



# Charter School Application

## *Start-up and Conversion (New and Renewal)*

SCHOOL NAME

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School

SCHOOL CONTACT ADDRESS

688 Grant St. SE  
Atlanta, GA 30315

Dr. John D. Barge  
State School Superintendent

JUNE 2014

## INTRODUCTION

Start-up Charter Applications are proposals to create new or renew existing start-up charter schools. Conversion charter Applications are for existing public schools that wish to convert to charter schools. The evaluation of your Application will focus on whether implementing the proposals in your Application will lead to the improved academic, organizational, and financial performance you are promising in exchange for freedom from much of Georgia's education law, rules and guidelines. It will also determine whether the proposed charter school would comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures (including the Charter Schools Act of 1998, as amended [O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2060 through 20-2-2071], State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.04 et. seq., and Department of Education Guidelines accompanying the Charter School Rules); whether the academic, organizational and financial plans are viable; and whether the charter school is in the public interest.

*Filing an application for a charter school does not guarantee that a charter will be granted.*

## DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Your Application must be approved by your local Board of Education in accordance with the rules and regulations of your local board. After local submission, review and approval, you must submit your application to the address below for GaDOE review. Initial start-up applications must be received. Please note that applications are processed and interviews are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. The application approval process consists of local board review, GaDOE review and panel interview, SBOE approval (generally 2 months). Your application must go through this entire process in the year before you plan to open, convert or renew.

*Interviews are currently scheduled for August 13, August 14, September 16, September 17, October 15, October 16, November 18, November 19, December 3, December 4, December 10, and December 11.* Applications must be received at least two weeks prior to your panel interview. General guidelines to remember:

Applications should be sent to:

Georgia Department of Education  
Charter Schools Division  
2053 Twin Towers East  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

**Faxed or emailed copies will not be accepted. Only complete petitions that comply with these guidelines will be evaluated. Applications will not be returned; please keep a copy for your records.**

## APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Your Charter Application Package must comply with the following submission procedures.

- An Application Package includes an original and two copies of the following items:

- APPLICATION COVER SHEET** (Use the form on pages 4-5; the form may not be altered in any way).
- CHARTER APPLICATION** (Your answers to the questions posed on pages 7-14).
  - The Application is limited to 75 double-spaced pages using an 11-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins with a header showing the school's name and a footer showing consecutive page numbers.
  - The original must be signed in blue ink. Stamped signatures will not be accepted.
- ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET** (Use the Assurances Form and Signature Sheet below on pages 15-18; the Form and the Sheet may not be altered in any way).
  - The original must be signed in blue ink; stamped signatures will not be accepted.
  - Electronic copy of assurances must be signed. Blank copies will not be accepted.
- DOCUMENTATION OF VOTE \*CONVERSIONS ONLY** (Use the form on page 19)
  - The original must be signed in blue ink; stamped signatures will not be accepted.
- EXHIBITS** (See list of required Exhibits below on page 20).
  - Required Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible.
  - All Exhibits must be tabbed.
- Your Application Package must be bound by a binder clip; do not enclose your Application Package in a notebook, binder, or folder.
- Your Application Package must also include a single CD or USB drive that includes a:
  - Microsoft Word version of your Application Cover Sheet
  - Microsoft Word version of your Application and Exhibits
  - PDF Version of your application in the following order: Cover Sheet, Application, signed Assurances Form, and Exhibits
  - PDF version of your Governance Matrix
  - Excel version of your completed Budget Templates
  - Renewals only – an Excel version of your completed Self-Assessment



Charter School Name Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School

Type Locally-approved Start-up (Locally-approved Start-up, State Chartered Special School, Career Academy, Jointly Authorized, Virtual)

Approved by the Atlanta Board of Education on January 24, 2011

Grade Levels Served K-8

Ages Served 5-14

Proposed Opening/Renewal Date July 1, 2016

Proposed Charter Term 5 Years (If this is a renewal petition with a term other than 5 years requested, please give the rationale for the requested term length)

Mission Statement *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

For each year of the proposed charter term, please indicate the number of pupils the charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Yr 1	72	72	72	72	72	72	81	81	81					675
Yr 2	72	72	72	72	72	72	81	81	81					675
Yr 3	72	72	72	72	72	72	81	81	81					675
Yr 4	72	72	72	72	72	72	81	81	81					
Yr 5	72	72	72	72	72	72	81	81	81					

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(2), please complete the following Affidavit. A list of secure and verifiable documents can be found on our website. This form should be completed by the CEO or President of the Non-profit Corporation.

**O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(2) Affidavit**

By executing this affidavit under oath, as an applicant for a charter school contract, as referenced in O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1, from the State Board of Education, the undersigned applicant verifies one of the following with respect to my application for a public benefit:

- 1)  I am a United States citizen.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ I am a legal permanent resident of the United States.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_ I am a qualified alien or non-immigrant under the Federal Immigration and Nationality Act with an alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency.

My alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Security or other federal immigration agency is:\_\_\_\_\_.

The undersigned applicant also hereby verifies that he or she is 18 years of age or older and has provided at least one secure and verifiable document, as required by O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e)(1), with this affidavit.

The secure and verifiable document provided with this affidavit can best be classified as:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Georgia Driver's License** \_\_\_\_\_.

In making the above representation under oath, I understand that any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation in an affidavit shall be guilty of a violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20, and face criminal penalties as allowed by such criminal statute.

Executed in \_\_\_\_\_ (city), \_\_\_\_\_ (state).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew C. Underwood  
Printed Name of Applicant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN  
BEFORE ME ON THIS THE  
\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
My Commission Expires:

# CHARTER APPLICATION

The Application includes 20 questions grouped into eight sections. Applicants should complete each section unless otherwise noted.

## THE CASE

### 1. Why do you want a charter?

- *What is your motivation for applying to be a charter school?*

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 motivated 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

Operating as a charter school allows us the flexibility to implement academic, operational, and organizational innovations that will lead to stronger outcomes for students. Our school demonstrated the effectiveness of a host of such innovations during our 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 like ANCS result in higher levels of student achievement and improved long-term outcomes for students.<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> *Measuring Up: Demonstrating the Effectiveness of the Coalition of Essential Schools*. 2006. Web. 7 June 2015. <[http://archive.essentialschools.org/d/3/Measuring\\_Up\\_Report.pdf](http://archive.essentialschools.org/d/3/Measuring_Up_Report.pdf)>

- 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. 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.
- 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 later in this application, 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.

These innovations have allowed us to meet or exceed the goals and objectives in our charter as well as to accomplish the following:



- 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 applying to renew our charter so that we may continue to build on our success.

- *What will you be able to do with a charter that you cannot do without a charter?*

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-emotion 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 academic objectives 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.

- *Describe how parents, community members, and other interested parties were involved in developing the petition and will be involved with the school.*

Since our founding in 2002 as the first grassroots start-up charter school in Atlanta Public Schools, ANCS has had the deep involvement of its full community—parents, teachers, and surrounding community members. Key aspects of our charter petition have been guided by our school’s strategic plan—a document developed by a committee of parents, board members, and faculty/staff members using the input of the full school community gathered through focus groups, surveys, and interviews. The charter petition itself has the approval of the ANCS Governing Board, whose composition reflects a cross-section of the school community.

## ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

### 2. What are your school's performance objectives for the proposed charter term?

- *As background for your answer to this question, please see the CCRPI and Beating the Odds goals (Attachments A and B) and review the PowerPoint found on the Charter Schools Division's website. These goals will be included in your charter contract.*
- *In your answer to this question, you will list the specific areas you will target to achieve your CCRPI and Beating the Odds goals.*
- *For example, you may choose to target Math or ELA to raise your overall CCRPI score – because your current Math or ELA scores are dragging your CCRPI score down.*
- *As a way to be competitive on Beating the Odds, you may also choose to focus on closing the gap in your school between educationally advantaged and educationally disadvantaged students – or you may choose to ensure gifted students are well-served, since average-performing gifted students will lower your Beating the Odds ranking compared to schools and districts with high-performing gifted students.*
- *Indicate the expected rate of student performance growth in each year of the proposed charter term.*
- *You are encouraged to include all or some of the components of the current draft of the Georgia Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI).*
- *You are urged to include cohort measures that show the progress over time of a single cohort of students.*
- *You are also urged to include national norm-referenced test results among your performance measures.*
- *Be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART).*

#### ***Our performance goals for the proposed charter term are as follows:***

Goal 1: During each year of its first five-year charter term, the Charter School shall “beat the odds” as determined by a formula measuring expected student growth.

