

Renewal Charter School Addendum

If your charter school is applying to have its charter renewed from a previous charter term, you will need to fill out the following addendum. This information will allow the Charter Schools Division to assess your charter school's performance over the current charter term and to assess the rigor of your projected charter goals. Please limit your response to 10 pages total.

PAST PERFORMANCE

1) Please provide a narrative describing how your charter school performed in meeting the academic and performance goals set forth in their previous charter contract. Please provide any charts, tables or graphs that provide quantitative data that can support your narrative. Please make sure to address your school's performance in each year of its charter term.

Formed by the 2011 merger of two successful charter schools in southeast Atlanta, ANCS has fulfilled the promises of its charter contract over the past five years and made an impact not only on the learning of its students but also helped to foster collaboration between schools in the Atlanta Public Schools and beyond to positively influence outcomes for a broader community of young people. We are pleased to submit this petition for renewal in our hopes of continuing over the next five years to live out the mission of our school to use the common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools to:

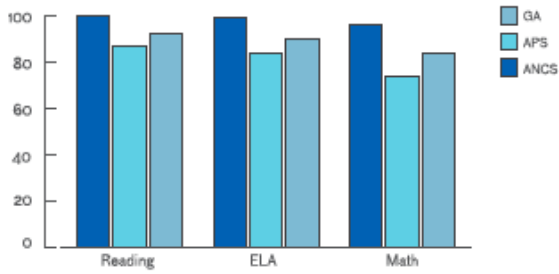
- **Build** an empowered and inclusive community of students, parents, and educators
- **Engage** the whole child--intellectually, social-emotionally, and physically
- **Help** all students to know themselves and to be known well by their community
- **Challenge** each student to take an active role as an informed citizen in a global society
- **Collaborate** with the larger community to advocate for student-centered schools

The accountability spreadsheet included with this petition documents in complete detail our achievement of the annual goals and objectives from our current charter contract. Here are a few key highlights:

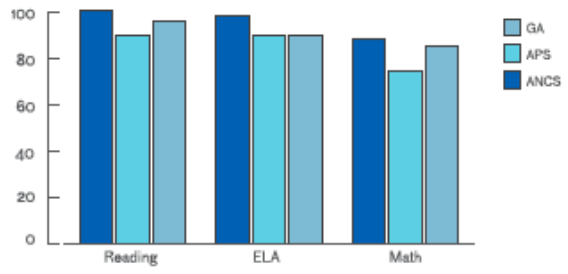
CRCT and Georgia Writing Tests

Our current charter agreement included a goal to “demonstrate growth and increased rigor” on the Reading/ELA and Math tests of the CRCT by meeting or exceeding certain performance targets each year on those tests. Additionally, the agreement contains a goal for students to show growth on the Georgia Writing Tests. In addition to meeting those targets, ANCS students also outperformed district and state averages for those tests for each year of the current charter term in which those tests were administered as shown in the charts below.

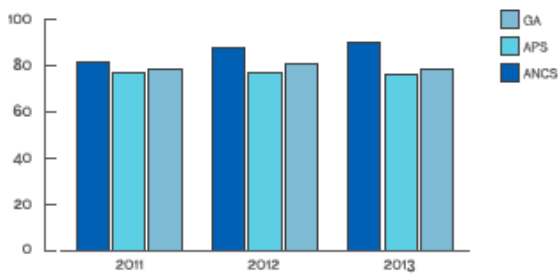
Georgia 2013 CRCT grades 3-5
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



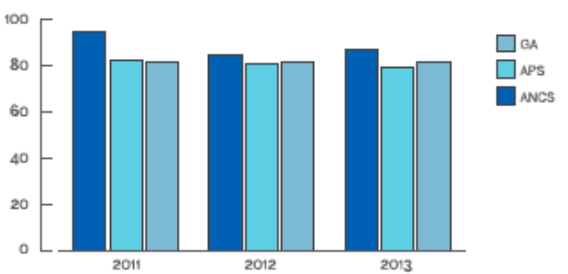
Georgia 2013 CRCT grades 6-8
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



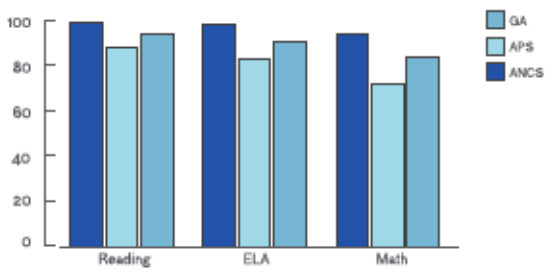
Georgia 5th Grade Writing Assessment
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



