

Fulton Science Academy High School

Final Memo

PROPOSED RENEWAL: Fulton Science Academy High School (FSAHS)

The FCS Charter Raters Committee recommends denial of the renewal.

- Fulton Science Academy High School was assessed as being Unlikely to Meet Standards by all raters.

SUMMARY:

The renewal petition requested a five year renewal of the contract for the school which has been in operation for nine years. The contract will expire on June 30, 2015. They envisioned serving approximately 390 students in grades 9 through 12. The innovative practices they described were:

- A smaller learning environment than the surrounding comprehensive high schools
- Student laptops
- Home visits to build community
- Carnegie Learning Georgia math curriculum
- School Uniforms
- AP Capstone
- Adaptive Curriculum

Major Benefits Identified:

- The small class sizes are an important benefit for some students who do not thrive in a larger learning environment.

Major Areas of Concern:

- FSAHS is not sustainable. In nine years of operation, the school has never been able to attract more than 300 students.
 - a. While a small school size can be an asset, a high school setting must be able to generate enough resources to offer students the full spectrum of courses needed for graduation as well as sufficient funding levels to achieve financial stability.
 - b. Upon renewal in 2009, the school assured the District they would achieve sufficient school size to properly serve students. In nine years of operation it has failed to attract students in sufficient numbers to overcome the challenges caused by insufficient attendance.
 - c. The renewal envisions a continued cycle of low attendance leading to low funding levels resulting in financial strain necessitating decreases in academic resource allocations causing a decline in basic, needed resources for students requiring the use of vendors to supplement the education offerings.
 - d. The petition does not develop additional financial resources, organizational, operational, or programming alternations to stop the cycle of decline.

- The school has a history of weak and reclusive governance practices which the District highlighted during an audit in 2012. The most recent audit reflected that the governing board lacked capacity to perform its function, had created serious financial concerns for the school, and did not provide sufficient oversight of school operations and compliance matters.
 - The school attempted to gain authorization from the State Charter School Commission (SCSC) and the District supported that effort.
 - The SCSC independently determined that the school’s governing team was not sufficiently competent to govern the school.
- The school’s lack of leadership has resulted in:
 - a 19 million dollar bond default,
 - selection of board members who were leaders at schools which are currently under federal investigation, and
 - a partnership with a now failed governing board that was not competent to earn either district or state renewal,
 - no strategic plan to remediate the serious challenges faced by the school.
- Students at the school generally perform in the same range as students in similar typical schools.
 - a. The last two years, the school did show a strong performance in EOCT Biology. This past year it had a strong performance in EOCT Physical Science and Geometry.
 - b. The other six EOCT indicators reflect performance in the same range or lower than similar typical schools.

PROCESS: After submission on the third Friday in September, a committee of five FCS staff from Curriculum, Budget, Strategy and Innovation, Central Learning Community and South Learning Community was assembled to assess the charter proposals. Areas in the petition which caused the rating committee members some concern were identified and assembled in the Initial Raters’ Memo. This memo is organized in the same categories as the FCS Charter School Application and was shared with the petitioners.

Petitioners responded to each concern in writing on October 27, 2014. The FCS Raters met on October 30, 2014. They reviewed the responses, the financial analysis, and the background data. They then discussed the petitions using the standards and areas of review identified in the FCS rubric:

1. The Case for Renewal,
2. Academic Plans,
3. Organizational Plans,
4. Governance,
5. Financial Plans, and
6. Operational Plans.

The entire rubric can be located here:

<http://www.fultonschools.org/en/divisions/strategy/cschoools/Pages/default.aspx>

A summary of the FCS Raters Committee remaining concerns follows:

1. The Case for Renewal

- **FSAHS did not demonstrate a deep and authentic understanding of the community.**
 - The charter school did not develop a relationship over nine years with the middle schools from which their students matriculated.
 - The governing board did not participate in the various enrichment opportunities available through FCS or the wider community.
- **The school did not evidence the development of the broad community support needed to fully utilize local resources and/or supplement and develop those resources.**
 - The school was not able to attract sufficient numbers of students from the community to maintain financial stability or offer the full spectrum of courses needed for graduation.
 - The school has no plans to develop additional local resources.
- **The school concept did not produce high quality educational outcomes in the targeted community.**
 - Student performance, while historically strong in Biology and recently in Physical Science and Geometry, generally was not consistently better than similar typical schools in the six other academic areas.
- **FSAHS did not demonstrate an understanding of the role of FCS.**
 - Due to the unwillingness of the governing board to collaborate with the District and operate in a transparent manner, the District has had to conduct numerous audits over several years in an attempt to ascertain the practices and activities of school leadership. These audits have uncovered a pattern of questionable decisions. The District has had to repeatedly order the governing board to take corrective actions based on these various audit findings.
 - Since the move for early termination, the governing board has been more cooperative with the District. However, as noted also by the SCSC, the board as a whole does not have sufficient capacity to operate autonomously and relies heavily on the principal and the Chief Financial Officer for decision making.

2. Academic Plans

- **The data and communication processes which the school has followed will not ensure that the charter school will be able to anticipate and adjust its operations to meet changing academic expectations and/or capitalize on new academic opportunities over the term of the renewal contract.**
 - As in previous petitions, the school identifies plans to address student performance such as Adaptive Curriculum and AP Capstone. However, the nine years of experience indicates that the school is not capable of implementing the plans with fidelity, due to poor governance and small size.

3. Organizational Plans

- **The school structure will not ensure that the charter school will promote strong student performance in the targeted community.**
 - See the General Concern regarding sustainability.
- **The organizational plans are not realistic or highly effective.**

- The plans over the previous nine years have not met with success. While some of the concepts in this most recent petition are viable, the organization's inability in the past to achieve its organizational goals leaves the committee doubtful the school would succeed in the future.
- The root of the organizational challenge is the inability of the governing board to address:
 - the small school size,
 - the competition from area schools which are some of the highest performing schools in Georgia, and
 - the facility site selection that requires approximately 14% of total revenues to operate.
- **The organizational plans will not result in a healthy, sustainable public school.**
 - See the General Concern regarding sustainability.

4. Governance

- **The governing board structure did not promote community involvement and will not ensure student performance and transparent operations in the future.** This lack of governing board conscientiousness has resulted in:
 - a 19 million dollar bond default,
 - selection of board members who were leaders at schools which are currently under federal investigation,
 - a partnership with a now failed governing board that was not competent to earn either district or state renewal, and
 - the inability of the school to gain support as a Commission charter school.
- **Governing board members do not authentically understand the educational concept and does not have a history of business or organizational excellence.**
 - There is a very high turnover rate on the governing board the most recent of which is announced resignations during this renewal process.
 - Although two new members were added for this submission in September, the historical pattern does not reflect an excellence in business and organizational acumen.
 - Additionally, board members were selected who were previous leaders at schools currently under federal investigation. While the investigation has been going on for quite some time, the governing board did not take steps to mitigate the concern until this renewal process began.

5. Financial Plans

- **The financial plans do not ensure that the charter will be able to fully implement the academic and organizational plan.**
 - The financial plans anticipate a decreasing revenue stream over the next five years as well as a decrease in the expenditure per pupil. However, the school assumes an increase in occupancy costs, an increase in the number of students, but flat personnel costs. This would reflect cycle of increasing financial strain and decreasing allocations for students.
- **Every opportunity to fully utilize available resources has not been identified and are confirmed or operationalized.**

- There are no additional resources that have been identified, confirmed, or operationalized in the previous nine years. There are no plans for such in the renewal.
- **The financial plans will result in a healthy, sustainable public school.**
 - See the General Concern regarding sustainability.

6. Operational Plans – No Remaining Concerns

FCS Initial Memo
Fulton Science Academy High School
10.17.2014

The FCS Initial Memo provides the petitioner with feedback from the FCS Rater's Committee with the intent of improving the final petition which will be voted upon by the Fulton County Board of Education. This feedback may include specific directions, general impressions, requests for additional information/explanations, suggestions for improvement, and acknowledgements regarding the strong aspects of the petition. These are organized according to the sections of the FCS Application.

The petitioner may decide to accept, not accept, or partially accept the raters' suggestions for improvements. Such a decision may impact the raters' committee final recommendation for approval or denial. However, the raters fully support the petitioner's obligation to put forth a petition that most accurately reflects the petitioner's concept.

Directions:

1. Review the feedback.
2. Construct a "Petitioner's Response to the Initial Memo". This should respond in writing to each Initial Memo item indicating if the petitioner has decided to accept, not accept, or partially accept the raters' suggestions for improvements. A sample is attached.
3. Alter the original petitions reflecting the changes, if any, and save the altered document in Word. We request that any such changes be made to the original petition using the "track changes" feature in Word. No additional changes to the petition will be accepted unless requested by FCBOE.
4. Email and document titled "Petitioner's Response to the Initial Memo" and an electronic copy of the altered petition to the Charter Coordinator. If the petition is too large for email, please contact the Charter Coordinator who will arrange another method of delivery.

SUMMARY:

In evaluating the petition, the Raters Committee identified many aspects of the petition which would benefit students attending the charter school.

- The school offers a smaller learning environment than the surrounding comprehensive high schools.
- The students are issued a laptop for learning.
- The school uses home visits to build community.

Please add:

- Carnegie Learning Georgia math curriculum

- Adaptive curriculum
- Increased use of technology including student laptops, electronic textbooks, and interactive whiteboards
- Student uniforms

However, there are other areas in the petition which caused the rating committee some concern. These concerns are organized in the same categories as the FCS Charter School Guidelines. Additional areas of concern may be raised by board members during their review of the petition or presented by the GADOE during their review process. Items which are to be considered mandatory are bolded. Optional items are in regular font.

We request the petitioner respond to each of these concerns in writing by October 27, 2014, via email to Laura Stowell (StowellL@fultonschools.org).

General Comments -

Poorly written - Throughout the document there are “cut and paste” sections from other sources. Additionally there are numerous spelling and grammatical errors which the committee did not correct for the petitioner. **Please review the document for any such errors and ensure that the materials presented here are sourced appropriately if they are from another document.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. Thank you for the feedback. The document has been reviewed and edited by a professional proofreader.

Lack of data or analysis - While the petition outlines a long list of items and actions the school hopes to take in a third term, data to evidence what the school has accomplished and why actions proposed are well suited to the students of Fulton Science Academy High School is not robust or compelling. There was very little analysis of student performance, organizational development or innovative learning.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. FSAHS Response to the Initial Memo and Appendix 1 contain additional data and data analysis as requested in later parts of this document.

Lack of demonstrated leadership - The school has been in operation for nine years. This renewal was the opportunity to demonstrate areas of successful leadership which would result in improved student performance and enhanced financial and operational stability. While the petition lists many of the areas of concerns raised by the District in the audit and termination hearing, the petition does not successfully address the governance and operational practices that have plagued the school for nine years.

- The instability on the board has continued with new members being added just since the school’s failed Commission Petition.
- The ineffective and non-transparent structure of the organization has not changed.

- The low attendance pattern which adversely impacts the school's financial health and prevents a sufficient variety of course offerings has continued.
- Financial plans have not been made which could have mitigated these issues.

The FSAHS Governing Board has made significant progress toward providing the proper infrastructure to continue operating an outstanding school. Over the last 2 years, several new members have been added to the Governing Board of FSAHS for 4 main reasons:

- 1. As a result of the bond failure, the Governing Board leadership resigned and they were replaced. On June 13, 2013, the FSAHS Governing Board voted on new bylaws that created a single streamlined Governing Board made up of 4 parent-elected Board members and 3 Board-elected Board members. Board-elected members were elected by the entire Board, which was a parent majority and the previous distinction between the corporate board of directors and the FSAHS Governing Board was eliminated.**
- 2. In May 2014, the Board composition was modified again specifically at the recommendation of the Georgia Charter School Association (GCSA) to meet the requirements of the State Charter School Commission and to create a Governing Board of between 7 and 9 Board members with 2 parent-elected Board members and 5 to 7 Board-elected members. As part of this change with the guidance of the GCSA, we have worked very hard to round out the experience and skill sets of the Governing Board by tapping into several community resources to recruit potential Board members. Over the past year we have reached out to parents and the community in the following ways: Georgia Universities, GCSA, and Board members' and parents' many industry contacts with relevant skills that will benefit the school, including STEM careers, marketing, legal, finance, and education. These changes were approved by Laura Stowell (email dated March 12, 2014).**
- 3. By design of the bylaws, the terms for Governing Board members are for 2 years (or previously some were 3 years) with staggered expiration years. This means that half of the Governing Board has been up for election or reelection every year.**
- 4. Many parent Board members loose interest before their term expires. This happens for several reasons, including their students graduate or are accepted to college, or their jobs change in ways that require longer hours or more travel.**

The changes over the last 2 years resulted in the following:

- **Our current Board President, Dr. Maria Beug-Deeb, is a parent-elected Board member as well as the parent of two FSAHS students.**
- **Our past Board President, Randall Morgan was a parent-elected Board member as well as the parent of two FSAHS students.**

- **Due to the high level of involvement and support among our FSAHS families, the composition of the Governing Board has remained a majority of parents of FSAHS students even after the change in bylaws to majority Board-elected Board members.**
- **The Governance Committee was created to evaluate current policies and recommend new board policies and processes designed to provide for effective and efficient governance. As part of this function, the Governance Committee has developed and is further refining a process for recommending nominees for election and reelection to the board.**
- **The Finance Committee was created to provide more oversight. The Chair of the Finance Committee is the Treasurer of the Governing Board, has a strong background in Finance, and is a parent of a current 11th grader. Other members of the Finance Committee include the CFO and the Principal. The Finance Committee reviews the budgets and expenditures before every Board meeting and presents their findings and recommendations at the Board Meetings. This is to ensure the continued financial stability of the FSAHS.**
- **Over the past year we have reached out to the community to recruit new members in the following ways:**
 - **Parents of current students**
 - **Many of our school parents have relevant skills that can benefit the school, including individuals in STEM, marketing, management, and finance careers.**
 - **Georgia Universities**
 - **Meeting with Dr. Mike Dishman, Kennesaw State University Department of Educational Leadership**
 - **University of Georgia (UGA) -- Associate Professor in Computer Science served on both the Governing Board and the Academic Excellence Committee during school year 2013-2014. Unfortunately, his schedule this academic year did not allow him to serve anymore and he recently resigned.**
 - **GCSA**
 - **Discussions with Elisa Falco**
 - **The newly formed Board Bank (March 2014) – Dr. Beug-Deeb will attend the November 15 meeting to network.**
 - **Industry and community contacts**
 - **GCSA recommended that we contact law firms as most law firms strongly encourage their employees to volunteer in the community. Our Board Member with legal expertise is Faris Zejnelovic.**

- **Our Board members and parents have many industry contacts with relevant skills that can benefit the school, including individuals in STEM, marketing, legal, finance, and education careers.**

To address your concerns about the number of parent-elected Board members, we have again revised the bylaws so that the Board composition will consist of 7 Board members with 5 parent-elected Board members and 2 Board-elected members. FSAHS is committed to conducting board assessments as recommended by FCS.

