



Founding Board Capacity/Clarification Interview Rubric

The Wright Community School

February 28, 2024

The review committee will use the following criteria to rate the founding 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 expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan 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 review committee will be based on evaluation of the written petition (narrative and attachments), independent due diligence, and the founding board capacity interview.

Community Support and Need	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the community WCS will serve. What is your understanding of the community school model? - pp. Executive Summary 2. Identify DeKalb community stakeholders including families, organizations, and other community members, whom the founding team engaged to learn of the aspirations and needs of the community and seek input into the design of the proposed school. Who are your biggest advocates in DeKalb? - Exhibit Appendix H 3. Who have you spoken to who has not supported your idea? What specific input/feedback from these stakeholders was used in developing the petition? - Appendices H&I 4. How did you incorporate input/feedback from students and families from diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English learners in your school design? What changed in your school plan as a result of this feedback? 5. How have you engaged with the DCSD community since you submitted the written petition? 	<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 is likely to serve. The Board demonstrates cultural competency specific to the communities with whom it seeks to work, including the ability to articulate the root causes of the needs it seeks to fill.</p>	<p>Meets the Standard</p> <hr/> <p>Partially Meets the Standard</p> <hr/> <p>Below the Standard</p> <hr/> <p>Far Below the Standard</p>
<p>Responses from Founding Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The petitioner states that WCS will serve South DeKalb. The community was identified using the UWA Child-Wellbeing Survey. The petitioner states that the school was co-designed with input from the community. Of the ~1500 stakeholders surveyed/interviewed about WCS concept, less than thirty-three percent of respondents were from DeKalb. - GACAN identified DeKalb as an area of need. The petitioner did not clarify upon what this identification was based. WCS researched the current landscape and answered questions from stakeholders around how charter schools are funded. Some members of the WCS Founding Board live or work in DeKalb. - The school received questions on the charter school model. Less than 5% of respondents were not interested in the charter school model. Stakeholders shared charter schools may conflict with traditional public schools. The WCS hosts a weekly chat/information 		

session. This event's location was not specified but is included on the school's public calendar.

- The petitioner states that the compliance components of IDEA are included in policies. The Founding Board Chair stated that WCS wants to create transparency with all stakeholders and ensure FAPE through IDEA compliance.
- WCS has attended several forums through GACAN. WCS partnered with the Boys & Girls Club, United Way, and Galileo to identify where to start the community engagement process—parks, recreation centers, etc. The petitioner clarified that the GACAN forums were in Atlanta but that the conveners invited South DeKalb families. The petitioner asserts that input was gathered from all different demographics in front of grocery stores, community events, parks, via ZOOM, and coffee chats but gave no locations. The petitioner stated that WCS plans to get feedback from potential families but did not indicate when or how.
- The petitioner researched charter schools like Anchor and Tapestry to see what partnerships may look like.
- The petitioner stated that WCS spoke to students in alternative programs but did not specify where. The petitioner stated that WCS looked at who is on the ground doing the work.

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- The Founding Board did not present a compelling case for the unmet need in the DeKalb Community that its proposed school meets.
- Though the school is targeting South Dekalb, the committee raised concerns that the data in the petition is not DCSD data but appears to have been compiled from state-level data sources.
- The petitioner did not demonstrate an understanding of the community or communities the school is likely to serve. The Founding Board did not demonstrate knowledge of the needs of the South DeKalb community or articulate a plan to assess those needs.
- Responses from the Founding Governing Board regarding WCS's targeted community are inconsistent with publicly available information on the WCS's website and social media. Specifically, the school hosts weekly chats in Henry County. The website indicates that WCS will open in Clayton County in Fall 2025. The Founding Board did not identify substantive engagement with DeKalb community stakeholders before or since submitting the petition.
- The Founding Board did not demonstrate understanding of the immense diversity of the DCSD community or the root causes of the needs it seeks to fill. The petitioner did not fully address how WCS incorporated input/feedback from students and families from diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, and /or English learners in its school design. The petitioner did not identify changes to its school plan as a result of feedback.
- The petitioner did not state what DCSD stakeholders were or were not supportive of the WCS school or model or how feedback from these stakeholders was used in the petition development process. The petitioner stated only why stakeholders were not supportive.
- The petitioner states that WCS researched Tapestry Public Charter School and Anchor School in developing its petition.
- The petition includes no letters of support from potential community partners. The committee raised concerns on the viability of a community school model without any identified potential community partners.
- The committee expressed concerns that the petitioner did not respond directly to any of the questions in this section.