- A. The Beating the Odds analysis is a cross-sectional, fixed effects regression model that uses the following factors from the CCRPI school-level dataset, GaDOE student record file, and GaDOE CPI data.
  - a. Student-based Factors:
    - % African American
    - % Hispanic
    - % White
    - % Other

- % Free/Reduced Lunch
- % Students with Disabilities
- % English Learners
- % Gifted

b. School-based Factors:

- School Size (FTE)
- Student/Teacher Ratio
- School Configuration/CCRPI Score Type (i.e. Elementary, Middle, High)
- Locale Type (i.e. City, Town, Rural)
- District Performance (fixed effect)

Goal 2: The Charter School will demonstrate proficiency and/or improvement on the CCRPI.

- A. Measure 1: For new start-up charter schools first opening in 2015 or later, using Year 1 of the charter term to establish a CCRPI baseline, the Charter School's CCRPI score shall be equal to or better than both the State and local district in Year 2, and better than both the State and local district in Years 3-5 of the charter contract.
- B. Measure 2: If the school's first-year CCRPI score is lower than either or both the local district and the State, the school shall have until the end of Year 2 of the charter term to close the gap between the Charter School and whichever score is higher, the local district or the State.
- C. Measure 3: In Years 3-5 of the charter term, the Charter School's CCRPI score shall be better than both the State and the local district.

***In addition to the required goals listed above, ANCS will also set the following goals aligned to our educational program:***

Goal 3: The Charter School will help students to demonstrate growth in Reading and Math as measured by the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment.

- A. Measure 1: The percentage of students meeting their RIT growth targets on both the Reading and Math Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments will meet or exceed national averages for each grade level in grades 3-8 annually.

Goal 4: The Charter School will help students to demonstrate growth in reasoning and problem solving skills as measured by the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).

- A. Measure 1: The baseline composite (verbal, quantitative, nonverbal) National Percentile Rank (NPR) for each cohort group will be established in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> grade. If less than 75% of the cohort group did not take the CogAT in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, ANCS will work with APS to establish appropriate achievement goals for that cohort.

Goal 5: The Charter School will help students to achieve healthy levels of well-being as measured by the Gallup Student Poll.

- A. Measure 1: 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.

**3. How will the charter school governing board, management, instructional leadership, faculty and staff know that students are on track to meet these academic goals?**

- *What assessments will the school administer to obtain performance data for each student?*
- *Describe how the school will obtain baseline achievement data.*
- *Describe how the school will benchmark student growth.*
- *Explain how the charter school will work with the local school system to participate in all state-mandated assessments.*

There are a variety of tools used at ANCS to measure student learning and growth in a range of domains:

- MAP: foundational skills and knowledge in language and math
- CogAT: critical thinking and reasoning skills
- Georgia Milestones Assessments: skills and knowledge expected by students at each grade level based on Georgia Performance Standards
- Gallup Student Poll and quarterly student feedback surveys: social-emotional wellbeing
- Performance projects: skills and knowledge expected by students at each grade level based on ANCS curriculum maps

Information from these varied assessment tools are used to determine benchmark data and track progress towards goals in the following ways:

- **Governing Board:** On a quarterly basis, the board reviews a “performance dashboard” which includes leading indicators related to academic performance, such as:
  - Average NPR on norm referenced assessments
  - Percentage of students showing NPR growth on norm referenced assessments
  - Percentage of students meeting standards in each ANCS performance area
  - Percentage of students responding affirmatively to survey prompts
- **Leadership Team:** In weekly meetings, the ANCS leadership team frequently examines academic data and issues. Once per quarter, the leadership team engages in a day-long off-site meeting to “deep dive” into academic data and other data to

assess progress and develop adjustments as necessary to stay on track towards goals.

- Faculty/Staff: In campus faculty meetings and in weekly teacher team meetings, teachers use protocols from the School Reform Initiative to examine student performance data, consider trends, and determine instructional and curricular implications of the data.

As a part of the Atlanta Public Schools, ANCS will participate in the APS training and administration schedule and processes for all state-mandated standardized tests.

**4. What specific actions will the school's management, instructional leadership, faculty and staff take to ensure student performance objectives are met during the proposed charter term?**

- *Describe the focus of the curriculum.*
- *Describe the educational innovations that will be implemented.*
- *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase student achievement.*
- *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.*
- *Describe the anticipated teacher-to-student ratios and the rationale for maintaining these ratios.*
- *If this is a charter high school, describe how the charter high school will determine that a student has satisfied the requirements for high school graduation, including the credits or units to be earned and the completion credentials to be awarded.*

***Description of Educational Program and Innovations***

The development of curriculum and the teaching practices at ANCS are guided by the Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools that place students at the center of their learning in a hands-on way, actively engaged in exploring questions and coached by their teachers towards the demonstration of mastery of higher-order concepts and skills. The curriculum at ANCS does not rely on textbooks; rather, it is driven by rich and interesting projects and learning experiences that help students to show understanding and develop meaningful skills. Teachers work collaboratively in developing the curriculum to reflect both the Georgia Performance Standards for each grade level and the standards of national discipline-specific organizations, and they use the Understanding by Design process as a planning framework. In addition, experiences that take students away from the school on field trips to support their learning occur on a regular basis.

**Grades K-5**

In addition to embracing the Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, ANCS teaching and learning in grades K-5 is infused with elements of constructivism, a theoretical model stemming from the areas of philosophy, philosophy of science, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. According to Black and Ammon (1992), constructivism in the educational area is "more concerned with understandings achieved through relevant experience than with accumulated facts received from others." Thus, students learn by doing. Instructional activities are relevant and varied, encouraging active participation as teachers serve primarily as facilitators and conduct questioning sessions to elicit student responses and probe for deeper understanding.

The overarching themes for grades K-2 are CARING AND SHARING. Throughout these years,

students experience firsthand the plants and animals of their world. The overarching theme for grades 3 – 5 is EXPLORATIONS. Once students have begun to build basic understandings and relationships with their world, they can then participate in more detailed and in-depth explorations of it.

In addition to the themes described above, each grade level has year-long theme, which serves as an organizing concept for the skills and knowledge expected for each year. The curriculum in grades K-5 uses basic scientific concepts as its focus. Both the Georgia Performance Standards and national professional standards were considered and are maintained in the creation of the curriculum maps. Listed below are the themes (with thematic content summaries) for each grade level in K-5:

#### Kindergarten – Me, My Role and Responsibility

- Place (backyard, home, state)
- Community
- Self
- Family

#### 1st Grade – A Year in Our Backyard

- Survival
- American Traditions
- Weather
- Cycles
- Patterns

#### 2nd Grade – Connections

- Connecting Ourselves
- Connecting Our Families
- Connecting to Nature
- Connecting to Our Past

#### 3rd Grade – Foundations

- Conservation
- Government
- Earth, Physical, and Life Science
- Economics

#### 4th Grade – How Do Populations Survive and Adapt To Change?

- Solar System
- Physical Features of the United States
- Populations Through History – How do underlying concepts (geography, politics, flora/fauna, economic, technology, culture, etc.) affect populations?
- Historical Periods – Native Americans, Colonization, Beginning of a Nation, Inventions, Westward Expansion, Civil War, Outer Space

#### 5th Grade – Truth: How Does the Evidence We Gather Impact Various Perspectives of the Truth?

- Systems – What are the underlying components of all systems?
- Responsibility – What is our responsibility to self, community, society and the world? What are the issues that arise from different perspectives throughout history?

### *Language Arts*

In grades K-5, a comprehensive language and literacy framework that serves as a conceptual tool for organizing instruction is utilized. To offer authentic reading and writing experiences for students, literacy standards are organized using a balanced literacy framework. While there has been much academic debate in recent years regarding two theories of how best to teach children to read and write—heavy phonics and word study or, contrarily, a “whole” language approach focusing solely on the developmental nature of the reading process—ANCS implements elements of both methods: careful attention to words and word study combined with natural experiences with print and oral language. This balanced approach includes the following components: reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, or reading workshop, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing or writing workshop, independent writing and letter and word study.

### *Mathematics*

Mathematics in grades K-5 follows a program that embodies the vision of the rigorous national standards for mathematics developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Using the Everyday Math curriculum developed by the University of Chicago [link to <http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/about/>], teachers create math curriculum maps that provide a scope and sequence for math instruction for the year, essential questions, and assessment measures. Learning activities emphasize the understanding of mathematical concepts through student articulated theories and strategies, focus on the myriad ways to solve problems, actively engage students through manipulative materials and games. Students develop flexibility and confidence when approaching a variety of complex problems, proficiency in using mathematical skills and tools, and fluency with facts, computation, and other areas of mathematics such as geometry, data and algebraic thinking.