THE CASE

- **Page 1 – “Being accountable for higher student achievement before its stakeholders, FSAHS has ranked as one of the top performing high schools in the Fulton County and state during its operation since 2006.” This comment is misleading. The school generally performs in alignment with the other schools in the area. Admittedly, the schools in this area are among the best in the state, but the way this is phrased, it implies that FSAHS outperforms similar typical schools which it does not. Refer to the Charter Sector Report for accurate information on comparator performance.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The sentence will read “FSAHS has met or exceeded student achievement expectations as compared to other traditional and charter high schools in the area. As a result, FSAHS, similar to other Fulton County high schools in the area, has ranked as one of the top performing high schools in the state during its operation”.

(same comment – different rater)

- **The measures in Appendix 21 indicate performance against FCS average. Fifty percent (50%) of FCS schools perform above average. Please indicate the performance of the school against similar typical schools as reflected by poverty levels. This information can be obtained in the State of the Charter Annual Report. You should also reference the BTO analysis conducted by the state.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The state accountability sheet (please refer to Exhibit 21) demonstrate that FSAHS has met or exceeded the majority of its charter performance goals during the second term of its operation. In addition, the 2012-13 Beating the Odds analysis conducted by the Georgia Department of Education Charter School Division illustrates that FSAHS has exceeded expectations set forth by the state through a cross sectional, fixed effects regression model that accounts for the variety of students and school level variables including but not limited to poverty and demographic differences. Furthermore, FCS analysis of charter schools’ academic performance based on the poverty level revealed that FSAHS has met or exceeded in 12 out of 16 areas as measured by the End of Course Tests in the 2012-13 school year. The FSAHS analysis of 2014 ACT and SAT results accounting for the poverty level showed mixed results which can be seen in

Appendix 1 (Appendices are a separate document that were added for clarification for the Response to the Initial Memo). While FSAHS ACT math average is significantly higher than the predicted value, FSAHS science and English scores were lower than the predictions. However, the differences were not significant.

- Page 1 – How do you achieve a “nurturing environment”?

A nurturing school environment is one that foster successful academic and social development and that prevents behavioral problems¹. In creating a nurturing environment, FSAHS administration, in collaboration with staff, has developed school-wide policies to teach, promote, and reinforce positive behaviors and to intervene in psychologically toxic incidents. FSAHS administration and staff also recognize that meeting academic needs of the students helps promote positive behavior and minimize opportunities for problem behavior. Furthermore, as an AdvanceED accredited school that is driven by its mission, FSAHS has consistently implemented AdvanceED standards that support the development of a nurturing environment, the foundation of which is our high quality student support system. The following practices have helped FSAHS fulfill this mission:

- Low student-teacher ratio
- Small class size
- Strong collaboration with parents through an open door policy, dedicated parent-teacher conference days, and an active home visit program
- Safe learning environment
- Increased student support services such as morning, lunch, afterschool, and weekend tutoring sessions for all learners
- Strategic supports for our course offerings such as a summer boot camp for AP Biology students and summer core credit classes for Accelerated Coordinate Algebra and Precalculus Honors students

- Page 2 – What is “low and small”?

There are several definitions of small schools. Most of the literature on the subject matter usually refer to high schools having less than 400 to 500 students to be considered small schools. The National Education Association noted on its website that the optimum size for small schools varies, with many recent definitions calling for not more than 500 students².

Grauer (2012) conducted an extensive review of literature to define small schools and concluded that schools with an absolute number of less than 400 students can be

¹ Biglan, A., Flay, B. R., Embry, D. D., & Sandler, I. N. (2012). The critical role of nurturing environments for promoting human well-being. *American Psychologist*, 67(4), 257.

² Cain, T. (2005). Research Talking Points on Small Schools. Retrieved October, 23, 2014 from <http://www.nea.org/home/13639.htm>

considered small schools³. Howley (2002) in his paper titled '*Small Schools*' summarizes the literature in an attempt to find a common ground for what is considered a small school. He referred to high schools enrolling approximately 400 or fewer students as small schools⁴.

Based on this information, Fulton Science Academy High School can be considered a small school given that it currently has fewer than 400 students and ultimately projects to enroll 390 students.

- Page 2 – What was the participation level in the survey? How long did parents have to complete the survey? Did you publish the results on line?

At the time of the charter submission, 43% of parents had participated in the survey. Parents were given nine days to complete the survey. The results have been posted at http://fsahigh.org/images/documents/Parent_Survey_Results.pdf since 9/18/2014.

- Page 2 - Consider allowing parents to lead this effort and gain buy in amongst each other.

Thank-you for your recommendation. We will pass it on to our Parent Volunteer Organization.

- Page 3 - The assertion that four governing board members are parents is by chance, not by design. The governing board structure only reflects two parent slots and those maintain minor terms lengths. This implies that there is a structural commitment to parental control, which there is not.

We have accepted your recommendation and revised the bylaws so that the board composition will consist of 7 board members with 5 parent-elected board members and 2 board-elected members.

As background information:

- **On June 13, 2013, the FSAHS Governing Board voted on new bylaws that created a single streamlined Governing Board made up of 4 parent-elected board members and 3 board-elected board members. Board members were**

³ Grauer, S. (2012). How big is a small school: A review of the literature on absolute secondary school

⁴ Howley, C. (2002). Small schools. In A. Molnar (Ed.) School reform proposals: The research evidence. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved October, 23, 2014 from <http://eps1.asu.edu/epru/documents/EPRU%202002-101/Chapter%2003-Howley-Final.htm>.

- elected by the entire board, which was a parent majority at the time, which was a parent majority and the previous distinction between the corporate board of directors and the FSAHS Governing Board was eliminated.
- **In May 2014, the board composition was amended again specifically at the recommendation of the Georgia Charter School Association (GCSA) to meet the requirements of the State Charter School Commission and comprised of between 7 and 9 board members with 2 parent-elected board members and 5 to 7 board-elected members with relevant skills that will benefit the school, including legal, finance, special education, general education and STEM careers. These changes were just begun with the prior approval by Laura Stowell (email dated March 12, 2014).**

It has always been the intent of the FSAHS Governing Board to have a majority of parents of FSAHS students. Due to the high level of involvement and support among our FSAHS families, the composition of the Governing Board has remained a majority of parents of FSAHS students even after the change in bylaws to majority board-elected board members.

- **Page 4 – The petition asserts that parents give feedback on policy and budget. How many times have non-governing board parents actually given feedback and had that feedback implemented by the board? Demonstrate that with facts from the minutes or other official records.**

FSAHS Governing Board has used a variety of methods to increase opportunities for parents to provide feedback. In May 2012, parents were invited to attend a budget review meeting where projected budgets for school operation and charter petitions were presented (Copy of email in Appendix 3). A budget review meeting was not held during the spring of 2013 because FSAHS was not given a preliminary budget due to the termination proceeding. In 2014, FSAHS started the Finance Committee, whose meetings are a public forum for the purpose of budget review. The agendas for May 10, 2014 and September 17, 2014 meetings include items for budget projections for the charter applications to the State Charter School Commission and Fulton County.

Further examples of parent feedback includes:

- **Curricular and extracurricular offerings: FSAHS conducted several surveys to solicit feedback from parents regarding both curricular and extracurricular offerings. The most recent survey was conducted in February 2014 to identify parent and student preferences for summer school courses and foreign language classes that would be offered during the school year 2014 -15. FSAHS made decisions to offer specific courses based on the feedback received from parents.**
- **The FSAHS Student Code of Conduct: This Handbook is reviewed every year by the Governing Board. Parent input that has been adopted includes the addition of dress down days (change made in 2012) and allowing jeans as**

part of the uniform (2014-2015 school year).

- **Increased bus transportation: After the initial suggestion was evaluated, all parents were surveyed to determine how many families would be interested, the number and location of the routes.**
- Page 4 – What is the participation at the Town Hall Meetings and what was the outcome?

FSAHS organized town hall meetings on a regular basis during the school year 2012-13. The number 3 bulleted item on page 4 is incomplete as written. The revised petition will state, “FSAHS Governing Board organized town hall meetings prior to every regularly scheduled meeting during the school year 2012-13”. In the town hall meetings, FSAHS Governing Board and administration mainly discussed the developments pertaining the school’s charter. The last town hall meeting was held on 6/27/2013 and 47 families attended.

(same comment – different rater)

- What were the participation levels in the morning breakfasts and what was the outcome of these meetings in terms of impacting school operations?

The morning breakfasts typically involve small groups of up to 10 parents in attendance. The breakfasts provide an opportunity for the principal to hear directly from parents regarding school operations. Specific topics for discussion are not identified before these events since the breakfasts are meant to serve as an open platform for parents to bring up their concerns and ideas for improvement.

- Page 5 – Spell out Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA) since it the first time it is used in the document

We accept the recommendation. Thank-you.

- Is the complete GCSA report in the appendix? Is this organization listed in the contracts in the appendix? They are a resource hired by the school to advocate on their behalf, correct?

GCSA’s assessment on FSAHS’s operation is provided in Exhibit 20 in its entirety. FSAHS does not have a contract with the GCSA. GCSA is a membership organization and the operational assessment is one of the services they provide to members for a fee. These assessments are conducted to provide charter schools outside feedback to help ensure operational success and fulfillment of the school’s charter. FSAHS Governing Board will utilize the outcomes from the assessment for the purpose of strategic planning, school improvement planning, improving governance, risk management, and internal control. Elisa Falco of GCSA conducted the operational assessment and her explanation is provided in Appendix 4.

- **Page 5 - This table reflects applications and registrations. It does not reflect enrollment. Please add a row reflecting enrollment data as indicated by 10 Day Count. Also, report the numbers for 13/14 along with the explanation in the footnote. This demonstrates transparency.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. A row containing the enrollment data as indicated by the 10-day count has been added. The revised petition will include the following table:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14*	2014-15
Number of applications received	357	475	0	559
Number of spaces available for new students	130	120	200	200
Number of completed registration (new and returning students) as of spring semester of the preceding year	314	380	0	340
Number of actual enrollment	283	266	170	270

***FSAHS did not follow its typical enrollment calendar during the spring of 2013. FSAHS chose to wait until the Georgia State Board of Education (SBOE) finalizes its decision on the charter termination proceeding. The SBOE made the decision on June 21, 2013.**

- **Introductory info: Enrollment is very low in grades 10, 11, and 12 in year 1. I'm assuming this is a reflection of current enrollment trends. What causes the drop off in student enrollment between 9th and 10th grade? Student retention is an important indicator of school quality.**

We agree that student retention is an important indicator of school quality under normal circumstances. Unfortunately, FSAHS enrollment was impacted negatively throughout the charter term by several events: the uncertainty associated with first charter renewal process in 2010, non-renewal of the FSAMS charter in 2012, and the termination proceeding in 2013. In 2010-11, FSAHS analyzed its enrollment trend and identified two major areas in which FSAHS had limited offerings, that negatively impacted student enrollment and retention: a.) transportation, and b.) extracurricular activities in the areas of sports and music. FSAHS enrolled 380 students (new and returning) during the early Spring of 2012. However, the uncertain status of our charter meant that FSAHS could not recruit and retain its students at the projected level. Our assessment of school enrollment and retention is

that the level of interest in the school has increased in years when the school's future was not in question and the school had a sufficient number of years remaining under the charter for rising 10th and 11th graders to graduate. Meanwhile, to address retention issues unrelated to the charter, FSAHS has done the following to increase student and parent satisfaction with the school:

- (a) Extended its transportation offering within the past two years by contracting with a student transportation company for one more school bus in 2013-14 and two more buses in 2014-15.**
- (b) Introduced an orchestra program.**
- (c) Negotiated with the landlord to build a gymnasium upon the renewal of the charter.**

The FSAHS leadership team believes that these actions coupled with high quality instructional offerings will yield a high level of student enrollment and retention upon the renewal of the charter.

- Page 5 – Home visits - This is a best practice that is very, very important and but rarely initiated!

FSAHS believes in a strong collaboration with the families of students. This is an important key to our success. The yearlong home visit program is an integral part of FSAHS' effort to create a nurturing environment for our students and enjoys the full support of the FSAHS staff members and faculty. .

At the beginning of each year, the FSAHS home visit coordinator contacts all families by email to inform them about the program and its particulars. Follow up emails and reminders are sent periodically throughout the school year. When parents respond that they are interested in being visited by teachers, the coordinator schedules the home visits. Teachers visit in family homes in groups of two to four based on availability and family request. The visits are scheduled for after school hours, usually lasting from around 6 pm to 7 pm.

Although family participation is voluntary, the program has been very well received by the FSAHS community. In the 2012 to 2013 school year, teachers visited 45 families and in 2013 to 2014, they visited 65 families.

The result of the home visit is that the entire parent, student, teacher relationship becomes more dynamic. The visits lay a foundation for student success. Parents report that their students' attitudes toward school and teachers are favorably impacted by home visits. Teachers and parents report that academic achievement improves after a home visit. These visits help foster feelings of personal empowerment and accountability for our students. Additionally, the visits open important lines of communication that then remain open for the entire school year.

- Page 7 - The text and the chart above do not reflect the same information. Consider reconciling or providing explanation.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The text on page 7 will be adjusted in the

revised petition, stating that the August 18, 2012 Governing Board Meeting Minutes reports 380 students registered for the school year 2013-14, which includes 200 returning and 180 new students. FSAHS experienced significant attrition due to the bad publicity surrounding the non-renewal of the FSA Middle School charter.