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School Governance	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you come together as a Founding Board? Why are each of you involved in this endeavor? 2. Why should DCDS authorize the Wright Community School? What unmet need WCS meet in the community? - Executive Summary, pp. 15 3. WCS bylaws state that the Board has established 6 committees. Indicate the committee membership of each Founding Board member. Do the existing committees include members who are not on the Founding Board? - Exhibit 2 4. Provide an example of when the Board might take action through consent in lieu of a vote as described in section 2.8 of the bylaws. - Exhibit 5 5. What mission-specific student outcomes does WCS seek to achieve? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

	and autonomously.	
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Responses from Founding Board:

- Per the petitioner, the Founding Board selection process was meticulous and structured—including candidate prospecting, resume review, etc. The goal was to attract individuals who were diverse in experiences. Most of the members of the board are/were administrators. The Board includes parents.
- A board member expressed that they are passionate about bringing innovation to the landscape. The petitioner stated that WCS brings forth innovative features such as community culture, individualized pathways, and a focus on coaching/guidance. Students will have an opportunity to take a law course. The school design includes prioritization of restorative practices. WCS students will have access to dual enrollment in 9th grade.
- The WCS will develop committees. Board members will serve as directors of those committees. The WCS Board has a gap in the area of legal. The Board Chair identified which member of the Board will lead each committee.
- Example of Consent in Lieu of a Vote – As it relates to Finance, the Board might seek outside counsel if there is an issue that arises in the area of expenditures.
- Mission-Specific Student Outcomes – The mission is to ensure all students are progressing academically and have access to learning. The Board is responsible for ensuring accountability to stakeholders.
- The petitioner stated that the collegiate model does not exist in any school in DeKalb.

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- During introductions, the Founding Board members each described why they are involved in the WCS endeavor. However, it is not clear how the Board was assembled. Articles of Incorporation for WCS were filed by the proposed head of school. The Petition Review Committee will request documentation of meeting agendas/minutes in the initial memo. The Petition Review Committee raised concerns that the Board has already lost a team member early in the planning stage.
- The Founding Board did not clearly articulate why DCSD should authorize WCS or present a compelling case for the unmet need in the DeKalb Community that its proposed school meets.
- WCS bylaws state that the Board has established 6 committees. The response to Question 3 in this section was provided in the future tense and raised concerns that the committees had not yet been established as indicated in the petition. The petitioner did not clarify whether the committees include members who are not on the Founding Board. The current Founding Board lacks legal expertise.
- In the start-up petition orientation and application timeline, it is stressed that all board members must attend the Founding Board Interview. Changes were made to the Founding Board roster after the petition was submitted. One Founding Board member was excused for medical reasons. An additional substitution was acknowledged only after prompting from the Petition Review Committee.

- The petitioner’s response to the question about when the WCS Founding Board might take action through consent in lieu of a vote (as described in section 2.8 of the bylaws) was insufficient. The example given was related to a financial decision.
- The mission-specific student outcomes WCS seeks to achieve were not clearly articulated.

Academic Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What data did you use to create your academic baselines and projections? Upon what data and assumptions are your projections based? - pp. 37-38 2. What is your understanding of GaDOE’s most recent changes to CCRPI? - Question 11, pp. 37 3. How will WCS serve students with disabilities whose IEPs require pull-out, small group, and/or co-taught instruction? How does your staffing plan address the provision of these services? - Appendix D pp. 755-757 4. Describe a day in the life of an English Learner at WCS. How will WCS ensure that teachers serving English Learners have the appropriate certifications and endorsements? - Question 7, pp. - 25-27 5. The petition mentions Edmentum, HMH (a purchased curriculum), and Common Core standards. Discuss the alignment of these 3 components of your academic plan to Georgia standards. - Question 1 pp. 1-8 Exhibit 10 	<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 Founding Board:
- The goal would be to exceed the District’s CCRPI. The data in the UWA Child-Wellbeing Study was used to establish baselines. CCRPI no longer includes a single score. The schools across the state have made adjustments.

