



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction

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Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

February 8, 2002

Mr. Thomas Scullen
Appleton Area School District
PO Box 2019
Appleton, WI 54912-2019

RE: Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA)

Dear Tom:

On January 8 and 9, an expert peer review panel evaluated FY02 Charter School Planning Grant applications. I regret that your proposal for the Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA) was not approved for funding. Readers' comments, which outline the strengths and the weaknesses of your proposal, are included with this letter. Some of those concerns were insufficient AASD community, parent and staff involvement, accountability issues, question of how the serve were serve children with diverse backgrounds, and a budget that appeared to address implementation versus planning activities.

Questions about the grant decision should be addressed to me at 608-266-5728 or paula.crandall-decker@dpi.state.wi.us.

While these funds were denied at this time, you may reapply for planning grant funds in the future. Also, you may apply for a competitive Implementation Grant whether or not you have received Planning Grant funds from this office. However, it would be important to address the readers' comments to improve your potential for funding. For more information about Wisconsin Charter School Grant Funds, please visit our website at www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/sms/csin-dex.html. Please share this information with all persons who participated in the development of your proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Crandall Decker".

Paula Crandall Decker
Charter School Consultant

pcd

Enclosure

c: Pat Laystrom, Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA)

PLANNING SUBGRANT APPLICATION REVIEW WORKSHEET

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Planning Subgrant Applicant
Appleton Area School District - Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA)
Peer Review Panel Member
Team 4

I. Charter School Vision

Strengths

Innovative.
Reaches a need.
Goals/objectives are measurable.
Well articulated goals.

Weaknesses

Focus appears too broad, "all things to all people".
Goals of employment of 10 teachers/enrollment of 200 students not appropriate measurable goals.
Proposal seems generic to state-level but not specific to Appleton.
Lacks description of involvement of local stakeholders or local need for this.

Rating for Charter School Vision: strong average [weak]

II. Planning Process

Strengths

Good description of planning activities to date.
Marketing plan.

Weaknesses

Insufficient community, parent, staff from AASD involvement.
Proposal does not outline community support nor parent involvement.
Proposal is weak in addressing sustainability and continued operation issues.
Lacks description of how charter school would be managed.
Lacks description of relationship between charter school and authorizer.
How will school effectively serve students with diverse needs — from gifted and talented to at-risk to EEN?
How will student accountability be managed?
How will standardized tests be administered?
Request for waivers not developed.
Appears that school wants to be a state-wide school with no outline/explanation of steps or plan on how they would accomplish this.

Rating for Planning Process: strong [average weak]

III. Budget

Strengths

[None listed]

Weaknesses

Budget appears to be for implementation needs.
Need to resubmit with indications on how the \$10,000 will be used for planning activities only.
Who will oversee expenditures?

Rating for Budget Section: strong average [weak]

Overall Rating Awarded: Strong Average [Weak]

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Recommendation for funding:

- q Fund
- q Fund With Minor Revisions
- q Fund Pending Significant Revisions
- n [No Funding]

The proposal seems to be generic to the state level and does not specify enough to Appleton.

No outlining and demonstrating of Appleton stakeholders involvement, commitment and need for this (i.e., community, board, parents, etc.)