

Fulton County Schools
Charter Interim Compliance Report
Fulton Science Academy Middle School
January 2011

Justification:

The responsibilities of charter authorizers, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(2) to control and manage local charter schools includes the following:

- Enforce clear expectations for, and ensure achievement of, performance contained in performance goals set forth in the charters;
- Review annual budgets for local charter schools;
- Ensure that the local charter schools is complying with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 *et seq.* and federal accountability requirements; and
- Evaluate a local charter school's performance in relation to the expectations and goals set forth in the charter and take appropriate action based on this evaluation.

This Interim Compliance Report is to serve as a vehicle to foster communication and transparency between the charter and the system in the area of general compliance. This report does not represent all the compliance items that might be required by federal and state governments of a charter since individual schools and students will generate additional compliance requirements. The schedule of compliance deadlines and related system training opportunities for the 2010-2011 school year as well as weekly email reminders have been provided to the charters since July.

Organizational Summary:

- Executive Director Selim Ozdemir resigned from Fulton Science Academy Middle School (FSA MS) over the summer. Mr. Ali Ozer was appointed Executive Director. Searches were not conducted for the open position. The transition was smooth.
- FSA MS has successfully met all deadlines and expectations for all In-Kind departments this school year.

Academic Summary:

- The school continues to perform well and is listed as one of the three "system leaders" in two Student Achievement measures on the Value Added Report.
- The school also performs well on nationally normed Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), performing as well as similar typical FCS school and slightly better in Math.

Other significant activities:

- The school has applied for a charter amendment to grant preferential enrollment status to students matriculating from Fulton Sunshine Academy.

- The school was recommended by the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) for the National Blue Ribbon Schools program.
- The governing board will apply for its second charter renewal next year and has met with the Charter Department to review the latest standards and practices.
- Governance Board elections were held. Both of the newly elected parent representatives did attend the Fulton County Schools (FCS) September Governance Board Training as well as the principal, Mr. Sener.
- The Annual Program Review by the Services for Exceptional Children Department indicated some of areas of concern. The main concern was that the Present Levels were either not specific enough or did not include information from each service provider. Written records did not include objectives. The school's areas of strength were also noted in the review. Accommodations were individualized. Transition plans are in place when appropriate. The meeting minutes pages were detailed and accurate.
- The school improvement plan and safety plan were submitted on time and were well written.
- The student body continues to perform well in state wide competitions.
- Fourteen percent (14%) of the 37 teachers are not Highly Qualified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The school has been notified that it has until December 2011 to bring the teachers into compliance.

Requested Actions:

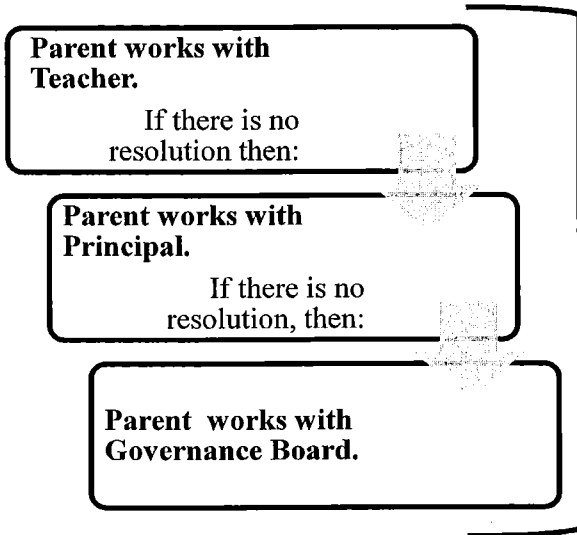
While the school continues a strong academic record, it remains challenged in the areas of governance transparency and participation.

- We request that the items identified by the Services for Exceptional Children Department be addressed and confirmation of such be sent to the FCS Charter Department April 30, 2011.
- We request a plan to improve parental involvement in the governing board be submitted by April 30, 2011.
- The school graciously provided all contracts for review in November. We understand that the school is now using the services of Grace Institute. We request that the relationship with the Grace Institute cease effective March 4, 2011, and the original terms of the contract approved by the FCBOE be honored. Additional direction is contained in the attached letter.
 1. According to its website, the Grace Institute does not claim to be an EMO. However, the scope of the services provided by the Grace Institute according to the contract supplied do indeed fall into the commonly accepted definition of an EMO and under the areas of governance as defined by the GADOE (personnel, finances, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring school improvement goals, and school operations).
The renewal contract did not specify the use of an educational management organization in general nor Grace Institute in specific. As such, the relationship is not approved by either the school system or the state.
 2. According to the Federal 990EZ Form, the Grace Institute's board of directors includes the FSAMS Executive Director (who also serves Fulton Sunshine

Academy and Fulton Science Academy High School) and the principals of the FSAHS and FSA MS, among others. This represents a business practice that is not in compliance FCBOE policy prohibiting conflict of interest.