- Families will be informed if there is a shortage of teachers for students with disabilities. The process will involve reviewing IEPs. The school will adhere to the IEP. WCS researched the schools that have opened this year. Based on student enrollments, the school will pivot. WCS will contract teachers for students with disabilities. A part of staffing correctly for SWDs is a part of understanding FTE (Full Time Equivalent) count.
- The WCS will look to hire teachers who have an ESOL endorsement. The schedule includes a flexible block. ESOL services will be provided during the flexible block. The flexible block can also be used as an intervention period. WCS will utilize partnerships like MRESA.
- Edmentum has programs under it. Edmentum allows teachers to meet student needs. The petitioner states that their research indicates that the curriculum is aligned to GA Standards. The curriculum will allow the students to take AP courses and a law course.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The committee expressed concerns about the petitioner’s 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 petitioner did not provide compelling evidence that the curriculum is inherently inclusive or designed to be responsive to students’ needs; clearly interrelated between its components; or directly aligned to the school’s goals, mission, and educational philosophy.
- The petitioner used data from the UWA Child-Wellbeing Study to establish academic baselines. It is unclear upon what assumptions projections in the petition are based.
- The school’s responses in this section raised concerns about Tier I instruction and WCS’s overreliance on a flex period to meet students’ needs. The committee expressed concerns about the rationale for ninth grade dual enrollment.
- Reliance on external vendors for special education teachers and other support staff was raised as a concern. It is unclear from the budget template how WCS would fund this expense. It is unclear how contracting teachers for SWD will lead to better outcomes for students.
- The petitioner did not mention monitoring students who exited ESOL services in its responses in this section. What delivery model will be used? How will English Language Learners with disabilities be served in this model? This concern is also raised during the performance task. If assignment to the flex block will be based on choice, how will WCS ensure that all ESOL students are served?
- A plan for how students’ MTSS needs will be met was not articulated.
- Peer Advocate Group – Who will supervise the groups given limited staff?
- Exceptional Education – The petitioner’s response on how teachers will implement IEPs was vague.
- ILPs – Who will be responsible for implementing the ILPs given limited staff?
- Collegiate auditing of schedules will be difficult with limited staff.
- What is the end goal for individualized pathways? How will the school implement individualized pathways for students with limited staff?
- How would WCS facilitate restorative justice?

Financial Plan	Standard	Rating
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<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss in detail the assumptions that underly your five-year budget projections. Address both the 100% and 50% budgets. - Exhibit 22 2. What funding has WCS received? What funding has been pledged? - Exhibit 22a 3. How will WCS obtain the funds to purchase/build the facilities listed in Question 45? What challenges does WCS anticipate with purchasing/renovating each of the various facility options? - Appendix 5 4. What would be your first steps post-approval for the WCS facilities plan? - Appendix 	<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 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>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Responses from Founding Board:

- Assumptions – Total revenue is anticipated at \$2 million in Year 1. As revenue increases, expenses will increase. The goal is to not be cash deficient. The WCS will grow a surplus year over year. The goal is to always carry cash on hand. The goal is to obtain resources (grants).
- WCS has secured a pledge of \$500k+ unrestricted funds upon approval. No funds have been received.
- The Facilities Resource Group is the partner supporting WCS with identifying a facility. Some of the facilities are not education ready. The WCS is prioritizing facilities that can be expanded after Year 1.
- First Steps Post-Approval – Work with the Facilities Resource Group and DCSD. The priority is ensuring the facility is accessible. The goal is also to stay within the budget. One Board member described their financial background.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The financial and facilities plans, including the proposed budget, lack detail. Alignment with the proposed school’s mission and education program are not clear. The budget is balanced. All necessary outlays, including unique program features described in the academic plan, are not delineated in the notes of the budget template. The Founding Board’s assumption that it will grow a surplus year over year is not realistic. The budget does not include notes on underlying assumptions or funding sources.
- The WCS’s plan to ensure adequate levels of cash on hand, including cash reserves and/or contingencies for unexpected shortfalls, is not evident.
- The revenue projections are unrealistic or sufficient to meet school expenditures. Both the finance and facilities plans are unrealistic and do not appear to be informed by accurate assessment.
- The Year 0 budget does not include an explanation of how the school would fund the purchase of land to build a new facility—one of its four proposed facility options. The other 3 facility options are not adequate for the number of students the Founding Board anticipates at maximum capacity. There is no financial plan for a facility. The petitioner stated that the facilities will grow over time. However, the petitioner does not present a financial plan to fund this growth. The petitioner did not provide evidence of a capital campaign.
- The petitioner’s response to the question regarding its first steps post-approval for the WCS facilities plan lacked detail and did not demonstrate understanding of operations/facilities management.