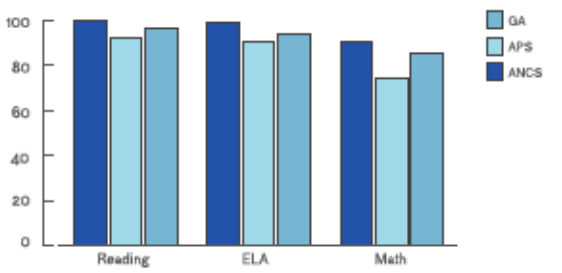
Georgia 8th Grade Writing Assessment
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



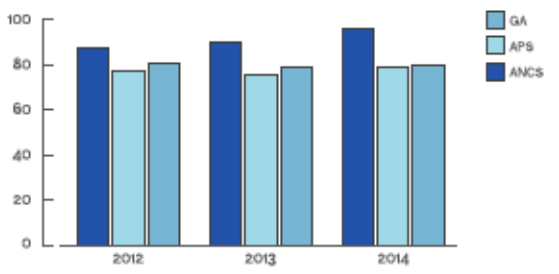
Georgia 2014 CRCT grades 3-5
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



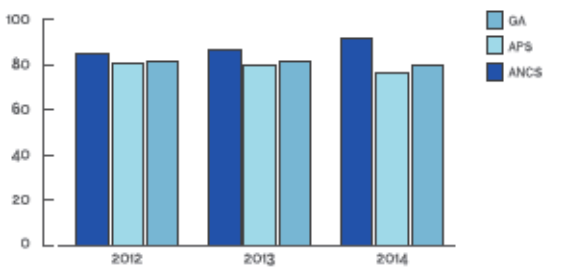
Georgia 2014 CRCT grades 6-8
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



Georgia 5th Grade Writing Assessment
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



Georgia 8th Grade Writing Assessment
Percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards



Beating the Odds and CCRPI

Beginning in 2014, all charter schools were required to “beat the odds” when it came to performance on the state’s College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). ANCS met the state’s “Beating the Odds” requirements and also exceeded the state and district CCRPI average scores by a large margin as indicated by the table below:

2014 CCRPI Scores	ANCS	APS	Georgia
Elementary (K-5)	90.9	62.7	72.6
Middle (6-8)	80.9	65.7	73.2

ANCS 2014 CCRPI scores were in the top five of all APS elementary and middle schools, and in a year where scores for elementary schools statewide dropped by over 5 points and middle schools dropped by nearly 2 points, the ANCS elementary score held steady and the middle campus score increased by a full 7 points.

In addition to meeting those goals and objectives, we would like to note several other highlights from our current charter term:

- Named a finalist for Georgia “Charter School of the Year” in 2014 and 2015 by the Georgia Charter Schools Association and the recipient of the award in 2015 because of our school’s track record of “academic achievement, strong governance, and broad community impact”
- ANCS alumni have shown strong performance into high school. For example, on the 2014 End of Course Tests, ANCS alumni had a meets/exceeds rate an average of 19 points higher than the APS district average. Additionally, on those tests, if the cohort of ANCS alumni 9th graders in APS schools were their own high school, they would have been ranked in the following places out of all 26 APS high school programs administering these tests:
 - 2nd highest performing on literature EOCT
 - 5th highest performing on coordinate algebra EOCT
 - 4th highest performing on biology EOCT
- Awarded a \$1 million “Innovation Fund” grant from the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement in 2011 to implement a unique new teacher residency program in partnership with Georgia State University
- Based on strong outcomes of residency program, awarded a \$3 million “Investing in Innovation” (i3) development grant from the U.S. Education Department to expand program into several other area schools--traditional and charter--over the next five years. Program has also received over \$400,000 in support from the R.H. Dobbs Foundation, Zeist Foundation, and Belk Foundation.
- Launched an innovative new “farm-to-school” program with supporting funds from the Aetna Foundation. Program provides students with nutritious and delicious school meals, allows them to help in the cultivation of food and development of recipes, and was highlighted in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in November 2014.
- Disseminating our learning and assisting others in efforts at school improvement through presentations at 10 national conferences and through the work of our Center for Collaborative Learning which, in the past year, organized various educator visits, workshops, and institutes for over 80 educators from 11 different schools

- Awarded nearly \$1 million in funding for building and grounds improvements from the Georgia Department of Education, Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, and the Sartain Lanier Family Foundation
- Several teachers have achieved local and national recognition, including the Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching
- Actively involved over 50 community members in our 8th grade portfolio exhibition assessment as a part of our commitment to making learning performance-based and public

As the second oldest charter school in Atlanta Public Schools, we are proud of what we have been able to accomplish since first opening our elementary campus in August 2002 and we are eager to build on our success in the next charter term.

