



**Governing Board Capacity/Clarification Interview Rubric**

DeKalb PATH Academy (PATH)

October 30, 2024

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: 1. Per the petition, PATH’s mission is to serve local “immigrant and refugee” families. Has the student population changed or remained the same over time? (p. 11) 2. Provide additional details about the school’s community outreach efforts. 3. Describe how teachers and families were involved in “planning, analyzing, and reviewing petition content.”	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	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard

	works or seeks to work, including the ability to articulate the root causes of the needs it seeks to fill.	Far Below the Standard
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Responses from Governing Board:

- During COVID, there was a shift in the student population. The school is now serving 53% ESOL students. As such, instructional approaches have changed.
- Change - The school is now serving second and third generation immigrant families. In the beginning, the school served primarily newcomers.
- The needs of the families have evolved over time as families try to navigate evolving legal requirements. The community has knowledge of the support for multilingual families available through the school.
- Community Outreach – The school communicates with local businesses so that the community can learn about the school. The school receives interest and positive feedback on cultural activities and diversity. The school hosts festivals and events for its vendors.
- The school values the community. The community values the school.
- Friends of the Community (a non-profit organization) partners with the school for Three Kings’ Day. This is a community event that takes place at the school. The event provides health services, entertainment, and food. The organization does goodwill in the community that impacts PATH families.
- Teacher/Family Involvement in Petition Development – The teachers were involved in creating the petition. The teachers assisted with some of the exhibits. The parents are always present in the school to advise. The Board gets parents’ input all the time. The monthly Board meetings include public comment. The school has parent engagement nights. Families can provide suggestions at any time.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The petitioner did not include letters documenting community partners as exhibits with the petition. The Petition Review Committee expressed confusion about this omission as the school has otherwise demonstrated that community partnerships are one of its strengths.
- During site visits, the applicant made a compelling case for why the school fills an unmet need in the DeKalb County School District.
- The Governing Board includes parents, members of the community (with a Finance background), a teacher (Chair), and former educators.
- The charter petition mentions that 40-50% of students are accepted into competitive schools. (p. 11). What is PATH’s definition of competitive schools? The Petition Review Committee requests clarification on whether the definition of competitive schools extends beyond private schools.
- Are DeKalb PATH Academy students eligible for merit-based or needs based scholarships to attend private schools? If so, how does DeKalb PATH Academy support parents in identifying scholarship/funding sources?

<b>School Governance</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the Governing Board’s current process for providing academic and operational oversight. (p. 81)</li> <li>2. Provide a timeline for the Board succession planning action steps listed on pages 79-80.</li> <li>3. Provide an example of what may be included in the board’s standard operating procedures. (p. 76)</li> <li>4. Although DeKalb PATH has existed as an authorized DCSD charter for more than 20 years, the petition states that the board is currently transitioning to a committee structure (pg. 77). Why is it that the board is only now finding that the committee structure is needed?</li> </ol>	<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> <hr/> <p>Partially Meets the Standard</p> <hr/> <p>Below the Standard</p> <hr/> <p>Far Below the Standard</p>
<p>Responses from Governing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Board members shared in their introductions their motivation for joining the Governing Board.</li> <li>- The Board works well with the school leader.</li> <li>- The Board receives academic and financial reports at each meeting. This helps the Board know what is going on in the school.</li> <li>- The PATH Governing Board is smaller than most Boards. This is why the Board has not previously used committees. The Board meets on a monthly basis. The Board is now growing. As such, PATH will begin building out its committee structure. The Board had committee structures in the past when it was larger.</li> <li>- The Board will continue to engage with a consultant on board development—including strategic planning. The process will require data gathering. The Board will pull out key themes.</li> <li>- Examples of Standard Operating Procedure – The Board has protocols for addressing grievances.</li> <li>- Board members have specific roles. The Chair runs the meeting. The vice-chair steps in when the Chair is not available. The Board has a secretary.</li> </ul> <p>Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Governing Board has struggled with Open Meetings/Records compliance in the current and previous charter terms. In 2019, the recommendation for PATH’s charter renewal included the following condition: The petitioner will consistently adhere to Georgia’s Open Records and Open Meetings laws by making all required documentation and information available on its Governing Board web page in a timely and organized manner. This condition was not met. The explanation for not meeting the condition is not sufficient.</li> <li>- A corrective action plan is needed to address persistent open meetings/records concerns. The plan should include time-bound goals and milestones.</li> </ul>		

- The Governing Board now includes one member with professional experience in Open Meetings/Records compliance.
- Additional context is needed on the factors that contributed to the turnover of board members. What criteria will be used to recruit new board members to promote sustainability?
- The petition review committee expresses concerns that the PATH's committee structure has been inconsistent.