3. There is no indication that a Request for Proposal (RFP) process was followed by the governing board in the hiring of the Grace Institute.
 4. The operations of the school reflect attendance at one conference conducted by Grace, but no transparency regarding the scope of the services provided is evident in any documentation provided by the school to date. Neither is any review period to assess the quality of the services indicated in the contract.
 5. Finally, although the contract supplied reflects that there is a fee associated with Grace services, there is no detail as to the amount of tax payer dollars going to the Grace Institute on an annual basis nor the formula for establishing such funding levels. Neither is there an articulation of the actual per pupil fee amounts to be paid by the school nor the schedule of payments in the contract. No payments are mentioned in the Annual Audit by the independent auditor, Mr. Sam Durden, CPA. Since the Grace Institute serves schools outside of Fulton County and the state of Georgia, the lack of transparency in the supplied contract makes it impossible to determine if state and local tax dollars are funding activities to benefit schools outside of Fulton County and the state of Georgia.
- If the governing body wishes to contract with the Grace Institute, we request the governing body follow the federally approved RFP process and officially amend their charter contract to properly reflect the transparent, contractual and approved relationship with the service provider selected. Any service provider selected would need to meet conflict of interest standards. This would require that no employees of the charter could also be associated with the service provider.
 - FCS and the GADOE both receive a number of parent calls requesting intervention in various charter school processes and decisions. We request that the governing board consider adding the following disclaimer to the student and/or parent handbook to clarify the school system's role in the operations of the charter:

“While the Fulton County School system retains ultimate authority over approved charter schools, it is a FCS practice to request that parents work through the processes identified in this charter contract to resolve school-level issues. Fulton County Schools respects the autonomy of the charter school and will not become involved in school level matters unless there is a serious issue such as a health or safety concern, federal or civil rights compliance issues, or evidence of criminal wrongdoing.”



FCS addresses health/safety, federal compliance and civil rights issues, or evidence of criminal wrongdoing.

- The governing board publishes a calendar of meeting dates and a copy of the charter document itself. However, the board contact information is incomplete. There is no policy summary. The meeting minutes and agendas on the website are not within the compliance dates required under O.C.G.A 50-14-1. We request that the governing board adapt its practices to come into compliance with the Open and Public Meetings requirements as explained in the FCS Governing Board training materials and required by law.

Documentation:

Attached are documents representing the compliance items and the complete State of the Charter Report to the FCBOE which contains financial, personnel, and academic performance items that might be useful comparisons for the governing body. The Value Added Report was issued to the school earlier in the year.

We appreciate the hard work, professionalism and dedication of FSA MS staff and governing board. We continue to offer our support as you meet the compliance items required by the charter and look forward to a successful second semester of learning for the students of the school.

Sincerely,

Len Box
Operations Area Superintendent

Laura Stowell, MPA
FCS Charter Liaison

Start Up Charters Compliance Overview Summary Page

Beginning in 2008 and in response to legislative changes, FCS and the charter schools in the system started construction of a checklist of compliance activities dealing with the major federal accountability reporting requirements set forth in the charters. This checklist does not represent all the compliance items that might be required by federal and state governments of a charter since individual schools and students will generate additional compliance requirements. However, this general listing can serve a vehicle to foster communication and transparency between the charter and the system in the area of general compliance.

- All charter governing bodies will receive interim compliance reports in January.
- With the exception of the Main Street Academy, every charter school has met every compliance deadline this school year.
- Main Street is currently out of compliance in the areas of facility safety, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Talented and Gifted (TAG). Main Street Academy is working closely with FCS to refine their internal operations and become more accurate and timely in their reporting.

Areas of Interaction Between FCS and Start Up Charter Schools

These FCS Departments offer full, in-kind services to charters and FCS requires complete compliance with the standards and practices of these departments.

