



Charter School Final Petition Evaluation Rubric
The Wright Community School

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 founding 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).	Meets the Standard
	- 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.	Partially Meets the Standard
	- 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.	Below the Standard

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 carry out its proposed program, especially with regard to building and sustaining community partnerships. 	Far Below the Standard
<p>Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The petitioner did not present a compelling case for the unmet need in the DeKalb Community that its proposed school meets or an understanding of the unique characteristics of DeKalb County’s educational landscape. - Neither responses provided during the Founding Board Capacity Interview nor the final revised petition demonstrate a deep, realistic, or authentic understanding of the targeted population or the community school model. - The petitioner did not demonstrate an understanding of the economic, political, historical, and social contexts of the community it seeks to serve. Awareness of the community's needs, assets or strengths was not evident in the final revised petition. - Insufficient evidence of involvement of DeKalb community members, organizations, and/or families in the design of the school was provided. Further, the petitioner submitted no Letters of Intent or agreements detailing proposed community partnerships to support the educational model. - Little or no evidence of authentic community engagement within the DeKalb community or a plan for moving forward to incorporate diverse stakeholders, touchpoints, and tactics were presented. Though WCS submitted documentation for Letters of Intent to Enroll, only a small percentage of the Letters of Intent to Enroll were from families who reside in DeKalb. The vast majority of the Letters of Intent to Enroll were for students residing in Clayton, Henry, and Fulton counties. A student survey included in Appendix I was redacted by the District to protect student information. Of the students who responded to the survey, none had zip codes within the attendance zone of the DeKalb County School District. Reported zip codes were within the Atlanta Public Schools and Fulton County Schools attendance zones. 		
School Governance	Evidence of Standard	Rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Meets the Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The governance structure creates a forum for parent, teacher, and community input and the strategies for communicating Board priorities and decisions include all stakeholders. 	Partially Meets the Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Board clearly articulates both its policies and a decision-making process for determining when and how to adjust its plans based on feedback. 	Below the Standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Founding Board reflects the sociodemographic diversity of the community served by the charter school. 	Far Below the Standard	

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The Founding Board members have a broad and varied knowledge base. The Founding Board reflects the sociodemographic diversity of the targeted community. However, it is unclear what role(s), if any, Board members played in the petition development process. Meeting minutes submitted in response to the Initial Memo do not reflect substantive engagement by the Founding Board in the development of the petition.
- In the Initial Memo, the Petition Review Committee requested documentation of all Founding Governing Board meetings. The petitioner submitted documentation for two total meetings. Supplemental documentation in response to the Initial Memo indicates that the Inaugural Founding Board meeting was held (1/16/24) after submission of the letter of intent to the District. The minutes of the 1/16/24 meeting state that the Founding Board “reviewed charter petitions submitted by the proposed school leader.”
- The petitioner acknowledges that there is a gap in the Founding Board’s knowledge base. WCS is actively seeking a board member with legal expertise.
- The Founding Board did not clearly articulate its policies or a decision-making process for determining when and how to adjust its plans based on feedback.
- WCS bylaws state that the Board has established 6 committees. The response to Question 3 of the Founding Board Capacity Interview 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.
- WCS bylaws state that the Board will meet 4 times a year. Per Appendix A of charter schools’ contract, Governing Boards must meet a minimum of 7 times a year.
- Collectively, the Board did not demonstrate the capacity to implement all aspects of the education program or to meet the needs of the target student population.