2) Please describe your school's current financial situation. Please detail any financial successes or struggles your school experienced during the current charter term. Please provide an explanation of how your school will address any outstanding debts or allocate any surplus funds. If financial stability was not achieved, please explain the reasons as such and how the school plans to address these for the upcoming renewal charter term.

- a. Is the school in default of loan and/or delinquent with debt service payments? **NO***
- b. Provide a summary of findings from independent audits and, where applicable, how the school developed and implemented a corrective action plan in response to audit findings. (If necessary, evidence may be attached as clearly labeled documents in the Appendix.)*

In every year since opening in 2002, our school has received an unqualified opinion on our independent financial audit. Our focus is on dedicating as many of our resources as possible to teaching and learning while at the same time building a reserve to protect the school during financially-challenging periods. At present, we hold around \$1 million in operating reserves in a mix of investment accounts. These reserves have been accumulated through careful planning and budgeting and have proven critical at a few points during our current charter term.

Our current charter term has coincided with an unprecedented decline in state and local funding due to an economic recession. Additionally, in the midst of that recession, ANCS, along with the other start-up charter schools in Atlanta, went for more than a year without a significant portion of our local funding as APS withheld a share of our funds to pay for an old, unfunded pension obligation. Although the issue was ultimately resolved and funding restored, the school year in which those funds were withheld required hard decisions to be made to maintain our financial health while providing students with a high-quality educational experience. Our reserve funds helped to mitigate some of the effects of these two funding challenges.

Along with thoughtful forecasting and budgeting, our school has also given increased attention to fundraising to supplement our governmental revenue stream. Over the past three years, our annual fundraising campaign targeting our school community and friends of the school has consistently raised in the range of \$230-280,000 for our school. We have also cultivated relationships with local foundations who have invested approximately \$800,000 in the past several years towards programming and facilities improvements at ANCS because of their belief in our mission and impact on students. Most recently, a \$267,000 award from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta's "Grants to Green" program allowed us--with matching funds from ANCS--to make energy-efficient improvements to lighting, plumbing, and climate-control systems at our historic middle school building. These upgrades not only benefited the quality of life for students and teachers; they also have resulted in significant energy savings that have led to an ENERGY STAR score of 99 out of 100. Fewer dollars spent on utilities means more money goes directly to the classroom.

In December 2007 our precursor middle school closed on the purchase of our middle school building located at 820 Essie Avenue in Atlanta. Financing for this purchase was provided by Self Help Credit Union through the New Market Tax Credits program. We have sustained a productive partnership with Self Help and in June 2014 refinanced our mortgage on the Essie Avenue property with Self Help at an extremely low interest rate of 5.11%. The current principal balance on the mortgage is \$1,132,453. Our monthly mortgage payments have always been made on time and our account is in good standing with Self Help.

3) Please provide a brief overview of your school's current organizational structure. Please provide a summary of any organizational or governance changes that your school made since the beginning of your charter term. If financial stability was not achieved, please explain the reasons as such and how the school plans to address these for the upcoming renewal charter term.

- a. Discuss any school administration leadership changes and explain those changes in detail.*
- b. Provide information regarding how the Board effectively evaluates the school administration. What policies and procedures are in place to evaluate the school leader on an annual basis?*
- c. Has the Charter School complied with the statutory requirements of teachers who are certified and/or highly qualified? Submit documentation supporting the response.*

The organizational chart included in the application appendix provides an overview of the organizational structure at ANCS. Our school's board focuses on strategic issues and is tasked with overseeing the Executive Director (our school's organizational leader) through a comprehensive process of support and evaluation. Our board partner's with Board on Track, a nationally well-regarded and experienced leader in charter school board governance support. Board on Track provides a number of resources, including training on best practices in school leader evaluation and a tool to help structure the process of regular feedback and annual evaluation of our school's Executive Director. On a quarterly basis, the board chair and board member responsible for the Executive Director's evaluation process meet with the Executive Director to discuss progress towards strategic goals for the year and a self-reflection on the Executive Director's leadership. Then, annually, these two board members work through Board on Track to gather the views of board members and members of the school's leadership team on a range of the Executive Director's leadership competencies and accomplishments and use this feedback in conjunction with surveys about the school of parents, faculty/staff, and students and a self-assessment by the Executive Director to complete an annual review of the Executive Director's performance.

