



## Governing Board Capacity/Clarification Interview Rubric

DeKalb Preparatory Academy (DPA)

October 31, 2023

The Petition Review Committee will use the following criteria to rate the governing board capacity/clarification interview. 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.

Community Support and Need	Standard	Rating
Clarifying Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The petitioner states that DPA “serves a higher percentage of low-income, African American students when compared to the district as a whole.” Please clarify how this statement addresses question #1 of the renewal application. - p. 11</li> <li>- Describe how teachers and families were involved in “planning, analyzing, and reviewing petition content.” Additionally, how will the stakeholder groups listed on page 12 of the petition continue to participate. - p. 12</li> <li>- Question #1 of the petition asks the petitioner to describe the importance of its initiative to the community it serves. How does the governing board define “community?” How does the governing board assess community need? How does the governing board assess the importance of its initiative to the community it serves? - p. 11</li> </ul>	The applicant makes a compelling case for why the school fills an unmet need in the DeKalb County School District. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the community or communities the school serves or is likely to serve. The Board demonstrates cultural competency specific to the communities with whom it works or seeks to work, including the ability to articulate the root causes of the needs it seeks to fill.	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Responses from Governing Board:

- The neighborhood where the school is located is low and middle income. The community is growing. DPA is a Title I school. The statement on page 11 aligns to the school’s vision and mission. Programming is designed to serve the specific needs of DPA students.
- Teachers provided feedback on areas of weakness. DPA frequently meets with parents. Feedback on school improvement strategies is solicited from different stakeholder groups at events (examples - wellbeing, instructional approaches, teacher support). Parent advisory group participated in development of Title I plan and petition.
- Community is where people come together in a shared space. Services and resources are shared in that space. The school contributes resources to the community's wellbeing. This is assessed by how DPA and its students engage with the community. AVC initiative is culturally relevant and ties in community members. Additional evidence is the types of businesses opening in the community. A movie production company recently opened in the community. Surveys are used to gather data. Donuts with Dads was provided as an example.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- Components of question #1 of the petition were not sufficiently addressed in the written petition.
- Request additional clarification on how the program provides an innovative option in DCSD.
- Has the movie production company indicated that its decision to open in the community was in whole or in part a result of DPA?

School Governance	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide an example of a corrective action the governing board has developed in response to progress monitoring of goals. What was the goal? What was the corrective action? - p. 12</li> <li>- On page 14, the petitioner states that “The governing board measures its own effectiveness on an annual basis.” Please share 2-3 findings from the governing board’s most recent annual evaluation. – p. 14</li> <li>- The petitioner states that “DPA ensures that due process rights of students are upheld at all times in disciplinary actions.” During SY22-23, the district raised concerns related to due process rights of students in disciplinary actions. How is the governing board informed of or engaged in resolving such concerns? - p. 72</li> </ul>	<p>The governance structure is designed to (a) put students first, including being responsive to family and community input; (b) achieve the school’s mission and goals; and (c) ensure legal compliance, particularly in terms of proactively preventing financial fraud and ensuring the appropriate use of public funds. The governance structure will ensure an active, engaged, knowledgeable Board that has timely, deep, and broad knowledge of the school’s operations, finances, and students’ needs, and operates independently and autonomously.</p>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Responses from Governing Board:

- Goal: Gaps identified coming out of COVID. The Board wanted to look at how learning gaps were being addressed. The Board has weekly check ins with the head of school on the concerns lifted up by DCSD as it relates to SPED. DPA is still filling vacancies. The Board reviewed teacher PD (ex. - PD on the teaching cycle) and data collection through its academic committee. Math was identified as a major area of need. Stop Gaps – Hire the most qualified teachers possible. DPA now has a principal for ES and a principal for MS. An after-school tutorial focused on math has been added. Fifty percent of DPA

teachers are certified. Fifty percent of DPA teachers are working toward certification. The school is being more intentional about working on gaps at each grade level. The Board is requesting more data from the Head of School. The Board is requesting cohort data.

- Board Evaluation Findings – Retention of Board members has been a challenge due to the lift. Committees allow for smoother transition to the full Board. The Board is mindful not to step into the day-to-day management of the school. The Board may have allowed too much grace coming out of COVID. The Board is leaning in to ensure more immediate accountability.
- The Board was informed of concerns related to due process rights of students by the principal. The Board ensured that the Head of School had the support to address the issue. The Board sought guidance from DCSD and reverted to DCSD policy. Everyone had to get on the same page around how to handle and communicate such issues. Training for school personnel was provided to ensure that this does not happen again. The goal is to be fair and consistent.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- Request additional clarification on Board membership and terms in the initial memo.
- During SY22-23, DCSD cited DPA for violation of State Board Rule 160-4-9-.06, and the Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. §50-18-70.

