1. *Why do you want a charter school?*

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

*· What will you be able to do with a charter that you can’t do without a charter?*

*· How were parents, community members, and other interested parties involved in developing the petition and how will each be involved with the school?*

*· What is your understanding of the Fulton County Board of Education’s obligation under the law to “control and manage” the charter schools it authorizes?*

*· Can you describe the larger community in which the charter school will be located to include demographic and subgroup data as well as information about the other schools in the area?*

*· How will this charter school serve the identified community more effectively than existing public schools in the area?*

*· (Renewals ONLY) Provide evidence of a secret ballot vote indicating that the petition was agreed to by a majority of the families of the students participating in the secret ballot vote per FCS policy.*

The Main Street Academy began in 2006 as the vision of residents of the Tri-Cities neighborhoods of south Fulton County including College Park, Hapeville, and East Point. The process came to fruition when the school opened its doors in 2010. The Founding Committee and the Governing Board that succeeded it envisioned a school where all children could receive a world-class education grounded in the liberal arts, and where teachers would have the freedom to develop innovative lesson plans to provoke students’ curiosity. The Main Street Academy founders envisioned a school reflecting the values of the community while improving students’ educational experiences by bringing together parents, and children, and teachers and community leaders.

This vision remains intact as the school prepares this petition for renewal of its charter. While we have exciting academic innovations planned for our third charter term, it is continuity rather than change that marks The Main Street Academy’s purpose:

*To provide all students with a challenging and enriching education from a dedicated and student-focused staff, in partnership with our highly-involved parents. Students will leave The Main Street Academy with high expectations of themselves as they prepare for further education and become contributing members of their diverse communities.*

This purpose is enacted as a tuition-free public charter school serving students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. The parents/guardians, students and educators work together to create a positive environment focused on developing the students’ whole selves. The school explores and celebrates cultural differences in an academically challenging, nurturing and multi-ethnic environment.

The Main Street Academy is part of a broad effort for development in the Tri-Cities area. The Main Street Academy complements the school district’s strategic plan as well as countless organizations in the county working diligently to uplift the community. The charter school has and continues to provide a viable option for parents in south Fulton County. Waiting lists have consistently existed in multiple grades (243 students were on the waiting list as of August 6, 2019), and the school has grown from 563 students in 2010-2011 to 823 in 2018-2019.

The community’s devotion to The Main Street Academy is observable using any number of metrics, perhaps none more so than the school’s continued growth despite a challenging beginning. When The Main Street Academy opened its doors in 2010, teachers struggled with all of the difficulties in opening a school for the first time, not the least of which was getting to know a student body that arrived with variable academic needs. This was particularly true in upper grade levels, where student needs and previous educational experience were so variable as to make teaching core subjects extremely difficult. When combined with all of the other challenges encountered by a start-up, this made for a difficult first year of operation. Nor was the Governing Board pleased with the academic performance in that first year, although there were some bright spots.

A number of reforms and initiatives adopted in each year of The Main Street Academy’s operation have helped to establish a positive learning environment. This is evidenced in many of the standardized test results. The first year scores in core subjects were quite weak:

Percent of Students Passing CRCT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 |
| Mathematics | 70.5% |
| Science | 66.5% |
| Social Studies | 68.4% |

A short three years later indicate improvement in each of the three subject areas:

Percent of Students Passing CRCT

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 70.5% | 78% |
| Science | 66.5% | 75% |
| Social Studies | 68.4% | 74% |

The data reveal other important patterns as well. If one looks at the mean scaled score in the core subjects, a distinct pattern of improvement from 2011 through 2014 is evidenced.

Mean Scaled Score (Third Grade Level)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 845.03 | 852.7 |
| Science | 828.48 | 837.93 |
| Social Studies | 827.36 | 842.88 |

Mean Scaled Score (Fourth Grade Level)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 823.14 | 824.98 |
| Science | 822.18 | 838.04 |
| Social Studies | 812.92 | 823.7 |

Mean Scaled Score (Fifth Grade Level)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 811.24 | 854.18 |
| Science | 807.13 | 833.42 |
| Social Studies | 806.25 | 829.68 |

The application of a rigorous curriculum combined with differentiated instruction brought significant improvement in the Level 3 (exceeds category), particularly when viewed at the specific grade level.

Percent of Students scoring Level 3 (Third Grade Level)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 44.7% | 55.9% |
| Science | 33.8% | 43.4% |
| Social Studies | 24.7% | 49.3% |

Percent of Students scoring Level 3 (Fourth Grade Level)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 29.2% | 33% |
| Science | 39.2% | 45.1% |
| Social Studies | 9.2% | 21.6% |

Percent of Students scoring Level 3 (Fifth Grade Level)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
| Mathematics | 15.2% | 57.1% |
| Science | 18.8% | 36.1% |
| Social Studies | 10.4% | 29.2% |

In TMSA’s 2014 charter petition, we argued the Middle School in particular had been a challenge, particularly because enrollment in grades 6-8 had meant every year The Main Street Academy matriculated new middle school students from area schools with varying degrees of readiness for the school’s rigorous curriculum. To put it plainly, The Main Street Academy’s significant academic gains have come from those grades where the students have been in TMSA the longest. The Middle School regularly contended with a student body more differentiated in terms of academic needs.

This is still true five years later, as evidenced by the following tables indicating the geographic reach of The Main Street Academy during the 2018-2019 school year, as students zoned for 24 elementary schools and seven middle schools in the area attended the school:

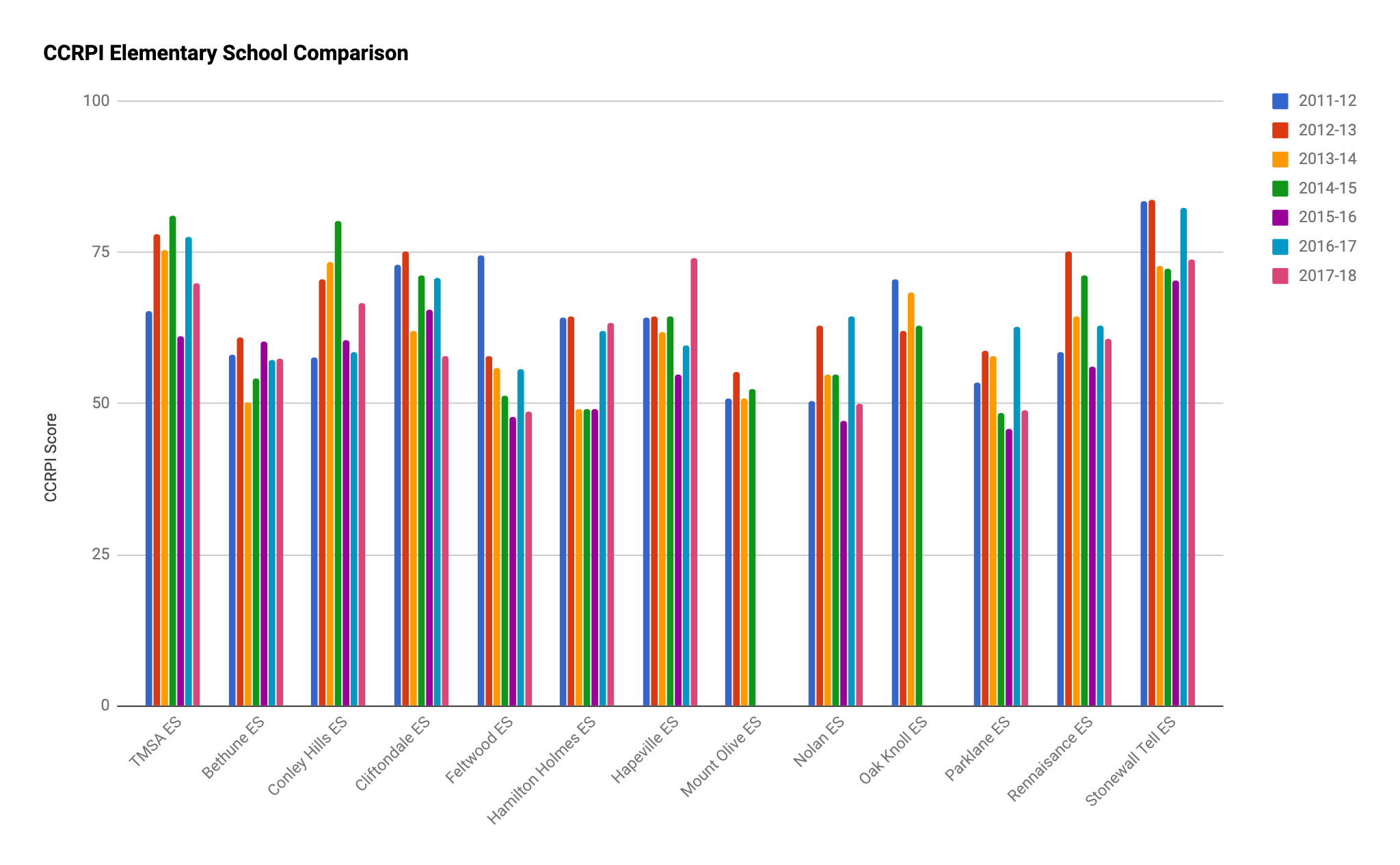
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Building of Residence - Elementary School** | **# Students** | **Percentage** |
| Bethune Elementary | 54 | 9.80% |
| Hamilton E Holmes Elementary | 45 | 8.17% |
| Love T. Nolan Elementary | 42 | 7.62% |
| College Park Elementary | 38 | 6.90% |
| Feldwood Elementary | 38 | 6.90% |
| Parklane Elementary | 30 | 5.44% |
| Renaissance Elementary | 27 | 4.90% |
| Liberty Point Elementary School | 26 | 4.72% |
| Heritage Elementary | 25 | 4.54% |
| Seaborn Lee Elementary | 25 | 4.54% |
| Oakley Elementary | 24 | 4.36% |
| Cliftondale Elementary | 21 | 3.81% |
| Stonewall Tell Elementary | 21 | 3.81% |
| S L Lewis Elementary | 20 | 3.63% |
| Asa G. Hilliard Elementary | 18 | 3.27% |
| Conley Hills Elementary | 18 | 3.27% |
| Evoline West Elementary | 15 | 2.72% |
| Stonewall Tell Elementary | 15 | 2.72% |
| Brookview Elementary | 14 | 2.54% |
| Campbell Elementary | 11 | 2.00% |
| Randolph Elementary | 11 | 2.00% |
| Gullatt Elementary | 8 | 1.45% |
| Palmetto Elementary | 4 | 0.73% |
| Hapeville Elementary | 1 | 0.18% |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Building of Residence - Middle School** | **# Students** | **Percentage** |
| Ronald E. McNair Middle School | 50 | 19.69% |
| Woodland Middle School | 50 | 19.69% |
| Paul West Middle School | 48 | 18.90% |
| Sandtown Middle | 32 | 12.60% |
| Renaissance Middle | 27 | 10.63% |
| Bear Creek Middle School | 26 | 10.24% |
| Camp Creek Middle School | 21 | 8.27% |