### *Art, Music, & Physical Education*

In the grades K-5, each week, students receive instruction in physical education, visual arts, and music. Teachers of these classes regularly collaborate with grade level classroom teachers to create integrated lessons/units and to support classroom instruction and student learning.

### Grades 6-8

Building on the experiences of grades K-5, students in grades 6-8 at ANCS continue in classes that integrate different disciplines built around essential skills and questions, but the classes begin to specialize somewhat based on content area as students prepare for the transition to high school. Following an advisory session that begins each day, students in grades 6-8 have a daily schedule that rotates through three different blocks of approximately 2 hours each: one block of Math/Science/Technology, one block of Humanities (language arts and social studies), and one block of visual, performing arts, technology, Spanish, and/or Fit for Life.

### *Humanities*

In Humanities students develop skills in reading, language arts and social studies with primary attention given to comprehending, analyzing, and producing expressive pieces in a variety of different genres (persuasive, analytical, creative, narrative, poetry) while exploring different regions of the world. In the sixth grade, the content focuses on the culture, literature, and history of the western hemisphere: the Americas, Europe, and Oceania. In the seventh grade, the content focuses on Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, while in the eighth grade the emphasis is on Georgia history in the context of the history and literature of the United States.

### *Performing Arts, Visual Arts, & Digital Expression*



Classes in the arts are designed to provide students with skills and ideas in a variety of artistic media and an appreciation for different styles of artistic expression. Students in the sixth grade have performing arts as their artistic concentration. Performing arts classes introduce students to basic theatre concepts and immerse students in different types of acting (monologue, plays, improvisation) as well as to various aspects of stage production. In the seventh grade, students have a visual arts concentration. These classes introduce students to techniques in drawing, collage, and other forms of expression.

Eighth grade students choose between taking a yearlong class in the arts/digital expression or enrolling in a yearlong course in advanced Spanish. The eighth grade arts classes build upon the foundational skills developed in the sixth and seventh grades by giving students the opportunity to explore more sophisticated concepts and techniques. In visual arts, this includes two- and three-dimensional art making methods and mixed media. The performing arts class ranges in focus from scene study to play production. The 8th grade digital expression class focuses on elements of digital expression and use of different media.

### *Math, Science & Technology*

The integrated math, science, and technology curriculum in grades 6-8 centers on essential skills and concepts to bridge students from the basic numeracy and emerging problem solving of elementary school to the more advanced thinking and knowledge necessary for success in high school. The content strands focus on foundations in algebra and geometry, number sense, probability, data analysis and measurement in math across all grade levels and use the JUMP math program as a guide. In science, the earth sciences (oceanography, astronomy, geology, and ecology) are the focus in sixth grade, while in seventh grade students explore content in the life sciences with an emphasis on biology. In the eighth grade, science content focuses on physical science, with strands in the nature of matter, laws of energy, matter, motion and forces, and energy transformation. Throughout their time in grades 6-8 students use technology as a tool to explore math and science with a focus on developing foundational computing skills and greater ease with different types of technology and their use.

### *Spanish*

Sixth and seventh grade students have Spanish class for one hour twice a week for the entire school year. In this class, Spanish language and grammar are taught through the context of cultural units to strengthen students' skills in speaking, listening, writing, and reading the language with a progression from basic to more intermediate Spanish. Eighth grade students can opt either to take a yearlong course in advanced Spanish to further develop their skills and possibly earn high school credit, or they may elect to enroll in a yearlong arts or digital expression class instead.

### *Fit for Life*

All students in grades 6-8 take part in Fit for Life classes for the entire year. In Fit for Life, students develop their physical, mental, and social-emotional wellness. The curriculum—focused on sports and interpersonal communication activities, health and adolescent development, social-emotional skills, and other mind-body connections—uses a holistic approach to empower students to take responsibility for making healthy personal decisions.

### *Advisory*

In addition to the classes described above, students in grades 6-8 at ANCS are also a part of an advisory group. The advisory group is a small group of around 12 students who meet daily under the guidance of an advisor from the ANCS faculty. The advisor serves as the primary link between school and home for the student.

The advisory program in grades 6-8 is designed to help meet the developmental and academic needs of middle school-aged students. The central purposes of the advisory program are:

- To support and be supported by an advisor and other advisory members in discussing and facing academic, social, and community issues
- To learn to understand and appreciate people who are different from us
- To participate in activities that build group spirit and cohesiveness
- To work together on common projects which benefit others through service to the community

### *Library Media Center*

Both the elementary and middle campus contain library media centers that serve as information centers for the school community. Through collaboration with classroom teachers, a media specialist helps to provide information literacy skills instruction to students in order to promote independent learning, research, and reading. These library media centers operate on a flexible schedule that allows users access to resources and services throughout the regular school day.

### *Technology*

Technology is used as a learning tool throughout our school. Computer access and internet connectivity is available to students on a daily basis both in the library media centers, in labs, and in the classroom through both desktop, laptop, and tablet computers. In addition to computers, a complete array of other forms of technology is available for instructional purposes, such as LCD projectors, document cameras, scanners, and digital cameras.

### *International Baccalaureate*

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.

### *Assessment*

ANCS teachers at all grade levels utilize a variety of tools to assess student academic performance including: diagnostic assessments in the first weeks of school; informal and formal assessments from class (including unit-ending performance tasks); universal screeners; student work portfolios; and standardized tests, such as the Georgia Milestones and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).

One of the more unique features of student assessment at ANCS is the use of portfolios and exhibitions. ANCS uses student portfolios and public exhibitions of them as a way to gather a wider array of information about student learning and growth. This system of assessment is tailored appropriately to match developmental and academic performance expectations at each grade level.

In grades K-5, students maintain one portfolio of their work for presentation during a “portfolio share” at the end of the schools year, while teachers work with students to develop another that serves as a “pass along” assessment tool from grade to grade.

In grades 6-8, the use of portfolios and exhibitions widens, as students must demonstrate their competency in essential skills via specific performance areas:

- Reading
- Writing
- Research
- Mathematical & Scientific Thinking and Problem Solving
- Artistic Expression
- Formal Presentation
- Communicating in Another Language
- Personal Wellness
- Beyond the Classroom

At the end of the school year, each student leads a public exhibition of his or her portfolio. Public exhibition of student work is intended not only to give each student a goal to reach for during the school year, it is also a way to engage the wider community in the learning process at ANCS. Public exhibition is a way to build awareness of the value of each student’s efforts and the critical thinking skills that guided the student’s work. The successful completion of the portfolio and exhibition is one of the criteria for moving from one grade level to the next in grades 6-8.

### *Reporting of Student Progress*

While teachers use data from student assessments daily, several reporting structures exist at ANCS to afford students and families frequent opportunity to reflect upon student performance information in order to grow as learners. These structures include:

- **Weekly Communication Folders (grades K-5):** Each week a communication folder is sent home to parents containing updates on student performance and classroom initiatives. Often additional home enrichment materials are included, as well as suggestions on how parents can collaborate with teachers in supporting their child.
- **Advisor Progress Reports (grades 6-8):** At the midway point of each academic term, each student receives a progress report from his or her advisor. These reports give feedback on a student's development of his/her habits of learning and provide current grades for each class along with comments from the student's advisor. Additionally, advisors will send out a "warning" report between these regular reporting periods for any students in their advisories who have been flagged for academic and/or behavioral concerns.
- **End of Term Reports:** Three times a year, students and families in all grades receive end of term reports. The end of term report provides academic and related information on a student so that support and attention may be enhanced, maintained, or altered to help the student achieve maximum growth and learning. These reports provide a detailed picture of a student's performance in each subject area or class by featuring a narrative that describes the student's skills and habits relative to the standards for the course.
- **Conferences:** In grades K-5, a meeting of teacher and family and, where appropriate, student, takes place following the distribution of end-of-term reports in November to provide a place for further discussion of student progress. In grades 6-8, each student leads a conference in October with his or her parents/guardians and advisor to reflect upon performance so far in the school year and to set learning goals for the remainder of the year. Another conference is held in the spring to review the student's progress towards his or her learning goals.
- **Portfolio Presentations:** Students at all grade levels present and reflect upon their learning through a public exhibition of their work at various points throughout the school year.
- **Standardized Test Score Reports:** Student assessment score reports are provided to parents/guardians. The score reports are accompanied by a cover letter that further explains the tests, a guide to interpreting the score reports, and a series of questions designed to help students reflect upon their performance.