During the current charter term, our school moved from having one of the two campus principals also serving as the Executive Director to having a full-time Executive Director and a full-time principal for each campus. This has strengthened our organizational capacity by allowing our Executive Director to focus on managing the leadership team (including using the Leader Keys evaluation process with our two principals) and tending to our external relationships with APS, GaDOE, and other entities while our principals can give their full attention to serving as instructional leaders and supporting the students, teachers, staff, and parents at their respective campuses.

Another change to our organizational structure during this term involves the creation of a position we call the Director of Collaborative Learning and Partnerships. In 2012, our GOSA-funded New Teacher Residency Project launched under the leadership of a project director. As that grant period ended, we broadened the position to facilitate our efforts at collaboration, dissemination, and outreach. This position is responsible for managing the current version of our teacher residency program (which now includes a total of five schools in addition to ANCS) and the activities of our Center for Collaborative Learning (CCL). The CCL offers opportunities for collaborative learning about practices grounded in the common principles for the Coalition of Essential Schools. Through the CCL, ANCS aims to bring together individuals, schools, and organizations to build capacity for creating student-centered learning environments in the following ways:

- Educator visits to ANCS to observe teaching and learning
- Workshops for educators, organizations, and others to deepen knowledge of ANCS practices for possible use in their own contexts

- Institutes and lectures by outside experts on teaching and learning topics
- School partnerships to establish longer-term formal relationships between ANCS and other schools and institutes of higher learning to offer facilitation and support as schools plan and carry out school change initiatives

The work of the CCL aligns with the part of our school's mission to "collaborate with the larger community to advocate for student-centered schools". These efforts also fulfill what we see as our obligation as a charter school to share how our innovations can impact public education beyond our own school.

A final shift in our organizational structure has been in moving our food service from an outside vendor to being managed by an ANCS staff member who serves as chef and nutrition director. Given our school's emphasis on the "whole child", under our new chef the direction of the food service program at our school now is oriented towards providing students with delicious meals that are created with a focus on healthy, organic, and locally-sourced food and, at the same time, engaging students in learning about the cultivation of the food they are eating in our cafeteria. You can learn more about this program through this blog post from our chef: <http://goo.gl/BEqfZF>

During this current charter term, ANCS has continued to remain in compliance with the highly-qualified provision on Title II, Part A by insuring all of our teachers meet the requirements of charter schools that do not require certification. This compliance is verified by documentation submitted to and reviewed annually by APS.

4) Please describe, in detail, any other unforeseen difficulties faced during the charter term and how your school dealt with such difficulties, or if they are still currently an issue for the school. Also, please explain how you plan to avoid these difficulties for the future charter term.

a. Provide clear explanations and evidence of how the Charter School has complied with requirements and regulations in each of the following areas. Address any complaints and corrections made regarding compliance in each area.

- *Special Education Students*
- *English Language Learners*
- *Homeless students*

b. Is the school monitoring and minimizing attrition rates and maintaining enrollment?

- *Has the school exceeded the enrollment level stated in its initial charter during any part of the charter term? If so, please indicate which grade levels, which academic years and stated and actual numbers for each incidence.*
- *Provide information regarding the school's attrition rate over the last 4 years. Using data starting with the number of students enrolled in September, what number and percentage of students transferred out of the school by the end of the school year? How does the school both monitor and minimize attrition rates?*

Other than the financial challenges noted in the response to question 2 above, our school has not experienced any other unforeseen difficulties during our current charter term. In the areas that often pose challenges for charter schools--enrollment and special programs compliance--ANCS has met the requirements of its charter contract as described below.

ANCS has been at full capacity with waiting lists at all grade levels during each year of the charter term. In the 2013-2014 school year, as a result of the aforementioned financial challenges presented by state and local funding declines and the unfunded pension issue with APS, our school increased our class sizes to insure the level of revenue necessary to implement our school program. At that time, our overall enrollment reached 675 students (up from the 576 projection in our charter petition), a change in the overall enrollment level for our school that was approved by the Atlanta Board of Education in February 2014.

In each year of our current charter term, the attrition rate (the number of students leaving the school during the year over the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year) has been under 1.5% annually. Of the students who have left ANCS during the school year, based on information collected from families at the time of withdrawal from ANCS, the top reason is "moving to another school district." Nearly all students, once enrolled at ANCS, remain through the end of 8th grade.

