

BIBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Dr. Dan A. Sims, Superintendent

ACTION MEMORANDUM

To: Bibb County Board of Education

From: Dr. Dan A. Sims, Superintendent
Dr. Katika Lovett, Deputy Superintendent

Subject: The Infinity Academy Charter Petition for SY25-26

Introduction and Background

The Infinity Academy (TIA) submitted an initial charter school pre-petition on April 11, 2025, proposing the establishment of an elementary school to serve grades K–5 by the 2029–2030 school year. The school’s mission centers on students learning to “LEAD, ACHIEVE, AND SUCCEED Together” through a combination of academic acceleration, servant leadership, multisensory literacy, and social-emotional learning strategies.

After receiving written feedback on May 12, 2025, TIA submitted a revised, final start-up charter school petition on June 9, 2025. BCSD and its legal counsel conducted a second review of the revised petition and responses to BCSD’s feedback and concerns, the results of which inform this recommendation.

Following internal review by the Charter Petition Review Committee and external legal counsel, and an interview with the TIA governing board conducted on May 20, 2025, this action memo outlines the strengths of the revised petition, identifies material concerns, and provides a final recommendation regarding the petition’s approval.

Strengths of Petition

1. Community Engagement

TIA demonstrated genuine stakeholder engagement by hosting multiple town halls and collecting surveys and interviews from local families. The petition reflects a responsive approach to addressing local educational challenges such as low reading and math proficiency and chronic absenteeism.

2. Innovative Instructional Design

The proposed instructional model features real-world project-based learning, multisensory literacy strategies, and a servant leadership framework. These

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innovations are aligned with national best practices for engaging underserved populations.

3. Focus on Acceleration

The curriculum emphasizes both remediation and advancement through flexible grouping, data-driven instructional strategies, and a compacted curriculum model. TIA's intentional focus on differentiated instruction and baseline assessments is commendable.

4. Small Class Size Commitment

The proposed student-teacher ratio of 1:15 (not to exceed 1:18) is aligned with research-supported practices that promote individualized instruction and relationship-building.

Areas of Concern

Despite the strengths noted above, the petition and supporting documents contain several substantive budgetary, legal, organizational, and operational deficiencies, many of which present significant risks to compliance, sustainability, and execution that were still present after TIA's opportunity to revise, which include:

1. Budgetary Concerns

- The TIA budget was built upon an estimated amount of \$19,364 per student, which includes revenues from funding sources that TIA is either ineligible for or have ended. For example, the TIA estimate assumes a portion of E-SPLOST funding which would only be permissible if written specifically into the E-SPLOST ballot and approved by the Bibb County Board of Education, and it also includes ARP and ESSR funding which supported COVID relief efforts and have ended. BCSD estimates that the actual estimated revenue per FTE for TIA would be closer to \$11,000 - \$12,000, which is significantly below TIA estimates and creates concern regarding TIA's financial sustainability.
- The GaDOE recommends elementary enrollment to be a minimum of 450 students to provide sufficient revenue for sustainability. While the planned enrollment for TIA is small by design, it also diminishes the opportunity for the school to raise the revenue needed to be viable in the long run.

2. Operational Concerns

- The petition states that the Director of Operations will oversee day-to-day operations, but makes no mention of which role will oversee safety

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- protocols, required inspections and facilities. When asked, the petitioner stated the Director of Operations will also oversee those areas, but the petition does not evidence an understanding or acknowledgement of the importance of these areas, which is further evidenced by the significant safety concerns presented by TIA's intended facility at 606 Cherry Street.
- TIA's stated transportation and pick-up/drop-off procedures raises concerns of students being dropped off on a sidewalk on a public road and a shared parking deck, which would cause traffic concerns and unsafe conditions for drivers and students. All sidewalks are located on major downtown streets (Cherry St and 2nd St) with limited parking. Other tenants of the building also utilize the parking deck. With no bus riders and few (if any) walkers, the majority of the students will be car riders. BCSD has significant concerns of numerous student drop-offs between 7:30am and 8:30am on downtown sidewalks and a shared parking deck.
 - TIA's preferred facility at 606 Cherry Street would require site approval waiver requests, which may not be granted due to size and safety concerns with the facility and its location. Pursuant to GaDOE requirements, TIA at its intended size would need to be seven acres, however the selected facility is 1.21 acres. BCSD is concerned that TIA would not receive waivers of this magnitude.
 - BCSD has concerns that the Cherry Street facility would not provide enough space for all instructional and support needs. There is no mention of cafeteria/lunchroom space, and the overall square footage of the Cherry Street facility (approximately 17,000 sq ft per tax assessor records) is significantly less than a comparable BCSD traditional elementary school. BCSD averages 115 sq. ft. / student, which would equate to approximately 29,000 sq ft for 250 students, the school's intended size.
 - The physical space needs and requirements for a school are quite different from office space. Based on the permit history for this facility, a partial renovation for non-rated (fire rated requirements) spaces occurred in 2022. All spaces for instructional use will require fire-rated walls from floor to ceiling, mechanical needs would be based on the number of rooms/zones and plumbing fixtures are determined by occupancy levels. The current facility would not meet any of these requirements for 300+ occupants and would need extensive renovations to meet all state and local codes for instructional use. Based on the current market and most recent renovation costs throughout the Bibb County School District, renovation budgets would be anticipated between \$275 and \$330 per square foot depending on the existing conditions. This renovation would be considered major and an