- **Page 7 – The petition implies that the actions resulting in the termination proceedings were “beyond the control of FSAHS.” The FSAHS Governing Board had actively partnered with the middle school and was an active participant in the events to include the bond failure. This phrase is not accurate and should be removed.**

This phrase will be replaced with “unintended consequences of the partnership”. Although FSAHS played no role in the decision not to renew the FSAMS charter, the risks of the bond offering were publicly disclosed, and FSAHS agrees that it was aware of the possibility (but did not expect) that the FSAMS charter would not be renewed. FSAHS’ motivation to enter into joint bond agreement with the FSAMS and FSAES was to offer its community a facility with better amenities including a gymnasium, an auditorium, and a digital library, which would in turn have increased the student enrollment and retention rate. Despite the bond default caused by the nonrenewal of the FSAMS charter, however, FSAHS was able to resolve the situation without having to use any of its own funds to repay the bond investors.

- Page 7 – The last bullet indicates the attrition was due to the bad publicity surrounding the non-renewal of the middle school. However, the pattern consistently shows that the school identifies a higher number of interested students in the spring but a lower number of students actually are enrolled as of 10 Day Count. I am not sure that this bullet does anything but remind the reader of the negative impact of the governing board’s decision to partner with the middle school. It might be better to delete it.

FSAHS agrees that the statement does, unfortunately, remind readers of the negative impact of the nonrenewal of FSAMS charter.

In the interest of serving the community however, FSAHS has identified the factors that contribute to student attrition. In years unaffected by the uncertainty of the charter, the attrition of students between Spring registration and the 10 day count ranges from 10 to 15 percent. In the years affected by charter uncertainty, this rate is much higher.

- **Page 8 – How many of the new members over the past two years have been placed from the GCSA Board Bank? Are they still seated?**

The Board Bank was newly formed in 2014 and its first training meeting was held March 2014. Therefore this resource has not been available for the last 2 years. Dr. Beug-Deeb will attend the November 15 Board Bank meeting to network with

potential candidates.

- Page 8 - It would not be appropriate for FCS to sit on the governing board of a charter school. District employees have been on advisory committees with charter schools, but charter governance should not include the authorizer.

FSAHS agrees with your recommendation and understands the FCS policy that disqualifies FCS employees from serving on the governing board of a charter school. Therefore, item 4 will be rephrased in the revised petition as FSAHS Governing Board welcomes any recommendations from FCS.

- pg. 8 - How are the individuals applying for the non-parent slots nominated for election?

The Governance Committee is responsible for identifying qualified candidates to nominate for a board-elected member position. The Governance Committee has identified potential candidates from a variety of resources including parents, universities, and businesses.

We actually have no "non-parent" slots, just slots that may be filled by non-parents with the intent to add specific expertise and skills that may not be available among our parent population.

Over the past year we have reached out to the community to recruit new members in the following ways:

- **Parents of current students**

Parents of current students can nominate themselves or others for the parent-elected positions. Parent-elected board members include the Chair Maria Beug-Deeb, Dr. Hamki

Parents can also be elected by the board upon the nomination by a board member. These includes Sharon Mutnick (Treasurer), and Jamie Henderson (Vice-President)

- **Georgia Universities**

- **Meeting with Dr. Mike Dishman, Kennesaw State University Department of Educational Leadership**

- **University of Georgia (UGA) -- Associate Professor in Computer Science served on both the Governing Board and the Academic Excellence Committee during school year 2013-2014. Unfortunately, his schedule this academic year did not allow him to serve anymore and he recently resigned.**

- **GCSA**

- **Discussions with Elisa Falco**
- **The newly formed Board Bank (March 2014) – Dr. Beug-Deeb will be attending the November 15 meeting to network.**
- **Industry and community contacts**
 - **GCSA recommended that we contact law firms as most law firms strongly encourage their employees to volunteer in the community. Our Board Member with legal expertise is Faris Zejnelovic.**
 - **Board members’ and parents’ have reached out to their many industry contacts with relevant skills that will benefit the school, including STEM, marketing, legal, finance, and education careers.**

Potential candidates for board-elected positions must submit a resume or CV and are interviewed by the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee then makes a recommendation for approval or denial at a public governing board meeting. The Governance Committee meetings are open to the public and the agendas are posted at least 24 hours in advance. The vote to approve a candidate occurs at a public board meeting.

- **Page 11 – Regards the various demographic tables, please include FSAHS in these (they are both labeled “Table 6”) for comparison sake.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. Please see the response for the next item.

(same comment – different rater)

- **It might be more useful to show where your students come from and then compare your demographics to those schools. Also, please break these and the next table down by Learning Community. Also, this data is all outdated. Please get the most recent information.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The table showing the student demographics in FCS traditional public high schools will be replaced with the following tables:

Student Demographics in FCS Traditional High Schools – 2013-14 School Year					
Northwest Learning Community	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Alpharetta HS	17.9%	19.3%	7.6%	6.5%	51.5%
Cambridge HS	6.7%	11.3%	7.6%	2.9%	71.7%
Independence HS	2.8%	29.8%	29.8%	5.6%	31.7%
Milton HS	6.7%	10.6%	7.8%	2.8%	71.7%
Roswell HS	4.5%	13.8%	15.7%	3.4%	62.2%
Northeast Learning Community	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Centennial HS	4.9%	23.2%	20.3%	3.8%	48.6
Chattahoochee HS	21.4%	14.5%	7.9%	4.4%	51.5

Johns Creek HS	21.7%	8.6%	5.2%	2.7%	61.3
Northview HS	44.7%	10.4%	3.7%	3.2%	37.5
Central Learning Community	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
McClarín, Frank HS	0.5%	95.4	4%	0%	0%
North Springs HS	2.4%	53	13.5%	3.3%	27.5%
Riverwood HS	2.8%	31	26.8%	3.4%	35.4%
Tri-Cities HS	1%	78.8	17.3%	1.2%	1.3%
South Learning Community	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White
Banneker, Benjamin HS	0.1%	96.7	2.3%	0.4%	0.2%
Creekside HS	0.6%	84.6	10.2%	1.5%	2.5%
Hughes, Langston HS	0.3%	92.9	4.7%	1.1%	0.7%
Westlake HS	0.4%	97.8	0.9%	0.4%	0.2%

Source: Georgia Department of Education Website, www.gadoe.org.

FSAHS Demographics – 2014-15 School Year				
Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Multiracial
21.2%	34.6%	8.3%	35.7%	0.2%

FSAHS Students by Learning Community 2014-15 School Year	
Northeast LC	36.3%
Northwest LC	47.5%
South LC	4.9%
Central LC	11.1%

(same comment – different rater)

- What percentage of students with disabilities does the school serve? ELL? They state it for gifted.

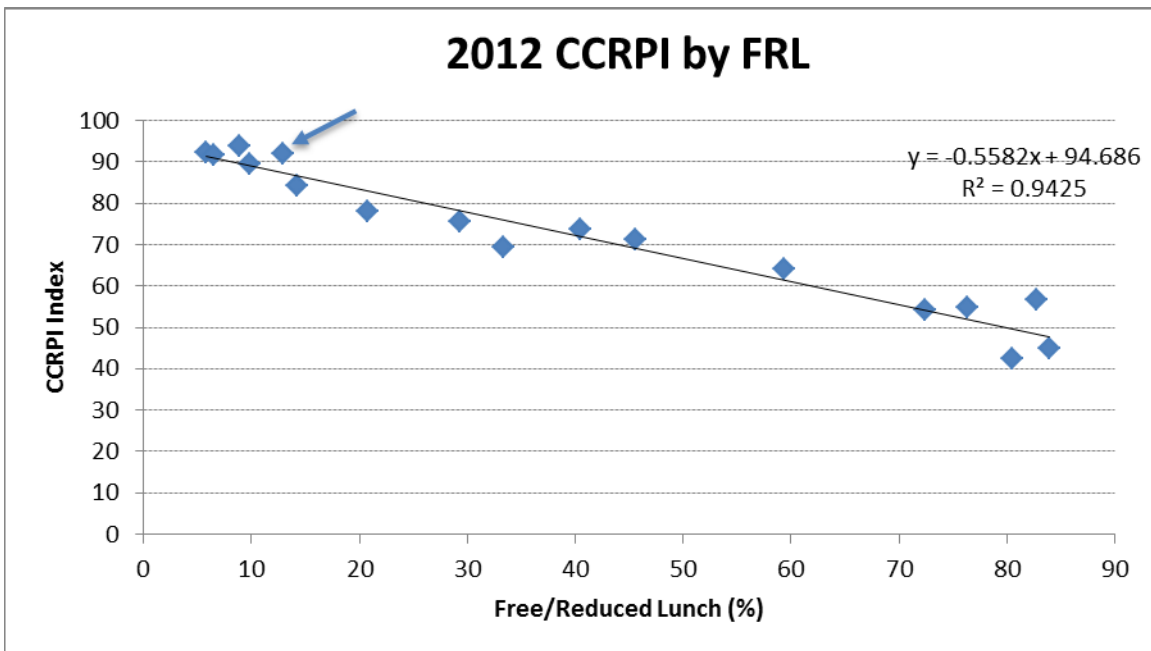
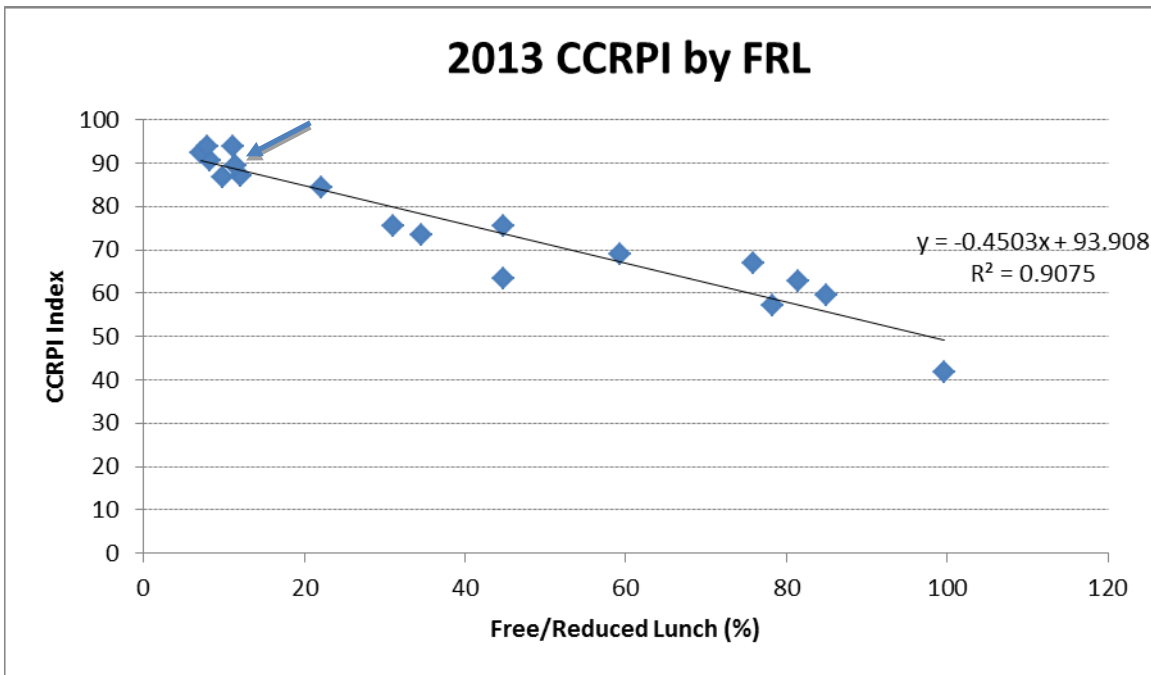
10.2 % of FSAHS students are students with disabilities. 11% of FSAHS students are LEP, and 21.9 percent of FSAHS students are gifted.

- **Page 13 - Look to the State of the Charter Report for the proper comparator schools. Throughout this entire petition, “North Fulton” is referenced by the petitioner. However, it is not a community that the District recognizes and, hence, is not a valid comparator grouping. You can break it down by Learning Communities and subgroups if you prefer, but comparisons by poverty levels are the model we use to determine “similar typical schools” and are a basis for the BTO as well.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The table demonstrating CCRPI scores and graduation rates will be replaced with the following tables:

	CCRPI-2012	CCRPI-2013
Northwest Learning Community – High Schools	82.1	82.5
Northeast Learning Community – High Schools	88.2	88.9

Central Learning Community – High Schools	59.9	63.4
South Learning Community – High Schools	54.5	63.2
Fulton Science Academy HS	89.6	89.4
Fulton – High Schools	73.9	77.6
State – High Schools	73	72



4-Year Graduation Rates (%)		
	2012	2013

Northwest Learning Community	87.9	89.0
Northeast Learning Community	91.2	91.1
Central Learning Community	67.7	70.3
South Learning Community	53.2	60.4
Fulton Science Academy	88.0	87.8
Fulton	71.3	75.5
State	69.7	71.5

- Page 13 – Congratulations on the test scores as compared to other charter schools.

Thank you.

- Page 14 – The petitioner asserts that there is internal accountability based on continuous assessment of teaching. Interesting. What is the method you use for teacher assessment?

Continuous assessment of teaching and learning is a four-step process:

- a. **Planning – Teachers are required to submit their weekly lesson plans, which are subject to approval by the department chair. Lesson plans outline the learning objectives, method of instructional delivery, materials used, formative assessments, and summative assessments included in each week of instruction. Teachers meet in their departments every other week and in a general teacher meeting on rotating weeks. Departmental meetings include time devoted to horizontal and vertical planning. Teacher meetings include training sessions on topics such as differentiated instruction and SmartBoard use.**
- b. **Execution – School leaders, including department chairs and assistant principals make sure that instruction is carried according to lesson plans and in keeping with state standards. FSAHS uses the state developed Teacher Keys Effectiveness System to monitor teacher performance. Above and beyond what is mandated by the TKES system in terms of teacher observations and evaluations, teachers are observed by department heads and assistant principals once every six weeks. Information gathered during these observations is used to determine professional development strategies appropriate for each teacher in the school. Administrators maintain an open door policy so that teachers feel welcomed to discuss best practices and classroom management, student performance and new ideas concerning curriculum and instruction.**
- c. **Assessment – In addition to conducting summative and formative assessments, FSAHS administers standard-based benchmark assessments every six weeks. A variety of reports are generated for these assessments to gauge learning, to identify standards to revisit in the classroom and to identify students who will be placed in mandatory tutoring sessions.**
- d. **Remediation – Students who are identified needing extra help are placed in tutoring sessions and remain in tutoring until they demonstrate at least 110% of the proficiency as compared to the passing border. For example, if**

the minimum-passing score is 70% in the Coordinate Algebra EOCT benchmarking, students who have been placed in tutoring sessions must remain in tutoring until scoring 77%.

