Charter School Renewal Final Petition Evaluation Rubric

School Name: DeKalb Preparatory Academy
Date: November 15, 2023

The Petition Review Committee will use the following criteria to rate the petition. Within each category, specific criteria define the expectations for a response that meets expectations. Reviewers will reach consensus when rating responses by applying the following guidance:

Rating	Characteristics
Meets the Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school operates and expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out its plans effectively.
Partially Meets the Standard	The response meets the criteria in some respects but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Below the Standard	The response is wholly undeveloped, demonstrates lack of preparation, and/or is unsuited to the mission of the authorizer.
Far Below the Standard	The response is significantly incomplete, raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan and/or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

Recommendations from the Petition Review Committee will be based on evaluation of the written petition (narrative and attachments), independent due diligence, and the governing board capacity interview. In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the petition should align with the overall mission and vision, educational program, and organizational and financial performance/plans.

	Evidence of Standard	Rating
Community Support & Need	• The petitioner demonstrates a deep, realistic, and authentic understanding of the "who" (targeted population), the "how" (education model), and the "why" (educational philosophy). • The petitioner describes how members of the community have been involved in the design and will continue to be involved in the implementation of the school. • The community engagement to date and plan for moving forward incorporate diverse stakeholders, touchpoints, and tactics, which are well-suited to reach the school's target population. • The petitioner understands the unique characteristics of DeKalb County's educational landscape and is aware of its communities' needs, assets, and strengths. • The petitioner demonstrates an understanding of the economic, political, historical, and social contexts of the community it seeks to serve. • The petitioner demonstrates that the school will continue to have the necessary community support to	Meets the Standard Partially Meets the Standard Below the Standard Far Below the Standard

	carry out its proposed program, especially with regard to building and sustaining community partnerships.	

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- The petitioner provided examples of two community partnerships. The petition review committee expressed that this number was relatively low.
- New leadership has a historical context for and connections to the community.
- As indicated on the "heater map" provided to the school by DCSD's Planning Department, community partners and staff understand that the student population represents all of DeKalb and not just the former Region 6.
- Families perceive DPA and its education model as a viable option in the community.
- The petitioner did not make a compelling case for the unmet need in the District that the school seeks to address. Though research is presented in the petition, the effectiveness of implementing these strategies at DPA is not clearly articulated or supported by the school's data.

	Evidence of Standard	Rating
School Governance	• The Board collectively has the capacity to implement all aspects of the education program and is, therefore, able to meet the needs of the target student population and those not in the target population but likely to enroll. • The governance structure creates a forum for parent, teacher, and community input and the strategies for communicating Board priorities and decisions include all stakeholders. • The Board clearly articulates both its policies and a decision-making process for determining when and how to adjust its plans based on feedback. • The Governing Board reflects the sociodemographic diversity of the community served by the charter school.	Meets the Standard **Partially Meets the Standard** Below the Standard Far Below the Standard

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- During the two-year extension, two ethics policy/personnel related ethics complaints were lodged. The responses for both were not answered in a timely manner:
- In addition to the letters of concern outlined in the academic plan and organizational plan sections below, the school was issued a letter of concern for adherence to mandated reporting requirements (3/30/22).
- DCSD Operations and Maintenance visited the school on 2/1/2023 and issued a report with numerous maintenance concerns. On 3/3/2023 the teams returned to find that the issues were resolved.
- Parental complaints decreased from SY22-23 to the first semester of SY23-24.

	Evidence of Standard	Rating
Academic Performance/ Plan	• The petitioner addresses student subgroups individually, recognizing and planning for the diverse needs of diverse students. • The application describes mechanisms and/or strategies that ensure equitable access to the curriculum for all students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English Language Learners (ELLs). • Embedded in the instructional methods and resources are concrete strategies and materials to support SWDs, ELLs, and academically struggling students.	Meets the Standard Partially Meets the Standard Below the Standard

	• The petition describes a student behavior management system that is likely to result in a low rate of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, is not overly punitive, and distinguishes between outcomes that are automatic versus those that are discretionary. • The petitioner has planned for all contingencies, including different rates of SWDs, ELLs, and academically struggling students, different disabilities, different levels of need, and how the school will adjust its programs and processes accordingly. • Vision for school culture or ethos that will promote high expectations, a positive academic environment and intellectual and social development for all students, including those with special needs, English Language Learners, and students who struggle academically. • The Board has demonstrated understanding of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies to appropriately identify, serve, and report data for all subgroups of students.	Far Below the Standard

