professionals in mixed practice method to bridge achievement gaps and better prepare educational professionals.

### **Potential Target Population**

With the mission to create a diverse student body, the potential target population will include members from all socio economic backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures. The selection emphasis will be placed on students that have the desire to learn and parents that will initiate and maintain positive support within the school climate. Further, in relevance to academic abilities, students that are behind grade level, on grade level and those that have exceeded grade level expectations will be included in population target.

### **School Concept & Design**

The school concept is to produce pilot data showing the intended interventions effectiveness for generating beneficial student outcomes that are expected to lead to subsequent applications to test the efficacy of the intervention. Dr. Lawless anticipates to partner in the research endeavor of the stated project goal development and innovation of a stimulated classroom environment in which learning is hands on, innovative and student teachers obtain hours towards licensure with local colleges and universities following completion of school curriculum/coursework requirements.

### **Individual Accomplishments**

Terrance D. Lawless, Sr. has a doctorate in Instructional Leadership (Ed.D.), M.A. Ed. in Educational Leadership, M.A. Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction/Special Education and a B.S. Ed. in Health Human Performance/Sports Management. Currently he serves in the capacity as the Executive Director of Education for the Learning Athletics and Wellness Foundation located in Nashville, TN. The mission of the foundation is to build healthy bodies and minds of the Inner city youth while promoting education, kinships, work ethics and community outreach. In addition, he serves in the capacity of an Adjunct Professor for Middle Tennessee State University, College of Elementary and Special Education. Dr. Lawless possesses the following licensure/certification; Tennessee-Special Education and Endorsement in Administration, New Jersey-Special Education Certification, and Georgia-Special Education Certification. In addition, he is a Certified Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) Evaluator. He has over 15 years experience K-12, special education practices/models, ADA laws/requirements and administration.

### **Organizational History of Success/Accomplishments in Education**

Tramont Lawless, Founder/CEO began the Learning Athletics and Wellness Foundation in 2005 with the mission to promote physical fitness, kinships, community outreach as well as educational attainment/retention among low socio economic youth in the inner city Nashville area. He has accomplished this by partnering with many members in the community to provide SAT/ACT prep courses for high school students, after-school enrichment, academic tutoring, mentoring and physical fitness programs for youth in the Inner city Nashville area. 1 out of 3 youth that enter into the program have graduated from high school and entered into some type of advanced educational attainment (Associates, Vocational School or 4 year college).

Agenda for Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M., Incorporated Charter School Meeting

May 31, 2013

- Opening Remarks / Mr. Tackett
- Introductions
- Procedures for Meeting
- Decision Process / Mr. Zago
- Timeline for Decision / Ms. Barnes
- Mr. Darnall's Opening Remarks
- Questions from the Committee
- Final Remarks from Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M., Incorporated Board of Directors

Board Members Dr. Terrance Lawless

Regina Lawless

Pamela Spicer

Ernest Johnson *e.s.d.*

Jeffery D. McWilliams

Ronald Wooding

Elaine Palmore - *Centennial in Montessori method*

Mark Neal

## Agenda for Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M., Incorporated Charter School Meeting

- Opening remarks,
- Introductions
- Procedures for Meeting
- Decision Process
- Timeline for Decision
- Mr. Darnall's Opening Remarks
- Questions from the Committee
- Final Remarks from Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M., Incorporated Board of Directors

*These are the questions I received. Committee members will proceed with questions in the order shown on this sheet. It may not be necessary to ask all questions listed, I'm thinking 4-6 questions per committee member may do it, especially in the first round – please kind of play it by ear. All members should feel free to follow up at any time. Members that have not submitted questions may want to pick up a question that was skipped over. I want us to be thorough, but it may become obvious to all that enough information has been gathered without belaboring the situation.*

### Mr. Evans.

1. Describe the Montessori accreditation process. Is anyone on the Board of Directors accredited in this area?
2. Have you marketed the school to anyone in Rutherford County using community meetings to gauge interest? If so, where were those meetings held and how were they advertised to the public?
3. Your application does not include any references or endorsements from parents in Rutherford County. Why weren't any included with your application? (only references from Davidson County)
4. The data used in your application is not current. Is there a reason you did not use the most recently available information (which was released in fall 2012)?