Despite the challenges of accepting a wide swath of students with varied needs, 8th grade English Language scores from the Georgia Milestones tells an exciting story:

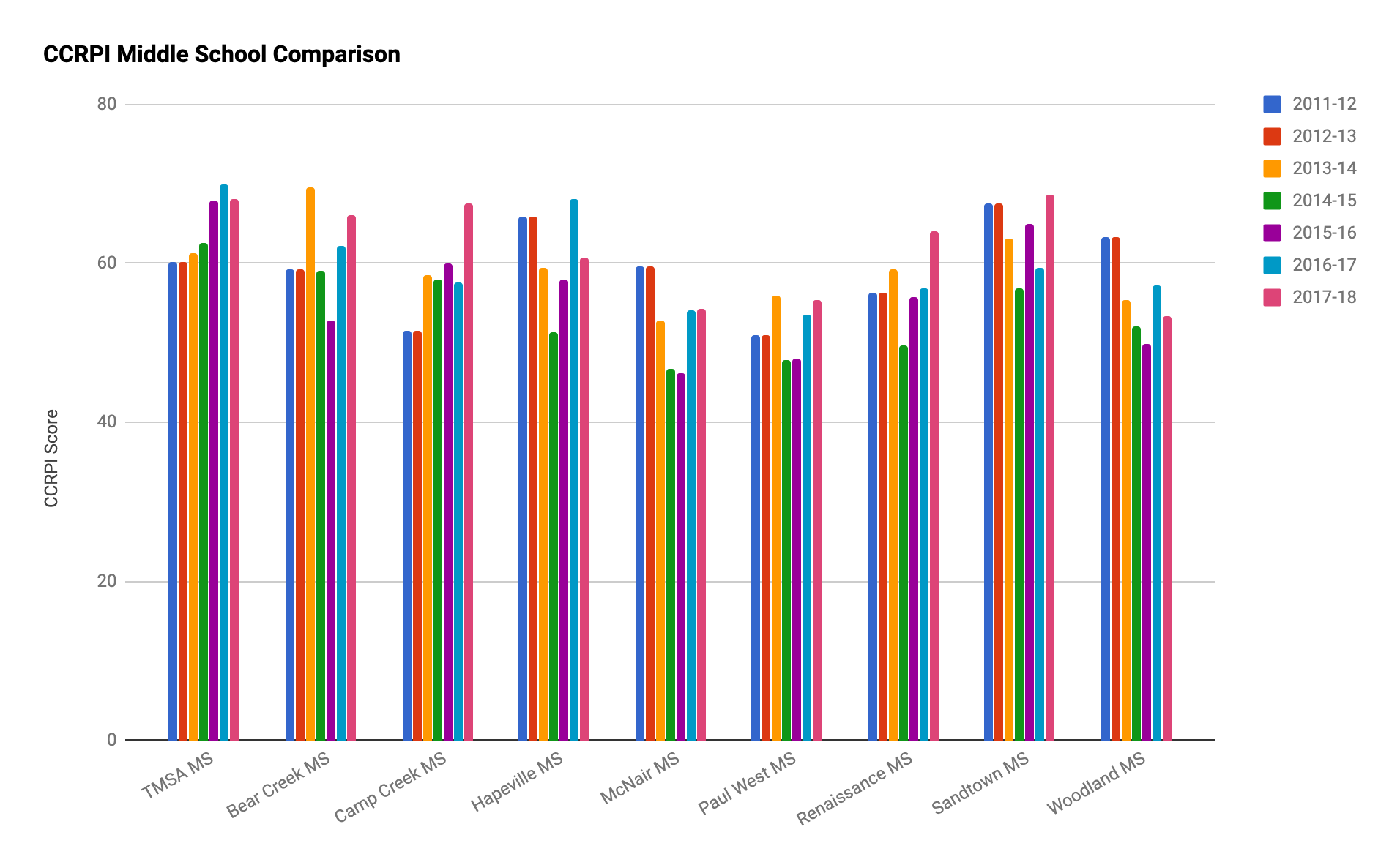
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| 8th graders scoring Proficient and Distinguished on Georgia Milestones | 35% | 32% | 35% | 47% | 62% |

When specifically compared to Fulton County Schools in The Main Street Academy’s enrollment zone, greater degrees of achievement and improvement occur at The Main Street Academy. This is as true of the Middle School (grades 6-8) as the Elementary School (grades 3-5).



In fact, The Main Street Academy outperforms many of the comparative elementary schools, in each year from 2011-12 through 2017-2018. The Xs in the table below indicate where TMSA outperformed another Fulton County elementary school zone from which TMSA educates students.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** |
| **Bethune ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Conley Hills ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Cliftondale ES** |  |  | **X** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** |
| **Feldwood ES** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Hamilton Holmes ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Hapeville ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |
| **Mount Olive ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | School closed | | |
| **Nolan ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Oak Knoll ES** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | School closed | | |
| **Parklane ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Renaissance ES** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Stonewall Tell ES** |  |  | **X** | **X** |  |  |  |
| how many TMSA outperforms | 8/12 | 11/12 | 12/12 | 12/12 | 8/10 | 9/10 | 8/10 |



In comparing middle schools, the contrast is even more striking:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **2011-12** | **2012-13** | **2013-14** | **2014-15** | **2015-16** | **2016-17** | **2017-18** |
| **Bear Creek MS** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Camp Creek MS** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Hapeville MS** | **X** |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **McNair MS** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Paul West MS** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Renaissance MS** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| **Sandtown MS** |  |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |  |
| **Woodland MS** |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| how many TMSA outperforms | 6/8 | 5/8 | 6/8 | 8/8 | 8/8 | 8/8 | 7/8 |

This is a promising trajectory of academic growth. The Main Street Academy may not yet be performing at the levels of academic performance to which it aspires, but significant progress has been made. More importantly, the Governing Board and administration has implemented academic innovations in the past year that directly account for much of the students’ success and plan a schoolwide implementation of these innovations in the next charter term.

The roots of our academic innovations started in the 2014 petition originated with then Principal Jeff Homan. Homan arranged for a series of courses to be taught on The Main Street Academy campus. Participation by teaching staff was voluntary, but those who committed to five courses would earn the Gifted Endorsement from the Professional Standards Commission. Eighteen teachers signed up for the opportunity, and all of them completed the endorsement. One hundred percent completion of an endorsement is quite a rarity.

During the courses, several of the teachers became quite excited about the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, a research-based school reform developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli. The model deploys proven strategies for augmenting the everyday curriculum and for supplementing it with enrichment activity clusters. Enrichment clusters are designed to engage students’ interests by using local resources and bringing them into the classroom to expand the academic experience. The clusters run six to eight weeks and involve one hour of instruction per week. The topics for enrichment clusters are developed by teachers, and they bridge academic and practical worlds (The model is more deeply explored in a later petition question.)

An investigation of the specifics of this innovation revealed that the Schoolwide Enrichment Model was an excellent means of addressing student needs at The Main Street Academy. Enrichment clusters are designed to use local resources and bring them into the classroom, matching the Governing Board’s vision of a school engaged with its community. The model is dependent upon a dedicated faculty, which has been a hallmark of The Main Street Academy’s school culture since opening in 2010. The faculty enthusiasm for this model is critical. The fact that 27% of The Main Street Academy teachers are gifted endorsed also heightened the probability of its success. It is rare to have a high percentage of teachers gifted endorsed, particularly in socioeconomic and academically diverse settings. It is worth mentioning that the model does not require all teachers to be gifted endorsed; however, the fact that so many TMSA teachers are currently endorsed ensures the continuity of our instruction program. The Main Street Academy’s extended school day also gives the scheduling flexibility to adopt the enrichment clusters while not compromising the delivery of the overall curriculum.

But most importantly, the Schoolwide Enrichment Model is exciting. Teachers realize creative and intellectual potential. Students get to choose special topics to study. Their work leads directly to a creative or research production presented to audiences beyond just teachers and parents and grandparents. Education at its best is fueled by real curiosity and the sheer joy of learning in both students and teachers.

Nowhere in Fulton County exists a K-8 school with a deep implementation of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model. This innovation sets The Main Street Academy apart from other charters as well as traditional public schools. Five years later, the Schoolwide Enrichment Model is still going strong.

Additionally, The Main Street Academy seeks to utilize charter flexibility to continue an innovative model for gifted education delivery in general classrooms: Flexible Learning Groups. In this structure, pre-assessments for each unit of study are created and used to flexibly group students so a team of teachers can more efficiently and effectively meet their needs. Some schools assume that learners identified as gifted should receive gifted service when engaging in learning in a particular content area. For instance, if a child is strong conceptually in math, s/he may be in an advanced mathematics class, even though the child is weaker in computational skills. Flexible Learning Groups provide the opportunity for each child, including children identified as gifted, to be placed in flexible groups for smaller segments of time (3-6 weeks) focused on a particular concept or skill. In this manner, teachers share students between homerooms as needs arise, thus providing a better surety to parents that each child has his/her needs met.

That is at the heart of a charter school: families wanting a firm commitment from the school that their children’s needs will be met. Parents have been an integral part of The Main Street Academy from those that served on the Founding Committee to those that have just enrolled their child for the very first time for the 2019-2020 school year.

This commitment is reflected in the parent-teacher-student learning compact, which all students, teachers, and parents sign. Parents promise to read with their children and practice mathematics literacy for at least 15 minutes per day, as well as discuss school learning with their students. (The Learning Compact is included as Exhibit XXX.) This compact was a vital part of TMSAs vision from the very start of our charter experience. The focus on making education part of the home as well as the school experience shows in the dedication and enthusiasm that students exhibit every day in class, and by the large numbers of parents active in the PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization).