	Evidence of Standard	Rating
Academic Performance/ Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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). 	Meets the Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embedded in the instructional methods and resources are concrete strategies and materials to support SWDs, ELLs, and academically struggling students. - 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. 	Partially Meets the Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The petitioner has planned for all contingencies, including different rates of SWDs, ELLs, and academically struggling students, different disabilities, different levels of need, and 	Below the Standard

	<p>how the school will adjust its programs and processes accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	<p>Far Below the Standard</p>
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Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The petitioner did not sufficiently address student subgroups or recognize and plan for the diverse needs of diverse students.
- The final revised petition does not describe in detail the mechanisms and/or strategies to ensure equitable access to the curriculum for all students nor were there concrete strategies and materials to support students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and academically struggling students. The Petition Review Committee was especially concerned about WCS’s capacity to support ELLs, Gifted Education, Special Education, AP, and dual enrollment.
- The petitioner did not present a plan for contingencies and program adjustments regarding different rates of SWDs, ELLs, and academically struggling students and differing levels of student need. The final revised petition lacks the specifics for progress monitoring to ensure student success and/or build capacity for students to be a part of the program as it relates to AP and dual enrollment.
- The student behavior management system and restorative practices described in the final revised petition were unclear and do not distinguish between outcomes that are automatic versus those that are discretionary.
- The petitioner’s revised response to Question 1 in the final revised petition includes elements of the organizational plan that were previously provided in the initial petition.
- The revised petition did not answer the initial memorandum question, “What will be the universal screener used for gifted identification?” The revised petition only reads I-READY or MAP. It does not specify the month, frequency, or grade level for gifted screenings.
- The revised petition references an out-of-date gifted diagnostic assessment.
- Regarding the gifted assessments being used, the revised petition did not specify the grade levels, nor did they indicate the months or the frequency in which these assessments would be utilized with the gifted identification process. These specifics as a district must be spelled out, because it is a state funded program.
- The revised petition refers to students working at their own pace but does not describe how teachers would facilitate learning while students use online programming like Edmentum. The facilitation and monitoring of the online programming is not detailed.
- The Initial Memo (Item #16) asked the petitioner to detail the timing and frequency of formative assessments. The revised petition does not answer the question with specifics but uses the terms “regular and ongoing.”
- DCSD uses four and a half, six and a half, 9 1/2 weeks checkpoints. There is an expectation that WCS should use checkpoints.

- Question 8 in the revised petition lacks the specifics for progress monitoring to ensure student success and/or building capacity for students to be a part of the program as it relates to AP and dual enrollment, especially if the petition plans to allow them as early as ninth grade.
- The revised petition does not give enough detail about how WCS would support remediation.
- Support for ninth grade dual enrollment was a concern raised by all DCSD divisions.
- The revised petition does not describe programming to address academic recovery.
- The revised petition does not explain how the ILP process is being monitored.
- Many of the explanations regarding restorative practices included in the petition are unclear or confusing and do not go align with DCSD best practices.
- The role of the counselor in the revised petition is confusing or unclear. The title college and career counselor is used often. The terms advisor, academic advisor, academic/educator coach are used (seemingly) interchangeably.
- Responses to the Initial Memo include lengthy definitions and overviews, but many of the questions are not answered in depth.
- The revised petition and answers to the initial memorandum do not address the concerns the district ESOL Department raised. A few of the items were not addressed at all.
- Considering that DCSD has 19% of its enrollment as linguistically diverse, there needs to be a certified ESOL teacher written into the plan and budget.
- The revised petition has not clearly identified the ESOL screener and does not detail how students will be identified and screened using language reflective of GaDOE.
- In the revised petition the service delivery model for ELLs was not clearly defined.
- Item 5 on the academic plan asks about students who are on waivers, but the petitioner did not state how students on waivers should be assessed with ACCESS only. They are not being serviced. The petitioner confuses the words waiver, reclassification and exit criteria.