### Ms. Barnes.

1. Please describe the process your design team used in determining the need for a charter school in the Smyrna area
2. How will you plan for transportation needs for students within a 50 mile radius?
3. Why was the Montessori philosophy selected? How will the Montessori program improve student performance?
4. What are the responsibilities of the Board members?
5. What is your plan for Professional Development of all staff?
6. Provide additional information about the anonymous provider listed as a contributor.

7. How will an evaluation be conducted on the Head of the School?
8. Describe the employee benefits package proposed in your budget

**Mr. Zago**

1. Please explain your plans to meet the PARCC requirements for assessments and how your budget will provide the resources necessary?
2. How do you plan to meet the academic needs of IDEA and ELL students?
3. What are the academic goals for students by grade level and how will you benchmark the progress toward those goals?
4. How do you plan to maintain student information pertaining to grades, attendance and other state mandated EIS (Education Information System) data?
5. How will meet federal lunch program guidelines set by the Nation School Lunch Program?
6. What is your nursing service plan and methods for student Health Plans?
7. What will be the daily curriculum for all subjects?
8. How will you recruit teachers and find teachers with certifications that will meet your requirements?
9. What is your discipline policy, and how will the data maintenance / reporting of the data be managed?
10. Have you located any potential property and how will you develop it to meet federal / state codes set for public schools?

**Mr. Sandvig** --

**Ms. Bell** --

**Dr. Bullen** --

*I plan to use the reverse of showing public demand - Review  
approval before getting Public Demand*

*History the whole a hill*

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Sent To **Dr. Terrance Lawless**  
 Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No. **P.O. Box 281785**  
 City, State, ZIP+4 **Nashville, TN 37228**

PS Form 3800, June 2002 See Reverse for Instructions

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1. Article Addressed to:  
**Dr. Terrance Lawless**  
**Empowering One to DREAM, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 281785**  
**Nashville, TN 37228**

2. Article Number  
 (Transfer from service label)

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A. Signature  
**X Regina Lawless**  Agent  Addressee

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**Regina Lawless**

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Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M, Incorporated  
P.O. Box 281785  
Nashville, TN 37228

May 20, 2013

Dear Dr. Lawless

The Rutherford County Schools Charter School committee has completed an initial review of your application for The Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy.

**We would like to extend an invitation to your Board of Directors to meet with our committee on Friday, May 31, 2013, beginning at 9 a.m.** The purpose of the meeting is to allow our committee to ask questions about your application. The meeting will be held at the Rutherford County Board of Education Central Office, 2240 South Park Drive, Murfreesboro, TN 37128 in the Board Room. Directions to our office are available on the school system website at [www.rcschools.net](http://www.rcschools.net)

Questions from the following categories may be asked during the meeting:

- Planned curriculum for general education, special education and English Language Learner students.
- Financial sustainability plan
- Personnel / Governance
- Documentation to support application

We look forward to meeting you and your team.

Sincerely,

Rutherford County Charter School Committee

Tim Tackett, Chairman

Bob Bullen

Richard Zago

Jeff Sandvig

Paula Barnes

James Evans

Shirley Bell



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Dr. Terrance D. Lawless Sr.  
 Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M. Inc.  
 P.O. Box 281785  
 Nashville, TN 37228

Instructions

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1. Article Addressed to:

Dr. Terrance D. Lawless Sr.  
 Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M. Inc.  
 P.O. Box 281785  
 Nashville, TN 37228

2. Article Number  
 (Transfer from service label)

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 X *Terrance Lawless*  Agent  Addressee

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*Terrance Lawless*  Yes  No

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## RUTHERFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

### Marvin D. Odom, Director of Schools

2240 Southpark Drive  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128  
Phone (615) 893-5812 Fax (615) 898-7940

January 12, 2013

Dr. Terrance D. Lawless Sr.  
Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M. Inc.  
P.O. Box 281785  
Nashville, TN 37228

Dear Dr. Lawless:

On behalf of the Rutherford County Board of Education, I'd like to thank your group for its interest in offering additional educational opportunities for students in our community.

The Board of Education has denied your application for a public charter school — The Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy — after reviewing the scoring report of the Charter School Review Committee. The committee's full report is attached for your reference.

We welcome innovation and ideas for ways to best serve our growing student population, and we appreciate your efforts to serve at-risk youth. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Rutherford County Schools central office at (615) 893-5812.