TMSA’s original contract also included a volunteer requirement for parents. During the school’s first charter term, volunteers were critical to providing basic services and saving labor costs for a startup school. Parent volunteers built playgrounds, mulched the playgrounds annually, painted classrooms and hallways every summer, helped with lunch monitoring, organizing rooms, and coordinating extra-curriculars and enrichment experiences. During the first charter term, strict records were kept on volunteer hours, and parents logged upwards of 10,000 volunteer hours every year. After moving to our new facility, parent volunteer opportunities shifted from providing core services to enhancing school life and extra-curriculars. Parent volunteers lead projects, such as the building of the school garden and the creation of an outdoor classroom. Parent volunteers also help organize fundraisers for field trips and in-school enhancement activities, such as bringing in speakers. Aware that the school’s policy could no longer be to “require” volunteer hours, the Governing Board moved to a system where parents log their volunteer hours manually online, rather than having project leaders log volunteer hours. In addition, TMSA no longer contacts parents who have not logged their volunteer hours asking them to contribute. Both of these new practices have led to significant underreporting of volunteer hours. As such, TMSA no longer has an accurate record of how many volunteer hours parents complete annually. However, volunteer culture is still vital to the TMSA learning and community experience.

The Governing Board and Parent-Teacher Organization executive officers model how to give their time and talent to The Main Street Academy. Although at times it would be easier for these individuals to organize and implement events and fundraisers themselves, they consistently consider how to build capacity in the parent base by including non-officers in important leadership roles.

The community agrees. In the secret ballot cast August 1-5, 2019, 749 votes were cast, and 98.8% of parents approved TMSA’s petition to reapply as a FCS charter school. TMSA is proud of this high response rate and overall approval.

*2. Please complete the Academic Performance Goals table to indicate your school’s performance goals for the proposed term. These goals will be included in your charter contract. The items in bold are mandatory. Renewal decisions will be based in part on achievement of these mandatory goals. The charter is encouraged to add additional goals directly related to the mission or academic innovations being proposed. A sample is included in the Attachment A.*

*· Please see the CCRPI and Beating the Odds goals (Attachment B) and review the PowerPoint found on the Charter Schools Division’s website.*

*Strong academic performance goals and measures should:*

*· 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)*

*· Include cohort measures that show the progress over time of a single cohort of students*

*· Include national norm-referenced test results among your performance measures*

*· Be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART)*

|  |
| --- |
| ***Goal 1: The charter school will “Beat The Odds.”*** |
| *Measure 1*  *As determined by the state regression formula based on CCRPI school-level dataset, GADOE student record file, and GADOE Certified/Classified Personnel Information (CPI) data, the charter will perform better than similar schools serving similar students in Georgia in each year of the five year term.* |
| *Measure 2*  *As determined by the FCS regression formula based on poverty levels and CCRPI, the charter will perform as well or better than similar schools serving similar students in FCS in each year of the five year term.* |
| ***Goal 2: The charter school will demonstrate proficiency on the State College and Career Readiness Performance Index.*** |
| ***Measure 1 – Mandatory*** |
| *The Charter School’s CCRPI score shall be equal to or better than both the State and local district in Year 2 of operation.* |
| *Measure 2 – Mandatory* |
| *The Charter School’s CCRPI score shall be better than both the State and the local district in Years 3 through 5 of operation.* |

*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?*

*· How will the school obtain baseline achievement data?*

*· How will the school benchmark student growth?*

*· How will this information be communicated to governing board, management, instructional leadership, faculty and staff?*

The monitoring of student achievement goals is arguably the most important role of school leadership, inclusive of employee leaders (e.g., the principal and academy directors) as well as the Governing Board. The Main Street Academy is proud to include a comprehensive monitoring plan as part of its operating procedures.

The Governing Board meets monthly and includes an update from the Academic and School Performance Committee. This committee’s composition typically includes the principal, three Governing Board members, and one or more community members. The committee focuses on the School Improvement Plan and regularly hears reports from the principal, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and student services. The group’s charge is to provide oversight of curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Evidence of their meeting agendas are found on The Main Street Academy’s website (<https://www.charterboards.com/public/the-main-street-academy/>).

All regularly-scheduled board meetings follow O.C.G.A. §50-14-1 (Sunshine Law) requirements and are open to the public. Student achievement data is regularly presented at these meetings, especially following major assessment windows.

The Main Street Academy faculty has regular data conversations as part of their job-embedded, collaborating planning time. Non-teaching staff, such as the instructional coach, assistant principals, and the principal, ensure teachers have access to high-quality materials, access to the electronic portals where the data is housed, and access to needed professional development determined from the data.

The assessment plan for The Main Street Academy will include the following instruments and processes:

* State-required assessments as required by the initial year of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System
* Examination of high and low achievement and progress using the Georgia Longitudinal Data System Student Growth Model (annually)
* i-Ready reading (TMSA purchases this itself - Fulton County does not provide this to their charter schools) and mathematics universal screener (three times/year for all students, monthly for students in Tier III interventions)
* End-of-unit assessments (periodic)

All state-required assessments are administered to students and follow all testing protocols. Currently, the Middle School Assistant Principal is denoted as the school’s testing coordinator. He participates in all Fulton-required training sessions and is responsible for the fidelity of the testing environment at The Main Street Academy.

For this charter renewal petition, baseline data are what is presented in this document. Some previous school year data are not readily available by the required submission date.

The School Improvement Plan, required by Fulton County, Title I, and Advanc-ED drives the decision-making regarding human and instructional resources, as well as focus and energy. This plan meets all federal and state requirements and is brought to the Board for action each year.

*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.*

The Main Street Academy provides a rigorous curriculum, implemented so as to build on students’ strengths, address their weaknesses, and kindle their enthusiasm for learning. These academic innovations are geared to make curriculum delivery more effective and exciting for teachers and students alike.

The focus of the curriculum at The Main Street Academy includes all state-required fields of study: English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The most current versions of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards inform the curriculum’s substance. The Main Street Academy will comply with all legislation germane to this question, including curricular standards and teacher evaluation. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System will be used for all staff that meet the criteria delineated in the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System Implementation Handbook. All evaluators will be appropriately trained and meet performance expectations to be credentialed. The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards will be explicitly taught in all subject areas that have promulgated these standards, and used for planning in all other subject areas.

The Main Street Academy’s mission has always been to integrate all aspects of a comprehensive liberal arts education into the experience of every student. During the first charter term, we learned that adherence to such a program was worthwhile. The challenges in staffing a school that must employ multiple Spanish, music, art, and physical education teachers on a limited budget and in small facilities proved formidable. Multiple times these teachers became itinerant, moving from space to space because they could not have a space of their own. Sometimes, the landlords were able to find other spaces; other times creativity and tenaciousness won out. Similarly, budget challenges have forced the Governing Board to consider cutting back on the arts and foreign language.

Rather than cut funding for such subjects, The Governing Board chose to maintain its dedication to developing the whole student at The Main Street Academy. This furthered innovative instruction in the expressive arts, physical education, and foreign language. These fields have been instrumental in shaping the school’s culture. They have also laid the groundwork for the implementation of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model which is detailed below.

**Expressive Arts**: The arts play an integral role in whole child learning at The Main Street Academy. All children have had instruction and opportunities to participate in music, creative movement, drama, visual arts, and creative writing. The 4th-8th grade Chorus and Band students have performed at various community venues and functions within the Tri-Cities area; the middle-grades Band also competes in regional music competitions. Teachers have adopted creative and prose writing in grades 3-8 through the use of a writing journal and periods of free-writing time. The visual arts are represented in a community-based annual art exhibit, as well as several enrichment opportunities through intra- and extra-curricular exposure to different areas of the visual and dramatic arts. Many studies speak to the enhancements of students’ performance in core subjects when the fine arts are integrated into the curriculum. The fine arts department has facilitated many different types of performances and public exhibitions, such as plays, concerts, and juried art shows.

**Physical Education**: Health and physical fitness are critical aspects of a child’s development of habits for lifelong healthy living. The Health and Physical Education program at The Main Street Academy has provided instruction, information, and support for lifetime fitness. Assessment measures have been drawn from state and national standards. Additionally, the school competes against other Fulton County schools in basketball, volleyball, and soccer. TMSA also participates in a local league for flag football. The students also participate in several physical fitness community events throughout the year, such as Jump Rope for Heart, community clean-up with the basketball team, and a community football and cheerleading camp. The TMSA cheerleaders are award-winning in various southeastern competitions. The Athletics department plans to expand, looking to found a Booster society and develop further community partnerships between exemplary student athletes and community members in order to increase The Main Street Academy’s presence in the Tri-Cities area.

TMSA leverages its waiver regarding school hours (O.C.G.A. §20-2-168 (c) (1)) in order to provide more active experiences for students. All students receive 30 minutes of daily recess, boosting their time involved in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Foreign Language**: Producing proficient speakers of languages other than English is an essential component of The Main Street Academy. The foreign language teachers at The Main Street Academy incorporate many best practices of instruction in teaching elementary students—such as movement, chants, and the integration of reading and writing—with the understanding that spoken fluency is the last step in the acquisition of proficiency. Students at these levels are exposed to many different areas of vocabulary, with the focus being encouraging an excitement for learning the language throughout their lifetime. The focus of upper elementary and middle grades instruction is the more formal acquisition of grammatical structures of the language in order to facilitate a smooth transition to additional lifelong language learning. The Spanish department plans to host an Elementary- and Middle-grades Spanish competition with nearby schools that also teach foreign language. This would be a quiz bowl-style competition for the Middle grades; in Elementary, the competition would be more relaxed and geared towards practice. This would give the students a real-life application of their learned skills in an emotionally-low-risk environment.

**Extracurricular offerings**: Education must be supplemented with physical and intellectual extracurricular activities, and The Main Street Academy strives to offer a multitude of options for students. Our offerings have included Academic Bowl, ballet, band, basketball, Beta Club, Boy Scouts, cheerleading, chorus, Cub Scouts, debate, fencing, flag football, Girl Scouts, Junior Achievement, karate, National Elementary and Junior Honor Societies, Reading Bowl, robotics, Science Olympiad, soccer, Spelling Bee, 48 Hour Film Project, Student Council, track, volleyball, and others.

· *Describe the educational innovations that will be implemented.*

· *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.*

**Schoolwide Enrichment Model:** Academic innovation at The Main Street Academy is part of the school culture. The Governing Board’s original vision was to create a dynamic education environment where teachers would have the freedom and support necessary to adapt curriculum and pedagogical approaches to best suit their students. As referenced in the response to Question One, then-Principal Jeff Homan offered professional development in the form of a series of courses that would help teachers earn their gifted endorsement in 2013-2014. The teachers who participated were exposed to the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, developed by Dr. Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis and delineated in their professional text, *Enriching Curriculum for All Students*. This generated immediate excitement among faculty. Several teachers organized a presentation to the Governing Board through the Academic and School Performance Committee and charter renewal committee about adopting the Schoolwide Enrichment Model at The Main Street Academy and outlined a plan for its success.

