

PA Private Academic School Licensing

Because NAEYC Accreditation is no longer accepted by the State of Pennsylvania in lieu of licensure, we have spent the past 9 months preparing our application for a PA Private Academic School License. Fortunately, we were able to repurpose much of the documentation we prepared last year for re-accreditation for the licensing application to address the questions regarding our school philosophy, educational program, support for children with special needs, parent services, professional development, etc. In addition, Carnegie Mellon had to prove ownership of the building, provide certificates of occupancy and insurance, and register our name officially with the state as the Carnegie Mellon University Children's School. Because PA has different administrative requirements than NAEYC, Dr. Carver has been named the school's "Owner" and Miss Hancock as the "Education Director". Because PA has different teacher certification requirements than NAEYC, 9 of our educators had to apply for PA Private Academic Teacher Certification at the "Nursery / Kindergarten" level. This spring, a representative of the Allegheny County Health Department inspected our school to ensure that we meet the county requirements for school health and safety, and a representative of the State Board of Private Academic Schools conducted a site visit to confirm that we have enough space and materials for the number of children we serve and that all of our educators have the appropriate health, clearance, and FBI fingerprinting documents on file here. The fees for the licensing application and related steps in the process totaled approximately \$2,000, though the certifications and fingerprinting are one time costs.



On Friday, April 25th, Dr. Carver and Miss Hancock appeared before the PA Board of Private Academic Schools in Harrisburg to answer questions about our application for licensing. Fortunately, we were alphabetically first on the list of 17 schools to be reviewed. The Board Chair began our session by commending us for an "exemplary application", as well as for the strength of the information and services we provide to the parents of our children and for the amount and quality of the in-service training and staff development that we provide for our educators. Other Board Members commended us on the longevity of our educators and said they were "almost envious"

of our program. The questions related to the undergraduate roles in our program and related child protections, the depth of our math curriculum, the frequency of our parent communication and conferences, and the way that we support children with special needs without having special education teachers on our staff. The Board did not require us to submit any of our answers in writing, so they **unanimously voted to approve our license. Hooray!** The annual license renewal process is apparently straightforward paperwork and fee payment, and most of the state requirements beyond the initial license align well with the work we are already doing.