Sincerely,

Terry Hodge, Chairman  
Rutherford County Board of Education

Tim Tackett, Chairman  
Charter School Review Committee



**Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy  
Charter School Application Review  
Ratings and Scoring Report**

Evaluator Comments and Questions		
<b>Application – Section 1 – Academic Plan Design and Capacity</b>		
<b>Strengths:</b> The applicant provided a vision — although broad in nature — for working with at-risk students.		
<b>Concerns and Questions:</b> The applicant lacks a detailed, specific plan for curriculum, standards, assessments, meeting the individual academic needs of special education students, providing supplemental services, and meeting all state and federal education requirements.		
<b>Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:</b>		
<b>Does not Meet</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	<b>Meets or Exceeds</b>
<b>Interview (if applicable)</b>		
<b>Concerns and Questions:</b> The applicant board members could not elaborate or provide specifics on several areas of their academic plan design. The applicant did not provide specifics for the following areas:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for clear, rigorous standards aligned with the Tennessee Curriculum Standards and Common Core State Standards.</li> <li>• A comprehensive plan for any additional academic standards beyond the Tennessee Curriculum Standards and Common Core Standards that may be adopted (mission-specific), including explanation and evidence of how those standards would exceed state standards.</li> <li>• Evidence of clear, rigorous promotion and exit policies and standards.</li> <li>• An explanation of how the organization will use data to inform instruction and evaluate academic progress, including progress of at-risk students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners.</li> <li>• An effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for measuring and evaluating academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, and the entire school – throughout the school year, at the end of the academic year, and for the term of the charter.</li> <li>• A comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data, using the data to refine and improve instruction – including providing training and support to school leadership and teachers – and reporting the data to the school community and district.</li> <li>• Appropriate, well-defined corrective actions the school will take if it falls short of the State's and/or district's student academic achievement expectations or goals at any level, including explanation of what would trigger such actions and who would implement them.</li> <li>• Identification of interim assessments and articulation of how they align with the school's chosen curriculum, performance goals and state standards.</li> <li>• A clear description of the school's approach to help remediate students' academic underperformance based on assessment and other data, and evidence the chosen approach will result in improved academic achievement.</li> </ul>		
<b>OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:</b>		
<b>Does not Meet</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	<b>Meets or Exceeds</b>
<b>Resubmission</b>		
<b>Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating</b> _____.		

**Evaluator Comments and Questions**

**Application – Section 2 – Operations Plan and Capacity**

**Strengths:**

- The applicant has taken the necessary steps to apply for non-profit status and its proposed structure is in compliance with state law.
- The applicant has proposed an effective governance structure and planned board size, powers, duties, and current and desired composition.
- The applicant has compiled a group of board members who demonstrate they have the will, capacity and commitment to govern the school effectively and have shared vision, purposes and expectations for the school.

**Concerns and Questions:**

The applicant did not provide an adequate or comprehensive plan for the following:

- Detailed start-up plan specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals, which is aligned with a sound start-up budget.
- Sound plans for school and student safety and security including security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies.
- Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Operations Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as staffing, professional development, performance management, school start-up, general operations and facilities management.
- Staffing plan is aligned with the educational program and conducive to the school's success.
- Compensation packages, system, and strategies are in place that is likely to attract and retain strong staff.
- Well thought out plan for professional development in the areas of special education and English Language Learners, including implementation of IEP's, discipline of students with disabilities and communication with ELL families.
- If the school leader is identified, evidence of the leader's experience in/ability to design, launch, and lead a school that effectively serves the target population, as well as evidence that the proposed leader is well qualified to implement the specific educational program being proposed. Any identified leadership training is appropriate for and aligned with the educational program.

**Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Interview (if applicable)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has assembled a diverse board of directors for the proposed charter school, in terms of background and experience.

**Concerns and Questions:**

The applicant was not able to provide clarification on many of the questions the charter school review team had concerning the application. The applicant repeatedly referred to its application as a "draft" instead of a finished proposal. The application did not represent a comprehensive plan for launching a charter school. The specific areas of deficiency and/or concern are bulleted in the above section.

**OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Resubmission**

**Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating**

\_\_\_\_\_.

**Evaluator Comments and Questions**

**Application – Section 3 – Financial Plan and Capacity**

**Strengths:**

There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team. The financial plan section of the application was an area of much concern.