This was precisely the kind of organic, teacher-inspired and student-centered innovation that the Governing Board had envisioned. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model was an exciting plan for pedagogical and curriculum development. It was a great fit for the school in several ways. To begin with, the natural facility delineations at The Main Street Academy in the form of a Primary Academy (K-2), Elementary Academy (3-5) and Junior Academy (6-8) were in line with grade bands that allowed for enrichment clusters to include students of different ages. In addition, because the administration had already enacted a plan to increase the percentage of gifted-endorsed teaching staff, the school was able to begin implementation of the model in the 2014-2015 school year. Finally, The Main Street Academy has always had an extended school day, and this would allow for the scheduling of the enrichment clusters while not sacrificing time for the general curriculum.

Several aspects of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model were already a part of The Main Street Academy’s dynamic curriculum. The first step in adopting a Schoolwide Enrichment Model is to deepen the general curriculum by bringing in outside resources, such as working professionals and artists and scholars, which are called Type I activities in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model. Current examples include author visits, yearly career day, Read Across America, visits from community members such as Georgia Power, Trees Atlanta, and others.

The next step in implementing the Schoolwide Enrichment Model was developing Type II enrichment clusters. These function like electives, a supplemental class developed by a teacher on a subject of his or her choosing. Enrichment clusters involve one hour of instruction per week and last six to eight weeks. Each faculty member picks a topic with the goal of producing a product, performance, or community service. An example of this would be “pop culture history detectives,” a cluster experience being launched in grades 3-5 in which students learn methods of historical investigation, understand how to read popular culture as a source for history writing, meet with working historians in the archives and/or universities, and finally produce a video at the end of the project that explains their research findings in a creative format. The cluster experience is therefore designed to develop multiple skills, including critical thinking, advanced research techniques, creative thinking and problem-solving, character development, self-reflection, and advanced communication. As the example indicates, Type II activities are designed to connect the academic and professional worlds, so that the techniques and skills students develop make them better students and show them the myriad connections between academics and real-world activities.

The final step was to implement Type III enrichment clusters. Although these clusters are structurally the same as Type II clusters, there are a few powerful differences. They are more intensive and involve the use of even more outside resources. Most importantly, they are developed and led by the students. Students decide what topic they wish to pursue, make a plan for research and ultimately present their results to authentic, outside audiences. For instance, a Type III project on urban renewal might involve multiple presentations to local chambers of commerce and neighborhood associations. Teachers are still an important part of the process, but their roles shift. If teachers are facilitators in Type II clusters, they become more like monitors and resources for the students in Type III clusters. Not all students will participate in Type III clusters. They demand student initiative, as well as strong skillsets and personal discipline. While students will be encouraged to develop them, it is ultimately up to the students to take charge of their education and develop this experience for themselves.

Additionally, The Main Street Academy seeks to utilize charter flexibility to enact an innovative model usually only used for gifted education delivery: **Flexible Learning Groups**. In this structure, pre-assessments for each unit of study are created and used to flexibly group students so a team of teachers can more efficiently and effectively meet their needs. Some schools assume learners identified as gifted should receive gifted service when engaging in learning in a particular content area. For instance, if a child is quantitatively strong, s/he may be in an advanced mathematics class, even though the child is strong conceptually in math, but weaker in the computational skills. Flexible Learning Groups provide the opportunity for each child, including children identified as gifted, to be placed in flexible groups for smaller segments of time (3-6 weeks) focused on particular concepts or skills. In this manner, teachers share students as needs arise, thus providing a better surety to parents that each child has his/her needs met.

· *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase student achievement.*

These innovations are designed to increase student achievement with effective pedagogy. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model will increase student achievement by motivating teachers and students alike. The design encourages teacher collaboration on common elements of the curriculum while also allowing them to develop advanced specialized materials for their own enrichment clusters. This encourages teachers to seek out Type I activities, such as coordinating visits from experts, in order to enrich the curriculum on a daily basis. Type II activities introduce research and critical thinking skills in order to encourage independent thinking and action on the part of students. Type III activities reinforce learning by connecting academics with practical activities. These are proven methods for increasing student involvement and learning through interaction and application.

Flexible Learning Groups allow teachers to break through the (somewhat) arbitrary homeroom designation in order to differentiate instruction. By using data in collaboration, clusters of teachers can determine how best to serve students’ particular needs in each area of instruction. Data examples include, but are not limited to, i-Ready assessments, ITBS, Milestones, and unit pretests.

· *Describe the anticipated teacher-to-student ratios and the rationale for maintaining these ratios.*

**Adult:Student Ratios.** Due to the emphasis at The Main Street Academy in making sure each child has an adult to support their learning, we choose to report adult-to-student ratios. We include adults in the building who work with students all day long, certified teachers and paraprofessionals. The adult-to-student ratios for The Main Street Academy are as follows: Kindergarten-Grade 1, 25:2; Grades 2-8, 25:1. Current adult-to-student ratios are based on a count of all certified teachers which include the following:

* 51 classroom, special education, and specials teachers grades K-8
* 1 gifted resource teacher/Schoolwide Enrichment Model coordinator
* 9 paraprofessionals

This makes the adult-to-student ratio 13.7:1. These figures do not include administration, counselor, social worker, media specialist, or instructional coaches. The adult-to-student ratio may increase or decrease slightly depending on enrollment. The number of teachers may be increased based on sections of students added and/or number of identified special education students or programming needs increased. Although The Main Street Academy experienced increased levels of success with previous ratios of 16:1, the Board voted to expend funds on lowering adult-to-student ratios in the primary grades. In 2019-2020, additional adults were placed in first grade rooms as paraprofessionals. This is planned to continue in 2020-2021 for second grade classrooms.

*5. What are the school’s plans for educating special populations?*

The school will have all the resources of a typical Fulton County school as well as the responsibility to fully participate in the same manner as all other Fulton County schools in these areas.

* *How will the charter school meet the needs of students identified as gifted and talented?*
* *How will the charter school provide state and federally mandated services for students with disabilities?*
* *How will the charter school provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners (ESOL)?*

As a public school that serves the general population, The Main Street Academy currently serves students who qualify for special services in the areas of special education, gifted/talented, and English as a Second Language. Re-enrollment data indicates this trend will continue.

Services for students who qualify for special education is provided by highly qualified Georgia educators in the least restrictive environment. They are provided a free and appropriate education, using a mix of inclusion and resource models. Each student served in this way has a current Individualized Education Plan, monitored by an educator certified in special education. English Learners are served in a resource model, boosting their English acquisition skills, as measured by the state-required ACCESS assessment.

Identification

The Main Street Academy trains its staff to use the information disseminated to them for identifying students eligible for special education under IDEA regulations. Identification is completed where appropriate for Kindergarten and other new students enrolling without appropriate records of screening, evaluation, and progress in school.

Evaluation

Initial Evaluation: After informed written parental consent has been obtained, an initial evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team composed of those personnel required by law. This initial assessment serves to determine whether the student meets the criteria for disability in accordance with 20 USC Sec. 1400, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its amendments.

Reevaluation

The Main Street Academy acts in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004 Sec. 614 (a)(2) and, after written parental consent has been obtained, performs a reevaluation as required under the IDEA regulations.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

The written individualized educational plan for each child includes a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance; annual goals; measurable short-term instructional objectives; the specific special education and related services to be provided to the child; a description of the extent to which the child will be able to participate in regular education programs and the extent to which the child will be able to participate with non-disabled children in nonacademic and extracurricular activities; the projected dates for initiation and the anticipated duration of services; objective criteria, evaluation procedures, and schedules for determining whether instructional objectives are being achieved on at least an annual basis. Copies of all IEPs will be provided to the Fulton County School District to meet compliance requirements.

Procedural Safeguards Notice

The Main Street Academy provides a copy of the procedural safeguards to the parents of a child with a disability upon initial referral for evaluation, reevaluation of the child, and receipt of a request for due process. The procedural safeguards notice includes a full explanation of all of the procedural safeguards available (i.e., prior written notice; parental consent; access to educational records; opportunity to present complaints to initiate due process hearings; and child's placement while due process hearings are pending).

Least Restrictive Environment

The Main Street Academy ensures that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are non-disabled, and that special classes or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment will occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. The Main Street Academy indemnifies the Fulton County School District in the event the District is held liable for The Main Street Academy’s failure to provide eligible disabled students with the special education, related services, program accommodations, and due process to which they are entitled under state and federal law.

Treatment of Student Records

The Main Street Academy adheres to all confidentiality requirements and parent and student rights provisions specified in federal laws. Upon request, The Main Street Academy provides parents with a list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used in The Main Street Academy. A parent who believes that information in the education records collected, maintained, or used is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the child may request the information be amended. The Main Street Academy decides whether to amend the information in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of the request. If The Main Street Academy refuses to amend the records, the parent will be notified in writing of the refusal and advised of the right to a hearing.

The Main Street Academy designates an official custodian of student records who is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality requirements. Employees who utilize the records receive instruction regarding the procedures for handling and managing confidential material and the custodian will maintain a listing of employees with access to the records and a logbook of each individual who has had access to the records. Student records are available for audit at any time during the year to ensure that funds are properly allocated. The Main Street Academy requires a request in writing at least one week in advance of the audit to ensure that the custodian and the Principal are available to assist with the files. The Main Street Academy also requires auditors to provide proper identification and sign the logbook.

Referral

The Student Support Team may refer students for evaluation. The classroom teacher or other personnel or parent will submit the name of the child to the administrator for referral for evaluation or other appropriate services. The referral of a child for an evaluation for possible placement in a special education program will be made under the direction of the administrator after documenting that the parent has received written information pertaining to rights regarding comprehensive evaluation, and following receipt of the written consent of the parent. The written request for the parent’s permission to evaluate will be in the primary language of the home.

Release of Information

The Main Street Academy does not release information from education records to participating agencies without parental consent unless authorized to do so by federal law. Parental consent is obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed to anyone other than officials of participating agencies collecting or using this information in accordance with state and federal laws.

Methodology

Modification of classroom instruction provides students with additional support to understand the materials and skills that are being presented. Various techniques are utilized to allow students to make the connections and enhance success when being exposed to new skills. As for all students these will vary and may include the following:

* Visual aids;
* Hands-on learning;
* Role-playing;
* Multi-sensory techniques;
* Read-alouds;
* Guided questions;
* Step-by-step questions; and
* Key words.

Students identified in accordance with federal regulations are eligible for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Main Street Academy complies with all applicable requirements of Part B of this Act. In accordance with Federal regulations, children with disabilities enrolled in the Main Street Academy, and their parents/guardians, retain all rights under Part B of IDEA. The Main Street Academy strives to provide all services in the classroom so students can get the full benefit of interacting with their peers in the learning environment.