### *Grading*

ANCS does not use numbers, ranks, or traditional A-F grades. Rather, student academic performance is documented in relation to a student's progress towards the standards for each performance area at each grade level using the following terminology:

#### Grades K-5:

- **N:** Not Meeting Standards
- **P:** Progressing to Standards
- **M:** Meeting Standards
- **E:** Exceeding Standards

#### Grades 6-8:

- **Not Yet** moving towards Standards
- **Just Beginning** towards Standards
- **Approaching** Standards
- **Meeting** Standards
- **Exceeding** Standards

### *Class Sizes and Student-Teacher Ratios*

In order to personalize learning for students, ANCS keeps class sizes small and student-teacher ratios low through multiple teachers in most classrooms, such as a lead teacher and associate teacher pair or two lead teachers co-teaching together. The table below outlines our optimal class size and student-teacher ratios at each grade level (note: these class sizes and ratios may vary as dictated by programmatic and budgetary needs).

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Targeted Class Size</i>	<i>Targeted Student-Teacher Ratio</i>
Kindergarten	16	1:8
1 <sup>st</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup>	22	1:11
6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	24	1:12

In addition to our ANCS teaching staff, additional educators are in several ANCS classrooms each year through our Collaboration and Reflection to Enhance Atlanta Educator Effectiveness (CREATE) Teacher Residency Program detailed further in the “organizational” section that follows.

- 5. What are the school’s plans for educating special populations? (Reciting the requirements of law and rule is not sufficient)**
- 6. Describe how the charter school will meet the needs of students identified as gifted and talented.**
  - Describe how the charter school will provide state and federally mandated services for students with disabilities.
  - Describe how the charter school will provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners (ESOL).

ANCS has demonstrated its effectiveness in serving students from “special populations” during its current charter term. We will use the practices we currently employ to meet the unique educational needs of such students.

*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.

Teachers have been trained in a variety of specialized programs, including Universal Design for Learning and Orton-Gillingham. 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.

In the next charter term, for students with identified learning disabilities, the special education program at ANCS will work with students and families to meet students’ individual needs by providing accommodations and/or modifying the curriculum. Our Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing teachers in managing the case files of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). ANCS will comply with all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

When students that already have an IEP enroll at ANCS, the school will set up a meeting with the child's parents or guardians to review the IEP and determine the best course of action. To the extent specialists are required beyond the ANCS full and part time staff, ANCS will work with the Atlanta Public Schools to provide services per the terms of the "Wrap-Around Services Agreement" and/or contract those services with appropriate and licensed service providers.

Accommodations within the regular classroom, as well as modification of the curriculum when appropriate (usually modifying the criteria required for promotion and expanding the range of forms that work may take in order to demonstrate mastery, and not the modification of the standards themselves), will allow students with identified disabilities to be successful.

Each year, the Special Education Coordinator will coordinate professional development during some of the school's professional learning days. The topics to be addressed will be developed through needs assessment, review of evidence-based practice in the field of special education, and staff review of student needs. Consultants may be brought in as appropriate. Topics could include: meeting the needs of students with nonverbal learning disabilities, meeting the needs of students with executive function problems, meeting the needs of students who are depressed, and meeting the needs of students through accommodation and modification of performance based requirements.

The Special Education Coordinator will also provide consultation as requested to teachers working together during shared planning time and for individual teachers who are providing instructional support and accommodations to regular education students as well as to students who are receiving special education services. Consultation may also be provided to classroom teachers to support students.

In addition to the practices described above, ANCS will provide a number of supports to students with exhibited academic and/or behavioral concerns who may not have an IEP, including using a Student Support Team (SST) to identify struggling learners and assess the effectiveness of various interventions for students. Students with 504 plans are a part of the SST program. In addition, teachers or parents may refer a student to SST, and the team will work in consultation with parents, guardians, and/or caregivers to develop individual plans for students. Currently, approximately 7% of students at ANCS have an active SST or 504 plan.

*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.

ANCS will continue to comply with all federal and state mandated requirements related to the education of ELL students. The ELL staff member(s) whom ANCS employs will use a variety of specific instruments and procedures to identify and assess English Language Learners. The school will adhere to the WIDA English Language Proficiency standards adopted by the State of Georgia and the identification and assessment process at ANCS will include:

1. Home language surveys (HLS), which parents and guardians will complete as part of the new student registration process. The HLS will be completed only when a parent indicates that a second or non-English language is spoken in the home.

2. Incoming student records will be reviewed to determine if ELL services have been provided in any previous educational setting/school. Student records will be scrutinized for indicators of limited English language proficiency.

3. All students who have recently arrived in the United States and/or ANCS with school record indicators or what appear to be potential English Language Learner needs will be provided access to ELL screening.

4. As determined in a review of records and/or application data, English language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening will be assessed using language proficiency assessment tools recommended by the Department of Education's Office of Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement (OLAAA). The assessments to be used will include those required by the State of Georgia (a), but may include additional assessments (b) as necessary.

a. The ACCESS instrument for ELLS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners), the official assessment instrument for schools in Georgia in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. This official screening instrument is required in Georgia. WIDA-ACCESS Proficiency Test, adopted by Georgia in 2007, will be the primary assessment tool employed by ANCS.

b. Oral language proficiency tests (OLPT) as needed, such as the Language Assessment Scales (LAS-O), the Language Assessment Scales, Reading and Writing (LAS-R/W), and the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey.

5. Once an assessment of English language proficiency (ACCESS) is completed in the four language domains students will receive individualized placement in an ELL instructional setting. The ELL instructional setting will be clearly defined and if a faculty member of ANCS possesses a valid ELL/ESOL endorsement, they will provide services. If there is not an ELL certified teacher on staff, a Georgia certified ELL/ESOL instructor trained in current best ELL practices will be hired to provide services.

6. Developmentally appropriate content area instruction will be provided to identified ELL students and a spectrum of teaching strategies and instructional practices may be used in delivering instruction. All instruction and materials will be relevant and include current best practice such as: scaffolding, shelter instruction, Total Physical Response (TPR), reciprocal teaching, critical thinking questions and tasks, hands-on experiences and simplification and integration of instruction that connects to the ELL's native culture. Additionally the use of graphic organizers, controlled language, labeling, and vocabulary and word banks will be employed.

7. In addition to ongoing assessment related to the ELL's individual plan, all ELL students will be re-evaluated annually to measure performance success and whether there continues to be a for ELL program support and services. The ELL services will focus on developing an individual plan for each student identified through assessments.

*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.

*Gifted & Talented*: ANCS does not offer a separate gifted and talented program. Classes are heterogeneously grouped, in large part because of the significant amount of research that suggests that ability grouping by classes has a negative impact on all students. Instead, the differentiation of instruction and assessment within the classroom will provide opportunities for students who have demonstrated mastery of a particular skill to take on assignments that are more intellectually challenging to them, while still receiving appropriate support in skills in which they may not be as advanced. These instructional approaches are made possible by low student-to-teacher ratios and multiple teachers in classrooms.

As students progress through the educational program at ANCS, a separate “academic growth period” in the middle school grades will allow opportunities for academically-advanced students to receive additional exposure to challenging skills and content outside of their core classes.

**7. Which of the specific actions in the academic plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?**

- *Although you will be granted a broad flexibility waiver if you are granted a charter, please demonstrate why a charter is necessary for this school by providing examples of significant components of your academic plan for which you need a waiver. Please also identify the specific waivers that are required to allow the implementation of those components.*

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 the flexibility of our charter and the broad flexibility waiver:

- *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-emotion 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. Waivers from local policies related to courses and curriculum as well as state board rule 160-4-2.01 are needed to design our educational program around the needs and interests of our students and teachers.
- *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. Waivers from local policies related to the school day, weekly schedule, and annual calendar as well as state board rule 160-5-1.02 are needed to structure the use of our students’ and teachers’ time around our educational and professional program.

- *Assessments of student learning:* As noted in the academic objectives 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. This exception is only available to charter schools and is therefore a critical area of flexibility for our school.

Draft

## ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

### 8. State the school's Organizational Goals and Measures.

- *School organizational performance objectives should reflect where the school envisions itself organizationally at the end of the charter term.*
- *Objectives should include areas such as: governing board training, student and teacher retention, and student, parent and teacher satisfaction.*

### ***The organizational objectives for the proposed charter term are as follows:***

Goal 1: The Charter School will effectively uphold the school's mission.