ANCS has complied with the requirements and regulations related to special student programs in the following areas:

1. *Special Education*: At present, approximately 14% of the student population receives services under an IEP. This is the highest percentage of students in special education of any charter school in APS and in the top 20% of all APS schools overall. The reason for this high percentage is due to the high-quality of the program that attracts families of students with disabilities. Our special education program is staffed by a program coordinator, school psychologist, and 13 special education teachers who help support students through a range of accommodations and modifications. Additionally, we have a close working relationship with the APS student services program to provide effective wraparound services and guidance. Our special education coordinator was chosen to represent charter schools on a districtwide special education committee advising the APS superintendent on special education matters.
2. *English Language Learners*: During the course of our current charter term, our school has not had many students who qualified for English Language Learner (ELL) services. We have contracted with a certified ELL teacher to provide instruction and assessment to students who qualify for ELL services. As well, we have worked with the APS Office of World Languages to insure compliance with ELL program requirements.
3. *Homeless Students*: Similarly, we have not had many students who were considered to be homeless by state criteria. Our school social workers partner with the APS student services program to insure our school's compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and its provisions. In instances when we have had a homeless student enroll or an enrolled student become homeless while at ANCS, we have provided the appropriate supports for these students in order for them to have access to the same educational experience as their peers.

5) Please describe in detail if your school had any compliance findings/failures by the Local District and/or State and during the past charter term. Please explain what steps were taken to remedy these findings and what steps the school took to ensure they do not happen again in the future.

ANCS has not had any compliance findings or failures during our current charter term.

6) Please state whether termination proceedings were initiated during the past charter term. If so, please explain the status of those proceedings.

- a. Describe if any whether your school was placed on probation during any part of the charter term; include the reasons for probation, terms and length of probation, and the status of your probation.

ANCS has not been placed on probation nor had termination proceedings initiated during the current charter term.

7) Please state whether the school's charter was amended via a formal amendment or an administrative clarification during the past charter term. Please explain the reasoning for the changes to the charter contract and how they have benefited the school.

The ANCS charter was amended via administrative clarification from the GaDOE in August 2012. The particular section of the charter that was changed was related to an academic accountability goal using the Iowa Assessments. In the original charter contract, the goal was based on Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) measures from the assessments. In 2012, the Iowa Assessments stopped reporting NCEs, therefore, the administrative clarification allowed for the replacement of NCE measures in the goal with the National Percentile Rank (NPR) measure as the change did not decrease the rigor of the stated goal.

8) Please describe the specific ways your school has utilized flexibility from state law and state and local policy over the charter term. Which laws or policies did you waive? How did your conscious exercise of flexibility result in better outcomes for students?

ANCS uses the common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools as the framework that supports the design of our school. These principles--which emphasize concepts like *depth over breadth*, *student-as-worker*, *teacher-as-coach*, *personalization*, *demonstration of mastery*, and *teachers as generalists first and specialists second*--are best lived out when there is flexibility to deviate from state and local policies as dictated by the needs of students and teachers. Here are some specific ways in which our school utilizes this flexibility:

Structure of educational program: At both of our campuses, the way in which courses are designed and structured differs from traditional school contexts. For example, at our elementary campus, as students progress into the upper elementary grades, they move from having a homeroom teacher and associate teacher to moving between a team of teachers who collaborate in developing the curriculum and materials used. This arrangement allows for flexible grouping of students across the day based on varying needs and abilities. At our middle campus, a student's day begins with an advisory session centered on cultivating social-emotional skills, then moves to extended class blocks of Humanities and Math/Science/Technology that integrate multidisciplinary skills and content. Students also take part in a daily "academic growth period" that provides foundational skill building or enrichment in a class with students from different grade levels.

Qualifications of teachers and staff: Although the majority of our teachers and staff members hold current certification from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, not all do. All of our teachers meet the "highly-qualified" criteria. In hiring teachers, we are looking for educators who possess not only strong content knowledge but also a range of competencies necessary for teaching in a school that focuses on collaboration, interdisciplinary teaching, curriculum development, and creative, flexible thinking. These characteristics are more important to us and our students learning than whether or not the teacher is certified.

School schedule: For most days of the week, our students are in school for slightly longer school days than their peers in traditional public schools in Atlanta. These longer days provide the space needed for the educational program described above. On Wednesdays, students at both campuses are dismissed earlier--either to leave with their parents/guardians or to take part in after school activities--in order to allow for an extended weekly block of collaboration time for teachers and staff. This time is used for a variety of activities, including curriculum design, professional development, and vertical planning. Collaboration time is followed by a more traditional faculty meeting time for "nuts and bolts" business. On the whole, students at ANCS are in school for a greater amount of time annually than classmates at other local public schools.