Additionally, the Main Street Academy has a non-discriminatory admission procedure consistent with its mission and with state and federal law and complies with all applicable regulatory special education requirements including IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, along with any applicable provisions of the Georgia Charter School law concerning the provision of special education services.

The Main Street Academy Director of Student Services completes the requisite paperwork, updates and files necessary information for initial referrals, oversees required evaluations, monitors student progress, and assures any/all test modifications as stipulated in the IEP are enacted for students being served at The Main Street Academy. For all special populations, The Main Street Academy administers all state-required assessments with appropriate modifications. This employee also maintains a central file with all special education evaluation material and IEPs in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and IDEA guidelines. As required by IDEA, the Main Street Academy collects and maintains the following information on students with disabilities:

* The count of all school-age students with disabilities provided with special education services by age, grade, category of disability and the number of students with disabilities who are Limited English Proficient;
* The number of students provided with test modifications and the types and the number of students assessed on the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA);
* The settings in which students with disabilities receive their services, specifically the portion of the school day they receive services with non-disabled peers including time away from the regular classroom; The number of students with disabilities suspended in-school and out of school, organized by disability and length of suspensions; and
* The basis of exit of students with disabilities from The Main Street Academy (e.g., attainment of diploma and type, declassified, moved, etc.).
* The Main Street Academy will comply with all applicable special education requirements including, but not limited to, those imposed by the Individuals with Disabilities Educational (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, along with any applicable provisions of the Georgia charter school law concerning the provision of special education and related services.

The Main Street Academy provides “a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) according to their unique needs.” The least restrictive environment is the law; “inclusion” is the preferred delivery model followed to ensure that all students participate in the educational and extracurricular environment. The statute is clear that students must be included to the maximum extent appropriate, with the use of supplementary aids and services, in order to have access to, and make progress in, the general education curriculum.

In order to serve our students with special needs, The Main Street Academy hires certified special education personnel. The Director of Student Services oversees all testing, documentation, accommodations and placements for students. Additionally, this professional organizes and administers special education professional development to The Main Street Academy teachers, enabling them to make modifications to the curriculum and the classroom, and to understand the requirements under IDEA. The Main Street Academy contracts with private service providers for all special education services needed by our students that fall outside of the expertise of our staff.

All personnel who provide related services (e.g., services provided by a speech-language pathologist; psycho-social counseling provided by a psychologist, social worker, or mental health professional) to students in The Main Street Academy meets all required licensure and/or certification requirements pertaining to their area of related service.

Although not required by the question, it is important to mention The Main Street Academy’s implementation and alignment to federally-mandated Response to Intervention (RtI). The Main Street Academy RtI pyramid of intervention model provides assistance to students who are struggling with academics, communication/language deficits, and appropriate school behavior/social skills.

Along this continuum of service with students, some are identified with needs, causing them to be included in the data and services required for special populations. The Main Street Academy complies with all state-required Student Support Team processes, as well as providing Tier II strategies and Tier III interventions.

Identified gifted learners will be served through two state-approved models and an innovative model. All learners are appropriately screened through an automatic referral process based on standardized test scores and/or through a teacher screening process based on observed characteristics. The Main Street Academy Eligibility Team oversees subsequent referrals for testing, testing procedures, and eligibility for gifted services in compliance with the Fulton County Schools Gifted Screening and Referral Process. Once identified, all gifted-identified students through 2018-2019 were served through Advanced Content Model of Delivery, and informally through collaboration and the innovative model of Flexible Learning Groups. After a review by the FCS Gifted Department and Charter Division, it was recommended TMSA implement the Resource Model of Delivery in grades 1-5. That shift is being implemented for the 2019-2020 school year.

In **Flexible Learning Groups**, an instructional unit is pre-assessed. The students are regrouped across multiple classrooms and assigned a teacher for that instructional unit. At least one gifted endorsed teacher teaches a group. That teacher documents the planning of groups with a lesson plan and a collaborative planning log. Each instructional unit where the Flexible Learning Groups model is used will have a new pre-assessment, thus assuring that the group composition is, in fact, flexible.

*6. 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 provide examples of a significant component of your academic plan for which you need a waiver – and the waivers that are required to allow the implementation of that component*

As mentioned in Petition Question 5, in 2019-2020, gifted learners will be served through one or more of three state-approved models (cluster grouping, collaboration, resource) and an innovative model. Potentially-gifted learners are appropriately screened through TMSA student review process, modeled after the Fulton County Schools Gifted Referral Process.

The innovative model is a collaborative model called Flexible Learning Groups. In this model, an instructional unit is pre-assessed. Students are regrouped across multiple classrooms and assigned a teacher for that instructional unit. At least one gifted endorsed teacher teaches a group. That teacher documents the planning of groups with a lesson plan and a collaborative planning log. Each instructional unit where the Flexible Learning Groups model is used will have a new pre-assessment, thus assuring that the group composition is indeed flexible.

According to Georgia Department of Education policy and regulation, any model other than State Board of Education-approved models is not permitted to serve gifted learners. School districts that wish to employ a different structure must seek approval through the Innovative Model Approval process. As pursuant to the current charter and the desired charter, TMSA will utilize the Flexible Learning Groups model without seeking the review process other school districts must employ.

|  |
| --- |
| **Action**: Use an innovative model called Flexible Learning Groups for gifted instruction. |
| **Specific waiver**: SBE Rule 160-4-.38 and GaDOE Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services |
| **Expected outcome**: Student achievement for all students, not just gifted learners, will improve - particularly in mathematics where research clearly supports this practice. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** Require the wearing of uniforms and align the student code to reflect the principles of The Leader In MeTM |
| **Specific Waiver:** O.C.G.A. §20-2-735 through 738 Improved Student Learning Environment and Discipline |
| **Expected Outcome:** An improved school culture where the focus of the students can be solely on learning and where behavior and academics are integrated and rewarded in the student code of conduct. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** A longer school day for the school. |
| **Specific Waiver:** O.C.G.A. §20-2-168 (c) (1)—Minimum School Year |
| **Expected Outcome:** TMSA’s longer school day allows for creative scheduling for the programming of additional specials (art, music, physical education, and Spanish) into the school day, and for the time required to implement the Schoolwide Enrichment Model. |

*7. Please complete the Organizational Goals table to indicate your school’s organizational performance goals for the proposed term.*

* *Use one table per each goal. A sample is provided in the Attachment C.*
* *There should be at least two organizational goals. FCS expects that at least one organizational goal address governing board development. Other goals could include areas such as: staff development, performance management, student or teacher retention, community support, school culture, partner acquisitions, etc. Each goal should have at least one objective.*
* *School organizational performance objectives should reflect where the school envisions itself organizationally at the end of the charter term.*

The Main Street Academy has three primary goals for its next charter term: to develop board members, decrease regrettable staff attrition, and improve school culture. These three goals are timely for TMSA - they would not have been part of the petition five years ago. The second charter term was marked by more immediate needs. TMSA needed a permanent facility and stable finances. Its Governing Board was still composed of mainly founders and people with a deep knowledge of all of the challenges TMSA had faced. Strategically, the Governing Board placed much of its energy in solving these fundamental problems.

The Governing Board has always met its contractual and ethical obligations in training its members. However, as the school thrives and works toward financial sustainability, the next step is differentiating board member’s trainings, thus creating more depth and specialization.

The inclusion of goals around teacher retention and school culture does not mean the Governing Board during the second charter term was blind to these important issues. It is, rather, the lack of a permanent facility and stable finances that were themselves barriers to teacher retention. Additionally, the Governing Board recognized the necessity of maintaining a flexible administrative and teaching structure in order to address immediate needs. For instance, at the end of its first charter term (2014-2015), TMSA employed an administrative model that had three academy directors (grades: K-2; 3-5; 6-8) working under the principal. This was the best administrative structure to govern a school that had three separate facilities for the different grade bands. Moving to a permanent, single facility obviated the need for independent academy directors. Two assistant principals replaced them, freeing up an administrative position that was later dedicated to a Director of Curriculum and Instruction, in charge of overseeing and implementing TMSA’s pedagogical innovations.

In creating one shared physical facility, it was also time to make more significant steps toward creating “one TMSA.” although the founding principles did not change, adopting and meeting the expectations for the Leader in MeTM framework proved to be an excellent fit. In fact, now TMSA is poised to take a step few Leader in MeTM schools take: working toward the Lighthouse Certification.

Organizational Goal #1: TMSA will have a knowledgeable, effective board.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 1** | Measure(s) | Year One Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| Increase board training - in particular, targeted and differentiated board training for specific members | # of board members who complete training unique to their skillset or focus on the board | 0 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 11 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Certificates or earned hours of training | Nothing additional if the trainings are free through the Georgia Charter School Association; if not, then minimal cost | yearly |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Board President | Vice President of Operations | Governance Committee |

Organizational Goal #2: TMSA will decrease regrettable staff attrition.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 1** | Performance Measure(s) | Year One  Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will reduce the financial gap between the TMSA salary scale and Fulton County Board of Education.\* | Yearly reduction of 5% of the difference | -$3,500 | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | Significant reduction of the difference\* |

\*It is impossible to declare a quantitative target as TMSA would be comparing their salary scale to the FCS scale which changes every year.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Comparing the TMSA salary scale to the FCS salary scale | none | yearly |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Vice President of Operations, Finance Committee | N/A | Vice President of Operations, Finance Committee |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 2** | Performance Measure(s) | Year One  Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will reduce regrettable attrition. | Yearly reduction of 2% of the regrettable attrition\* | 23.5% | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | 5% more of the difference than the previous year\* | Significant reduction of the difference\* |

\*Regrettable attrition is a sub-reporting of attrition. It is calculated this way: numerator is the number of staff who left TMSA whom we wish had stayed; denominator is number of staff who left TMSA. For example, if out of 8 staff members who left TMSA, 2 we wished had stayed, the regrettable attrition figure is 25%. This is not saying 25% of TMSA staff members left (full attrition).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Each year, analyzing the TMSA staff members who left and posing as regrettable or non-regrettable attrition | none | yearly |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Vice President of Operations, Principal | N/A | Vice President of Operations, Principal |

Organizational Goal #3: TMSA will improve school culture.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 1** | Measure(s) | Year One Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will achieve the Leader in Me Lighthouse designation. | Official recognition from the Leader in Me organization | Preparation materials being developed | Submission to Leader in Me, acceptance | Lighthouse designation | Preparation of resubmission materials completed | Recertification materials submitted, acceptance | Lighthouse designation |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be Collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Submission materials (either preparation or final submissions) prepared | $18,000 yearly,  $3,000 extra one year prior to Lighthouse evaluation visit  No extra cost for recertification every two years | yearly |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Principal | Vice President of Operations, Principal | Principal |

*8. What specific actions will the school take to achieve its organizational performance objectives?*

* *What are the organizational innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term?*
* *How will the innovations increase organizational effectiveness?*
* *Why are the innovations appropriate for this unique school?*

TMSA has three main objectives over its next charter term: to increase the board’s effective training; to decrease attrition, and to improve school culture. Each of these goals builds on challenges and successes from the last charter term, and also identifies three areas of specific growth for the new term.