- A. Measure 1: The Charter School's board will review and update the school's strategic plan on an annual basis.
- B. Measure 2: The Charter School's board will conduct an annual performance review of the school's Executive Director.
- C. Measure 3: On annual surveys of students, parents/guardians, and faculty/staff, at least 87% of respondents will indicate that they are satisfied with their experience at the Charter School.
- D. Measure 4: During each year of the charter term, the Charter School will formally collaborate with at least one other school or organization as a part of a dissemination/shared learning activity or program.

### 9. What specific actions will the school take to achieve its organizational performance objectives?

- *Describe the organizational innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.*
- *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase organizational effectiveness.*
- *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.*

In the fall of 2014, the ANCS Governing Board adopted a multi-year strategic plan (a one-page overview of the plan is included as an appendix to this application) in order to continue to provide students with an exceptional educational experience and to establish the strategic direction for the school in its second decade of existence. The plan was completed through a strategic planning process over 10 months aimed at identifying key strategic issues to improve the school's ability to

carry out its mission and achieve its vision. During this process, an outside consultant conducted a situation analysis through a review of data and feedback from the following sources:

- Interviews of ANCS leadership team and governing board members
- Surveys distributed to all faculty/staff and parents
- Nine separate focus groups: students, faculty/staff, and parents
- Interviews and/or surveys of 30 different external stakeholders, including representatives from APS, local funders, elected officials, and national education experts

The consultant then worked with a diverse strategic planning committee of faculty/staff, board members, and parents to review the situation analysis and determine a draft of key strategic issues in the following areas:

1. Teaching & Learning
2. Diversity
3. Faculty & Staff Development
4. Parent & Community Partnership
5. Fundraising & Resource Development
6. Facilities & Operations
7. Governance Capacity

Following a final feedback period with the school community and external stakeholders, the strategic planning committee presented the strategic plan to the ANCS Governing Board for adoption at its October 21, 2014 meeting.

The board and the school's leadership team work in partnership to identify key initiatives each year that will move the school towards the multi-year strategic goals and develop an action plan and key performance indicators for each initiative.

Several aspects of the strategic plan involve organizational innovations in key areas, such as:

*Increasing socioeconomic diversity of the student body:* Since the founding of our school, there has been an emphasis on working towards having a student population at ANCS that is socioeconomically-diverse. Why? Learning with and from students of backgrounds different than one's own is one way to live out that mission. Research from "socioeconomically integrated" schools (that is, schools with free/reduced meal percentages in approximately the 35-50% range) has shown academic benefit to students of *all* races and socioeconomic status at such schools.<sup>2</sup> And numerous other studies demonstrate higher levels of empathy, civic participation, college graduation, and other positive indicators for students who attend socioeconomically and racially diverse K-12 schools.<sup>3</sup>

A recent op-ed in *The New York Times* made the case for why seeking student diversity is in keeping with the spirit behind the original intent of charter schools as labs for public innovation.<sup>4</sup> Indeed,

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<sup>2</sup> *Educational Leadership*. "Boosting Achievement by Pursuing Diversity". Potter, Halley. Web. 10 June 2015. <<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may13/vol70/num08/Boosting-Achievement-by-Pursuing-Diversity.aspx>>

<sup>3</sup> The UCLA Civil Rights Project. Web. 11 June 2015. <<http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity>>

<sup>4</sup> *The New York Times*. Web. 15 July 2015. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/31/opinion/sunday/albert-shanker-the-original-charter-school-visionary.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/31/opinion/sunday/albert-shanker-the-original-charter-school-visionary.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share&_r=1)>

there are many public charter schools committed to being “diverse by design”<sup>5</sup> and ANCS aspires to do the same. We have increased our efforts at enrollment outreach over the past several years as a mechanism for boosting our socioeconomic diversity, and a broadening of our attendance zone is also aimed in part at addressing this area. We may also consider in the future the potential of a weighted enrollment lottery for “educationally disadvantaged” students in accordance with new Georgia law if necessary. In a country where schools are as segregated now as before the *Brown* Supreme Court decisions<sup>6</sup>, using the flexibility granted to us as a charter school to achieve an economically integrated school is truly innovative—and truly important.

*Disseminating our practices and building partnerships for school change through our Center for Collaborative Learning:* In the summer of 2014, our school launched what we call the 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.

Under the CCL, our school runs a teacher residency program called CREATE, which stands for Collaboration and Reflection to Enhance Atlanta Teacher Effectiveness. The program was initiated in the winter of 2012, when ANCS and Georgia State University’s College of Education—with the support of a \$1 million “Innovation Fund” grant from the Georgia Governor’s Office of Student Achievement—collaborated to design a residency program to train and support prospective and early career teachers in innovative and effective ways that differ from traditional new teacher induction models. Based on the success of this teacher residency program, ANCS applied for and received a \$3 million “Investing in Innovation” (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education to evolve the program into one focused on supporting new teachers and engaging schools beyond ANCS. This program—CREATE—represents a partnership between ANCS, Georgia State University (GSU), Wesley International Academy (WIA), several district-run schools from the Atlanta Public Schools (APS), and with additional support from the School Reform Initiative, Emory-Tibet Partnership, and Georgia Intern Fellowship for Teachers (GIFT). CREATE’s goals are to improve teacher satisfaction and practice, decrease teacher attrition, and to increase student learning with a particular emphasis on the Maynard Jackson cluster of schools in APS.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Hechinger Report*. Web. 10 June 2015 <[http://hechingerreport.org/content/in-new-orleans-and-nationally-growing-number-of-charter-schools-aspires-to-be-diverse-by-design\\_13756/](http://hechingerreport.org/content/in-new-orleans-and-nationally-growing-number-of-charter-schools-aspires-to-be-diverse-by-design_13756/)>

<sup>6</sup> *The New York Times*. Web. 15 July 2015 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/20/education/segregation-prominent-in-schools-study-finds.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/20/education/segregation-prominent-in-schools-study-finds.html?_r=0)>

*Develop a financially-viable “farm-to-school” program to improve student outcomes:* 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.

**10. Which of the specific actions in the organizational plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?**

- *Although you will be granted a broad flexibility waiver if you are granted a charter, please demonstrate why you need a charter by providing examples of a significant component of your organizational plan for which you need a waiver. Please also identify the waivers that are required to allow the implementation of that component.*

*Faculty/staff qualifications and compensation:* 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 an array of competencies necessary for teaching in a school that focuses on collaboration, interdisciplinary teaching, curriculum development, and creative, flexible thinking. These factors take precedence for us over a teaching candidate’s certification status.

Additionally, within our school, there exists a range of pathways to additional roles and responsibilities that can result in differentiated compensation to keep veteran educators at our school and fully engaged in work that is meaningful to them and beneficial to students. For these reasons, waivers from local policies related to certification and compensation as well as state board rules related to the “highly-qualified” provisions of Title II, Part A are needed to recruit, hire, and retain our teaching faculty.

## GOVERNANCE

A key characteristic of charter schools is that an autonomous governing board makes decisions on behalf of the school. It is imperative that all governing boards demonstrate substantial autonomy, decision-making authority and capacity.