- Page 14. The percentage of student in tutoring was a strong factual data point. Do your teachers tutor or do you use an outside vendor?

Our teachers tutor the students. We have never used an outside vendor for tutoring.

- Page 14 – What does “scored the highest” mean? Can you show the data instead?

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The revised petition will clarify that FSAHS has the highest percentage of students who met/exceeded in the following End of Course Tests.

- Geometry (2012, 2013, and 2014)
- Physical Science (2012, 2013, 2014)
- 9th Grade Literature (2012)
- Biology (2012, 2014)

By way of example: In the case of Analytical Geometry EOCT in 2014, 88% of FSAHS students met or exceed the standard, while all other Fulton County high schools’ passing/exceeding percentages were lower. Further data is available at <http://www.fultonschools.org/en/divisions/acd/assess/Pages/Testing.aspx>.

- Page 16 – Please indicate the evidence the academic program is being implemented with fidelity. Is the report in the appendix? There are a lot of awards listed, but that is really not useful. The comparator schools all have awards as well. What is FSAHS doing that is different? This is not capturing that.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The evidence that the academic program is implemented with fidelity is provided in the Appendix 5, which includes sample lesson plans and a feedback from Megan Friedlander of Carnegie Learning upon the completion of the training on the problem-based math curriculum. The GCSA report is fully provided in the Exhibit 20.

(same comment – different rater)

- I am unsure of value of GCSA assessment—they are paid a membership fee by school to advocate on their behalf.

GCSA’s assessment on FSAHS’s operation is provided in Exhibit 20 in its entirety. FSAHS does not have a contract with the GCSA. GCSA is a membership organization and the operational assessment is one of the services they provide to members for a fee. These assessments are conducted to provide charter schools outside feedback to help ensure operational success and fulfillment of the school’s

charter. FSAHS Governing Board will utilize the outcomes from the assessment for the purpose of strategic planning, school improvement planning, improving governance, risk management, and internal control. Elisa Falco of GCSA conducted the operational assessment and her explanation is provided in Appendix 4.

- Page 16 – Where is the data to indicate “The organization is data-driven at all levels; however, instructional and support staff members are particularly skilled at differentiation of instructional methodologies to meet the needs of all student.”

FSAHS has implemented data-driven decision-making⁵ (DDDM) to drive instruction. FSAHS administrators and teachers have followed a five step DDDM process to design instruction:

- 1. Collecting data from previous assessments**
- 2. Setting SMART instructional goals**
- 3. Administering frequent formative assessment**
- 4. Revising lesson plans based on the results from assessments**
- 5. Providing students with focused instructional interventions.**

Evidence of data provided to the teachers from a benchmark assessment, and evidence of instructional interventions are provided in the Appendix 6.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES, PLANS AND WAIVERS

- The Goal Four objectives are not measurable.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The objectives are revised as follows:

School Specific Objective 1

Percent of graduates earning high school credit(s) for accelerated enrollment via ACCEL, Dual HOPE Grant, Move On When Ready, Early College, Gateway to College, Advanced Placement courses, or International Baccalaureate courses will increase by 2% every year during the charter term based upon threshold from 2014-15.

School Specific Objective 2

Percent of students earning Microsoft Office Specialist certification or Microsoft Technology Associate certification will increase by 3% every year during the charter term based upon the threshold from 2015-16.

FSAHS plans to participate in Microsoft IT Academy starting 2015-16 school year.

- Page 20 – The sections dealing with formative and summative assessments are not specific to the school nor are they innovations. These are standard practices

⁵ McLeod, S. (2005). Data-driven teachers. Retrieved October, 1, 2005.

which are in operation at every school. Is FSAHS doing something unique here? If so, please detail it. If not, cut it.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. In addition to typical assessment practices, FSAHS administers benchmark assessment on a regular basis that drives the instruction at the school. The process is explained on page 23 in the charter petition and sample reports are presented in Appendix 6.

- Page 20 – Have you ever considered GA EOC?

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. FSAHS will continue to follow state mandated the assessment program. As the state transitions to the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, FSAHS will follow the district and state initiatives and directives.

- Page 24 – Finally, some student performance data that is specific to the school! Build on this. What is happening in academic, operations or financial practices that are increasing the percentage of student passing AP exams?

FSAHS accepts your recommendation:

Since FSAHS began operation in 2006, FSAHS has aimed to increase the offering of AP level courses, encourage increased enrollment in those courses, and worked to improve student performance on AP examinations. We have been successful in all of these areas and will continue to set even higher standards for our AP program performance under our new charter. Since 2011, FSAHS has doubled the percentage of students enrolled in AP courses. In 2011, FSAHS students took 42 examinations, in 2014, students took 101 exams. In 2011, 64% of FSAHS students scored 3 or higher on their exams, while in 2014, 71% of students scored 3 or higher on AP exams. Numerous academic and operational practices have made our AP success possible. As previously highlighted in this document, the small class setting and low student to teacher ratio are essential to this success because it provides students with greater access to their teachers and more individualized attention. Additionally, teachers have been able to offer a greater depth of experience such as the number of essay writing opportunities and in-depth individualized evaluations. Since writing is a key component of AP examination across all subject matters, this is a significant advantage for our students. The program, including AP teacher training, after school hours student support sessions and materials, has the necessary funding for continued growth and increased achievement due to the financial support, approved by the board .

FSAHS has embraced the College Board policy for inclusion for AP level courses. Our AP courses are available to any students who are academically prepared and who demonstrate the willingness to take on the challenges of higher level learning. During “Freshman, Sophomore and Junior Night” events and on “AP Night”, students and parents learn about the requirements of AP coursework. Counselors and AP teachers discuss opportunities and explain keys to success in AP courses. Prospective students are then invited to meet with AP students currently enrolled in classes for a question and answer session about their experiences with the courses and the teachers. Teachers create

rigorous summer assignments for students and are available via email to support students as they complete their summer preparation for the course.

AP teacher preparation is the key to AP student success. All of our AP teachers are certified, College Board trained, and have in-field advanced degrees. All AP teachers are required to engage in ongoing professional development to remain eligible to teach AP courses. Teachers attend week-long summer training, paid for by FSAHS as well as various one day workshops offered throughout the school year. Our AP teachers have created an AP teacher community within the school and meet regularly to share best practices and experiences. This is particularly helpful for teachers new to AP teaching. Teachers are encouraged to network with other AP professionals outside of the school, visit AP classes at other schools to share ideas and materials, and work as AP exam readers to improve their professional practice.

FSAHS supports a strong curriculum in the ninth and tenth grades leading to AP courses. Vertical teaming helps teachers in all grades foster the development of analytical thinking and strong writing skills. In 2013, teachers of ninth and tenth grade language arts and social studies courses attended PRE AP training sessions offered through College Board. During the 2012-13 school year, FSAHS Social Studies teachers developed a new course for ninth graders interested in AP opportunities. The PRE AP Social Studies course, taught by an experienced AP history teacher attracted thirteen students in the first year. During the 2014-15 school term, 43 students are enrolled in the course. The course focuses on developing essential historical thinking and writing skills during the first semester and introduces the AP World history curriculum during the second semester. Students who enter AP World history as tenth graders are better prepared for the increased work load and have already developed AP skills essential to success.

FSAHS teachers and administrators have developed other innovations for students interested in AP science and math courses. During the 2014-15 school year AP Biology is being offered to 9th grade students. This past summer, FSAHS launched a summer boot camp for students interested in this opportunity. The boot camp provided students with foundational chemistry, math and biology concepts to prepare them for higher level learning expected in the course. Experienced FSAHS teachers developed the curriculum for the summer boot camp and taught the courses. Also during the summer of 2014, Accelerated Pre-Calculus was offered for rising 11 graders so that they can take AP Calculus in 11th grade, and upon success on the AP examination, be eligible for Georgia Teach Calculus in 12th grade.

In addition to these operational and academic innovations for AP program growth and success, FSAHS teachers have developed mandatory after school academic supports for students. Led by the classroom teachers, these supports, offered after school and on Saturdays, include tutoring sessions, writing workshops and practice examinations. Students who are interested in AP level learning at FSAHS understand the commitment necessary to succeed. Our AP teachers, students, parents and administrators have enjoyed the rewards of the extra efforts and supports developed and embraced by the entire FSAHS community.

Beginning in 2015-16, FSAHS will add the AP Capstone program to its AP course offerings. During 2014-15, only three Georgia schools will participate in the program. Next year, FSAHS will be one of 350 schools nationwide that offers this innovative program that prepares students with valuable research, collaboration and communication skills necessary for continued academic and real life success beyond high school.

- Page 27 – How are you using Adaptive Curriculum?

FSAHS will implement the Adaptive Curriculum starting in the school year 2015-16 upon approval of the charter. The Adaptive Curriculum is a supplemental curriculum that will enhance the implementation of FSAHS' inquiry-based science and problem-based math curriculum. Appendix 7 illustrates the adoption guideline prepared in collaboration with the FSAHS and the developer of the Adaptive Curriculum.

- Page 33 – The school has been in operation for almost nine years. It is very disappointing that there is very little in the petition that demonstrates what is distinctive data about the instruction that has been going on for the past nine years.

FSAHS implemented Carnegie Learning Georgia Math Curriculum in its second term. Aligned with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, Carnegie Learning Georgia Math Curriculum promotes a problem-based, student-centered classroom where teachers facilitate the instruction and guide students to master the content and procedures through real-life related problem-solving strategies. Therefore, the distinction between FSAHS math curriculum and traditional math curriculum is in the process of teaching and learning. In order to gauge learning during the instruction, FSAHS teachers have utilized variety of formative assessment strategies as outlined in the assessment section of the charter petition. With regards to the summative data, results from state and national assessments specific to the FSAHS students are accessible to FCS. As far as the effectiveness of the Carnegie Learning Georgia Math Curriculum in schools and school districts implementing it, the electronic link is provided in Exhibit 9 of the charter petition as requested in the FCS Application Packet.

In the new term, FSAHS will collaborate with FCS to collect data (i.e. formative, summative, quantitative, and qualitative) that FCS would like to access. FSAHS welcomes recommendations from FCS in this area.

- Page 35 – What evidence is there that the use of laptops has improved student achievement? How have teachers altered their instruction? How did the school alter PD? Where is the data to support continuation of this? This could have been so rich in information, but instead there is a number of generalizations with no supporting, meaningful data.

FSAHS has had a one-to-one computing initiative in place since the beginning. Student computer based activities are utilized in the classroom to enhance student learning of standards based materials. From research to explorations to preparing presentations to producing student products to assessing learning, in-class computers are a valuable asset for the classrooms. Textbook based websites are very useful in areas such as vocabulary development and the links they provide to primary documents, interactive tools for Coordinate Algebra through Calculus. Furthermore, students that could not otherwise afford a computer are provided with a computer to use during their high school years and become proficient in its use. Computer proficiency allows students to become better prepared for

competitive colleges and careers, which is the mission of FSAHS. Many of the college courses at universities like Georgia Tech and Kennesaw State University require use of electronic textbooks, online class syllabi (where assignments are posted during the course of the semester), online submission of homework, and access to learning and homework portals. These portals are frequently found in math and foreign language courses. Students that are versed in using at least some of these systems and understand that they are responsible for any assignments posted online at any time are clearly at an advantage.

Quantitative data on the benefits of student computers is not readily available. Since student use of computers is one of the factors impacting student achievement, it is difficult to measure the extent to which student computers have improved performance. Although there is no data to determine the effectiveness of the program, teachers continue to find creative and valuable uses for this technology in the classroom to enhance student learning.

Further illustrations of student use of computers and how teachers altered their instruction are provided in the Appendix 8.

- Page 38 – You might want to bullet the list.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. The revised petition bullets the list.

- Page 39 – The school plans to continue offering a school size which hampers the number of teachers which can be hired, the number of courses which can be offered and the strain on the operational budget. Small is fine, but this is too small to be sustainable or effective.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation, and we plan to increase the school enrollment as projected in the charter petition. FSAHS plans to continue to offer a small school setting in a way that will completely meet the educational needs of every student attending FSAHS. Every year during the charter term, FSAHS has been able to offer all core classes required for graduation. As FSAHS does not offer as many elective courses as would be offered in a traditional Fulton County high school, FSAHS has done the following to optimize the course offering:

- (a) Offered all on-level and honors courses in core areas,
- (b) Opened Advanced Placement courses based on the feedback from students and parents,
- (c) Aligned elective course offering with its mission by mainly offering computer and technology related elective courses, and SAT prep,
- (d) Made available online courses that have been requested by students and parents at no cost to them, and
- (e) Offered summer courses to interested first-time takers (students not previously enrolled in the same course).

While offering a small school setting can be a burden on the budget, FSAHS' annual audits reveal that FSAHS has allocated sufficient funds for instruction. Specifically, the percentage of funding spent for instruction is as follows:

2010-11: 64.16%

2011-12: 66.74%

2012-13: 63.8%

2013-14: 68.21%

FSAHS' appropriation of funding for the instruction is very similar to FCS' appropriation, which is 67.60%, as reported in FY2015 FCS Budget Profile.

- Page 43 - If the school's plan is to provide the exact same level of service and programming as in place at traditional public schools in FCS, a few sentences could accomplish that. Since the school will not be offering anything different or distinctive than what is already required at a traditional school, just state that and use the space to describe explain previous failures or successes, adaptations based on that learning and goals moving forward.

Thank you for your suggestions. We shortened our answers to make better use of the space.

ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

- **Organizational Objective 1 – This is a weak measure. They will sit through training? How about some outcome?**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. Organizational Objective 1 has been replaced with a measurable objective in the area of parent participation in the board election. The revised petition reflects the changes as follows:

Objective # 1	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
FSAHS will encourage parent participation in the election of board members elected by parents.	Parent participation in the election of board members elected by parents will increase by 10% in each election regularly held.	10% increase from Spring 2015 election.	10% increase from Spring 2016 election.	10% increase from Spring 2017 election.	10% increase from Spring 2018 election.	10% increase from Spring 2019 election.	Never
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed			Responsible Party		
Participation rate at each regularly scheduled election in spring of each year.		Not needed.			FSAHS Governing Board Chair		
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection			Responsible Party		

Percent of parent who participated in the election.	Spring of each year.	FSAHS Governing Board Chair

- **Page 53 – How do you plan to meet objectives 2 and 3? It doesn't seem related to anything in the petition.**

FSAHS accepts your recommendation to include information in the charter petition regarding how to accomplish objectives 2 and 3. The revised petition includes the following information:

FSAHS has successfully met its performance goal with regards to student behavior during the second term of the charter. Specifically, FSAHS' goal of decreasing average office referral of 0.44 per student in 2010-11 to 0.33 in 2013-14 has been accomplished through the nurturing setting FSAHS has established in collaboration among the FSAHS administration and staff, students, and parents. FSAHS has set the bar even higher for the coming charter term. FSAHS aims to reduce the average office referral per student to 0.2 in 2019-20 school year. FSAHS will accomplish this goal by continuing to offer a nurturing school environment that foster successful academic and social development and that prevents behavioral problems. FSAHS administration, in collaboration with parents and staff, has developed and implemented school-wide policies to teach, promote, and reinforce positive behaviors and to intervene in psychologically toxic incidents. FSAHS administration and staff also recognize that meeting academic needs of the students helps promote positive behavior and minimize opportunities for problem behavior. The following practices allowed FSAHS to offer a nurturing environment that helped reduce behavior problems:

- Low student-teacher ratio
- Small class size
- Strong collaboration with parents through an open door policy, dedicated parent-teacher conference days, and an active home visit program
- Safe learning environment
- Increased student support services such as morning, lunch, afterschool, and weekend tutoring sessions for all learners.

During the new term, FSAHS will continue to follow these practices in addition to searching for best practices across the nation that foster learning and development. While this charter petition includes current FSAHS student code of conduct, during the school year 2014-15, FSAHS will examine several best policies and practices proven to be successful. One of the policies under consideration is the positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS) as promoted by FCS. FSAHS will seek approval of the FCS before implementation.

In respect to objective 3 as it relates to the staff retention, FSAHS Governing Board and administration believe that teacher satisfaction is directly correlated with retention. With that in mind, FSAHS has developed several practices to increase teacher job satisfaction and therefore retention. These practices include:

- Increased opportunities for professional growth: All three administrators of FSAHS were once teachers at FSAHS. Teachers are encouraged to develop career goals and are given opportunities to take on new responsibilities and administrative roles. FSAHS helps teachers to find professional development opportunities to make their career goals achievable.
- Increased autonomy with regards to their instructional method of delivery: While classroom instruction is based on the Georgia Performance Standards and students must demonstrate mastery on EOCTs and SLOs, teachers have a great deal of autonomy with regard to the content they use in their instruction and the specific materials they use in the classroom.
- Increased teacher influence on school operation: Teachers help determine policies and practices at FSAHS. For example, a team of advanced placement (AP) teachers and the assistant principal of curriculum determine policies concerning placement and exit from AP classes.
- Increased support from school governing board and administration in the area of teacher training: FSAHS, in collaboration with the GCSA, supports its teachers and encourages their participation in GATAPP certification and gifted endorsement programs. Since 2012, five FSAHS teachers have completed teacher certification programs and one has earned gifted endorsement.
- Increased benefits: For example, FSAHS teachers receive \$50,000 life insurance coverage at no cost to the employees in addition to other standard benefits.
- Increases in salaries: The projected budget shows salary increases over the duration of the charter term. In addition, FSAHS Governing Board supplements teacher salaries with its bonus programs based on teacher workload and demonstrated academic success. Examples include:
 - 5.5% bonus based on the salary during the school year 2012-13.
 - Additional stipend of \$4,000/year for teachers teaching more than five periods.
 - Additional stipend of \$1000 for each advanced placement class for teachers teaching AP classes.
 - Additional stipend of \$100 per student who pass the AP exams.

Coupled with these practices, small classes and the consistent enforcement of school-wide student behavior policies allows teachers to maximize instructional time rather than dealing with behavior-related problems, which in turn contributes to teacher satisfaction. In the new term, FSAHS will continue to seek innovative ways to increase the job satisfaction level of its teachers and staff members.

- Page 55 – The petition cites national studies that indicate a link between student performance and governing? What about data over the past nine years of operation in the school?

We have accepted your recommendation. The revised petition identifies the following information:

FSAHS Governing Board has fulfilled its roles and responsibilities in a consistent manner with the Georgia Charter School Act of 1998 and other applicable Georgia laws. Specifically, FSAHS evidences of executing school board's roles cited in

(WSSDA, 2011) includes but not limited to:

- **Setting the vision:** The mission and vision are reviewed by the FSAHS Governing Board as needed. The most recent update to the mission and vision statements was made for the charter petition to the SCSC and was approved by the FSAHS Governing Board in its meeting on June 13, 2013. Starting this school year, the Governance Committee will review the mission and vision statement and make recommendation on an annual schedule.
- **Establishing Goals:** FSAHS Governing Board has developed charter performance goals and school improvement goals, and closely monitors the progress toward achievement of such goals. The Academic Excellence Committee presents student achievement data and their recommendations at board meetings. The school administration also presents student achievement data at board meetings as part of the Principal's report. Examples include the board meeting minutes dated October 26, 2014 and September 17, 2014. Charter goals, which are included in the charter petition submitted to the authorizer, are adopted by the board as evidenced in the board meeting minutes dated September 19, 2013, and May 12, 2014.
- **Developing policy:** Using the policy manual from GCSA as starting point, the FSAHS Governing Board has reviewed, updated, added, and adopted many policies. Recent evidences are the board meeting minutes from April 19, 2014, March 15, 2014, and February 22, 2014.
- **Allocating resources:** FSAHS Governing Board ensures appropriate allocation of funds for every aspect of the school operation in a way that best serve its students and community. The board adopts a preliminary budget in spring of every year and amends the budget in fall once receiving the final budget from FCS as evidenced by the board meeting minutes dated April 19, 2014, and November 23, 2013.
- **Assuring accountability:** FSAHS Governing Board closely monitor attainment state-established performance targets and other measures reported in the College and Career Performance Ready Index. Student achievement data is frequently presented board meeting as it relates to the state's accountability system as well as charter goals and school improvement goals.

FSAHS Governing Board meeting agendas, minutes, and other relevant documents may be viewed for further evidences and accessed at http://fsahigh.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=210&Itemid=668 to. For illustration purposes, only a few examples are cited. More examples are available on the FSAHS website or can be obtained from FSAHS administration.

- What kinds of transportation services does it provide currently? Are they legal and properly insured this time?

FSAHS currently provides transportation with three school busses, one FCS bus and two Stancil Bus Service busses. Stancil Bus Services, Inc has been approved and certified to transport Fulton County students. A confirmation email from R. Sam Ham, FCS Director of Transportation Operations and Transportation Services, dated September 17, 2013 is provided in the **Appendix**.

GOVERNANCE

- Does the conflict of interest policy as declared in the FES articles of amendment reflect the one referenced within the petition? The articles of incorporation and articles of amendment may need to be amended to reflect new changes in the corporation.

The conflict of interest policy referenced in the petition is the latest version and was recommended as a best practice by the GCSA.

- Wouldn't the contract with GCSA need to be included in vendor contract area?

FSAHS does not have a contract with the GCSA. GCSA is a membership organization and the operational assessment is one of the services they provide to charter schools for a fee.

- **Question 10 - This structure does not maximize local governance. The self-perpetuating nature of the make up as well as the shortened term for two parents and the longer term for the five to seven appointed members results in a structure that is not responsive to local control but, rather, to a self-perpetuating, closed power structure in which parents do not influence decision making. Rather, a majority positions should be elected by parents with ex-officio members selected to provide subject matter expertise. This lack of maximized local governance and non-transparent processes has resulted in numerous difficulties for the school which have distracted the school community from the mission of educating students. These include:**
 - selecting governing board members who were previous leaders at schools which are currently under federal investigation,
 - a partnership with a now failed governing board that was not competent to earn either district or state renewal,
 - a 19 million dollar bond default,
 - a move by the District to terminate the contract, and
 - the inability of the governing board to gain support as a Commission charter school

FSAHS has addressed these concerns in the following ways:

Concern #1: "This structure does not maximize local governance."

To address your concerns about the number of parent-elected board members, we have again revised the bylaws so that the board composition will comprise of 7 board members with 5 parent-elected board members and 2 board-elected members.

Concern #2: "The self-perpetuating nature of the make up"

Board appointed positions were eliminated on June 13, 2013, when the FSAHS Governing Board voted on new bylaws that created a single streamlined Governing Board made up of 4 parent-elected board members and 3 board-elected board members. board-elected members are elected by the entire board.

Concern #3: “the shortened term for two parents and the longer term for the five to seven appointed members”

We have responded to your recommendation by amending the bylaws so that they specify two (2) year terms for a maximum of two (2) terms for all positions on the board.

Concern #4: “non-transparent processes”

We have been working with the GCSA to implement best practices for charter school Governing Boards. As part of the new recruitment processes recommended by GCSA, we have worked very hard to round out the experience and skill sets of the Governing Board by tapping into several community resources to recruit potential board members. Over the past year we have reached out to the parents and the extended community including Georgia Universities, GCSA, and board members’ and parents’ industry contacts with relevant skills that will benefit the school, including STEM careers, marketing, legal, finance, and education. Five of our current board members were added as a result of this new recruitment process. Further information about the board members are provided in the Governance Section of the Charter Petition.

Concern #5: “selecting governing board members who were previous leaders at schools which are currently under federal investigation”

Dr. Akgun was elected to the board as a parent with a STEM career as an industrial engineer and a background in risk management. Prior to moving to Georgia he served on the board of an Illinois charter management organization called Concept Schools. The recent federal investigation of Concept Schools started after he had resigned from that CMO, moved to Georgia and was elected to our Governing Board. Dr. Akgun did not have any executive responsibilities at Concept Schools and was not involved in its day-to-day operations. Nor, to our knowledge, has he been named or otherwise implicated in the recent federal investigation. Dr. Akgun also voluntarily resigned from our board to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Concern #6: “a partnership with a now failed governing board that was not competent to earn either district or state renewal,” and “a 19 million dollar bond default”

FSAHS partnered with FSAMS when both schools were in good standing prior to

the FSAMS charter renewal process. As a result of the bond failure and the failed partnership, the board leadership resigned from the Governing Board and was replaced. The new board was able to manage the obligations such that as of February 5, 2013, FSA High School was free of all obligations under the settlement agreement.

Concern #7: “a move by the District to terminate the contract”

The FSAHS Governing Board has repeatedly addressed the FCS concerns raised in the termination proceedings, which ultimately concluded when the State Board of Education refused to terminate the FSAHS charter. FSAHS remains committed to working with FCS to become a valued school choice for parents and students.

Concern #8: “the inability of the governing board to gain support as a Commission charter school”

In May 2014, the board composition was amended specifically at the recommendation of the Georgia Charter School Association (GCSA) to meet the requirements of the State Charter School Commission and we began to add new board members that met the new requirements. At the end of June, two new members were added when the previous members’ terms expired. Unfortunately, 2 of the 3 board members that were able to attend the interview were the ones that had just been added a month earlier. The timing of the interview was at the end of the summer and could not be rescheduled. Several board members had to travel for work and one member had a family medical emergency. These events may have led to the impression that FSAHS was not ready to serve as an independent local education agency under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2090. The State Charter Schools Commission’s executive director, however, expressly “encourage[d] [us] to work with [our] local board of education to explore continuing to serve [our] community as a local charter school,” and we look forward to the opportunity to work with FCSS to achieve that goal in the future..

(same comment – different rater)

- Page 59 - If the threshold for governing board removal is a two third vote, the structure means that the two parent representatives can always be removed, with or without cause. As noted earlier, this structure does not maximize local governance nor encourage an organization that is responsive to either parents or authorizers. Rather it supports the maintenance of the existing power structure.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation and have amended the bylaws so that they require and specify the causes for removal. Section 12 Removal of Directors was added as a best practice at the recommendation of the GCSA in order to deal with issues such as board members with poor attendance records and any conflicts of interest

- Page 59 – Unlimited number of terms? This does little to develop potential leaders in the community. It should be capped at two years. Can appointed directors serve consecutive terms? If so, this again creates a very closed, insular network.

FSAHS accepts your recommendation. We amended the bylaws so that they specify two (2) year terms for a maximum of two (2) terms.

- Page 63 – The instability on the board identified in the termination hearing has continued. The pattern results in a lack of progress and focus on student learning and financial stability. The petition does not envision a change in the pattern.

The FSAHS Governing Board has made significant progress toward providing the proper infrastructure to continue operating an outstanding school. The steps taken include:

- **Board appointed positions were eliminated on June 13, 2013, when the FSAHS Governing Board voted on new bylaws that created a single streamlined Governing Board made up of 4 parent-elected board members and 3 board-elected board members. Board-elected members are elected by the entire board.**
- **To address your concerns about the number of parent-elected board members, we have again revised the bylaws so that the board composition will consist of 7 board members with 5 parent-elected board members and 2 board-elected members.**
- **We have been working with the GCSA to implement best practices for charter school Governing Boards, including:**
 - **As part of the new recruitment processes recommended by GCSA, we have worked very hard to round out the experience and skill sets of the Governing Board by reached out to the parents and the extended community including Georgia Universities, GCSA, and board members' and parents' industry contacts with relevant skills that will benefit the school.**
 - **The Governance Committee was created to evaluate current policies and recommend new board policies and processes designed to provide for effective and efficient governance. As part of this function, the Governance Committee has developed and is further refining a process for recommending nominees for election and reelection to the board.**
 - **The Finance Committee was designed to provide more oversight. The Finance Committee reviews the budgets and expenditures before every board meeting and presents their findings and recommendations at the board meetings. This is to ensure the continued financial stability of the FSAHS.**

- **FSAHS has started working with GCSA to develop a strategic plan designed to address succession planning and improve the board's effectiveness**
- **GCSA has been engaged to conduct a comprehensive board assessment and this feedback will be used to develop the strategic plan.**

Our primary concern is, and will always be, for the students and the learning environment of the school. FSAHS is consistently among the top performing high schools in this county, and by extension, Georgia. Our students achieve academically and our students go on to some of the most prestigious schools in the nation, including Cornell, Princeton, Georgia Tech, University of Georgia, University of California, and many others. FSAHS is committed to continue to work with FCS to become a valued school choice for parents and students.

FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

- The school credits its low teacher/student ratio as a big part of its success. If it does manage to increase enrollment, is the school committing to keeping a certain student/teacher ratio? How is this accounted for in the budget planning?

Low student-teacher ratio at FSAHS is one of the factors contributing to the student achievement. The budget projection presented in the Exhibit 8 of the charter petition illustrates increase in the number of instructional staff and associated expenses over the proposed charter term. Consistent with the 5-Year Budget Projection supplied in the Exhibit 8, projected student-teacher ratio will remain low ranging from 13-1 to 15-1 over the next charter term as presented in page 39 of the original charter petition.

- Page 69 – What is the plan and timeline for raising additional revenue?

Additional revenue will be raised for specific projects through a fundraising campaign. Specific projects and goals for the fundraising will be defined before the fundraising campaign begins. At this time, there are no projects that will require fundraising under consideration.

STUDENT ADMISSIONS

- The school in the discipline section states that a student may withdraw without penalty at any time and enroll in another local school in the school district in which the student resides pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-2066(d). Is this provision being used by students to avoid discipline consequences? How many student withdrawals has occurred in lieu of penalties in the last charter term?

We have accepted your recommendation and understand your concern. That language is removed from the revised petition. Consistent with FCS policies and practices, FSAHS has always taken proper actions against any behavior considered a misconduct. No student withdrawals has occurred in lieu of penalties in the last charter term.

- Page 73 – Please note the difference between application and enrollment in your stated processes.

We have accepted your recommendation. The revised petition reflects the changes recommended.

- Are any of the dismissal procedures different than what is already required by law and FCS? If not, why not just state that you will follow the FCS practices and save all this space? What about Multi-Tier Student Support or PBIS?

Although consistent with the FCS student dismissal policies and the Georgia law, FSAHS dismissal policy is different from what is already required by FCS in some aspects as illustrated in the Exhibit 14 in the charter petition. Therefore, FSAHS would like to retain its autonomy to implement and revise current student dismissal policy, and/or adopt a new policy. This autonomy will allow FSAHS to continuously improve its practices in a way that best serves its students. FSAHS has already undertaken search process to identify best practices with regards to the student behavior policies. PBIS is one of the behavior support systems under consideration.

FACILITIES

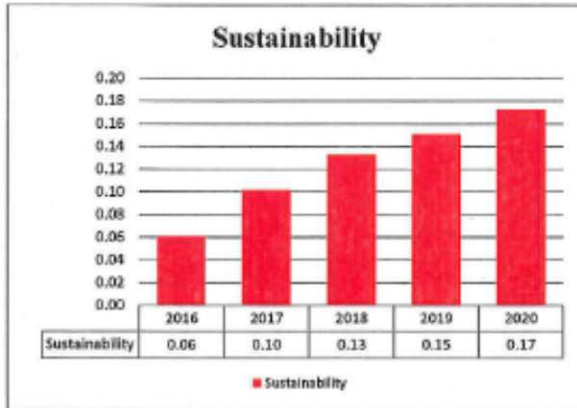
No comments.



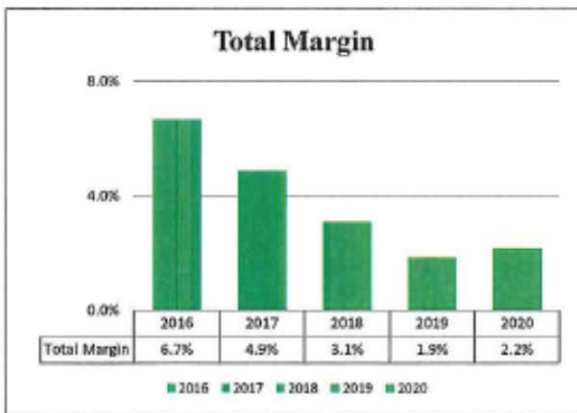
Fulton Science Academy High School

RENEWAL START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS (Unaudited)

Projected Fiscal Years Ending 2016 - 2020



■ Meets Standard: ≥ 1.1
■ Do Not Meet Standard: > 0.9 but < 1.1
■ Falls Far Below Standard: ≤ 0.9



■ Meets Standard: Total Margin is Positive
■ Do Not Meet Standard: Total Margin is Negative



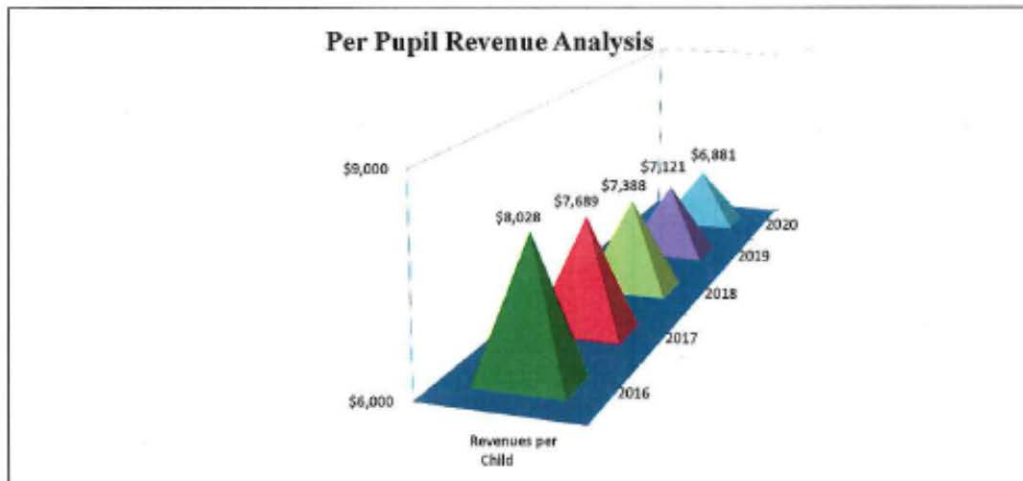
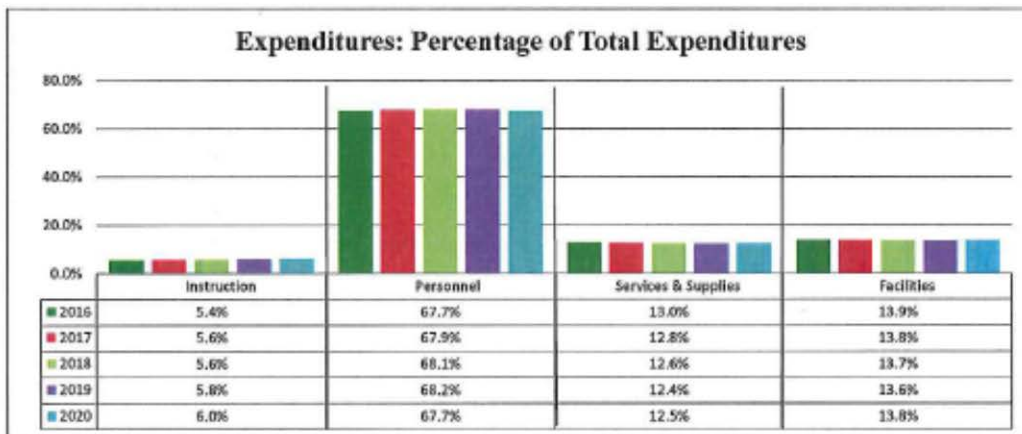
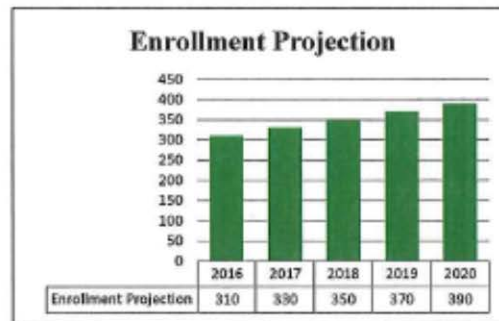
■ Meets Standard: $\leq 15\%$
■ Do Not Meet Standard: $> 15\%$



Fulton Science Academy High School

RENEWAL START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS (Unaudited)

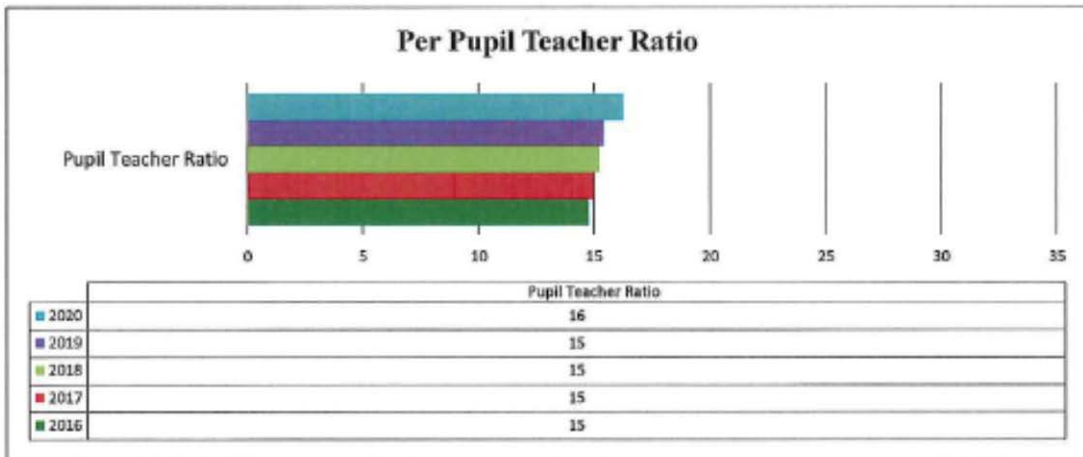
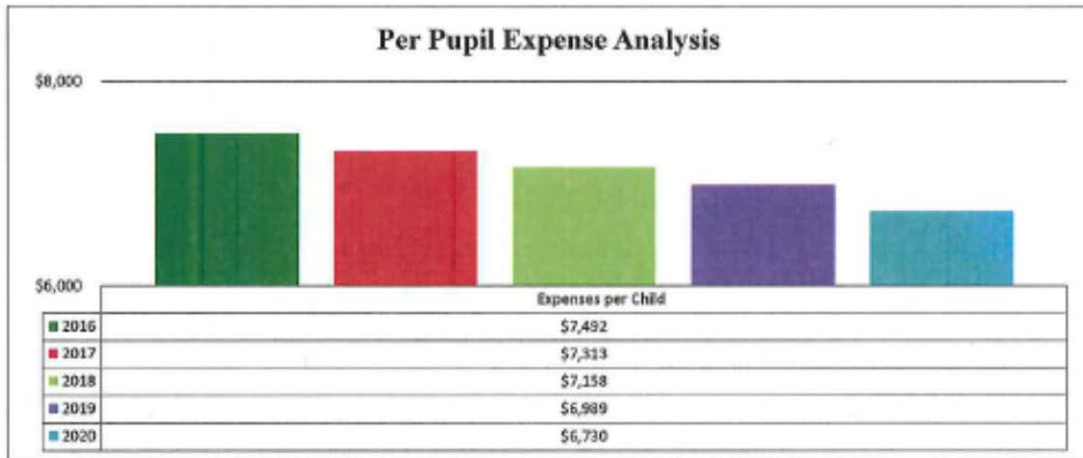
Projected Fiscal Years Ending 2016 - 2020





Fulton Science Academy High School

RENEWAL START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS (Unaudited)
 Projected Fiscal Years Ending 2016 - 2020



Background Material

Financial Analysis

Summary:

1. Four of six charter schools are reflecting positive trends per the financial indicators.

Background:

Nationally, the primary reason charters fail is financial governance. Consequently, the FCBOE has requested meaningful financial analysis of charter schools. We have been conducting such analyses for four years and can present trending information in this area.

Our practices have been recognized by the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) and we are being asked to share our processes with other systems, the Georgia Commission and the state house.

Note, we do not include conversion schools in this analysis given the lower levels of personnel oversight which results in a much smaller area of financial autonomy.

The May 2009 report from the National Consensus Panel on Charter School Operational Quality sponsored in part by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers indicated the Liquidity, Sustainability, and Occupancy Expenses were useful measures of a charter schools' financial performance. Based on feedback from board members as well as the as the October 2010 charter case study from the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, a Debt – Asset measure has also been included.

FCS start up charter schools are required to submit financial statements every month and their state Annual Audit each October 1. That information is the basis of this data.

Financial Support Data

1. Liquidity Ratio compares a charter school's assets (what they "own") to liabilities (what they "owe"). The charter's liquidity ratio is calculated as its total assets less its total liability as a percentage of their total expenses. A school with a high liquidity ratio is better able to raise additional capital, either through selling off or borrowing, against its assets.

Year	Amana	FSA HS	Hapeville	KIPP SFA	Main Street	Sunshine
2009	0.15	0.02	0.19	0.08		
2010	0.09	0.17	0.52	0.12		
2011	0.09	0.16	0.49	0.18	0.005	0.05
2012	0.06	0.13	0.40	0.21	-0.03	0.04
2013	0.08	0.07	0.46	0.12	-0.02	0.13

Observations:

- Sunshine has completed their building renovations and also has more assets available.
- Amana and Hapeville are consistent with previous years and KIPP SFA has returned to their previous pattern after the purchase of their facility.
- FSAHS is not trending positively for a number of reasons, most notably a very small student body.
- Main Street continues to struggle with a lack of liquidity.

2. Sustainability Ratio compares the amount of resources that are not already assigned such as to a loan payment (unrestricted assets) to the average monthly expenses. It indicates how many months a charter could financially function without revenue in a crisis. At least two month's revenues are recommended by most analysts.

Year	Amana	FSA HS	Hapeville	KIPP SFA	Main Street	Sunshine
2009	2.18	-0.22	20.88	2.02		
2010	1.41	3.39	15.26	4.11		
2011	1.84	2.67	13.82	8.78	-0.75	1.10
2012	1.58	2.23	10.93	10.09	-0.27	1.38
2013	1.81	1.29	11.60	12.23	-0.69	2.47

Observations:

- Main Street, although they have strong attendance numbers, continues to see their operational costs put a strain on the school.
- FSAHS has seen a significant decline in this measure.
- All other schools demonstrate improved positions in the area of sustainability.