Academic Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the implications of a teacher-created curriculum? What anchors the curriculum?</li> <li>2. How do you ensure high quality instructional materials with a teacher made curriculum?</li> <li>3. How are students who are dually identified (ESOL and Special Education) served? (page 48)</li> <li>4. Flexible groupings are mentioned in the petition, but the description sounds more like tracking. Clarification is needed on the difference between the flexible groups described by PATH and traditional ability grouping? (pg. 12, 17)</li> </ol>	<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
<p>Responses from Governing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A teacher-created curriculum creates buy-in and investment. The adjustments that are made along the way are made by those who created the structure. This curriculum gives the teacher the ability to course-correct quickly. PATH's model allows teachers to visit other teachers' classrooms and see how the lesson should be taught.</li> <li>- A flexible instructional model allows for improvement in real time.</li> <li>- Teachers have a voice in the curriculum.</li> <li>- GA Standards anchor the curriculum.</li> <li>- In the past, the curriculum left with the teacher. The school is working to keep those assets at the school. This helps the school not lose the wonderful work that plays to teachers' strengths. The school has benefitted from low turnover.</li> <li>- Instructional materials are reviewed weekly with the weekly lesson plan reviews. There is a line item available in the budget for instructional materials. Department heads are working with a budget line item on a yearly basis. Teachers know what has been approved in the budget for the year.</li> <li>- ESOL students are served in small groups in the morning. This year, students are grouped by their composite scores. This ensures that students get what they need. PATH uses the co-teaching and small group SPED models. The students cannot be served in the same model. Most students are in co-taught classes.</li> </ul>		

- The teachers are dual-certified. Students' grades have improved due to extended days.
- The school believes that the petition is clear that students are not tracked with data only. Traditional tracking uses only data. The students are grouped based on strengths. Some students enter the school only with the information that is available in Infinite Campus. Teachers hold weekly team meetings and make decisions about where to place students.
- The principal/CEO provided a specific example of the flexible grouping experience at PATH for a child from the time the child enters the school. The example included how the experience differs from traditional tracking. The example also demonstrated how teachers collaborate in making decisions about flexible grouping.
- PATH starts school a week before DCSD schools to allow time for making decisions around flexible grouping.
- Parents shared their students' positive experiences with flexible grouping at PATH. Parents expressed that they believe the flexible grouping has helped their students to excel and has

Review Committee's Comments or Concerns:

- The petition review committee expressed concerns about the applicants' capability to design or select a comprehensive, high-quality curriculum.
- The petitioner does not describe gifted services at DeKalb PATH Academy. In the Initial Clarification Memo, request more information on gifted services, including delivery models, the student population, the gifted identification process, and number of gifted certified teachers.
- Special Education Program Clarification Needed – Provide additional clarification on support for students with disabilities in Saturday School and extended day. How do you serve students with disabilities who transfer or move into the school with services in a small group setting? How does flexible grouping foster students with disabilities' growth?
- How does PATH support professional development for teachers in meeting the evolving needs of SPED students, especially those with dual needs (SPED and ESOL)?
- Analysis of the causes of the dramatic decrease in Social Studies scores is needed.
- ESOL Program - Does the school have intensive English students? If so, how specifically are they servicing intensive English students? Confirm the number of segments ESOL students receive. The district is concerned with the EL progress. A high percentage of ELs did not make positive band to band movement.
- ESOL Program - The description for re-testing ELs in the petition does not follow GADOE protocol. This information needs to be revised in the petition.
- ESOL Program - The reclassification process is described. However, the clear exit process is not described. Reclassification criteria not explicitly stated.

Financial Performance/Plan	Standard	Rating
Clarifying Questions:  1. In its new charter term, PATH will develop a strategic plan designed to identify areas of academic, operational, and financial improvement and to develop strategies and actions plans aligned with PATH's vision and	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	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

<p>mission. (p. 78) Describe the Governing Board’s vision and desired outcomes for this process.</p> <p>2. What is the current fund balance for DeKalb PATH Academy? What contingencies are built into your annual budget?</p> <p>3. Which Governing Board members have experience in large-scale fundraising?</p>	<p>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>	
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Responses from Governing Board:

- The school will need to address its transportation issue. It moved quickly into an unfavorable contract. The school hopes to move into a less expensive transportation contract.
- The school will need to do a needs assessment. The school will study academic data.
- Retaining staff and attracting quality staff is important. The Board has decided to keep its salaries the same as DCSD salaries to retain teachers.
- Honoring the needs of the community is important to PATH. The school does not want to make assumptions about what are the needs of the staff, community, and families. The school is preparing to assess the needs of its community. Strategic planning provides a structure for an on-going conversation. The process will include culture.
- The school shares a financial report at each meeting. The school maintains a balance of at least \$2.2 million in its contingency. The school uses a Georgia Fund ONE account as part of its contingency plan. A typical year may end with a surplus. A percentage of the surplus goes into the high yield interest fund. The school began with \$20,000 and had added more each year. This fund is in collaboration with a government agency.
- Fundraising - The school has secured donations recently. Different Board members play a role in fundraising. Board members have experience with fundraising and grant writing. The school reaches out to local businesses to support the school. Example – The chorus class is supported by fundraising.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The Governing Board should create a 5-year contingency budget considering other options for building space/locations. The budget should include underlying assumptions.
- What contingency plan has PATH put in place to resolve transportation issues that may occur during the new charter term?
- DCSD Risk Management requests multiple items missing from Exhibit 16.