11. Describe how an autonomous governing board will make decisions for the school. *\*Please note that the following relates to the board that will immediately replace the founding board, as well as future boards:*

- *Identify each member of the governing board; describe the composition of the governing board (number of members, skillsets to be represented, how members are/will be representative of the school and the community, etc.; describe how and when board members will be selected, and the terms that governing board members will serve.*
- *Describe the governing board's function, duties and role in the areas of budget, resource allocation, personnel decisions (primarily school leader selection, evaluation, and termination), establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, curriculum and school operations.*
- *Please use the Governance matrix (found on the Charter School Division's website) to illustrate the level of autonomy your Governing Board will have. Please note: This matrix will become part of your charter contract.*
- *Use this section to provide a narrative of your matrix, including anything in the matrix that requires further explanation or clarification.*
- *Describe your plan for ensuring that you maintain a diverse board with broad skillsets.*
- *Describe how and why governing board members may be removed.*
- *Georgia law now requires Charter Schools to provide initial training for newly approved charter school Governing Boards as well as annual governance training thereafter. Governance training should help build the capacity needed to make decisions in the above-mentioned areas. Trainers must be selected from a SBOE-approved list that ensures that the training covers certain SBOE requirements. Beyond those requirements, as a best practice, Charter Schools should also ensure that it selects a training program that covers areas of identified needs.*
- *Describe your plan and timeline for securing a provider for your initial governance training as well as annual training thereafter. Include in this plan, areas of focus that are specific to your board and school.*
- *Disclose any potential conflicts of interest and describe how the governing board will ensure that current and future board members avoid conflicts of interest.*

### **Current Board Members & Board Recruitment**

The current members of the ANCS Governing Board are listed in the table below:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Board Role</b>	<b>Occupation</b>
<b>Mitch White</b>	Board Chair	Educator
<b>Lia Santos</b>	Governance Chair	HR Consultant
<b>Alice Jonsson</b>	Accountability Chair	Former Educator
<b>Ryan Camp</b>	Finance/Operations Chair	Business Analyst
<b>Narin Hassan</b>	Fund Development Chair	College Professor
<b>Melissa McKay Hagan</b>	Secretary	Educator
<b>Leigh Finlayson</b>	Board Member	Attorney
<b>Tiffany Mitchell</b>	Board Member	Educator
<b>Tara Stoinski</b>	Board Member	Scientist
<b>Philippe Pellerin</b>	Board Member	Real Estate Developer
<b>Matt Underwood</b>	Ex-Officio	ANCS Executive Director

The board's governance committee is focused on recruitment of new board members with a focus on identifying the specific skills and characteristics needed each year for new board members. The nominating sub-committee of the governance committee—described in more detail in our by-laws later in this section—formally selects new board members for the slate presented to the board and PTCA for approval.

### ***Governance Autonomy & Relationship between Board and School Leadership***

The ANCS Governing Board strives to set clear distinctions about the role of the board and its relationship with the leadership and staff of the school. The graphic below<sup>7</sup> provides a useful guide to how our board approaches making these distinctions between the time and attention of the board and the time and attention of the school's leadership when making decisions.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Hundley DeKuyper, *Trustee Handbook: A Guide to Effective Governance for Independent Schools*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (National Association of Independent Schools, 1998).

## NAIS Design of the Partnership<sup>1</sup>

Policies	Time and Attention Graph
<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <p>Mission Survival Leadership Major</p>	<p>Board's Decision</p> <p>CEO's Advice</p>
<p><b>Partnership</b></p> <p>Authorizations Finance Policies Enrollment Employment Terms</p>	<p>Shared Decision: Board and CEO</p>
<p><b>Operational</b></p> <p>Staffing Program Systems</p>	<p>Board's Advice</p> <p>CEO's Decision</p>

Above the diagonal line = allocation of board's time  
Below the diagonal line = allocation of CEO's time

The governance matrix included as an appendix provides greater detail as to how the board and school leadership delineate roles in key areas, such as personnel, financial decisions, and curriculum.

### ***Board By-Laws***

The by-laws of the ANCS Governing Board outline the structure of our corporation and the specific duties of governing board members. The by-laws are listed in their entirety as exhibit \_\_\_\_\_. Key sections are provided below.

### ***General Powers***

The business and affairs of ANCS shall be managed under the direction of the Board. The members shall in all cases act as a Board, and they may adopt such rules and regulations for the



conduct of their meetings and the management of the corporation as they may deem proper, not inconsistent with ANCS' Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, and the laws of this State.

#### *Duties of the Board*

The Board shall be charged with the management of the affairs of the corporation, and shall pursue such policies and principles as shall be in accordance with law, the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation, these By-Laws, and any written charter entered into by the Board. The Board shall be considered as having the powers of a Board of Directors and shall be deemed to be acting as the Board of Directors for all purposes of the Nonprofit Corporation Law. By way of elucidation, and not in limitation, the Board shall be responsible to carry out the following duties and obligations:

a. The Board shall uphold and promote the school's mission and vision and ensure effective organizational planning on the part of the school through an annual strategic planning and review process that will review and update the school's short-term, mid-term, and long-range goals, and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the school's mission and plans;

b. The Board shall either directly or through a governance committee provide for the annual appraisal of the Executive Director's performance;

c. The Board ensures the financial stability of the corporation through regular monthly review of financial statements and reports, an annual independent audit, and direct oversight of major financial commitments and decisions;

d. The Board shall take an active role, either directly or through a Board committee, in resolving grievances and conflicts which may arise within the school community involving students, parents/guardians, staff, administration, and Board members.

To the extent permitted by law, the Board may, by general resolution, delegate to officers of the corporation or to committees of the Board such powers as it deems necessary or appropriate to carry out its duties and obligations.

#### *Structure, Number, Tenure, and Qualifications*

The Board shall consist of at least seven (7) and no more than thirteen (13) voting members, which number shall be fixed from time to time by the Board.

The membership of the Board will consist of a simple majority of parents/guardians of current and/or alumni students, including at least one (1) parent/guardian of a current elementary campus student and one (1) parent/guardian of a current middle campus student.

Members shall be natural persons who are 18 years of age or older and must be residents of the State of Georgia. Regularly elected Board member terms are for up to three years and begin July 1 of the year in which they were appointed.

#### *Termination of Membership*

The Governing Board, by affirmative vote of two-thirds of all of the members of the Board, may suspend or expel a member for cause after an appropriate hearing, and may, by a majority vote of those present at any regularly constituted meeting, terminate the membership of any member who becomes ineligible for membership.

### *Meetings of the Board*

The order of business at all meetings shall be set by the Board Chair. The Board must have a quorum of five (5) voting members present in order to conduct business. The Board shall be subject to the provisions of Open Meetings Law, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, and Inspection of Public Records Law, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70.

### *Conflict of Interest*

Members shall comply with ethics and conflict of interest provisions applicable to members of the Atlanta Board of Education. Board members shall not participate in discussions or votes related to any ANCS business transactions or affairs which would cause an actual, or would give an appearance of a, conflict of interest.

### *Number and Qualifications of Officers*

The officers of ANCS shall consist of a Chair, a Chair-Elect, a Recorder, and such other officers and assistant officers as may be deemed necessary, each of whom shall be confirmed by the Board. The same individual may simultaneously hold more than one office of the corporation except that the Chair may not simultaneously hold another office.

### *Board Standing Committees*

The standing committees of the Board are each chaired by a member of the Board; the Chair is not permitted to chair committees.

The standing committees and their respective responsibilities are as follows:

**Accountability, Compliance, and Curriculum.** Review Executive Director-prepared reports, and present such reports at each Board meeting, on one or more compliance items from the charter; district, state, or federal law, policy, or regulation; or any other source – including any annual accountability and compliance reports required by the district or state, and a monthly academic performance report.

**Business Operations.** Review and recommend annual budget for Board approval. Monitor budget compliance, all financial expenditures, and revenues and other financial issues throughout the year. Recommend financial policies to the Board. Work with the Director of Business and Operations, Executive Director, and other staff to establish financial goals and policies. Work to secure funding and grants to support ANCS. Business Operations Chair will, in collaboration with the Executive Director, prepare and present a report on current financial and operational performance at each Board meeting.

**Executive.** At its discretion each year, the Board may vote to create an Executive Committee, which will include at a minimum the Chair, Chair-Elect (when such an officer is in place), Business Operations Chair, Recorder, and Executive Director, with the authority to handle urgent or routine issues during the period between regular monthly Board meetings. All meetings and decisions of the Executive Committee must be reported to the Board at the regular meeting and any actions taken may be overruled by simple majority vote of the full Board.