3. Occupancy Expenses indicate the percentage of the charter schools' total revenue that goes toward facility costs. The national average is between 15% and 20%.

Year	Amana	FSA HS	Hapeville	KIPP SFA	Main Street	Sunshine
2009	17%	18%	4%	3%		
2010	18%	17%	5%	5%		
2011	17%	13%	6%	4%	7%	14%
2012	18%	23%	6%	5%	6%	21%
2013	14%	21%	6%	5%	7%	20%

Observations:

- Of interest is the difference in occupancy costs for schools located in the Northwest Learning Community as opposed to those located in the South and Central Learning Communities.
- There has been an expected decrease in occupancy costs for Amana Academy which will continue as the school completes its building processes.
- The occupancy costs for Main Street are in line with the other schools in the Learning Community. The challenges presented in the previous two tables for Main Street are not directly due to occupancy costs.

4. Debt to Assets Ratio measures relationship of total debt (liabilities) to total assets.

The higher the ratio, the higher the charter school’s degree of financial risk. Debt ratios greater than one indicate a start-up charter that has more debt than assets. Conversely, a debt ratio less than 1 indicates a start-up charter that has more assets than debt.

Please note, the school system and taxpayer are not responsible for a charter school’s debt.

Year	Amana	FSA HS	Hapeville	KIPP SFA	Main Street	Sunshine
2009	0.12	1.07	0.11	0.75		
2010	0.09	0.01	0.63	0.59		
2011	0.09	0.09	0.61	0.36	1.16	0.24
2012	0.19	0.20	0.62	0.32	1.07	0.21
2013	0.92	0.27	0.59	0.04	1.38	0.07

Observations:

- Main Street Academy’s ratio is a serious concern.
- There is a sharp drop in this measure for KIPP SFA as they purchased their facility and for Sunshine Academy as they completed their campus renovation activities.
- There has been an expected increase in Amana’s ratio as they entered into their bond and building program.
- FSAHS continues to struggle with low attendance which is negatively impacting revenues.

Personnel Analysis

Summary:

- Charter schools are being included in the system-wide federal audit of FCS personnel processes which is taking place at this time. Data from that federal audit was not available before the deadline of this report. Charter school information will be made available later in this school year as part of the larger system report.
- The percentage of charter teachers meeting Highly Qualified standards is generally lower than the system average.
- Charter school teachers have four years' experience, compared to 11 years' experience for system teachers.
- Charter school teachers earn approximately \$42,000 in annual salary while system teachers earn approximately \$69,000 in annual salary.

Background:

Start up charter school employees are not employed by Fulton County Schools and are under the control and management of the governing body of the charter. To meet our obligations to students and taxpayers, FCS does monitor the performance of these charter employees while still following the intent of the law that governing bodies have decision making authority in this area.

Charter schools may hire un-certified teachers and administrators unless otherwise prohibited by the requirements of a specific federal program. However, teachers must be Highly Qualified (HQ) under the NCLB.

To be considered Highly Qualified to teach in a public charter school in the State of Georgia, teachers of core academic subjects must meet all requirements except those pertaining to licensure or certification provided that the terms of the state-approved charter allow the school to exempt licensure or certification.

New Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) standards also require that non-certified charter school teachers obtain a Clearance Certificate at the time of employment. After receiving the results of the fingerprinting and background checks, the school must submit the information electronically to the GaPSC via the appropriate online procedures available on gapsc.org. Upon successful review, the Clearance Certificate is issued to the charter school teacher for a five year term.

FCS personnel must confirm the status of each teacher listed by the charter with the GaPSC database as well as perform a visual check of each schools fingerprint and background check personnel files annually. Charter school employee information is maintained by the charter school in the FCS supplied AppliTrack system. It allows FCS real time information on charter school staff.

Due to the confidential nature of personnel records collected, the worksheets used to compile the data in this report will not be made public.

Personnel Support Data

School	HQ Percentage	Teacher Salary	Years Experience
Amana	77%	\$38,644	4
FSAHS	94%	\$35,392	2
Hapeville	63%-HS 78%-MS	\$39,928	3
KIPP SFA	76%	\$54,211	7
Main Street	95%-ES 87%-MS	\$44,652	7
Sunshine	85%-ES	\$40,032	3
FCS Average	95%	\$69,065	11

Academic Analysis

Standardized Test School for high stakes grade levels for SY 13/14

(Note that the scale may change depending on the range of scores)

The charts detail academic performance in each Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) subject areas as well as the high school End of Course Tests (EOCT).

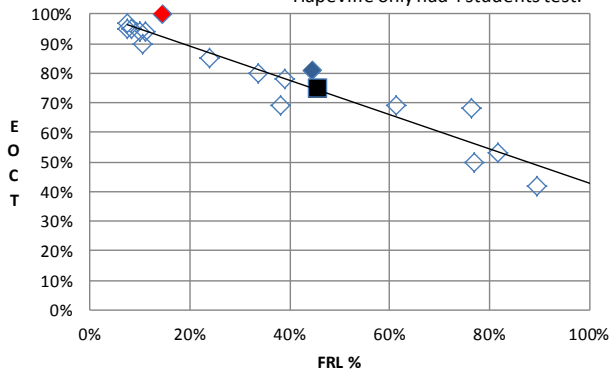
Data is presented for both Meets and Exceeds categories.

This analysis allows us to compare charter school performance to typical FCS schools with similar poverty levels. Poverty level is one of the strongest indicators of school-wide performance on standardized tests.

- The reader can see the Free and Reduced Lunch percentage along the bottom of each chart and the percentage of students passing the test along the side.
- The Black markers show typical Fulton County schools.
- The color coded markers show the charter schools.

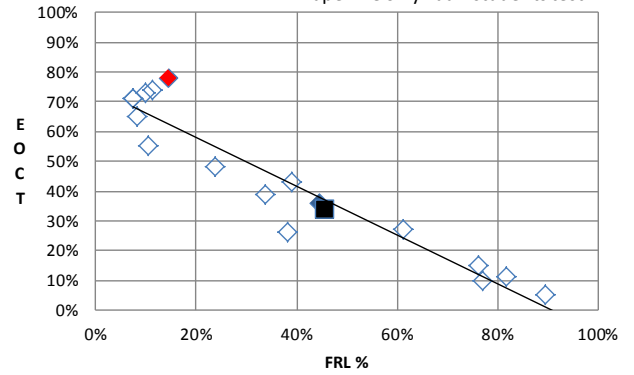
Biology Meets/Exceeds FSAHS, North Springs, FCS

Hapeville only had 4 students test.

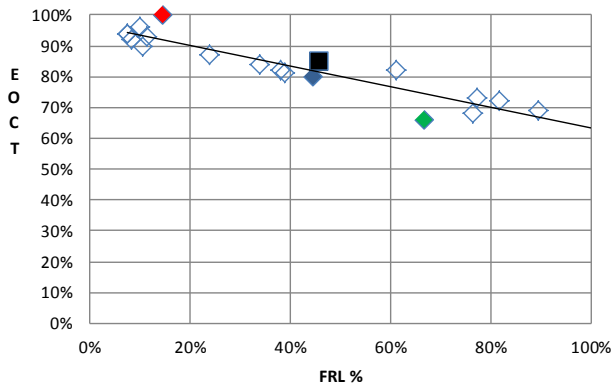


Biology Exceeds FSAHS, North Springs, FCS

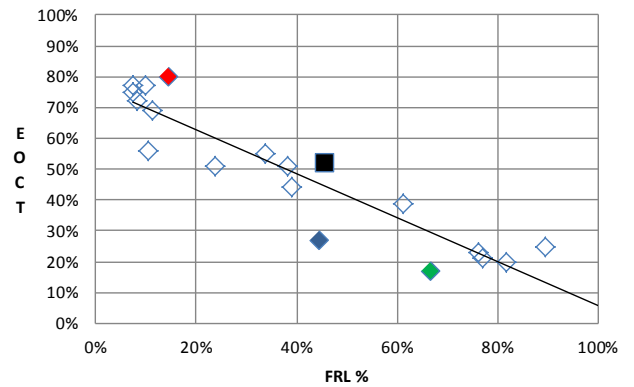
Hapeville only had 4 students test.



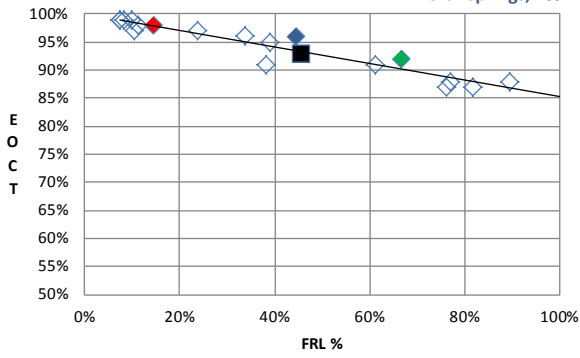
Physical Scie. Meets/Exceeds FSAHS, Hapeville, North Springs, FCS



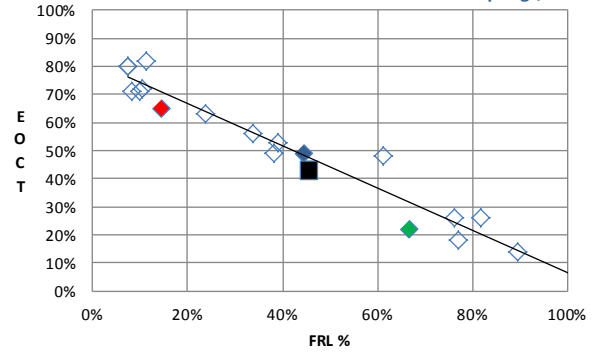
Physical Scie. Exceeds FSAHS, Hapeville, North Springs, FCS



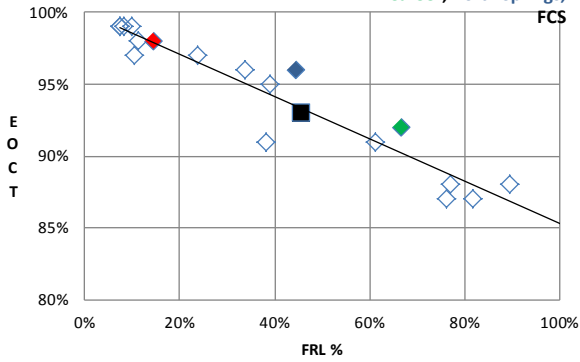
Grade 9 Lit/Comp. Meets/Exceeds FSAHS, Hapeville Career, North Springs, FCS



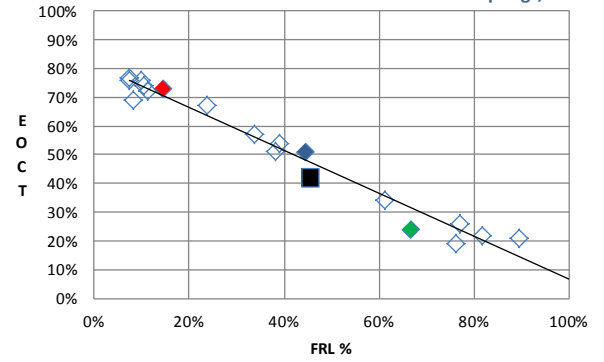
Grade 9 Lit/Comp. Exceeds FSAHS, Hapeville Career, North Springs, FCS