**Concerns and Questions:**

The application did not include a sound, consistent or complete plan for startup and operation of a charter school. The following areas were inadequate:

- Detailed financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the proposed school will have sound systems and processes in place for accounting, payroll, and independent annual school-level and network-level (where applicable) financial and administrative audits.
- Sound criteria and procedures in place for selecting contractors for any administrative services.
- Complete, realistic, and viable start-up and five year operating budgets.
- Detailed budget narrative that clearly explains reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions, including grant/fundraising assumptions, identification of the amounts and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (noting which are secured vs. anticipated), and including evidence of firm commitments where applicable.
- Sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.
- Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the financial plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, and accounting.

**Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Interview (if applicable)**

**Strengths:**

There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team. The financial plan section of the application was an area of much concern. The budget presented in the application does not match the applicant's statements during the interview and will not fund the proposed operations of the school. For example, the budget in the application only accounts for two teaching positions for 66 students and not the 11 teaching positions the applicants discussed during the interview.

**OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Resubmission**

**Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating**

\_\_\_\_\_.

Evaluator Comments and Questions		
<b>Application – Section 4 - Additional Attachments: Facilities, Transportation Plan, Food Service, Insurance, Waivers, etc.</b>		
<b>Strengths:</b> There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team.		
<b>Concerns and Questions:</b> <b>The applicant did not provide an adequate and/or complete plan for the following areas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility that will meet the requirements of the educational program and anticipated student population.</li> <li>• Budget assumptions and reasonable budget numbers that reflect rent, utilities, maintenance, insurance and build-out costs.</li> <li>• Demonstrated experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations.</li> <li>• Clear description of transportation plan that includes anticipated routes and extracurricular activities.</li> <li>• Description of how the school will arrange transportation for special needs students where necessary.</li> <li>• Detailed budget assumptions that include anticipated growth and associated additional costs.</li> <li>• Demonstrated familiarity with state and federal regulations relating to provision of transportation services to students.</li> <li>• Plan to secure comprehensive and adequate insurance coverage, including worker's compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, sexual abuse and any other required coverage.</li> </ul>		
<b>Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:</b>		
<b>Does not Meet</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	<b>Meets or Exceeds</b>
<b>Interview (if applicable)</b>		
<b>Strengths:</b> There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team.		
<b>Concerns and Questions:</b> As noted above, there were several areas on concern with this section of the application. During the interview, the applicant was not able to provide specific answers to many of the review committee's questions. In some areas, the applicant stated the possibility of contracting with the school district to provide some services, but did not identify an adequate budget plan or agreements to fulfill those possibilities. The applicant did not demonstrate it had researched the specific costs involved with its facilities and transportation plan.		
<b>OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:</b>		
<b>Does not Meet</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	<b>Meets or Exceeds</b>
<b>Resubmission</b>		
Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating _____.		

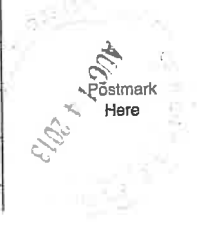
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**Sen** Dr. Terrance D. Lawless Sr.  
**Stre or P** Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M. Inc.  
**City** P.O. Box 281785  
Nashville, TN 37228

PSI See reverse for instructions





## RUTHERFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Marvin D. Odom, Director of Schools**

2240 Southpark Drive  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128  
Phone (615) 893-5812 Fax (615) 898-7940

August 13, 2013

Dr. Terrance D. Lawless Sr.  
Empowering One to D.R.E.A.M. Inc.  
P.O. Box 281785  
Nashville, TN 37228

Dear Dr. Lawless,

The Rutherford County Board of Education voted on August 13, 2013, to deny the resubmitted charter school application for the Tracy Darnell Montessori Academy. The full report from the Charter School Review Committee is attached for your reference.

If you have any questions, please contact the Rutherford County Schools central office at (615) 893-5812.