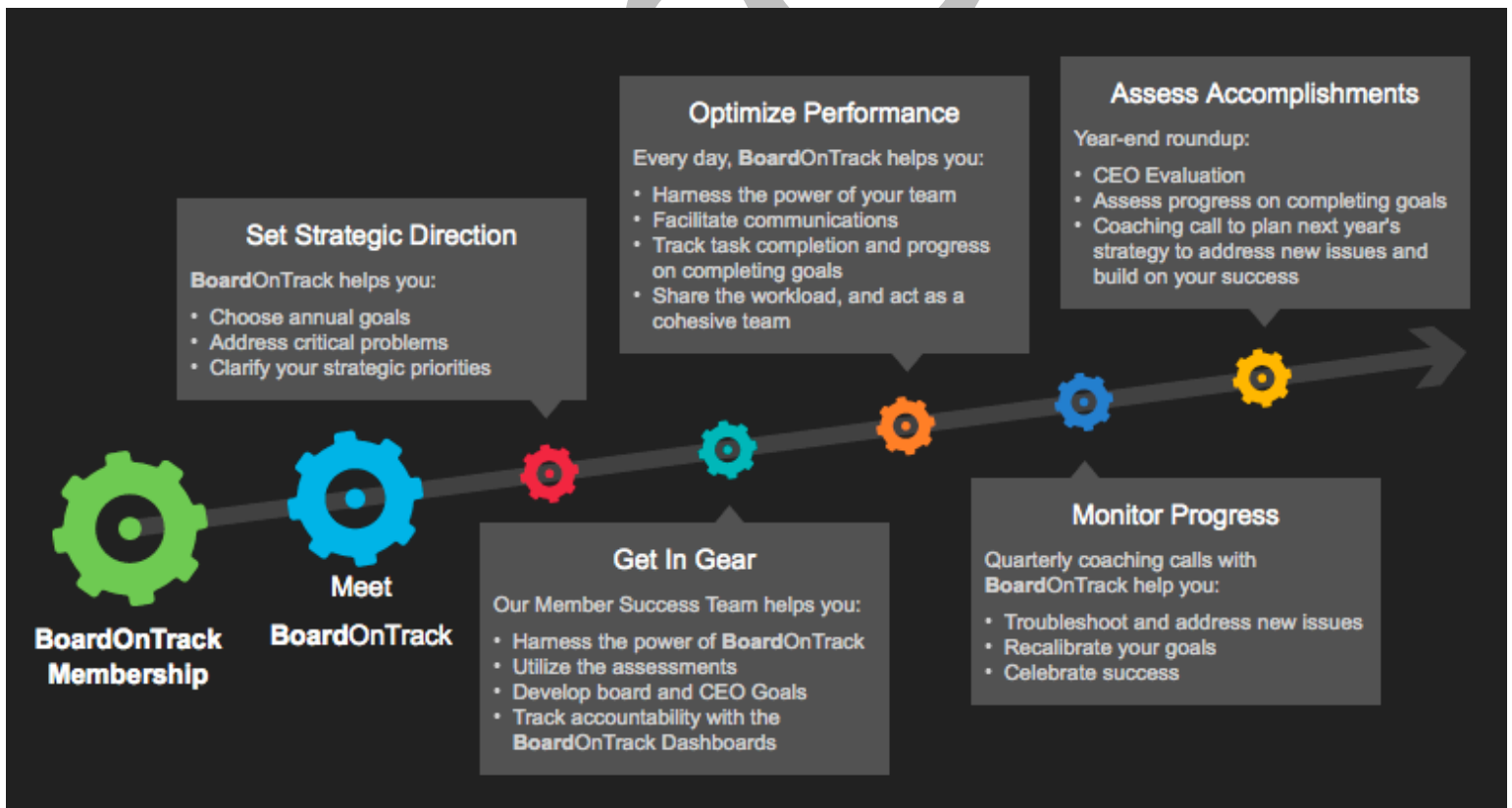
**Fund Development.** Raise funds through an Annual Campaign to supplement the per-pupil funding received from Atlanta Public Schools. Ensure that all fundraising at school is vetted through the development committee.

Governance. Develop the Board policies, procedures, and training. Act as the parliamentarian. Establish hiring, grievance, transfer, evaluation, and other personnel procedures. Provide support for the Executive Director in the implementation of these policies. Conduct, and report to the Board on, an annual performance review of the Executive Director and the Principals.

Nominating. Announce openings, accept nominations for, review candidates, and make recommendation(s) to the full Board candidates for open Board positions. Obtain school community input on nominations prior to selecting and recommending Board members for election by the Board.

**Board Governance Training**

For the past three years, the ANCS Governing Board has worked with Board on Track (formerly The High Bar), a premier support organization for charter school governing boards. Board on Track works nationally with over 500 charter school governing boards, and their staff members possess a wealth of knowledge about how effective charter school boards operate. ANCS’s membership with Board on Track provides us with a host of supports detailed in the graphic below. Board on Track will serve as the governance training provider for ANCS. Because of their existing relationship with our board, they have been able to tailor a training plan focused on our board’s needs as we transition into the second decade of existence.



## FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

### 12. State the school's Financial Goals and Measures.

- *School financial performance objectives should reflect where the school envisions itself financially at the end of the charter term.*
- *Objectives should emphasize fiscal health and sustainability.*

***The financial goals and measures for the proposed charter term are as follows:***

Goal 1: The Charter School will demonstrate responsible financial practices and fiscal sustainability.

- A. Measure 1: The Charter School's board will adopt a balanced annual budget.
- B. Measure 2: The Charter School's board will maintain a general operating reserve fund of at least 5% of its annual operating budget.

### 13. What specific actions will the school take to achieve the financial performance objectives?

- *Describe the financial innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.*
- *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase financial effectiveness.*
- *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.*

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.

The flexibility afforded ANCS as a charter school to set our own budget and determine spending priorities in line with our school's mission and strategic plan is key to supporting all of the academic and organizational innovations described in earlier sections of this application. We plan on continuing to employ the same sound financial practices into our next charter term. As we are not planning for any growth or major programmatic changes outside of our current budget levels, the financial projections for the coming charter term reflect our expectations around state and local funding based on what is known today.

**14. Which of the specific actions in the financial plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?**

- *Although you will be granted a broad flexibility waiver if you are granted a charter, please provide examples of a significant component of your financial plan for which you need a waiver – and the waivers that are required to allow the implementation of that component.*

In order to effectively implement the innovations described in the academic and organizational sections above (some of which require waivers from state and local policy), the ability to craft our own budget around those innovations and free from current or future programming requirements and associated expenses is essential for the success of our overall school program.

## STUDENT ADMISSIONS

### 15. How will students be admitted to the charter school?

- *What is the school's attendance zone?*
- *Please check any of the following enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) that apply put them in the rank order in which you will use them. If the school will not utilize any enrollment priorities, please leave this section blank.*
  - A sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up charter school
  - A sibling of a student enrolled in another local school designated in the charter
  - A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school
  - Students matriculating from a local school designated in the charter
- *Describe the rules and procedures that will govern admission and registration. Please note that "enrollment priorities", "admission" and "registration" are different concepts. To avoid confusion the Department recommends the following:*
  - *"enrollment priorities" describe those students granted priority pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1);*
  - *"admission" describes pre-lottery processes and forms; and*
  - *"registration" describes post-lottery processes and forms after the student has been offered a seat at the school through enrollment priorities or the lottery process.*
- *How will the charter school reach students representative of the racial and socioeconomic diversity in the school system?*
- *How does the school plan to recruit students and maintain/increase enrollment?*

The dates for all admission periods will be set by the Governing Board each year and posted on the school's website, in flyers posted around the city of Atlanta, and on all admission application materials. The admission periods for the following school year will not begin until at least January of the current school year each year.

Prior to open admission period each year there will be an admission period for returning students and their siblings; this will apply in all subsequent years as well (i.e., prior to the initial regular registration there will be a pre-enrollment period for returning students and their siblings. Admission forms and information regarding the cut-off date will be sent to the families of all currently enrolled students of the school at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the admission period. All eligible returning students and their un-enrolled siblings who submit complete admission application forms during the admission period will be registered for the following school year unless there are not enough spaces available in any particular grade or program. In that case, all returning students who submit complete registrations during the admission period will be

registered and the un-enrolled siblings will be enrolled based on a lottery to be held in an open forum on the date stated in the admission information.

Following this initial admission period, there will be an open admission period each year during which time any interested students may submit an admission application (see appendix for a copy of the admission application). The dates and times for this open admission period shall be established by the Governing Board each year and shall end no later than the last day of April for the school year beginning the fall of the same year.

Admission shall be open to any student who resides within the 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 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.

Lottery and waiting list. If a lottery is required after any registration or enrollment period, that lottery will be held in an open forum at the time and place listed in the registration materials and/or flyers. All lotteries will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with Georgia law and that ensures that each eligible student receives an equal chance of being selected. All names will be selected in each lottery, and the students who are not selected for registration will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which their names were selected. Once all grades are filled or once the lottery, if necessary, is complete, any additional students who submit an application shall be placed at the end of the cumulative waiting list on a first come, first served basis.