Organizational Plan	Standard	Rating
Clarifying Questions:	The organizational plan aligns with and supports the school’s mission and educational philosophy, is	Meets the Standard

<p>1. What is WCS’s theory of action (“If we..., then...”) for its educational program? How does WCS’s organizational plan support the school’s logic model?</p>	<p>designed to support the school’s goals and academic achievement expectations and is</p>	<p>Partially Meets the Standard</p>
<p>2. What is WCS’s plan for recruiting and retaining teachers qualified to teach both 6th and 9th grade students in Year 1? What are WCS’s Year 1 and beyond target(s) for percentage of certified teachers? - Question 3 pp. 14-15</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Below the Standard</p>
<p>3. How will WCS support students’ counseling and social work needs in Year One? - pp.52-55</p>	<p>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>Far Below the Standard</p>
<p>4. Describe a student’s experience during the 8:00am–8:25am advisory/flex period block. - pp. 10 and Exhibit 9</p>	<p>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>Far Below the Standard</p>

Responses from Founding Board:

- WCS – The key elements of the organizational plan are the coaching programs and support for teachers. Teachers function as advisors. The WCS has goals around the organization that are connected to the school culture. Identifying needs will lead to higher attendance. If students are in the building, they can explore pathways that will lead to student success. An additional law course credit supports this plan. Expulsions are connected to retention. Research shows that having a connection to an adult supports student retention.
- Staff Recruitment – The hiring process will be similar to the process used for the Board (including social media and LinkedIn). WCS will go into the community to identify teachers and utilize GPSC. The ELA teacher will be certified 6-12. The goal is to have 100% of teachers certified by the end of Year 1 by using alternative certification pathways. The starting salary is competitive. The WCS would like to mirror DeKalb’s IGNITE Program.
- WCS is in discussion with Hope Bound for virtual mental health/SEL support and group/individual therapy. The program can be aligned to the needs of WCS students. Hope Bound can ensure the mental health needs of students.
- The goal of the flex block is to ensure that students receive individualized support. The block is structured, and students select each semester what they will do during this block. Support is based on the student’s needs identified with the advisor. The advisors will also be coached. The period is also planned alongside the student’s schedule.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The committee raised concerns that the staffing/recruitment plan does not provide sufficient academic, non-academic, and mission-critical staff to cover all of the courses and programs described in the Academic Plan.
- The petitioner stated that upon opening staff will be in-serviced. The petitioner mentioned MRESA as a potential partner for teacher certification. However, the committee raised concerns about the petitioner’s timeline as alternative certification pathways take more than 1 year.
- The 6-12 general or broad field certification no longer exists in some content areas. The petitioner did not adequately address the staffing/teaching of grades 6-12 social and natural sciences at WCS in the absence of this broad certification.
- Who will provide professional development? Who will train on all the elements of the essential features, Restorative Justice, etc.?
- The petitioner spoke about mirroring the district’s IGNITE program. How would the school afford to mirror the IGNITE program? The budget does not include a line item for such a program.
- The petitioner’s anticipated cost of Hope Bound (\$30/hour) may not be realistic. Will the parents be asked to contribute to the cost?
- Social Work was not addressed by the petitioner.

Performance Task	Standard	Rating
<p>Founding Board Performance Task:</p> <p>DeKalb County School District’s student demographics include ~10% students with disabilities (SWD) and ~19.6% English language learners (ELL). Using the WCS’s staffing matrix (Appendix B) and budget template (Exhibits 22) as resources, develop a Day 1 plan of action for addressing the specific needs of these student populations.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>a. How will WCS ensure that the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs are met?</p>	<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>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

<p>b. What additional info would be helpful in order to deliver a quality analysis and clear communication to the school community?</p> <p>c. Which budget line items would you recommend revising in order to help achieve this solution? How would the Founding Board determine the budget line items that are off limits for revision?</p>		
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Responses from Founding Board:

- The prospective head of school reviewed the student demographic data with the group. The school would consider additional staff.
- The school may utilize contracted special education services depending on student needs. For ESOL, the school would push-in and utilize the flexible block.
- The school would begin by understanding each student’s plan. A general education teacher endorsed in ESOL will be hired. WCS has \$25,000 in the budget for this area. The budget can also support additional material resources.
- WCS would schedule SWD based on IEPs. Meet with Treasurer about potential revisions to budget line items. The first step is to understand the level of need at enrollment. Funds can be reallocated.
- The proposed plan is to start the enrollment process to make sure students’ needs are met. The second step is to understand the severity of the needs to determine whether contracted SPED teachers are needed.
- The WCS would have an additional ESOL teacher. WIN block would be leveraged. Money from marketing and contracted teachers is in the budget.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The Board seems to collaborate and communicate effectively with each other. However, the Founding Board does not demonstrate 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.
- The committee raised concerns regarding the Founding Board’s discussion of salaries. The petitioner’s response implied that the school may be staffed by less inexperienced teachers.
- The petitioner did not articulate a strategy for ensuring that general education teachers would also be ESOL certified, as discussed during the performance task.
- The rationale for not utilizing a media specialist is unclear. WCS did not explain how it would offer specials or CTAE pathways as these teachers and supplies are not noted in the budget.
- Edmentum has been utilized as a resource for credit recovery and full courses in the district.