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estimated budget for renovations would be between \$4.7 and \$5.7 million. A renovation timeline for this type of renovation would be estimated at 4-6 months once construction begins and would be very intrusive for existing tenants, with noise and utility interruptions. When asked, TIA states it will negotiate the renovations into the lease agreement so that it is the responsibility of the building's owner. TIA has allocated only \$20,000 in its budget in Year 1 to cover facility improvements. This does not evidence a realistic plan to address the facility's inadequacies.

- In the event of fire or fire drills (required monthly), fire safety regulations require students to exit the building to a safe location adequate for students and staff to remain until the building is cleared. Based on the existing site, there is no location for this – the parking garage/lot would not be eligible as it would be full (vehicles).
- State law requires every student be provided with physical education or structured activity time every day. Without access to a gymnasium or “greenspace” outside of the facility, this could not be provided.
- Physical safety of staff and students within the facility is another concern. The Cherry Street facility, a five-story building, currently houses several other tenants, including a bank on the 1st floor. The foot traffic to and from the facility, during school times, is concerning as there would be limited ways to restrict interaction with the public until a student/staff is inside the facility. Secured doors and vestibules are not available to protect students from drop-off to the secured area. There are also major concerns of where to stage students for afternoon pickup.

3. Governing Board and Operational Oversight Confusion

- The petition assigns day-to-day administrative functions (e.g., handbook development) to the governing board, rather than maintaining clear boundaries between governance and school operations.
- Role descriptions for the **Chancellor and Director of Operations** are duplicative, suggesting an unclear organizational structure that could lead to internal conflicts.

4. Special Education and Budget Misalignment

- The staffing plan proposes hiring only one special education teacher by year two, despite serving multiple grade levels and anticipating enrollment of over 180 students by that time. This does not appear sufficient to meet the needs of students with disabilities at projected enrollment levels.
- The petition envisions contracting significant training and vendor support for ELs and students with disabilities, but **the proposed budget does not demonstrate financial capacity** to support this level of outsourcing.

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5. Legal and Compliance Concerns

- The petition exhibits a lack of understanding regarding **student discipline** due process, including appeals procedures required under Georgia law for charter schools (p. 68 of the petition).
- The **grievance and disciplinary processes** outlined in the petition are inappropriately blended and fail to guarantee the procedural safeguards required for suspension and expulsion hearings.
- The **termination and resignation language** is internally inconsistent and lacks clarity on whether staff are at-will or contract employees—raising Fair Dismissal Act concerns.

6. Incomplete and Misaligned Documents

- The **student and employee handbooks** appear to be incomplete templates, with placeholders still present, and are not aligned with Georgia law. There is no FERPA-compliant definition of directory information, and critical policies (e.g., student code of conduct) are missing or underdeveloped.
- The **student enrollment form** includes references to laws not applicable in Georgia and requests inappropriate information, such as immigration status, at the outset.

Overall Recommendation

While The Infinity Academy presents an ambitious and community-centered vision for public education, the petition in its current form fails to demonstrate operational readiness, statutory compliance, effective governance practices, and legal sufficiency.

Therefore, non-approval of The Infinity Academy's petition is recommended at this time.

Superintendent's Comments and Approval

Superintendent's Signature	Approved / Not Approved
Dr. Dan A. Sims	Approved