Assessments of student learning: As noted in the next section, we use a range of assessments to determine students' levels of knowledge, skills, and growth. This includes being granted an exception from the use of local SLO assessments to use assessments better aligned to the educational program at ANCS.

9) In what ways has your school innovated over the charter term? Were these innovations academic, organizational, operational, or financial? How did these innovations result in improved outcomes for students?

Our school demonstrated the effectiveness of a host of innovations over the current charter term:

Academic

- Implementation of the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools: ANCS is one of two CES schools in all of Georgia. Research studies have shown that CES schools demonstrate higher levels of student achievement and improved long-term outcomes for students (see <http://archive.essentialschools.org/items/22.html>). As one of the only schools in our state affiliated with CES, we offer a unique educational experience to students. Some example of the innovations we use that grow out of CES principles include:
 - Using multiple forms of student learning and growth assessment - portfolios of student work, standardized achievement tests, school climate surveys
 - Developing students' capacity for social-emotional growth through the use of Conscious Discipline, mindfulness/breathing exercises, whole community and classroom morning meetings
 - Public exhibition of student learning through student portfolio process in which community members provide students with feedback on their learning
 - Multiple teachers in nearly every classroom to better personalize teaching and learning

Operational & Financial

- The very existence of our school is innovative. ANCS came into existence by merging two formerly separate charter schools into one school with two campuses, the first time that has ever happened in the state of Georgia. We have created an effective and sustainable leadership structure to help manage a multi-site school.
- Facilities ownership: Our partnership with Self Help Credit Union highlights how charter schools can work with districts and lenders to secure a long-term facilities solution for their schools.
- Sustainable practices: We have received two "Grants to Green" awards to make major energy-efficient improvements and have partnered with Southface to monitor and assess our school's energy footprint. Currently, our school's ENERGY STAR certification is in the 99th percentile nationally.
- Farm-to-school program: After moving our food service from an outside provider to a chef and nutrition director employed by our school, we have been able to develop an innovative farm-to-school program in which we locally-source and even grow the majority of the food served in our cafeteria and extend learning for students into the garden and kitchen. Even after only one year of operation, the program has proven financially viable and has drawn the interest of other local charter schools interested in creating similar programs.

Organizational

- Center for Collaborative Learning: Described in greater detail in the response to question 3, our CCL is--to our knowledge--the only formal outreach and dissemination arm of an existing charter school in the Atlanta area and perhaps the state. The CCL is in line with the original vision of charter schools as "laboratories of innovation" to help shape and influence educational change more broadly to better serve students. The flagship program under the CCL is our CREATE teacher residency program. The program--originally funded by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and now funded by a grant from the U.S. Education Department's "Investing in Innovation" program and several local foundations--has expanded a successful new teacher training model from ANCS into five other committed schools in Atlanta.

- Majority parent governing board: We know we are in the minority of those who believe charter schools can be effectively governed by current parents at the school. It is not easy--it requires careful recruitment of board members and ongoing and highly-skilled training of those board members to focus on issues of governance. But when done right, a majority parent governing board that includes a mix of community members can lead to a productive, community-oriented school, as has been the case with ANCS.
- Emphasis on socioeconomic diversity: According to research conducted by The Civil Rights Project at UCLA, U.S. schools are, on the whole, more racially and socioeconomically segregated than they were prior to the *Brown v. Board* rulings. And, that same research found, charter schools are likely to be less diverse than surrounding traditional public schools. In that context, our school's push to achieve greater economic diversity among our students is unique among public schools, particularly in the South. Although we are not yet where we would like to be in terms of our overall measure of socioeconomic diversity (see the "operational changes" section below), we know from past experience in an earlier charter term as well as from research studies that economic diversity will create the conditions for a range of positive short and long-term outcomes for students.

PROPOSED CHANGES

1. Please describe in detail any proposed changes and the reasoning for such changes from your school's previous charter term. Please address if there will be any changes and the related reasoning for each of the following:
 - A. ACADEMIC CHANGES TO:
 1. The academic program and curriculum.

As of the submission of this petition application, there is one potential academic program change under consideration, and that is the possibility of our school's middle campus pursuing International Baccalaureate (IB) authorization for a Middle Years Programme (MYP). Why is the possibility of applying to become an IB school being explored? In updating our school's strategic plan, we included both an objective to enhance our student learning expectations, particularly in the arts and foreign language and an objective to strengthen our partnership with our neighborhood high school, Maynard Jackson High School (MJHS). Though our educational outcomes for students are already strong, these objectives were included because of a desire to provide a truly exceptional experience for students as they matriculate from ANCS to high school.