Sincerely,

Terry Hodge, Chairman  
Rutherford County Board of Education

Tim Tackett, Chairman  
Charter School Review Committee



**Tracey Darnell Montessori Academy  
Charter School Resubmission Review  
Ratings and Scoring Report**

August 2, 2013

Evaluator Comments and Questions		
<b>Application – Section 1 – Academic Plan Design and Capacity</b>		
<b>Strengths:</b> The applicant provided a vision — although broad in nature — for working with at-risk students.		
<b>Concerns and Questions:</b> The applicant lacks a detailed, specific plan for curriculum, standards, assessments, meeting the individual academic needs of special education students, providing supplemental services, and meeting all state and federal education requirements.		
<b>Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:</b>		
<b>Does not Meet</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	<b>Meets or Exceeds</b>
<b>Interview (if applicable)</b>		
<b>Concerns and Questions:</b> The applicant board members could not elaborate or provide specifics on several areas of their academic plan design. The applicant did not provide specifics for the following areas:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for clear, rigorous standards aligned with the Tennessee Curriculum Standards and Common Core State Standards.</li> <li>• A comprehensive plan for any additional academic standards beyond the Tennessee Curriculum Standards and Common Core Standards that may be adopted (mission-specific), including explanation and evidence of how those standards would exceed state standards.</li> <li>• Evidence of clear, rigorous promotion and exit policies and standards.</li> <li>• An explanation of how the organization will use data to inform instruction and evaluate academic progress, including progress of at-risk students, students with disabilities and English Language Learners.</li> <li>• An effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for measuring and evaluating academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, and the entire school – throughout the school year, at the end of the academic year, and for the term of the charter.</li> <li>• A comprehensive, effective plan (including qualified personnel) and system for collecting and analyzing student academic achievement data, using the data to refine and improve instruction – including providing training and support to school leadership and teachers – and reporting the data to the school community and district.</li> <li>• Appropriate, well-defined corrective actions the school will take if it falls short of the State's and/or district's student academic achievement expectations or goals at any level, including explanation of what would trigger such actions and who would implement them.</li> <li>• Identification of interim assessments and articulation of how they align with the school's chosen curriculum, performance goals and state standards.</li> <li>• A clear description of the school's approach to help remediate students' academic underperformance based on assessment and other data, and evidence the chosen approach will result in improved academic achievement.</li> </ul>		
<b>OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:</b>		
<b>Does not Meet</b>	<b>Partially Meets</b>	<b>Meets or Exceeds</b>

<b>Resubmission</b>
<p><b>Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating</b>  <b><u>NO</u></b>.</p> <p>Although the applicant provided additional information during the resubmission process, the information provided does not address all of the concerns stated by the Charter School review committee. For example, the applicant provided copies of state curriculum but did not provide a specific alignment plan for each grade level.</p>
<b>Evaluator Comments and Questions</b>
<b>Application – Section 2 – Operations Plan and Capacity</b>
<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The applicant has taken the necessary steps to apply for non-profit status and its proposed structure is in compliance with state law.</li> <li>The applicant has proposed an effective governance structure and planned board size, powers, duties, and current and desired composition.</li> <li>The applicant has compiled a group of board members who demonstrate they have the will, capacity and commitment to govern the school effectively and have shared vision, purposes and expectations for the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Concerns and Questions:</b></p> <p>The applicant did not provide an adequate or comprehensive plan for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed start-up plan specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals, which is aligned with a sound start-up budget.</li> <li>Sound plans for school and student safety and security including security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies.</li> <li>Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Operations Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as staffing, professional development, performance management, school start-up, general operations and facilities management.</li> <li>Staffing plan is aligned with the educational program and conducive to the school's success.</li> <li>Compensation packages, system, and strategies are in place that is likely to attract and retain strong staff.</li> <li>Well thought out plan for professional development in the areas of special education and English Language Learners, including implementation of IEP's, discipline of students with disabilities and communication with ELL families.</li> <li>If the school leader is identified, evidence of the leader's experience in/ability to design, launch, and lead a school that effectively serves the target population, as well as evidence that the proposed leader is well qualified to implement the specific educational program being proposed. Any identified leadership training is appropriate for and aligned with the educational program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 10px;"><b>Does not Meet</b></span> <span><b>Partially Meets</b></span> <span><b>Meets or Exceeds</b></span> </div>
<b>Interview (if applicable)</b>
<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>The applicant has assembled a diverse board of directors for the proposed charter school, in terms of background and experience.</p>
<p><b>Concerns and Questions:</b></p>

The applicant was not able to provide clarification on many of the questions the charter school review team had concerning the application. The applicant repeatedly referred to its application as a "draft" instead of a finished proposal. The application did not represent a comprehensive plan for launching a charter school. The specific areas of deficiency and/or concern are bulleted in the above section.

**OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Resubmission**

**Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_.**

The applicant provided copies of Rutherford County Board of Education policies but did not include a plan for how those policies would be adapted to fit the charter school. For example, the applicant provided copies of the Board of Education's salary policies, employee benefits packages and safety policy but with little or no explanation of how these policies would apply to the charter school or its employees.

**Evaluator Comments and Questions**

**Application – Section 3 – Financial Plan and Capacity**

**Strengths:**

There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team. The financial plan section of the application was an area of much concern.

**Concerns and Questions:**

The application did not include a sound, consistent or complete plan for startup and operation of a charter school. The following areas were inadequate:

- Detailed financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the proposed school will have sound systems and processes in place for accounting, payroll, and independent annual school-level and network-level (where applicable) financial and administrative audits.
- Sound criteria and procedures in place for selecting contractors for any administrative services.
- Complete, realistic, and viable start-up and five year operating budgets.
- Detailed budget narrative that clearly explains reasonable, well-supported revenue and cost assumptions, including grant/fundraising assumptions, identification of the amounts and sources of all anticipated funds, property, or other resources (noting which are secured vs. anticipated), and including evidence of firm commitments where applicable.
- Sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.
- Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the financial plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, and accounting.

**Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Interview (if applicable)**

**Strengths:**

There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team. The financial plan section of the application was an area of much concern. The budget presented in the application does not match the applicant's statements during the interview and will not fund the proposed operations of the school. For

example, the budget in the application only accounts for two teaching positions for 66 students and not the 11 teaching positions the applicants discussed during the interview.

**OVERALL RANKING:** Please circle the rating that best describes this section:

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Resubmission**

Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_\_.

The applicant's financial plan was not viable. The applicant provided inconsistent budget plans for the charter school, especially in relation with compensation/benefit plans for employees and assumed funding sources. The applicant did not demonstrate or document a process for purchasing goods, services or materials. The resubmission plan lacked a sound contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

**Evaluator Comments and Questions**

**Application – Section 4 - Additional Attachments: Facilities, Transportation Plan, Food Service, Insurance, Waivers, etc.**

**Strengths:**

There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team.

**Concerns and Questions:**

**The applicant did not provide an adequate and/or complete plan for the following areas:**

- A sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility that will meet the requirements of the educational program and anticipated student population.
- Budget assumptions and reasonable budget numbers that reflect rent, utilities, maintenance, insurance and build-out costs.
- Demonstrated experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations.
- Clear description of transportation plan that includes anticipated routes and extracurricular activities.
- Description of how the school will arrange transportation for special needs students where necessary.
- Detailed budget assumptions that include anticipated growth and associated additional costs.
- Demonstrated familiarity with state and federal regulations relating to provision of transportation services to students.
- Plan to secure comprehensive and adequate insurance coverage, including worker's compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, sexual abuse and any other required coverage.

**Please circle the rating that best describes this section of the application:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Interview (if applicable)**

**Strengths:**

There were no strengths noted by the charter school review team.

**Concerns and Questions:**

As noted above, there were several areas on concern with this section of the application. During the interview, the applicant was not able to provide specific answers to many of the review committee's questions. In some areas, the applicant stated the possibility of contracting with the school district to provide some services, but did not identify an adequate budget plan or agreements to fulfill those possibilities. The applicant did not demonstrate it had researched the specific costs involved with its facilities and transportation plan.

**OVERALL RANKING: Please circle the rating that best describes this section:**

**Does not Meet**

**Partially Meets**

**Meets or Exceeds**

**Resubmission**

**Has the applicant adequately addressed the committee's concerns with this section in the resubmission process? Please give specific reasons why or why not. Resubmitted rating**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_.**

The applicant's plan for facilities and transportation is inadequate and does not provide specific documentation or evidence of support. For example, the applicant identified a potential facility but did not provide any documentation to support the estimates for renovating the building, providing furniture, fixtures or equipment. In addition, the applicant did not demonstrate a familiarity with state and federal regulations relating to the provision of transportation of students. Instead, the applicant simply provided copies of the Rutherford County Board of Education's transportation policy and state regulations without any explanation or a specific plan for how the applicant would adapt those policies to serve the charter school.