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- Progress Monitoring for DeKalb Preparatory Academy is incomplete for the first 4.5 Progress Reporting period of SY23-24. Teacher acknowledgements, which includes accommodations, behavior intervention plans, and any other necessary IEP (Individualized Education Program) documents, have not been provided to staff members that teach students with disabilities (SWD). A letter of concern was issued by the District in October 2023. This has been an ongoing concern since SY22-23. Progress monitoring for the 2022-2023 school year was completed during the month of June 2023 for 46 of the 53 SWDs by one teacher. Progress monitoring should be completed in a timely manner (every 4.5 weeks) and reported to parents according to the grade reporting periods.
- Special Education Staffing – The DCSD Big Picture dated 10/19/2023 notes 8 full-time special education teachers, two 1:1 paraprofessionals, and two supportive paraprofessionals are required. The school is currently staffed by 3 contracted full-time teachers and 4 part-time retired special education teachers that are scheduled to leave at 12:00 each day; 1 1:1 para and 2 program paras. The petition review committee raised concerns about how the needs of students with disabilities are being met after these staff members depart for the day.
- FAPE - The findings of a GaDOE Complaint dated 8/18/2023 cited concerns regarding the following: Evaluations and Reevaluations (Child Find) and Provisions of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- FAPE – DPA was issued a letter of concern on March 10, 2023, because SWDs were not served according to the services in their current IEPs on FTE count day. A directive was made to place staff/substitutes in all SE classes.
- FAPE - A probe of Infinite Campus on August 18, 2022, validated a parent complaint that teachers had not received accommodations for SWDs; the Teacher Acknowledge forms had not been triggered nor uploaded. The Head of School indicated that the special education teachers would provide the general education teachers with the accommodations and obtain signatures by Tuesday, August 22, 2022. A letter of concern was issued by the District on August 22, 2022, regarding how SWDs' IEPs were being implemented. General education teachers had not been provided with a copy of student accommodations as documented in Infinite Campus.
- DPA demonstrated single-digit proficiency rates in some areas of the 2023 EOG test, including 8.77% proficiency in 4th grade mathematics and 5% proficiency in 5th grade mathematics. Additionally, the school demonstrated 14.55% proficiency in 8th grade mathematics and 23.64% proficiency in 8th grade ELA.

Financial Performance/ Plan	**Evidence of Standard**	**Rating**
	• The budget is balanced, error free, and based on realistic expectations for income and expenditures. • The financial plan demonstrates a clear understanding of the statutory funding formula, private funding opportunities, and all applicable federal funds. • The budget reflects all necessary outlays outlined in the Academic Plan, including personnel, technological resources, facilities, curricular resources, and mission-specific expenditures. • If the budget includes substantial private fundraising revenue, the application details a strong fundraising plan, and the Board includes a member or advisor with significant fundraising expertise. • The identified facility will meet the needs of the education program, and there are effective measures to ensure the health and safety of students. • The facilities financing plan is based on realistic market expectations and includes contingencies in the case that the preferred financing method is unavailable. • The applicant has established protocols to ensure strong financial performance, compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and major federal fund requirements. • Financial policies are comprehensive and likely to prevent fraud, including clear job responsibilities of the staff and board members who direct or execute financial transactions; strong financial and accounting procedures and internal controls; clear, robust policies for managing actual or perceived conflicts of interest; direct Board oversight of procurement contracts; and in-depth reviews of budgets, actuals, forecasts, and external financial audits.	Meets the Standard Partially Meets the Standard Below the Standard Far Below the Standard
Review Committee's Comments or Concerns: • DeKalb Preparatory is able to project enrollment in a way that enables it to adequately budget. • The school maintains an appropriate balance of cash on hand and meets the standard of unrestricted cash flow.		
Organizational Performance/ Plan	**Evidence of Standard**	**Rating**
	• The Board has, collectively, expert professional knowledge and requisite skills in all areas needed to open a successful public charter school, including organizational, financial, legal, real estate/facilities, start-up, and other operational capabilities along with extensive, recent, and relevant teaching/school leadership experience with a population similar to that the school plans to serve. Experience with ELLs, SWDs, and/or economically disadvantaged students is evident.	Meets the Standard Partially Meets the Standard Below the Standard Far Below the Standard

	• The Board has identified the school leader(s) or the skills and experiences necessary for the leaders who will operate the school. • The applicant has a thorough and accurate plan for how the school will meet its expected growth trajectory. • Staff recruitment and retention plans are likely to attract and retain the quality and specific expertise needed to support the school's academic program. • The PD plan is broad, covering all necessary areas to prepare teachers to fulfill the school's goal, including offering consistently high-quality instruction, as well as flexible enough to respond to teacher/PD needs as they develop throughout the school year. • The PD plan specifically addresses any supports the student population may require. • The charter school's faculty, staff, and students reflect the sociodemographic diversity of the community served by the school.	

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- During the two-year extension, instability in leadership persisted. The longest tenured administrator is the Director of Operations with one year of experience. The current Head of School has been in this role three months and was preceded by three other Heads of School during the term of the two-year extension. The Academic Specialist and two Principals have all been in place for less than three months. A letter of concern from the District (dated March 16, 2023) requested that DPA respond in writing with the timeline and plan for filling the Head of School position. A clear timeline and plan were never received.
- The attrition rate for staff was 53% in both SY21-22 and SY22-23.

	Evidence of Standard	Rating
Minimum Requirements	• Applicant met all submission deadlines and requirements. • The essential elements of the mission, philosophy, and school program are infused in each element of the application. • Petitioner presented evidence to support the program design and sufficiently responded to clarifying questions and/or evidence that challenged or refuted elements of the proposed program. • Petition includes specific examples of waivers or flexibility needed to accomplish the school's goals.	Meets the Standard Partially Meets Standard Below the Standard Far Below the Standard

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- The petitioner did not infuse essential elements of the school's mission, philosophy, and school program into each element of the application.
- The petitioner's response to the notification of incompleteness was provided after the deadline.

Overall Assessment/Final Evaluation

	Meets the Standard	Partially Meets the Standard	Below the Standard	Far Below the Standard
Written Petition Evaluation		X		
Governing Board Capacity Interview Evaluation		X		
Final Evaluation		X		

Meets the Standard - The petition may be recommended for approval without any further action on the part of the applicant.

Partially Meets Standard - Additional supplemental information and/or clarification is required before a recommendation to approve or deny the charter can be made to the DeKalb Board of Education (DBOE).

Below the Standard - The petition requires substantial and material revisions before a recommendation to approve or deny the charter can be made.

Far Below Standard - Petition is irreparably flawed and will be recommended for denial.