In light of these two objectives, the ANCS board created an IB exploratory task force in August 2014 to consider whether pursuing IB authorization would be beneficial for our students and school. With many of our alumni entering the IB Diploma Programme at Maynard Jackson High School and with other area schools feeding into Maynard Jackson also offering or preparing to become IB programmes, the potential for collaboration on implementing the IB programme added to our interest in forming the task force.

There are many similarities between the IB programme and the ANCS experience as it stands currently—a curriculum framework that fosters student inquiry and critical thinking, a focus on community and the study of other cultures. However, the task force has been studying many questions that need to be answered before a decision can be made about whether ANCS should go through the IB authorization process, such as:

- What would be the benefits to students of an IB programme while at ANCS? What would the costs—financial and otherwise—be?

- What—if anything—about the ANCS experience would change for students and/or teachers by becoming IB authorized?
- If ANCS were to become IB authorized, what are the advantages to ANCS students if they attend an IB programme in high school? If ANCS did *not* become IB authorized, would there be any disadvantages to students who go on to the IB programme at MJHS or elsewhere?
- If ANCS were to become IB authorized, would authorization be focused on the middle school grades at ANCS or should it also include the elementary school grades?

The final phase of our consideration of the IB programme is IB training of some key teachers this summer to fully understand what it means to teach in an IB programme. Shortly after this training, the task force will convene and then make a final recommendation to the ANCS board about whether to pursue IB authorization.

2. Any assessments being used.

In addition to the new “Beating the Odds” requirement using our school’s College and Career Readiness Performance Indicators, ANCS will also use the following assessments as the sources of data for our educational program goals:

- a. Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in Reading, Language, and Math for grades K-8 to track student growth in reading, language, and math as compared to national norms: reading and math norm referenced (include targets from MAP data)
 - i. *Proposed Goal:* The percentage of students meeting their RIT growth targets on each MAP assessment will meet or exceed national averages for each grade level in grades 3-8 annually.
- b. Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) for students in grades 2 and 7 to track student growth in reasoning and problem solving abilities as compared to national norms: reasoning and problem solving (include targets from CogAT data)
 - i. *Proposed Goal:* The baseline composite (verbal, quantitative, nonverbal) National Percentile Rank (NPR) for each cohort group will be established in the 2nd grade. Each cohort group will get at least 10% closer to a composite NPR of 100 by the time the cohort takes the CogAT in 7th grade. If less than 75% of the cohort group did not take the CogAT in 2nd grade, ANCS will work with APS to establish appropriate achievement goals for that cohort.
- c. [Gallup Student Poll](#) for students in grades 5-8 to track student growth in hope, engagement, and overall well-being as compared to national norms (or other survey to assess students’ hope, engagement, and overall well-being)
 - i. *Proposed Goal:* The percentage of students in the categories of “hopeful”, “engaged”, and “thriving” on the Gallup student poll will be higher than the national averages for each grade level annually.
- d. Annual ANCS stakeholder feedback surveys for students in grades 3-8, parents, and faculty/staff to track each group’s overall satisfaction with the ANCS experience
 - i. *Proposed Goal:* On annual feedback surveys, at least 87% of students, parents, and faculty/staff will respond affirmatively to the prompt “I am satisfied with my experience at ANCS this school year.”

B. GOVERNANCE CHANGES TO:

1. The school’s governance structure.

- a. In April 2015, the ANCS Governing Board amended its by-laws to change the number of board members and the term length. Previously, the number of board members was set at nine (9) total. After discussions with our board governance support organization, Board on Track, our board decided to amend the by-laws to allow for a range in the number of board members so that (a) the board would not be out of compliance should a member resign and (b) to allow room for the board size to increase from time to time as the school's needs change. This section of the by-laws now reads as follows: "The Board shall consist of at least seven (7) and no more than thirteen (13) voting members..."
- b. Additionally, the term length for a board member was previously set at three (3) years. To provide flexibility in appointing new board members, this section of the by-laws was also changed in April 2015 to read as follows: "Regularly elected board member terms are for *up to* three years..." (italics added for emphasis).

C. OPERATIONAL CHANGES TO:

1. The school's attendance zone and any enrollment priorities being used.

Our school is making two slight changes to our attendance zones in this petition for charter renewal. First, we are moving from having different attendance zones for each of our campuses for utilizing the same attendance zones for both campuses. This change is being made per the request of the GaDOE and to have consistency and clarity in our school's attendance zones. After evaluating various options, our board decided that the best arrangement would be to keep the general structure for our attendance zones patterned after our current elementary campus attendance zones as the vast majority of our new students enroll at ANCS in the elementary grades (K-5).