Academic Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The petitioner states on page 20, “the innovative features create the quality curriculum and support infrastructure that is needed to close achievement gaps at all levels.” Please specify how the curriculum supports the infrastructure and has closed achievement gaps at all levels. – p. 20</li> <li>- A comparative analysis of “Region 6” was included in the petition. On page 35, the petitioner states that “Scholars who attend DPA live all throughout DeKalb County and are not localized to Region 6.” Given that the district is no longer administratively organized into geographic regions and that the attendance area for DPA is the DeKalb County School District, please clarify why an analysis of the former “Region 6” was included this petition cycle. – p. 35</li> <li>- The NWEA MAP performance data presented in the petition indicates that performance at the kindergarten level is significantly better than performance in grades 1-8. What root cause(s) (other than the pandemic) has DPA identified for this disparity? – p. 41</li> <li>- Please confirm that DPA currently has six (6) <b>full-time</b>, certified special education teachers, each of whom is responsible for a caseload of between 9-10 students and four (4) paraprofessionals on staff to provide assistance to classroom teachers and meet the instructional needs of exceptional students in the general classroom setting. – p. 62</li> </ul>	<p>The applicant demonstrates the capability to design or select a comprehensive, high-quality curriculum (standards, resources, methods of instruction, and formative assessments for each core, electives, and mission-specific subjects). The curriculum is inherently inclusive and designed to be responsive to students’ needs; clearly interrelated between its components; and directly aligned to the school’s goals, mission, and educational philosophy.</p>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Responses from Governing Board:

- DPA ensures that teachers are well-trained. PD days are provided. Math is the primary focus as these are the lowest performance scores. Additional PD days have been added to the school calendar. Training is culturally relevant to what is going on in the school. Teachers are reminded of the AVC differentiator and alignment of lessons to standards. New teachers are provided PD on PBL. Technology is used to drive student achievement. DPA is stronger in ELA than math. Students are pushed to make connections between technology and literacy. Recent MAP data demonstrated growth. MAP, iReady, EOG, and formative assessment data were shared with the Board.
- PD is offered to support strong Tier I instruction. Special education teachers also received PD. DPA has an academic and instructional plan in place.
- At the time of the writing of the petition, the school was in Region 6. The petitioner states that the vast majority of the students live in the area of the school.
- The school has 6 certified special education teachers. The school has contracted with an agency for special education teachers to fill gaps and ensure wholistic coverage. The school has also implemented two academic recovery programs. The school contracts teachers and paraprofessionals. A paraprofessional was recently hired to address the needs of newly enrolled students.
- Summer Bridge Program runs for two weeks during the summer. Each year we look at data to determine what types of programs are needed. The Board has asked us to look closely at what worked in the groups where students did well. This is where the tracking of the cohorts comes in. Members of the Board are certified in TKES/LKES. The Board includes a retired and current educator. The goal is to avoid regression. The Head of School is reviewing whether DPA is using the appropriate materials. DPA has a large number of young teachers. There is a need for veteran teachers to support younger teachers.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- Verify with RDE data that demonstrates student growth in 2023.
- Did the school confirm that the six contracted, certified SPED teachers are full-time?

Financial Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does the governing board leverage the broad flexibility waiver in terms of resource allocation to address non-administrative staffing needs? – p. 14</li> <li>- Explain what factors were considered when determining the 6 % facility spending level in light of the most recent facility complaint involving building repairs and facility maintenance concerns from the district’s Operations Department? - p. 51</li> <li>- The petition mentions that DPA has a strong cash position and was able to increase its salary scale to</li> </ul>	<p>The financial and facilities plans, including the proposed budget, are thoroughly developed and aligned with the proposed school’s mission and education program. The budget is balanced and conservative; reflects all necessary outlays, including any unique programs described in the academic plan; ensures adequate levels on cash on hand, including cash reserves and/or contingencies</p>	<p>Meets the Standard</p> <hr/> <p>Partially Meets the Standard</p>

<p>become more competitive and reduce teacher turnover. - p 52. DPA has consistently had a healthy monetary position for cash on hand. Why weren't incentive pay and salary increase considered earlier during the contract extension?</p>	<p>for unexpected shortfalls; and contains no accounting errors. The revenue projections are realistic and sufficient to meet school expenditures. Both the finance and facilities plans are realistic and informed by accurate assessment, including key funding opportunities and facilities availability.</p>	Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

- Responses from Governing Board:
- DPA uses the broad flexibility waiver to hire teachers who are not certified. Instructional coaches have been hired to assist teachers who are working toward certification.
  - The Board has made some significant expenditures in the area of facilities. DPA has hired an Operations Manager. DPA has identified a need to replace its water tower. The Board has identified the need for a facilities management plan with a policy attached.
  - Various forms of incentive pay were used during COVID. Incentive programs such as referral and longevity incentives were previously used. How can we sustain the current budget plus bring in teachers with incentive programs? The Board is constantly having a conversation around balancing sustainability with current needs.

- Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:
- Provide a copy of the facilities management plan and policy referenced by the Governing Board Chair during the Governing Board Capacity Interview.
  - DeKalb Preparatory Academy has demonstrated a strong financial performance and has a substantial fund balance.

Organizational Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goal 8: On page 20, the petitioner states "DPA met all legal requirements during the current charter term." DPA has been issued multiple letters of concern for failure to implement federal and state legal requirements related to students with disabilities. Some concerns raised in letters of concern issued by the District have not been sufficiently addressed. Additionally, responses to some letters of concern from the District have been delayed. Please clarify the governing board's understanding of the letters of concern received from the District and DPA's response during the current charter term. pp. 20-21</li> </ul>	<p>The organizational plan aligns with and supports the school's mission and educational philosophy, is designed to support the school's goals and academic achievement expectations, and is accurately reflected in the budget. The staffing and recruitment plan provides sufficient academic, non-academic, and mission-critical staff to cover all of the courses and programs described in the Academic Plan. The Board has all areas of</p>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the status of DPA’s implementation of targeted strategies identified through the root cause analysis conducted in response to compliance letters or letters of concern? – p. 21</li> </ul>	<p>knowledge and expertise necessary to operate a successful charter school, and the school leader(s) have or will have the expertise and resources to fulfill the school’s mission and goals.</p>	<p>Far Below the Standard</p>
<p>Responses from Governing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Board has been targeting concerns related to special education. What are the boxes that need to be addressed head on? The Board is asking weekly for staffing and resource updates. How can we get stakeholder support in this area. The Board is targeting the gaps step-by-step. One student recently came in with an IEP that required a paraprofessional. The Board responded by ensuring the the student had what he/she needed. The Head of School was given all letters of concern upon hire to work better with DeKalb and the SPED team. Teachers were trained on how to write IEPs. Families are urged to provide the school with existing IEPs. In the past, the Board was not always aware of what the challenges in this area were. DeKalb has provided communications and collaboration to help the school get to where it needs to be.</li> <li>- The Board is working with the Head of School and teacher to address the targeted areas in the root cause analysis. The new Head of School has been transparent with the Board about resource needs. DPA is working through communications issues to address areas of concern. There has been high attrition in the Head of School position. The Board sought someone who was local in this role and offered the Head of School a three-year contract. DPA is able to offer a more attractive salary to teachers. DPA pays full benefits for teachers to help attrition rate. The Board has faced challenges with attrition. More support for Board members is in place. DPA has had turnover in its central office.</li> </ul> <p>Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The recent change in leadership has fostered communication between the Governing Board and the school.</li> </ul>		

Performance Task	Standard	Rating
<p>Governing Board Performance Task:</p> <p>Governing Board Performance Task: In reviewing DPA’s most recent academic performance data in the area of writing, you identify several concerning trends in the data set which need to be addressed.</p> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would the Governing Board approach this challenge?</li> <li>What additional info would be helpful in order to deliver a quality analysis to the school community?</li> <li>How would you ensure that the needs of students with disabilities and ELL are met?</li> <li>Which budget line items would you recommend revising in order to help achieve this solution? How</li> </ol>	<p>The Board demonstrates the capacity to confront potential pitfalls in opening and/or operating a school by identifying the root causes of plausible challenges and solutions to those challenges.</p>	<p>Meets the Standard</p> <p>Partially Meets the Standard</p> <p>Below the Standard</p> <p>Far Below the Standard</p>

<p>would the Board determine the budget line items that are off limits for revision?</p>		
<p>Responses from Governing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of School provided overview of the dataset including definitions of categories. The Head of School would provide a recommendation using the Board Action Form. Questions – What are the gaps identified? What support is needed from the Board? How will parents be encouraged to support students with building writing skills?</li> <li>- Gaps – Students do not know how to attack the question or respond to a prompt. Write Score will be used as a benchmark. It also has resources. Head of School provided an explanation of how Write Score results can be used by teachers to differentiate instruction. Data would be housed in Illuminate. Head of School would request budget approval to purchase Write Score. Data was discussed in Academic Committee and approved before bringing the recommendation to the full Board.</li> <li>- PD – District provides PD in the area of writing through the Area Office. Write Score provides PD.</li> <li>- PBL infuses writing in all areas. Topic addressed during Dads for Donuts and Science Night. Students’ writing impacts GMAS scores. Writing is a life skill. Would it be helpful to have a special writing training session for students? Write Score pre-assessment will also provide insights into the data.</li> <li>- SPED – Expectations are the same for SWD with accommodation(s). Head of School is working with teachers to ensure differentiation. Teachers are loosely using RACE. The Board asked the Head of School to research the availability and cost of assistive technology.</li> <li>- Budget – Finance provided guidance on options for funding the proposed initiative.</li> </ul> <p>Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Head of School and Governing Board collaborate to analyze the root causes of persistent deficiencies in programming.</li> </ul>		