



Governing Board Capacity/Clarification Interview Rubric

International Community School (ICS)

November 2, 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"> - Provide key findings from the Comprehensive Master Plan conducted as part of the governing board’s research into increasing ICS’s maximum enrollment. – p. 11 - Describe how various stakeholders (teachers, families and community members) were involved in the renewal petition process. Additionally, how will these stakeholder groups continue to participate? - p. 11 - Describe ICS’s efforts to ensure that the Beloved Community (parent/community engagement structure) reflects the socioeconomic and cultural diversity of the student population. – p. 22 	<p>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.</p>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Responses from Governing Board:

- Comprehensive Master Plan: The first area was internal and external stakeholder feedback. The request for increased enrollment has been lifted up for over 10 years. The school considered the impact on IB status. A consultant was brought in to oversee the work—focus groups with Board members and staff, etc.. The work was an offshoot of the facilities taskforce. One goal was ensuring instructional staff could meet the needs of students and families. ICS also considered teacher support. ICS was cognizant of whether the facility could support growth. ICS is looking at budget and other factors to address challenges.
- Stakeholder Involvement – The Governing Board holds monthly meetings. Focus groups were facilitated. Chai Chats with families are held. ICS used its newsletter to communicate with stakeholders. Interpreters were used to ensure all families could participate.
- UN Day is one way the Beloved Community is involved. The Beloved Community ensures that students have access to a top-notch academic environment and a top-notch nurturing school community. The Board includes a former student. This is a testament to ICS actualizing its vision and mission.
- ICS is the third oldest charter school in Georgia.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The petitioner's response regarding key findings of the Comprehensive Master Plan lacked detail.
- The petitioner demonstrated an understanding of the community or communities the school serves.
- During the Spring 2023 Superintendent’s Site Visit, the previous head of school raised concerns regarding sociodemographic representation within the Beloved Community. The concerns were not addressed in the response to Question #2.
- ICS has developed partnerships with several community organizations that support their diverse school community.

School Governance	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petition includes examples of governing board decisions. Provide 1-2 examples of decisions from p. 49-50 made in response to family and/or community input. - To what extent has the school achieved its mission/vision during the current charter term? What is the evidence that the Governing Board uses to evaluate this goal? - Describe ICS’s efforts to ensure that the Beloved Community (parent/community engagement structure) reflects the socioeconomic and cultural diversity of the student population. – p. 22 	<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>	<p>Meets the Standard</p>
		<p>Partially Meets the Standard</p>
		<p>Below the Standard</p>
		<p>Far Below the Standard</p>

Responses from Governing Board:

- Decisions: (1) Increasing Enrollment; (2) How can facilities support the school community? New American Pathways provides after school programming. The Board held a retreat. The Board is aligned on the next steps. No decision is made without considering the impact on families. Focus groups are used to gather input. Students were given an opportunity to provide input. ICS holds workshops at its community resource center. Other examples include a clothing closet, food coop, and SEL workshops. Fundraising goals are responsive to the needs of the community—increasing unrestricted dollars.
- Vision/Mission - Participant read vision/mission. ACCESS scores have been a bright spot based on resource allocation decisions. Math outcomes are in line with District outcomes. IB program evaluation indicated that no areas of concern need to be addressed. Reading program was revamped to align with new requirements around dyslexia. ICS will use Science of Reading and OG. ICS focuses on academic excellence for all students. School looks closely at ACCESS, dyslexia screener, and iReady data.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The Governing Board is high-functioning, knowledgeable, and collaborative.

Academic Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expound on how ICS leverages the broad flexibility of the charter contract “to address the individual academic and emotional needs of our students.” Provide any data that supports this conclusion. – p. 14, 16-17 - What percentage of ICS teachers are certified? – p. 16 - Describe the school’s strategies for moving students from proficient to distinguished content mastery. Discuss trends in ICS’s gifted population. – Superintendent Site Visit 	<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:

- Flexibility – The Board allocated additional funds for ELL. Additional ESOL staff have been hired. ICS had phenomenal growth in ACCESS scores last year. The community resource center is another program. SEL, parenting classes, and other services are provided through the center. The school is using creative scheduling to allow an extended block on Mondays for Second Step. ICS also leverages strong community partnerships.
- Ninety percent of ICS teachers are certified. The focus is to ensure that staff reflects the diversity of the student population. The school has almost achieved 100% of teachers being ESOL certified.
- A larger percentage of students were identified as gifted (increased from 7 to 21). ICS has implemented the Wonder Lab. A goal has been to ensure that a more diverse group of students are represented in the gifted program. The model with the Wonder Lab serves more students and has helped increase the number of students identified as distinguished. This increases the number of students with access to talent development.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The CCRPI metrics reported for the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years are accurate. The petition does not include the content mastery CCRPI targets for the 2018-2019 school year.
 - o ELA target- 52.12- met target (actual- 65.47)
 - o Math target- 54.69- met target (actual- 58.52)
 - o Science target- 44.90- did not meet the target (actual- 38.89)
 - o Social Studies target- 39.78 did not meet the target (actual- 33.34) - Exhibit 5
- MTSS process has been enhanced through collaboration with the DCSD MTSS team. The number of referrals from Tier 2 to Tier 3 has increased.
- The special education population at ICS is increasing. An increase in targeted interventions and support is evident.