The first goal is to increase the number of board members who receive individualized training specific to their skillset. The Governing Board takes this goal very seriously, especially when dealing with the challenge of rotation in office. The first step is to seek out additional individual training from the Georgia Charter Schools Association, which currently provides mandatory training. The Governing Board will seek to get individualized training during its training sessions, to better prepare individual board members who are assuming responsibilities.

A second step the Governing Board will take is to seek out other training opportunities, especially at specialized conferences. Individual training is important, but it is also important for Governing Board members to network with other charter school boards and administrative leaders. This not only helps develop individual skill sets, but can also bring new ideas and contacts to the TMSA Governing Board. It also has the advantage of being cost effective. Individualized training can quickly become expensive, and the Governing Board should seek to minimize expenses for its own development in favor of expanding resources for students and teachers.

A third step the Governing Board will take is to increase the length of its members’ terms. Governing Board members (styled “directors”) currently serve a two-year term and can serve up to two terms before being required by the bylaws to rotate off of the board. These short terms and term limits were adopted by the Founding Board in 2010 because there was a concern that the founding members might dominate the Governing Board for years to come. The Founding Board rightly decided that the larger community should have ample opportunity to apply for membership and serve on the Board, and so wrote bylaws that insured rotation in office. It worked, and perhaps too well. If the Governing Board is to invest in individualized training for Governing Board members, then it must guarantee that these board members can return longer service terms back to the school.

The second organizational goal relates to one of the most difficult aspects of maintaining a charter school: cultivating and keeping talented teachers and administrators. Decreasing attrition means taking an honest evaluation of attrition overall. As such, TMSA needs to identify “regrettable” attrition: the faculty and staff we lose that we wish to retain. Some attrition is beyond TMSA’s control: for instance, when teachers leave the state or change professions, or seek professional advancement. TMSA must first establish a metric to measure what regrettable attrition the school does have.

A second step is to offer competitive salaries, at least on par with the Fulton County payscale. While maintaining flexibility in this area is important, it is virtually impossible to attract and retain teachers at TMSA when they can earn higher salaries at other area schools. Raising all faculty and staff to Fulton County Schools’ payscale will be a major goal in the third charter term. It is not the only step that can be taken, however. The Governing Board can, in concert with the administration, institute satisfaction surveys, encourage dialogue at Governing Board and PTO meetings, and redirect resources in order to improve the school environment. It is worth pointing out that this will build on current practice. To take one example: facilities expenditures necessarily have focused on essential systems and repairs, and this often left out important details. The water fountains and bathrooms (while serviceable) were in bad need of updating. Teachers had identified this as a sore spot. So the organizers of the TMSA Silent Auction (a private, fundraising event created and run by TMSA parents, faculty and Governing Board members, supported by hundreds of local businesses), donated over $15,000 to replace all the water fountains with modern fixtures and to renovate teacher/staff bathrooms in 2019. In short, there are ways the Governing Board can leverage community action and resources in order to improve the working environment and community of TMSA, and therefore to help retain teachers.

The third organizational goal is to improve school culture. Here, TMSA benefits from a long history of promoting core values, parent engagement, and active responsibility. The Leader in Me™ framework has been adopted as a school-wide approach to culture, student behavior, collaboration, and relationships. As part of the next charter term, TMSA will attempt to earn the Lighthouse certification - the highest designation earned through the Franklin Covey organization.

*9. 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.*

Retaining effective teaching staff is integral to any school, in particular, a charter school. Charter school teachers and staff must face an additional factor most non-charter public school employees do not: the unknown. When teachers apply to a charter school, whether district-sponsored or not, it is sometimes unclear to the potential candidate what is different from a human resources and benefits side.

The first three waivers mentioned below help us retain high-quality teachers. Offering similar health care and other financial benefits is important to staff, but we do not need to be restrained by the requirement of the State Health Benefit Plan. Creating incentives for teachers and administrators allows us to reward competence in a way most public schools cannot. Finally, having contracts which are more at-will than time-bound creates a helpful environment for both the employee and the employer. Either are able to exit the contract with an appropriate amount of notice.

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** Establish annual performance evaluations and annual contracts that reflect charter goals and are aligned to The Main Street Academy’s unique academic innovations. |
| **Specific Waiver:** O.C.G.A. §20-2-210 through 211—Annual Performance Evaluation; Annual Contracts |
| **Expected Outcome:** These waivers will allow The Main Street Academy to institute evaluation criteria for teachers to supplement the TKES evaluation, and to establish contracts that make clear the different criteria upon which teachers’ employment will be judged. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** Establish salary increases and bonus schedules connected to the successful implementation of the academic innovations and achievement of academic performance objectives outlined in this renewal petition. |
| **Specific Waiver:** OC.G.A. §20-2-212, §20-2-20-2-212.1, §20-2-212.2 |
| **Expected Outcome:** Better retention of teachers devoted to The Main Street Academy’s founding principles and the successful implementation of the Schoolwide Enrichment Model and Flexible Learning Groups. This will improve student learning, help meet student performance objectives, and help us retain students. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** Offer benefits packages that are competitive with similar packages offered at Fulton County Schools. |
| **Specific Waiver:** Part 4 (§20-2-850 through 853), Part 6 (§20-2-880 through 925), and Part 7 of Article 17—Personnel Policies and Benefits. |
| **Expected Outcome:** The Main Street Academy seeks a waiver from these parts to the extent they are inconsistent with any personnel policies and benefits programs that may be established from time to time for Charter School personnel. The Main Street Academy does not waive the right of any of its personnel to participate in any benefits program that may be available to them as public school teachers. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** The Main Street Academy seeks a waiver from these code sections only to the extent that allow the local school system to consolidate or re-organize the schools in its system and to the extent the seat time requirements for middle schools are inconsistent with the educational program at The Main Street Academy. The Main Street Academy specifically does not waive any provisions of this section regarding The Main Street Academy’s right to receive funding as a middle school program. |
| **Specific Waiver:** §20-2-60; 290—Consolidation of County Schools; Organization of Schools. |
| **Expected Outcome:** This waiver will help The Main Street Academy achieve its performance goals by ensuring that the organization of The Main Street Academy as set forth in the charter is not subject to being unilaterally changed by the local school system and that TMSA is able to establish a daily and weekly schedule that is consistent with its unique educational program. This waiver is not inconsistent with the purpose of this section because the organization of the school is clearly stated in the charter and because on purpose for having charter schools is to allow for scheduling flexibility as long as The Main Street Academy students met the performance standards required by law and set forth in the charter. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** The Main Street Academy seeks a waiver from that part of the code which allows the state to prescribe textbooks, so that textbooks may be selected that best fit the needs of The Main Street Academy’s educational design. |
| **Specific Waiver:** §20-2-1010—State Board to Prescribe Textbooks |
| **Expected Outcome:** This waiver will ensure The Main Street Academy can align textbook purchases that will work best within the school’s use of Flexible Learning Groups and Schoolwide Enrichment Model. |

*10. How will an autonomous governing board make decisions for the school?*

* *Identify each member of the governing board and 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.; How and when will board members be selected? What are the terms of members? How and why will governing board members be removed? How will you ensure a diverse board with broad skill set?*

The Main Street Academy’s Governing Board is comprised of residents of East Point, College Park, Hapeville, Atlanta, and beyond. This is a small group of dedicated parents and community leaders who wish to maintain The Main Street Academy’s reputation as a tuition-free public charter school and a pillar of the community. All Governing Board members are styled “directors” by the board’s bylaws. Officers are elected, and the executive committee sets committee chairships.

The current Governing Board members are:

Jennifer Fine, President; [jennifer.fine@tmsa.org](mailto:jennifer.fine@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Project Management; Real Estate Finance; Economic Development; Grant Writing

Britton Bateman, Vice President, [britton.bateman@tmsa.org](mailto:britton.bateman@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Leadership Training; Project Management

Kelly Brokenburr, Secretary, [kelly.brokenburr@tmsa.org](mailto:kelly.brokenburr@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Grant Writing; Community Development Programs

Kelly Johnson, Academic and Social Performance Chair, [kelly.johnson@tmsa.org](mailto:kelly.johnson@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Community Development; Corporate Partnerships

Farrah Brown, Communications Chair, [farrah.brown@tmsa.org](mailto:farrah.brown@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Marketing Management; Stakeholder Communications

Bridgett Bell, Finance Chair/Treasurer; [bridgett.bell@tmsa.org](mailto:bridgett.bell@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Small Business Solutions; Finance Management

Heather Wells, Governance Chair, [heather.wells@tmsa.org](mailto:heather.wells@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Policy Writing; Environmental Impact Analysis

Willie Davis, Director, willie.davis[@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Community Development; Corporate Partnerships

Rebecca Dearolph, Director, [rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Certified Public School Teacher; State Compliance

Mitch Foster, Director, mitch.foster[@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Corporate Partnerships; Insurance and Benefits Review

Kristin Jackson, Director, kristin.jackson[@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Certified Public School Teacher; Curriculum Development and Implementation

Kristal S. Ramirez, Director, kristal.ramirez[@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Legal Compliance; Marketing Initiatives

Santonya Scott, Director, santonya.scott[@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Legal Compliance; Policy Writing

Carla Wagner, Director, carla.wagner[@tmsa.org](mailto:rebecca.dearolph@tmsa.org); Skill sets: Accreditation Compliance; Curriculum Development

The Governing Board serves as the governing body of The Main Street Academy, which is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization in the state of Georgia [Exhibit 1]. The Governing Board is composed of between 9 and 14 members of the community, plus ex-officio board members. Officers include a president, treasurer, secretary, and communications officer. Board members serve for a two-year term and may serve for two consecutive terms (for a total of four years) before being required to remain off the board for at least one year. Terms are staggered so that half of the board seats come available every year. This guarantees both annual elections and some continuity of membership in order to preserve foundational and institutional knowledge from one year to another.

In addition, three ex-officio board members are also seated on the board: the school principal, a faculty representative, and the immediate past president. These members of the Governing Board are not permitted to vote, but they have full privileges of deliberation and committee membership, with the sole exception of participation in executive session. These three members bring the voices of TMSAs administration and teachers to the deliberations of the Governing Board.