	Evidence of Standard	Rating
Financial Performance/ Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Meets the Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Partially Meets the Standard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Below the Standard

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Far Below the Standard
<p>Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The budget is not based on realistic expectations for income and expenditures. For example, the Founding Board’s assumption that it will grow a surplus year over year is not realistic. - The budget does not reflect all needs outlined in the Academic Plan, including personnel, technological resources, facilities, curricular resources, and mission specific expenditures. - Applicable federal funds are not detailed in the budget. - Insufficient detail on the assumptions underlying estimates in the budget template was provided. - The petitioner did not present a solid facility plan, financial plan, or development campaign. The petition lacks a financial plan for the facility. A fundraising plan and/or capital campaign (critical to the viability of the facility options presented in the petition) are not evident. - The petitioner is exploring multiple facility locations (one more than 12 miles from the targeted community) as well as a new construction across from the Sam Moss Center. Per Operations, a new construction cannot be built in the time frame projected by WCS. - The petitioner did not present a clear plan to fund the purchase of land, property, and/or renovations required to build or convert identified sites for educational purposes. It is unclear how WCS would fund these costs or complete these projects during the planning year. - None of the proposed sites can accommodate 600 students. The proposed sites are retail spaces. WCS did not demonstrate understanding of DOE requirements for educational facility modifications when questioned about immediate next steps if the petition were approved. - A facilities financing plan based on realistic market expectations (including contingencies in the case that the preferred financing method is unavailable) is not evident. - Financial policies/protocols are not comprehensive. - The WCS’s plan to ensure adequate levels of cash on hand, including cash reserves and/or contingencies for unexpected shortfalls, is not evident. 		
Organizational Performance/ Plan	Evidence of Standard	Rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	Meets the Standard

	<p>similar to that the school plans to serve. Experience with ELLs, SWDs, and/or economically-disadvantaged students is evident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. 	Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The Petition Review Committee raised concerns that the staffing/recruitment plan does not provide sufficient academic, non-academic, and mission-critical staff to cover all courses and programs described in the Academic Plan.
- The professional development plan does not sufficiently address all necessary areas to prepare teachers to fulfill the school’s goals. The professional development plan does not sufficiently address support for special student populations.
- The WCS conflict of interest policy and form lack specificity on the personal and professional interests that would constitute a conflict.
- The petitioner includes the DCSD Employee handbook as its grievance and complaint policy. Charter school employees are not district employees. Charter school governing boards must adopt and implement a grievance/complaint policy at the local school level. The WCS grievance policy is written from the perspective of the school district and appears to have been copied in part from DBOE Policy JCAC. The District’s Policy JCAC cannot serve as the school’s grievance procedure.
- The petitioner did not articulate a realistic plan for how the school will meet its expected growth trajectory. The petitioner did not articulate a realistic plan for how the school will meet its expected growth trajectory. The Petition Review Committee expressed concerns that the petitioner’s limited understanding of the unique characteristics of DeKalb County’s educational landscape and limited awareness of the community’s needs, assets or strengths (noted above under Community Support & Need) would serve as barriers to identifying, recruiting, and retaining faculty and staff that reflect the diversity of the community.
- The Wright Community School was incorporated by the prospective principal through the GA Secretary of State as a domestic non-profit organization on 10/30/2023. The inaugural Founding Board meeting was held 1/16/24. The Board’s role in identifying a prospective school leader with the skills and experiences necessary to operate the school is unclear.
- The petitioner acknowledged gaps in the Founding Board’s knowledge base.

Minimum Requirements	Evidence of Standard	Rating
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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:

- 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 added components of its response to the Initial Memo to the DropBox after the submission deadline. The page numbers listed in the response to the Initial Memo do not align to the final revised petition.
- The WCS's final revised petition includes an application that is 137 pages in length with multiple single-spaced sections and sections with font size less than 11-point. Question #1 of the executive summary is 676 words in length exceeding the 350-word limit. Question #2 of the executive summary is 406 words in length exceeding the 350-word limit.
- The petitioner did not present sufficient evidence to support the program design or sufficiently respond to clarifying questions and/or evidence that challenged or refuted elements of the proposed program.
- The school's unique innovation was not evident in the petition. Specific examples of waivers or flexibility needed to accomplish the school's goals are not evident.

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
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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.