- Governance: FCBOE, Superintendent
- Central Office Administration: Assessment and Evaluation, Testing Materials (CRCT, ITBS, SPED and TAG diagnostics), Student Information Systems (eSchools), Grant Development, Budget and Audit Services, *Certification Services NEW*
- Support Services: Exceptional Children (SEC), Charter Department, SST/504/RtI, GED/Homeless, Title I, GHSGT/Remediation, ESOL, Talented and Gifted, Early Childhood Special Programs, Media Services
- Facilities: Building Safety, Planning and Student Forecasting
- Health and Safety: Student Safety, Health Services,

These FCS Departments offer optional or contract only services to start up and conversion schools:

- Communications
- Professional Learning
- Nutrition
- Transportation
- Virtual Campus
- Night School
- Intramurals
- Teaching Museums

These FCS Departments are restricted from start up charters and offer limited services to conversion charters:

- Operations - FCS Foundation, Continuous Improvement, Financial Services, Payroll, Inventory Control, ERP System (SAP), Contracting/Purchasing
- Support Services- Student Discipline, Extended Learning, Summer School, Social Work, Counseling
- Curriculum - All Departments, Checkpoints Assessments, Textbooks
- Human Resources- Personnel Services, Placement Office
- Instructional Technology
- Facilities

General Compliance Checklist for 2010-2011 School Year

Note: ESOL, TAG, and Title I monthly meeting are not reflected in this listing. Given the flexibility in certain department meetings, this listing may change throughout the year.

July

New Principals' Meeting
Financial Statements DUE
Preliminary Personnel List DUE
Governance Board, Transportation,
Property Insurance Info DUE
Transportation provider and contact information
any calendar/early release day variations; and
any requests for pickup/drop off location changes;

August

Consolidated Application Meeting
FCCSA
Financial Statements DUE
Title I Annual Principals Seminar
SES Providers Orientation
Discipline Disproportionality
Second Day Count
Student Support Team
New SST Chair Orientation
Sixth Day Count
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
New Eligibility Team Chair Training

September

Mass Vision and Hearing Screening
Ten Day Count
School Safety Plan DUE
GKIDS baseline due
New 504 Chair Orientation
Title I Binder DUE
Discipline Disproportionality
Fall Test Coordinator Training HS
Fall Test Coordinator Training ES/MS
Fall Test Coordinator Elluminate HS
Special Education Segment Count Due for FTE 1 & 2
Immunizations Records DUE
Fall Test Coordinator Elluminate ES/MS
Financial Statements DUE
School Improvement Plans DUE
New Principals' Meeting
FCCSA
Least Restrictive Environment
ES TAG South Workshop
Affadavit of Residency DUE

FCS Charter Department
January 2011

GB Names and Fingerprints DUE
CPI Report DUE
Georgia High School Writing Test

October

GADOE Annual Report DUE
Audits DUE
CPI Report DUE
GACE Content Tutorial
FTE Count
Discipline Disproportionality
GACE Content Tutorial
FCCSA
Financial Statements DUE
GACE Content Tutorial
GACE Content Tutorial
New Principals' Meeting

November

FCCSA
Financial Statement DUE

December

FCCSA
Financial Statement Due

January

Student Support Team
FCCSA
SST Workshop
Financial Statements DUE
8th Grade Writing Test
New Principals' Meeting
School Improvement Plans Interim Report DUE
IST Meetings

February

Financial Statement DUE
CPI Report DUE
FCCSA
New Principals' Meeting

March

5th Grade Writing Test
Special Education Segment Counts Due for FTE 3
FCCSA
Financial Statements DUE

April

Financial Statements DUE
FCCSA
CRCT Starts

May

New Principals' Meeting

FCCSA
Financial Statements Due

June
Financial Statement DUE
FCCSA

Federal Accountability

Department Checklist

Full In Kind Departments	FSA MS Compliance
Assessment and Evaluation	yes
Testing Materials (CRCT, ITBS, SPED and TAG diagnostics)	yes
Student Information Systems (eSchools)	yes
Grant Development	yes
Budget and Audit Services	yes
Certification Services	yes
Exceptional Children (SEC)	yes
Charter Department	yes
SST/504/RtI	yes
GED/Homeless	n/a
Title I	n/a
GHS/GT/Remediation	n/a
ESOL	yes
Teaching Museums	n/a
Talented and Gifted	yes
Early Childhood Special Programs	yes
Media Services	yes
Building Safety	yes
Planning and Student Forecasting	yes
Student Safety	yes
Health Services	yes
Intramurals	yes
Limited In Kind Departments	
Communications	n/a
Professional Learning (general)	n/a
Professional Learning (optional)	n/a
Virtual Campus	n/a
Night School	n/a
HS Summer School	n/a
Nutrition	n/a
Transportation	yes