Enrollment priorities: Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1), ANCS will continue to use the following enrollment priorities in the order in which they are listed below:

1. A sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up charter school
2. A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school

Enrollment outreach: As mentioned earlier in this application, our school has been focused on increasing the socioeconomic diversity of our student population. Over the past few years we have engaged in a more robust enrollment outreach effort, including:

- Canvassing neighborhoods in our attendance zone
- Posting signage about enrollment throughout the neighborhoods in our attendance zone
- Visiting local preschool and pre-K programs in our attendance zone to share information about our school and the enrollment process
- Using social media, neighborhood email groups, and other forms of communication to more widely disseminate information about our school and the enrollment process

We will continue to employ these outreach methods and use the knowledge and expertise of our school's diversity committee to hone our approach to maintain a diverse student body. As well, if

these outreach efforts do not result in the increase in socioeconomic diversity which we seek, our board will consider the possible future use of a weighted enrollment lottery for “educationally disadvantaged” students as allowed under Georgia law. If necessary, we would make a request to APS and the GaDOE to use such a lottery under the guidance provided by the GaDOE.

Draft



## *FACILITIES (START-UPS ONLY)*

A charter school's facility is a very important part of implementation. Without a proper facility, the charter school will not be feasible. Best practice is that a school's facility costs should not exceed 15% of its total expenditures. Additionally, please be aware that all facilities must be approved by the Department's Facilities Services Unit (more information regarding this step can be found on the Department's website). For this reason, it is imperative that the charter school not commit to a facility before it has been approved. We encourage new schools that are planning construction or major renovations prior to the admission of students consider a planning year to safely complete the construction process. We also strongly encourage Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) pending approval. Also for this reason, it is encouraged that a school have at least two facility options.

### **16. Describe the school facility that the charter school proposes to use.**

- *What is the location of the facility?*
- *Is the facility new or existing?*
- *Will the facility require renovations? If so, describe the extent of the renovations and source of funding to pay for the renovations.*

ANCS will continue to occupy the same facilities in which it has operated for its current charter term. The elementary campus is located at 688 Grant St, Atlanta 30315 in the historic Slaton Elementary building, and the middle campus is located at 820 Essie Ave, Atlanta 30316 in the historic Anne E. West building.

### **17. Does the charter school have an MOU for the facility pending charter and facility approval?**

- Yes, we have an MOU and it is provided as Exhibit \_\_\_\_.
- *The MOU should include the total proposed facility cost.*
- *The MOU should set forth any material terms that will be reflected in a lease, such as the lease term.*

ANCS is in a lease agreement with APS for the 688 Grant St. facility. ANCS owns the 820 Essie Ave. facility and is in a mortgage agreement with Self Help Credit Union. A copy of both the lease agreement and mortgage agreement are included in the appendices.

### **18. Does the charter school have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the proposed facility?**

- Yes, we have a CO and it is provided as Exhibit \_\_\_\_.

A copy of the certificate of occupancy for each of our facilities is included in the appendices.

### **19. Does the charter school have an emergency safety plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 for the proposed facility?**

- Yes, we have an emergency safety plan and it is provided as Exhibit \_\_\_\_.

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.

Draft

## SIGNATURE SHEET

The law requires your school provide assurances that it will do certain things and comply with certain laws. This Assurance Form enumerates all of these requirements and, when you submit this signed Signature Sheet with this Assurance Form as part of your Start-up Charter School Application Package, you are providing the legal assurance that your charter school understands and will do these things. This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the school.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School located in Fulton County is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that if awarded a charter the school:

1. Shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations;
2. Shall be subject to the control and management of the local board of the local school system in which the charter school is located, as provided in the charter and in a manner consistent with the Constitution;
3. Shall not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, national origin, gender, disability or age;
4. Shall be subject to all federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of school students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions; and the prevention of unlawful conduct;
5. Shall be subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A § 20-2-1050 requiring a brief period of quiet reflection;
6. Shall ensure that the charter school and its governing board are subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq. and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.;
7. Shall ensure that the charter school's governance board members may only receive compensation for their reasonable and actual expenses incurred in connection with performance of their duties;
8. Shall ensure that the charter school's governing board members receive initial training and annual training thereafter, provided by a SBOE-approved vendor;
9. Shall ensure that the charter school's governing board adopts and abides by a conflicts of interest policy;
10. Shall ensure that all teachers will be certified or highly qualified in compliance with No Child Left Behind;
11. Shall comply with O.C.G.A. §20-2-210(b)(1) and implement an evaluation system as adopted and defined by the State Board of Education for elementary and secondary school teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals;

12. Shall comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements, and participate in statewide assessments;
13. Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as applicable;
14. Shall provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners, as applicable;
15. Shall provide for supplemental educational services as required by federal law and pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03, and for remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01;
16. Shall notify the state of any intent to contract with a for-profit entity for education management services;
17. Shall notify the state of any changes in for-profit entity contracted with for management services;
18. Shall be subject to the requirement that it shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized by local boards by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133;
19. Shall comply with federal due process procedures regarding student discipline and dismissal;
20. Shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school;
21. Shall have a written grievance procedure to resolve student, parent, and teacher complaints;
22. Shall have a written procedure for resolving conflicts between the charter school and the local board of education;
23. Shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1 relating to fingerprinting and criminal background checks;
24. Shall remit payments to TRS on behalf of employees and shall employ teachers in accordance with TRS;
25. Shall ensure that if transportation is provided for its students, the school shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
26. Shall ensure that if the charter school participates in federal school meals programs, then it shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
27. Shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 and submit and obtain approval from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency;
28. Shall comply with the state facility requirements regarding site codes, facility codes, the submission of architectural plans for any new facility that the school may build or occupy during the charter term and all other facility requirements as established by the Department;
29. Shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160, subsection (e) of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-320, and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-740;
30. Shall be subject to an annual financial audit conducted by the state auditor or, if specified in the charter, by an independent certified public accountant licensed in this state;
31. Shall designate a Chief Financial Officer that meets all requirements as established by the Charter Schools Rule and Guidelines;

- 32. Shall secure adequate insurance coverage prior to opening and shall maintain such coverage throughout the charter term in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia;
- 33. Shall acknowledge that all criteria used to calculate QBE funding may not be waived; and
- 34. Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter school.

This Charter School Application, Assurance Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Board of Education on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Representative, Charter School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Local Board of Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If a Charter is granted, Petitioners assure that the proposed charter school's programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with the terms of the Charter and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Representative, Charter School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Local Board of Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# DOCUMENTATION OF VOTE (CONVERSIONS ONLY)

This petition has been agreed to, by secret ballot, by a majority of the faculty and instructional staff members at a meeting called with two weeks' advance notice during which time a complete petition draft was available for review.

Date of Vote \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Faculty and Instructional Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Number Approving \_\_\_\_\_

Percent Approving \_\_\_\_\_

Number Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_

Percent Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This petition has been agreed to, by secret ballot, by a majority of the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the school who were present at a meeting called for the purpose of deciding whether to submit the petition. Two weeks' advance notice of the meeting was published during which time a complete petition draft was available for review.

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Parents Attending Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Number Approving \_\_\_\_\_

Percent Approving \_\_\_\_\_

Number Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_

Percent Disapproving \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# EXHIBITS

The following Exhibits are required to complete your Charter School Application Package. Please tab the Exhibits to match the item numbers below. Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible.

1. Attach an official copy of the certificate of incorporation for the required Georgia nonprofit corporation from the Georgia Secretary of State. Note – Please Note: All charter school contracts—including those of start-up and renewal conversion charter schools—must now be held by a Georgia nonprofit corporation.
2. Attach a copy of the by-laws for the nonprofit corporation.
3. Attach a copy of any admissions (pre-lottery) application the charter school proposes to use.
4. Attach the charter school’s proposed annual calendar and a draft of the charter school’s daily school schedule.
5. Attach a copy of any intended contracts for the provision of education management services. Such contracts shall describe the specific services for which the contracting organization is responsible. Such contracts should clearly delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of the management organization and the governing board in the management and operation of the charter school.
6. Attach a copy of any agreements with your local authorizer.
7. Attach a copy of any MOU for a proposed facility.
8. Complete and attach the start-up budget template located on the Charter Schools Division’s website: Please note that the budget template includes:
  - A monthly cash flow projection detailing revenues and expenditures for the charter school’s first two (2) years of operation;
  - An alternative monthly cash flow projection detailing revenues and expenditures for the first two (2) years of operation with the assumption of one-half (1/2) of the projected student enrollment; and
  - A spreadsheet projecting cash flow, revenue estimates, budgets, and expenditures on an annual basis for the first five (5) years of the charter term.
  - *Note – Any sources of revenue appearing in the template that are anticipated to come from outside of state and local funding must be supported by documentation. Failure to provide supporting documentation will result in the revenue source being removed from the budget.*
9. ANCS Organizational Chart