Selection of the board members occurs at the May meeting. Prospective board members will also submit to a background check if elected to the Governing Board. Election is by secret ballot, and a majority of positive votes secures election to the board. After election, board members assume their seats on July 1.

Removal from the Governing Board is an extraordinary procedure, and it has and will continue to be taken with great care. All members of the Governing Board will be expected to act in the best interests of TMSA. An individual may be removed from the board according to the procedure listed below for any of the following reasons: absence from meetings without notice or just cause, not fulfilling duties as defined in the by-laws, not disclosing conflicts-of-interest which may compromise the board member’s capacity to make decisions, not acting in accordance with the mission and vision statements of Fulton County Schools, acting negligently or against the laws of the state of Georgia when representing Fulton County Schools, or any other good cause.

Removal will occur by a vote of two-thirds of the Governing Board after notice to directors of the Governing Board has been given that such a vote will occur. The director so named will have an opportunity to answer any charges brought against him or her and will be accorded the opportunity to respond to any other statements brought against him or her at that meeting. Votes to remove will be recorded in the meeting’s minutes by roll call.

It is essential that The Main Street Academy’s Governing Board maintain a body of directors who represent a broad skillset and diverse community views. The Governance Committee of the Governing Board is tasked with recruiting community members who have broad and diverse backgrounds, such as K-12 education, higher education, law, finance, human resources, marketing, fundraising, grant writing, communications, risk management, facilities management, and experience with board service. Admission of new members is driven by the current needs of the board and guaranteeing that applicants are not just current parents at the school, in order to embrace outside perspectives. The Governing Board strives to match its own racial diversity to that of the students, faculty and staff of the school.

During its second charter term (2015-2019), the Governing Board recognized that it would need to create stable procedures for ensuring that future Governing Boards would remain diverse in every way. A Governance Committee was tasked with establishing a new process for board recruitment. The Governance Committee began by aligning the formal recruitment period to the beginning of the school year in September. They instituted a systematic set of announcements to the parent and larger community on its school webpage, social media outlets, and at PTO meetings. The Governance Committee directly contacted Tri-Cities professional and business leaders, as well as leaders across the Metro Atlanta area, to recruit new board members. The committee collaborates closely with the Georgia Charter School Association (GCSA), utilizing its Board Bank, a spreadsheet of candidates around metro Atlanta who have been trained and are interested in serving. The call for Governing Board applications (see exhibit) and the application for the Governing Board lays out the duties and responsibilities of board members.

Applications are directed to the Governance Committee, which holds interviews with the candidate. Candidates are required to attend a board meeting as a visitor, and then have an introduction to the Governing Board. The Governance Committee then makes a recommendation to the Governing Board as to the suitability of new candidates for the board at its May meeting, and candidates will be given the opportunity to make a short presentation. The Governing Board then vote on admission of new members, and terms begin on July 1.

* *What are the governing board’s function, duties and role in the areas of budget, resource allocation, personnel decisions (primarily school leader selection, evaluation, and termination as well as participation in the state mandated evaluation system), establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, curriculum and school operations? This authority should be distinguished from the day to day management responsibilities of the school leader. Please use the following Governance matrix to illustrate the level of autonomy your Governing Board will have. Please note: This matrix will become part of your charter contract. A sample is provided in the Attachment E.*

The Governing Board sets The Main Street Academy’s mission, strategic plan, and oversees the financial operations and academic progress of the school. Day-to-day operations are managed by the principal and the Vice President of Operations and their administrative staff. The Governing Board reports to the Fulton County School Board and is subject to its control and management in a manner consistent with applicable Georgia law. The Governing Board is the holder of the charter contract.

The Governing Board meets on the last Tuesday of every month. The meetings will be held according to Robert’s Rules of Order in order to guarantee that all meetings are efficient and orderly and that all specified business is addressed. In accordance with the provisions of O.C.G.A. §50-14-1, all meetings of the Governing Board will be open to the public, unless a meeting meets the requirements mentioned in the law for a closed executive session. Any resolution, rule, regulation, or other official action adopted at a meeting which is not deemed open to the public will not be binding. Meeting locations, times, and dates will be posted on the Governing Board’s website and in the school office in an area available to the public at least one week prior to any public meetings. Any changes to locations, times, or dates will be posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting time. Agendas and minutes for each open meeting will be made publicly available on the Governing Board’s webpage. All open records will be available for personal inspection by any citizen of the state of Georgia at a reasonable time and place and individuals in charge of those records cannot refuse this privilege to any citizen. Reasonable time, not to exceed three business days, shall be given to determine if requested records are considered open and to provide these open records to the requesting party. Upon request, records maintained by computer shall be made available where practical by electronic means.

The Vice President of Operations prepares an annual budget for The Main Street Academy, based upon the relevant operating information to develop a basis for an annual budget. The first draft is typically presented at the March meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee, which scrutinizes the draft budget in detail and ensures that it is in line with financial objectives set by the Governing Board. Once approved in committee, the budget will be submitted to the Governing Board at its April meeting for its deliberation and approval. All budget amendments go through the same process.

Month-end financial reporting to Fulton County is done according to established and agreed-upon deadlines with Fulton County, and all month-end reporting is reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee.

The Budget and Finance Committee reviews profit and loss statements provided by the school operations manager at its meetings, and investigates significant variances from the budget. Those variances are investigated fully as part of the committee’s charge to oversee financial operations. The Budget and Finance Committee reports periodically to the Governing Board on the progress of The Main Street Academy revenues, expenditures, and financial projections. This reporting is generally monthly, and at least quarterly.

The Governing Board also prepares an audit of annual financial statements conducted by independent certified public accountants.

Personnel decisions at the instructional and staff level are made by The Main Street Academy’s administration, pending the approval of the Governing Board. The Governing Board oversees this process so as to maintain its fiduciary duties, but does not as a matter of policy interfere with the administration’s selection of its faculty and staff.

The selection of The Main Street Academy’s Principal is made by the Governing Board. The Governing Board appoints an ad hoc Principal Selection Committee which is charged with drafting an advertisement for the position for presentation to the Governing Board. Once approved, the committee will advertise the position, using both local and national professional periodicals likely to bring us the most competitive pool of applicants possible. The committee will collect applications and make them available to any member of the Governing Board who wishes to review them. After deliberating, the committee will select a pool of roughly ten candidates to interview by phone. From this first round of interviews, at least two and up to four candidates will be invited to campus for full-day interviews by the Governing Board, the parent community, and faculty and staff. After hearing input from all stakeholders, the Governing Board will deliberate and determine who will be selected as the new principal of The Main Street Academy.

The Academic and School Performance Committee is tasked with evaluating the Principal, according to the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES). It is the charge of the Academic and School Performance Committee Chair to be trained in LKES and subsequently develop a model for assessing the Principal using this system. In 2018-2019, the board also took the step of having the vice-president of the board trained in LKES, in the event that the ASPC needs assistance with the review. The assessment by two LKES-trained board members is vetted by the Academic and School Performance Committee and then presented to the Governing Board for its deliberation and approval.

The Academic and School Performance Committee reviews the principal’s School Improvement Plan at its August meeting and prepares it for presentation to and approval of the Governing Board. The committee provides periodic updates to the Governing Board on the progress of the School Improvement Plan.

The Academic and School Performance Committee also assesses curriculum and delivery by inviting to its monthly meetings faculty and administrators who give presentations on innovative features. This allows the Academic and School Performance Committee to gauge the effectiveness of The Main Street Academy’s curriculum, instruction, and school culture using measures other than standardized tests.

* *How will the governing board assess its own development and effectiveness? Georgia law now requires Charter Schools to provide initial training for newly approved charter school Governing Boards as well as annual governance training thereafter. Describe your plan and timeline for securing a provider for your initial state mandated governance training as well as annual training thereafter. Include in this plan, areas of focus that are specific to your board and school.*

In July 2019, the Governing Board approved seven new members--evidence of both the community’s strong interest in participating in school governance and of the need for the board to retain strong on-boarding procedures. The Main Street Academy Governing Board welcomes new board members with a Governing Board handbook that describes our policies and procedures. New Governing Board members receive fifteen (15) hours of training, six (6) of which are specific to new board members and nine (9) of which are with the remainder of the board. Three (3) of the new hours of training are Financial Governance Training, provided by the GaDOE. In 2018-2019, the Governing Board welcomed two new members, who completed this training on 9/26/2018. An additional three (3) hours of training Best Practices (constitutional and statutory requirements, and applicable rules) for new board members were provided by the Georgia Charter Schools Association, and our two new board members completed this training on 8/25/2018.

Both new board members and returning board members participated in nine (9) hours of training in 2018-2019. Three (3) of these hours were devoted to Finance and Budgeting training, covering the topics of budgeting, funding, oversight, and internal controls. This included training for new members on the complicated subject of QBE formula funding. Three (3) hours were devoted to governance board best practices, including fiduciary duty, open meetings legal requirements, succession planning, committee structure, and accountability. Three (3) more hours were specifically designed for the TMSA board to cover charter renewal and to brief the Governing Board on their roles and responsibilities in preparing the petition for rechartering. This training was provided on 8/25/2018 and 1/19/2019. All board members are required to attend the mandatory training.

In addition to mandated training, the Governing Board took steps in 2018-2019 to strengthen its executive board leadership. Vice President Britton Bateman participated in the annual Georgia Charter Schools Conference from February 13-15, 2019 in Savannah, Georgia. The conference offered an opportunity for school leaders, board members, and teachers to explore best practices in operating high-quality public charter schools. Vice President Bateman additionally participated in the GCSA’s Charter School Leadership Center, devoted to providing professional development for charter school leaders (board members as well as principals). The center featured professional development on the eight standards of effective school leadership as defined by LKES. Future executive leaders will also attend this training in 2019-2020.

The Governing Board is serious about developing its members, as demonstrated by an organizational goal in this petition specifically requiring differentiated, specialized training. The executive leadership training completed by Vice President Bateman signals the commitment to this goal. In terms of the 2019-2020 training, the Georgia Charter Schools Association has been secured as the training provider. One of the two days has been scheduled (September 7, 2019).

The Governing Board will assess its own development and effectiveness by establishing a new strategic plan. The Governing Board drew up its first strategic plan in 2015, and designated the period 2016-2019 for implementation. The strategic plan identified ambitious organizational, instructional, and fiscal goals for the new Governing Board. To date, the Governing Board has made significant progress on its first strategic plan, but has not met all of its goals. Nonetheless, the process of strategic planning and implementation has helped the Governing Board to identify its own weaknesses and to take steps to strengthen its action.