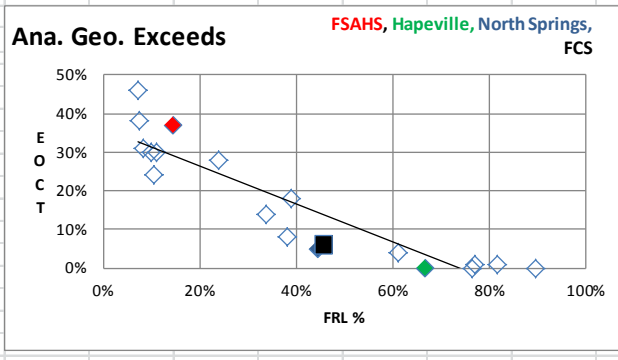
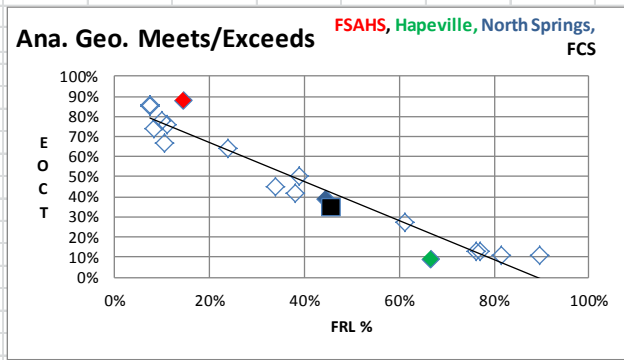
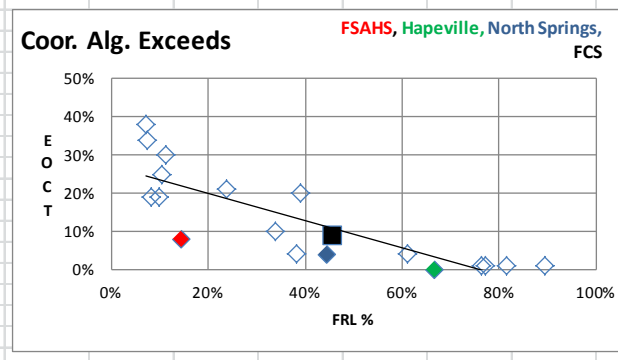
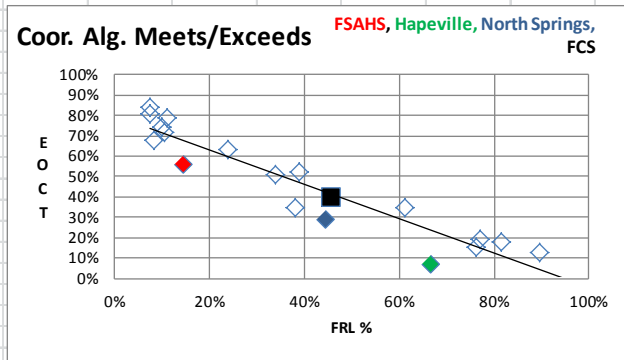
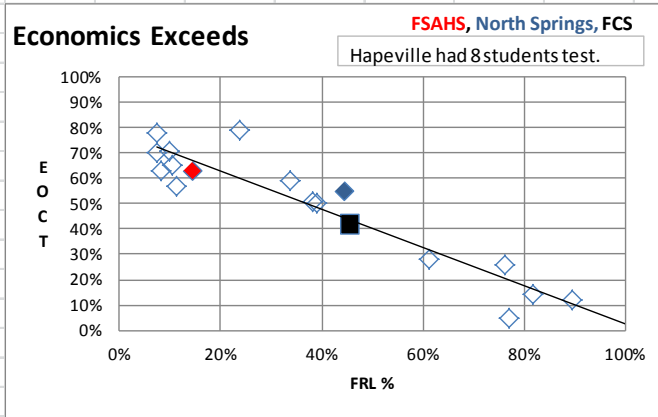
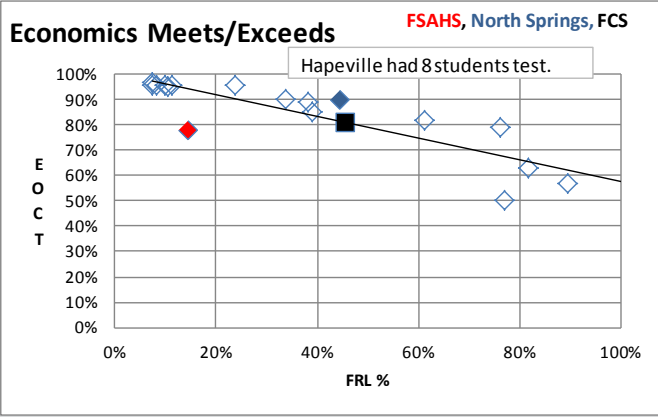
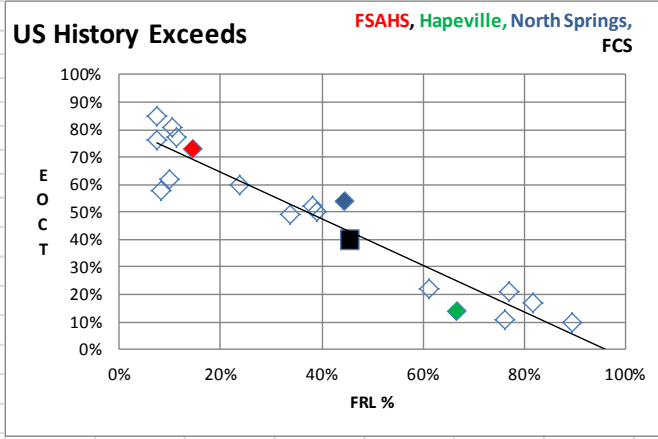
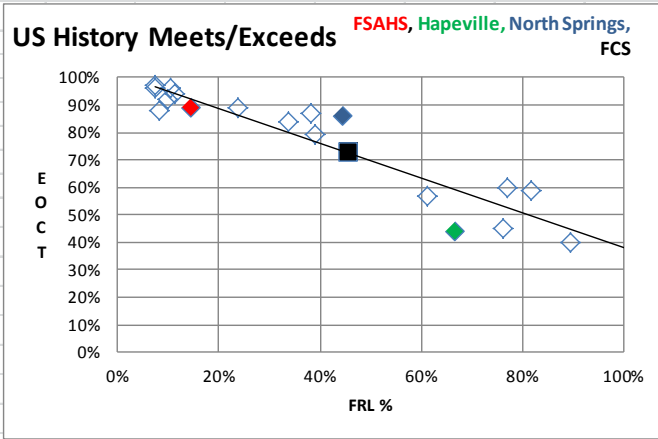


Amer. Lit/Comp. Meets/Exceeds FSAHS, Hapeville Career, North Springs, FCS

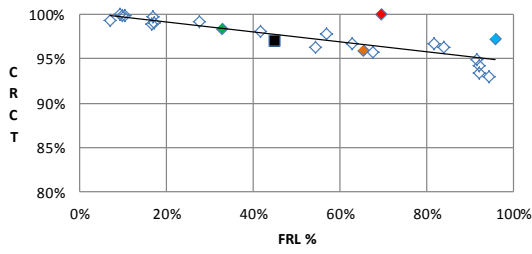


Amer. Lit/Comp. Exceeds FSAHS, Hapeville Career, North Springs, FCS

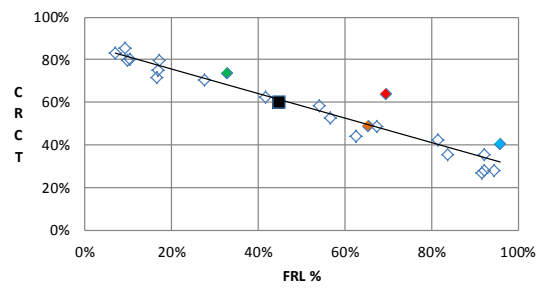




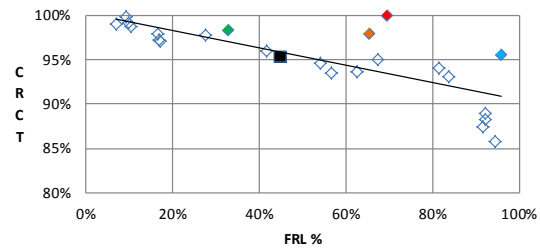
Grade 8 Reading Meets/Exceeds



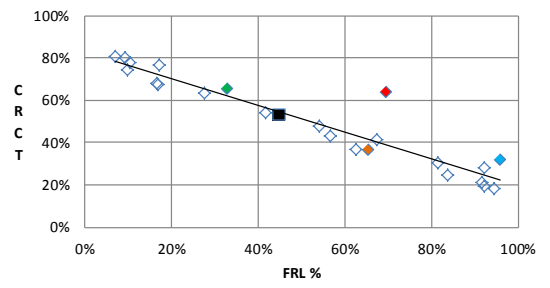
Grade 8 Reading Exceeds



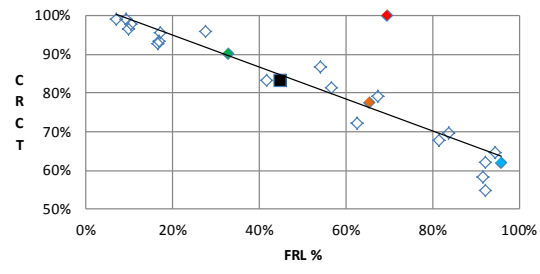
Grade 8 ELA Meets/Exceeds



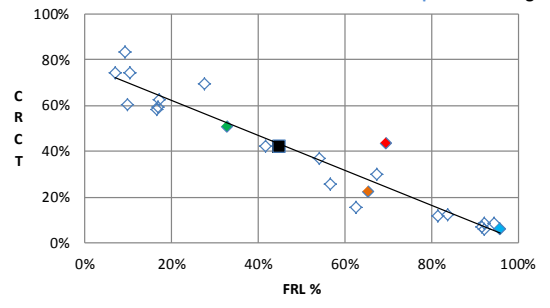
Grade 8 ELA Exceeds



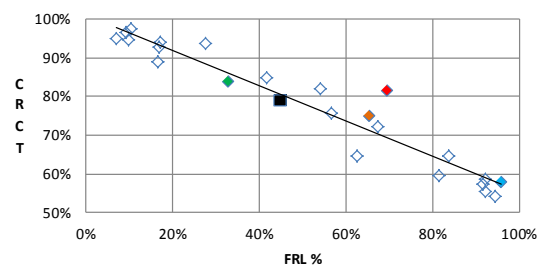
Grade 8 Math Meets/Exceeds



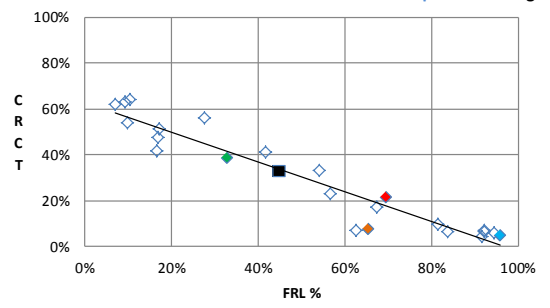
Grade 8 Math Exceeds



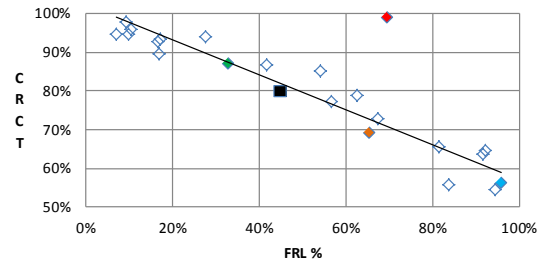
Grade 8 Science Meets/Exceeds



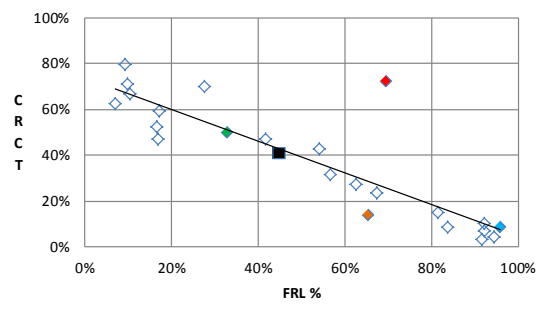
Grade 8 Science Exceeds



Grade 8 Soc. Studies Meets/Exceeds

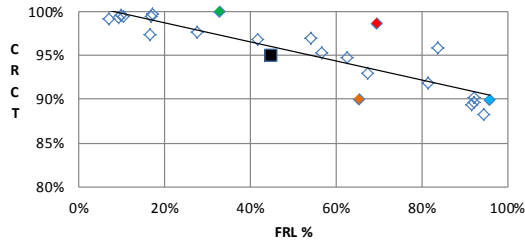


Grade 8 Science Exceeds



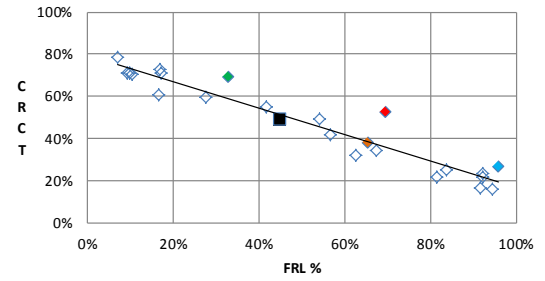
Grade 7 Reading Meets/Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



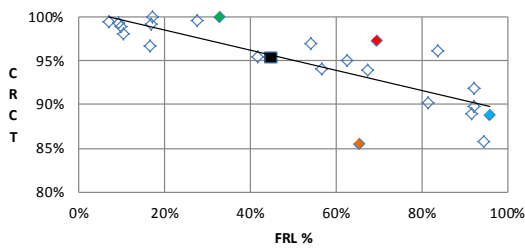
Grade 7 Reading Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



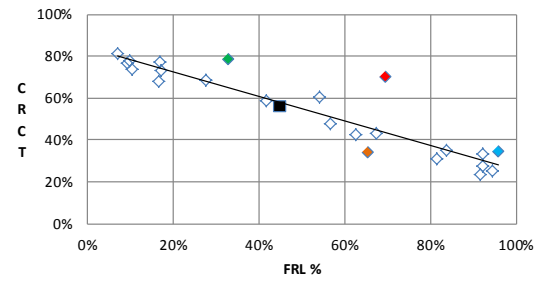
Grade 7 ELA Meets/Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



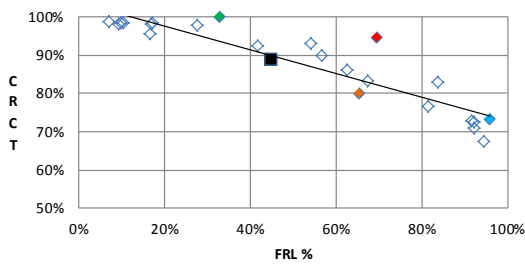
Grade 7 ELA Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



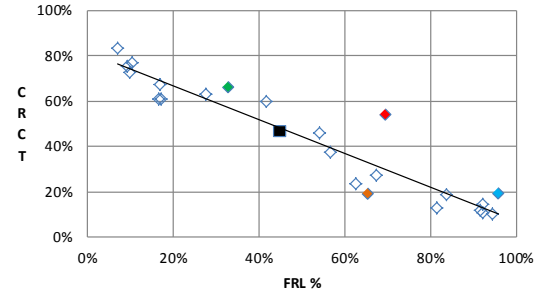
Grade 7 Math Meets/Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



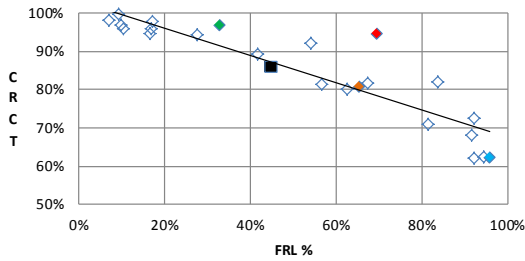
Grade 7 Math Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



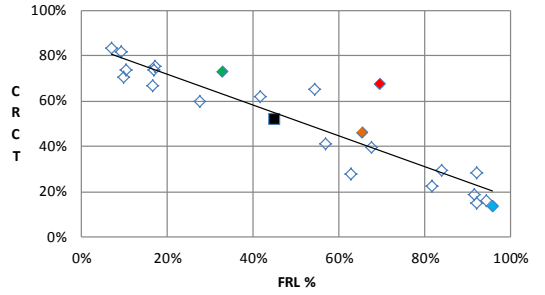
Grade 7 Science Meets/Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



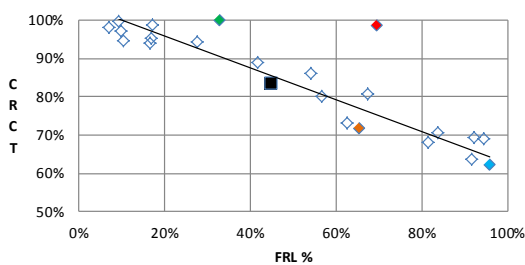
Grade 7 Science Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



Grade 7 Soc. Studies Meets/Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.



Grade 7 Soc. Studies Exceeds

Amana Main Street KSFA
Hapeville FCS Avg.