The second change we are making in regards to our attendance zones is to add the neighborhood of Summerhill to our primary attendance zone. Thus, our attendance zones for this petition would become as follows:

The enrollment shall be open to any student who resides within the primary attendance zone, which is defined as the neighborhoods of Grant Park and Ormewood Park and Summerhill.

In the event, space remains available at the time of the application deadline set by the Charter School, the attendance zone shall be expanded to include the secondary attendance zone of Neighborhood Planning Unit W and according to the application deadlines set by the Charter School.

In the event space remains available at any grade level at the time of the application deadline set by the Charter School, the attendance zone shall be expanded to include the Atlanta Public Schools district and according to the application deadlines set by the Charter School.

Why was the neighborhood of Summerhill added to our attendance zone? Primarily because the addition aligns with a goal in our current strategic plan to "build upon current diversity by creating a proactive program to improve, retain, and realize the benefits of student diversity that reflects the diversity of the Jackson cluster". In the past decade, we have seen the socioeconomic diversity of our school greatly reduced--at one point qualifying as a Title I school to now having less than 20% of students qualifying for free/reduced price meals. This downward shift has happened for a number of reasons--some of them outside of our school's immediate control. However, having a diverse student population is central to our school's mission because of the academic and social benefits research studies have shown come to students who learn in socioeconomically-diverse schools, therefore, addressing this decrease in economic diversity is an important task for our school. We have started

this work by adding a diversity coordinator to our staff, an individual who works with a committee of parents and teachers to help shape our school's approach to maximizing the benefits of diversity. A chief aim of this committee and the school in the past two years has been increased outreach to prospective families through a variety of means:

- Neighborhood canvassing
- Visits to local preschool and elementary schools
- Social media
- Promotional material and signage around southeast Atlanta

While these efforts have resulted in some measurable positive impact, moving the neighborhood of Summerhill--currently in our tertiary attendance zone--to our primary attendance zone will, we believe, accelerate our movement towards increased economic diversity given that (1) it is a neighborhood with a higher percentage of students who qualify for free/reduced price meals than our other primary attendance zone neighborhoods of Grant Park and Ormewood Park and (2) it is also within less than one mile walking distance to our elementary campus providing relatively easy accessibility to families of interested students.

Prior to making this change in attendance zones, the ANCS board looked at a great deal of data and research, including demographic data, historical enrollment application trends, and other charter school attendance zone structures. Additionally, the board solicited feedback in a range of ways, including multiple community town hall meetings and electronic surveys.

Adding a neighborhood to our primary attendance zone was done with sensitivity to our history as a *neighborhood* charter school founded and located in the neighborhoods of Grant Park and Ormewood Park. Our board did not wish to greatly reduce the chances of students from those neighborhoods from getting into ANCS through an enrollment lottery. With a current average of about 18 students per grade level, the addition of Summerhill does not seem likely to dramatically impact the odds of residents of Grant Park and Ormewood Park receiving a seat at ANCS through our lottery, especially given that it is unlikely that families of all eligible students would submit an application for enrollment. The student numbers from adding Summerhill, though, do hold the potential for increasing the socioeconomic diversity of our school in conjunction with our other efforts in this area.

Our school advocated for the recent state legislation that will now allow for charter schools to use a weighted enrollment lottery to increase the odds of "educationally disadvantaged" students to get into the school. Our board will evaluate the impact of our change in attendance zones and other efforts aimed at increasing our school's socioeconomic diversity and will consider requesting the use of a weighted enrollment lottery if it seems as though it would be helpful to our goal of economic diversity among our students.

D. CHANGES TO:

1. School mission and vision

During the 2013-14 school year, the ANCS board formed a strategic planning committee to guide a process of assessing the current climate in which our school operates, draft strategic goals for the school for the next 3 years, gather feedback on those goals, and identify key initiatives to drive towards the strategic goals. As a part of this process, the ANCS mission and vision statements were updated to these current versions:

Vision: To be a dynamic learning community where students become life-long learners, develop self-knowledge, and are challenged to excel.

Mission: The mission of the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) is to use the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools to:

- **BUILD** an empowered and inclusive community of students, parents, and educators
- **ENGAGE** the whole child—intellectually, social-emotionally, and physically
- **HELP** all students to know themselves and to be known well by their community
- **CHALLENGE** each student to take an active role as an informed citizen in a global society
- **COLLABORATE** with the larger community to advocate for student-centered schools

An overview of our school's strategic plan is included in the appendices of our petition application.