Financial Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Figure 29: ICS Example Decisions for the Governing Board. P-48. ICS collaborated with the Georgia Charter School Association to begin the process of the facilities master plan using \$80,429 of the facility grant that was awarded from the state. Where in the planning phase is ICS on completing the facilities master plan? - To further clarify, DCSD provides a district LTSE to monitor and oversee Special Education compliance as 	<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</p>	<p>Meets the Standard</p>
		<p>Partially Meets the Standard</p>

<p>well as facilitate the initial/redetermination of eligibility process. – p. 62</p>	<p>cash on hand, including cash reserves and/or contingencies 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>	<p>Below the Standard</p>
<p>Far Below the Standard</p>		
<p>Responses from Governing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultants completed the initial report. The Board is looking at the high priority improvements identified in the report. The Board is looking into how modulars can be used to support growth. Short-term (health/well-being) and long-term goals will be addressed. <p>Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The financial plan is developed and aligned with the school’s mission, vision, and education program. - The district does not retain “state and local special education funding” in exchange for the provision of special education staff funding. – p. 61 - Resources are strategically allocated to support academic priorities. - ICS met the standard on all measures of near-term and sustainable financial performance. - The Board’s monitoring of financial performance is evident during Governing Board observations. - ICS has a substantial fund balance. 		
<p>Organizational Performance/Plan</p>	<p>Standard</p>	<p>Rating</p>
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify the waivers of State Board Rule and/or Georgia Law used by ICS to provide “consistent professional development opportunities for staff as well as support for our innovative academic program.” – p. 13 - Describe the organizational challenges that ICS has faced during the current term with special attention to challenges that directly impacted school climate and culture. – Superintendent Site Visit - Provide an update on ICS’s 2023-2024 staff retention results and initiatives. What supports has ICS put in place for staff members in the aftermath of the pandemic? – Superintendent Site Visit - The petitioner states that ICS has had 3 school leaders in the last 5 years. To what does ICS attribute turnover in the school leader role? – p. 70 	<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 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>Meets the Standard</p> <p>Partially Meets the Standard</p> <p>Below the Standard</p> <p>Far Below the Standard</p>

Responses from Governing Board:

- The Board understands that it cannot waive anything related to financial reporting. PD opportunities for staff are provided.
- Challenge: The school lost its former Executive Director. An interim ED was named. The community provided input on what was needed in the next ED. A consultant made the recommendation for the selected permanent ED. The school also had a transition in the school leader role. Both positions were filled by internal candidates which may have prevented negative impacts on climate/culture. The current school leader has an HR background. This has helped with thinking through how the school values teachers. COVID – The Beloved Community concept was used to hold morning circles to check in on wellness and stay connected. Stability in the school leaders and ED position have also resulted in strong climate/culture. The Board has a succession plan.
- 100% of staff returned for SY23-24. Opportunities for continuing education and opportunities for growth within the school are examples of ways ICS acknowledges staff needs. Wellness and self-care days are held. ICS offers competitive benefits to keep staff healthy. ICS assesses staff salaries compared to the District and market. ICS tries to stay in lockstep with the county. The Board reviews financial performance metric regularly.
- School Leader Turnover – An external review was conducted by GSU 10 years ago. The first step to address root causes was to create an ED role. How do we leverage philanthropic partners to get things moving? Answering this question is the role of the ED. ICS spent time asking questions of the exiting school leaders. Some school leaders were promoted. Framework for evaluation of school leaders is being refined. ED will assess Board support. The current school leader was trained by the previous school leader. The Board trains its next Chair before transitioning to new leader.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The ICS instructional staff is strong. ICS had 100% staff retention for SY23-24. Ninety percent of the teachers are certified. Almost 100% of those have achieved ESOL certification.
- ICS is taking advantage of PL opportunities through DCSD regularly.
- The principal attends area-level meetings and principals’ meetings held by DCSD.
- The school is fully staffed in SPED and adjusts quickly mid-year, as needed.
- When the District makes recommendations regarding SPED staffing needs as it relates to the DCSD Big Picture, the school moves swiftly to make change.

Performance Task	Standard	Rating
------------------	----------	--------

<p>Governing Board Performance Task: In reviewing ICS'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>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How would the Governing Board approach this challenge? What additional info would be helpful in order to deliver a quality analysis to the school community? How would you ensure that the needs of students with disabilities and ELL are met? Which budget line items would you recommend revising in order to help achieve this solution? How would the Board determine the budget line items that are off limits for revision? 	<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>Responses from Governing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching and Learning would have reviewed data before full Board. Each month T&L looks at different data points. The Head of School provided an overview. School-based team presents data to the T&L committee. Data is analyzed in real time. Only students in grades 3-5 take the exam. The committee lead reviewed the parameters of the writing test. Scores were explained. Many students attempted the prompt but didn't complete the task. Issues with writing across the curriculum had already been identified. Writing across the curriculum doesn't explicitly teach conventions or how to write. The data showed an improvement over January. ICS had a more intentional focus on writing in the second semester. - Board Questions - Is the data broken up into demographics or subgroups? How is the school tracking progress throughout the year? What is the difference between narrative and informational writing? Additional subgroup data is not available. ICS is using the state's aligned performance tasks. ICS does not have a dedicated special time for writing. ICS students read narratives all the time and are more comfortable with narrative writing. Students who struggle with reading informational texts will struggle with writing informationally. Some students may have struggled with the vocabulary and relied on the text for support. - Financial Requests – Should we have a dedicated media staff member to support with writing? The Finance committee would review needs after the T&L committee makes a recommendation. The Finance committee examines PD needs of staff as well as any supply needs. ESOL line items would also be reviewed. - Were some of the students who scores 0-1 students who struggled with English language acquisition? - The time constraints of the assessment may limit students. - The Board works with the District and the school staff to hold the team accountable. - The Board requests additional data as needed. <p>Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a budget line item specifically for the needs of students with disabilities? - The Board summarized its thought process at the end of the task. - Functioning committees were evident. The DCSD Petition Committee heard from everyone. - A Board Member reviewed the task with the group at the end to ensure that the group had addressed all components of the performance task. - The Board's progress monitoring process was clear and evident. 		