Organizational Performance	Standard	Rating
<p>Clarifying Questions:</p> <p>1. The Governing Board has struggled with compliance with Georgia’s Open Meetings/Records requirements this charter term. Describe the measures the Governing</p>	<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</p>	Meets the Standard
		Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard

<p>Board is taking to remain in compliance with the law.</p> <p>2. Given the two-year lease extension provided by its leaser, what options is the Governing Board exploring to secure a facility. How is the Governing Board navigating this uncertainty? What are the potential organizational and financial implications for PATH?</p> <p>3. Executive Summary – The school does not plan for an increase or decrease in enrollment in the next charter term. Please explain how the school maintains consistent enrollment.</p>	<p>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>
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Responses from Governing Board:

- The most important thing the Board is doing is training. The secretary now knows who to send the notes to for posting. The website has been updated.
- The Board now includes an Open Records Clerk.
- The school has a meeting with the Board of Trustees concerning the lease. The Board feels confident in solving this issue. The school was able to find a solution for transportation.
- The Board is open to facilities that may be available through DeKalb County School District.
- The school has a \$3 million contingency fund. The school is curious about the timing of the lease and why the leaser chose a two-year agreement. The school has not been given priority to engage. The school has had a partnership with the university for more than 20 years. The school has a new president who has been less engaged.
- The school has not yet engaged with DCSD Operation as the news from the leaser was received less than two weeks before the Governing Board Capacity Interview.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The school does not currently have a long-term facility plan or lease agreement beyond the current two-year extension provided by the leaser.
- The school does not plan to increase or decrease enrollment in the next charter term.

Performance Task	Standard	Rating
Governing Board Performance Task: Review the ACCESS data provided by the ESOL team. The data shows DeKalb	The Board demonstrates the capacity to confront potential pitfalls in opening and/or	Meets the Standard

<p>PATH Academy’s most recent performance on the ACCESS assessment. ACCESS is given annually to monitor English Learner students' progress in learning academic English.</p> <p>a. How would the Governing Board approach this challenge?</p> <p>b. What additional info would be helpful to deliver a quality analysis to the school community?</p> <p>c. Discuss the Governing Board’s role in ensuring that the needs of multi-lingual learners are met.</p> <p>d. Which budget line items, if any, would you recommend revising in order to help achieve your identified solution? How would the Board determine the budget line items that are off limits for revision?</p>	<p>operating a school by identifying the root causes of plausible challenges and solutions to those challenges.</p>	Partially Meets the Standard
		Below the Standard
		Far Below the Standard

Responses from Governing Board:

- Principal/CEO explained the purpose of the ACCESS assessment and walked the Governing Board through the data. The Assistant Principal supported the data analysis.
- ACCESS looks at student performance through different lenses. Is the student advancing to different language acquisition bands?
- Support Available – PATH is addressing learning modalities through morning groups. During extended day sessions, the students are participating in small groups for language acquisition.
- When there is lack of movement in grade bands, it raises questions about appropriate grade-level work, scaffolding, curriculum maps, etc. The school has new curriculum maps.
- Some students moved multiple grade bands.
- Questions from the Board – What is the root cause? The composite groupings are new. This is the first year that the school has had 70% of teachers trained. Is extended day being implemented with fidelity after the training? The morning group work is new.
- Are there any trends in the group that did demonstrate growth/movement? The school should dissect the data. The students who are moving in their grade band are 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Teachers must ensure that the students are having instructional conversations using academic language. Instructional conversations need to be used outside of the extended day.
- Strategies – Analyze teacher proficiency. The workaround planning for extended days and curriculum is housed in planning meetings. How is the ELA department addressing this issue? How is this issue being addressed in Social Studies or math? The school leader will look at the plans. Administrators will conduct observations.
- How is PATH assessing the work that it is doing around the curriculum? This will be the school’s next step in its work with a consultant.
- The ESOL population has grown dramatically. This triggered conversations with a state university about instructional conversations. The population grew at the same time that students were not exiting the program.

- Board Questions: Are the results from ACCESS similar to the assessment results in other areas? When is the ACCESS assessment given? How is a “band” defined?
- Summarize Next Steps – The Board may attend the department planning meetings. The work of addressing assessments is the next phase of PATH’s work with its consultant. The principal/CEO will provide a cut of the data to dig in deeper with 6<sup>th</sup> grade data. What is 6<sup>th</sup> grade doing differently to get positive results? At its next Board meetings, the principal/CEO will share what the next stage of the school’s work on assessments will be.

Review Committee’s Comments or Concerns:

- The Governing Board is highly collaborative.
- The CEO/Principal and Assistant Principal demonstrate strong instructional backgrounds and knowledge.
- The Governing Board identified similar key findings to those identified by the DCSD Research, Data, and Evaluation team and the petition review committee.