

Maine Charter School Commission

August 1, 2012

John Jaques, President
Baxter School for Technology and Science
6 Mann Road
Freeport, ME 04032

Dear Mr. Jaques,

I would suggest that in addition to an updated and integrated revised application, your overall application would be strengthened by adding the following additional material:

1. Academic program:

- You described the freshman Integrated Lang. Arts, biology and technology program in some detail. Because you will be enrolling sophomores as well, please give us a sense of how the core curriculum for tenth graders will work as well. The overall curriculum goals for the subjects, based on the learning standards in all core subjects, are okay as is and need no further elaboration, but a more fleshed out sense of how a model for 10th graders parallel to the freshman year instructional experience will serve to offer answers both during the Commission's review, and for prospective parents' questions as well.
- Flesh out how "Flex Friday" will work. The day is crucial to your proposed curriculum and personalized learning plan, and integral to your required school calendar. You can do this with a scenario format of "a day in the life" for a typical student, plus some example elements of the volunteers or project places where kids will be engaged. (MeANS did this superbly in their application.) Adding some letters of specific commitment from individuals and organizations to work with BA students in the 2013-14 year will also be helpful. With only a few exceptions, the previous letters are only vague statements promising some unspecified future willingness to work with students. That kind of letter is not persuasive.
- A narrative describing how your advisory board has worked with you to help shape the academic program. If you can convey a sense of how their work has influenced what BA will offer, that will be more persuasive than a generalized, non-specific letter of support from a Boston or San Diego charter school principal will be. A few letters from individual Advisory Board members citing specific ways in which the BA curriculum or instructional model excites her/him is also helpful.

2. Staff recruitment:

- o Please add more about whom you will help you (or have helped) in recruiting, interviewing and selecting the faculty. You have identified some outstanding experienced teachers who are ready to come on board, but you have acknowledged that some instructional personnel are likely to be unfilled as of next Feb-March. Involving some members of your Board or Advisory Board with academic backgrounds in secondary and/or undergraduate college education will strengthen our confidence levels in the skill of the staff you will eventually hire. This is important in that neither you nor your proposed principal possess any expertise in teaching math, engineering or science. (Both MeANS and Cornville have provided excellent models for how they will recruit and who is or will be involved in recruitment and selection.)

3. I won't add anything here on the facilities or financial side, as I am sure you are aware and on top of the need to give us updated proposals on the work as per the letter you have received from Jana Lapoint.

To the extent possible by our rules, I and others will try to be helpful to you before submitting your revised application. As I said to you earlier, all applications have proven to need revision during the contract negotiation phase; the more specific you are in adhering to the evaluation criteria in the RFP in the first place, the fewer subsequent revisions will be required. For this reason, I suggest taking the maximum amount of time we have given you for an extension to put all this together.

Best wishes,



Richard Barnes, Vice-chair
Maine Charter School Commission



Jana Lapoint, Chair
Maine Charter School Commission

cc: Andrea Berry, Chair, Baxter Academy for Technology and Science Board