One of the challenges that the Governing Board has faced is the structural problem of continuity. When the Founding Board drew up TMSAs bylaws in 2010, there was concern that the board might become something of a permanent or static entity, and that membership would not be extended to the larger community. In order to insure rotation in office, terms were limited to two years and a two-term limit was established. This brought in new voices from the TMSA and larger community. But it came with two drawbacks. The first drawback was that directors with special skillsets who were vital to TMSA’s academic and financial oversight had to roll off the board before they could establish leadership. Indeed, one might just be ready to assume a position of executive leadership after two years, and can only then serve for one or two years before reaching the term limit. The second drawback was that strategic planning and implementation requires a four year minimum to complete. Given that many members were already serving a second or third year on the Governing Board when strategic planning took place in 2015, the strategic plan was largely left to new board members (who had not participated directly in its creation) to implement. In order to remedy these drawbacks, the Governing Board will revisit its bylaws. The Governing Board should lengthen its terms to three years from two, in order to allow leaders with effective institutional knowledge to remain on the board for longer periods of time.

It must be emphasized that the Governing Board recognized this problem prior to 2019, and has already taken steps to foster enhanced leadership. The establishment of a new office of vice president during the second charter term (2015-present) allowed for mentorship and helped establish continuity. The decision to include additional leadership training for the vice president in 2019 further strengthened the Governing Board’s executive leadership.

* *What is the school’s timetable and plan for achieving accreditation from the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) AdvancEd, the Georgia Accreditation Commission (GAC), or some other recognized accrediting commissions?*

TMSA is proudly accredited by AdvancEd through June 30, 2021.

* *What communication protocols will the governing board follow with parents, the larger community and FCS staff and Board of Education members?*

During its second charter term, TMSA established a communications committee to develop protocols for communication. These policies governed both internal and external communications. The purpose of the protocols was to create a comprehensive communications plan, but for the purposes of the petition, we will extract those sections relevant to the Governing Board’s protocols.

Parents who wish to communicate directly with the Governing Board are advised to make public comments at the appointed time during the Governing Board’s monthly meetings. Governing Board members should make parents aware that all comments to the board should be addressed publicly at these meetings, and that private comments made to individual Governing Board members are not considered to be matters of official board business.

In early 2019, the Communications Committee identified the need to create a Communications Manager position in order to better inform and engage all stakeholders, including parents, staff and the community at large. Communications are now directed through the newly-created position. All media relations are handled by this individual, with support from the Public Relations Committee (a subset of Communications Committee) when needed. Governing Board members are advised to limit their interaction on social media and treat all such communications, regardless of any selected privacy features, in the same manner as they would a comment at a public meeting.

* *Charter school board members and employees are held to following an established conflict of interest policy per the terms of state law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-2065(b)(5), O.C.G.A. 20-2-63) and the charter contract. Are there any existing or potential conflicts of interest? How will the governing board ensure that current and future board members avoid conflicts of interest? Please attach the charter school’s conflict of interest policy in the Exhibits.*

The Governing Board has a policy in place to prevent conflicts of interest in compliance with the requirements of O.C.G.A. §20-2-63 and 20-2-2065(b)(5). Every director on the Governing Board is provided a conflict of interest disclosure form at the July meeting. Directors are required to disclose any and every conflict of interest at this time, and to update the form if it should ever require it.

In addition, Governing Board members are expected to self-monitor themselves regarding any potential conflict of interest regarding deliberations, votes, or decision-making. Should a Governing Board member perceive that he/she has a potential conflict of interest in any subject before the Board, it is the duty of the Governing Board member to disclose it at an open meeting of the Governing Board, and to indicate any recusal from discussion, votes, or decision-making in the official minutes of the meeting.

The Governing Board has a system in place, provided for in Article V of its bylaws, to investigate potential conflicts of interest. After a Governing Board member has identified a potential conflict of interest, the member with the potential conflict will leave the room while the Governing Board deliberates on the matter. Article 5(c) of the corporation’s bylaws specifies that the Governing Board exercise due diligence to determine whether it can arrange an alternative transaction more favorable to the school. The Governing Board member with the conflict of interest is not allowed to participate in such discussion or deliberation.

The Governing Board’s bylaws specify that no vote taken will be binding if a conflict of interest exists which was not disclosed and properly investigated.

Violations of this policy shall be investigated according to Article V(d) of the Governing Board’s bylaws. The Director will be informed of the Governing Board’s belief that the Article has been violated, and will have the opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. After deliberation, the Governing Board will take appropriate disciplinary or corrective action, including possible expulsion from the board.

*11. Does the charter school intend to contract, or has the school contracted, with an education service provider (ESP) or other charter partner, to provide management or consulting services? If so, please complete this section and include a signed, operationalized agreement submitted as an exhibit. This should clearly define the services that will be rendered over the term of the charter as well as the associated costs for those services.*

TMSA benefited from a partnership with EdisonLearning. They were instrumental in providing fiscal, instructional, and governance resources to help TMSA launch in 2010. The TMSA Governing Board ended its contract with EdisonLearning on June 30, 2017. The support EdisonLearning provided is now provided internally by TMSA itself. No ESP is included as part of this charter petition.

*12. Please complete the Financial Performance Goals table to indicate your school’s financial performance goals for the proposed term.*

* *Please use the following tables to indicate financial goals. Use one table per each goal. A sample is provided in the Attachment F.*
* *There should be at least two financial goals. Each goal should have at least one objective.*
* *School financial performance objectives should reflect where the school envisions itself organizationally at the end of the charter term. Goal areas could include financial transparency, efficiency ratings per the FCS State of the Charter Report and/or the CCRPI, additional resource acquisition, capital development, audit findings, etc.*
* *Objectives should emphasize fiscal health and sustainability. FCS evaluates charter schools based on National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) standards of Sustainability, Liquidity. Occupancy Expenses and as well as a Debts to Assets Ratio. It might prove useful to review the FCS State of the Charter Sector Report on the Charter Department website to learn more.*

The Main Street Academy’s primary financial goal is to ensure that the school is a sustainable and financially sound organization, capable of meeting both short and long-term obligations, able to withstand unforeseen financial shocks, and capable of long-term growth. TMSA’s second charter term (2015-present) has been a financial success story. TMSA has met all of its short-term obligations and retired more than half of its startup debt. Clean audits have been recorded every year, revealing no deficiencies in our internal controls. We end our second charter term as an organization that is financially stable and in a strong position to leverage resources to engage our school mission in a third charter term.

Some history is in order to understand where TMSA has come from. TMSA’s first charter term (2010-2015) was challenging. The school had to borrow more than $1.5 million in start up funds and had the misfortune of opening its doors right at the start of the Great Recession, an economic calamity that reduced tax receipts for the state and the county and impacted all schools’ funding. During its first two years of operation, TMSA ran deficits. In order to secure the school’s survival, the first Governing Board had to reallocate resources, cut non-essential services, and renegotiate its debt. By FY2014, TMSA had made great progress, but still carried significant debt and had only built up cash reserves that amounted to two months of operating expenses. TMSA had stabilized, but was not yet in a strong financial position.

TMSA’s second charter term (2015-present) has been about the creation of a financially stable organization with the ability to grow. By all measures it has been a success. TMSA increased its operating reserves to just under six months (from just under two month of reserves at the end of FY2014). TMSA increased its liquidity ratio to 7.61 (from -0.02 at the end of FY2014). TMSA improved its debts-to-assets ratio to 0.17 (from 1.12 at the end of FY2014). TMSA improved its sustainability ratio to 1.01   
(from -0.13 in FY2014). TMSA will enter a new charter term as a sustainable, healthy financial institution, capable of weathering financial shocks, providing for the safety and health of our students, and providing appropriate resources for our faculty.

In the next charter term, TMSA’s financial goals are to maintain its financially stable position and to balance debt repayment with campus and instructional improvements. The first goal is critical to sustainability, and although TMSA is currently in a stable position, the school learned during its first charter term (2010-2015) just how difficult it is to build such a position. Maintaining that position requires vigilance, and needs to remain a financial goal. The second goal also comes from experience. TMSA’s second term (2015-2019) began with the purchase of a new facility. Given that the first charter term had been marked by financial uncertainty and a drive to increase sustainability, liquidity, and debt-to-asset ratios, the Governing Board initially made only modest investments in its campus while aggressively retiring debt. But it is important to balance the desire for a strong financial position with appropriate expenditures on academic and campus resources. The Governing Board has accordingly made other investments in the past two years along these lines, detailed in other portions of this petition. It is an important goal for TMSA to balance debt repayment with campus and instructional improvements.

Financial Goal #1: TMSA will be financially sustainable.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 1** | Performance Measure(s) | Year One  Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will retain at least six month's reserve. | % of reserve to be able to make payroll | Six months | Six months | At least Six months | At least Six months | At least Six months | At least Six months |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| % of reserve to be able to make payroll | Six month’s reserve | annually |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Vice President of Operations | Vice President of Operations | Vice President of Operations |

Financial Goal #2: TMSA will balance the reduction of debt with campus and instructional improvements.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 1** | Performance Measure(s) | Year One  Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will reduce debt | Reduction of the debt incurred from mortgage and HVAC renovation | 10% reduction | 20% reduction | 30% reduction | 40% reduction | 50% reduction | 50% reduction |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Debt reports | Reduction of the debt incurred from mortgage and HVAC renovation | annually |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Vice President of Operations | Vice President of Operations | Vice President of Operations |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 2** | Performance Measure(s) | Year One  Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will maximize campus use. | Created campus master plan  At least two completed enhancements to existing campus by the completion of the next charter | RFP for master planning service | Master plan complete | Master plan complete  1 completed enhancement to existing campus | Master plan complete  1 completed enhancement to existing campus | Master plan complete  2 completed enhancements to existing campus | Master plan complete  2 completed enhancements to existing campus |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Evidence of RFP and completed campus plan | To pay vendor and to fund enhancements (TBD) | yearly |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Principal, Vice President of Operations, Board President | Vice President of Operations | Principal, Vice President of Operations, Board President |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective # 3** | Performance Measure(s) | Year One  Baseline | Year Two Target | Year Three Target | Year Four Target | Year Five Target | Extinction Level |
| TMSA will implement a 2:1 Adult/classroom Ratio in by adding a Para Professional to each K-3 classroom | Additional paraprofessionals hired to achieve the ratio | 20% of the necessary paraprofessionals hired | 40% of the necessary paraprofessionals hired | 60% of the necessary paraprofessionals hired | 80% of the necessary paraprofessionals hired | 100% of the necessary paraprofessionals hired | 100% of the necessary paraprofessionals hired |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interim Data to be collected | Budget/Resources Needed | Frequency of Collection |
| Staff rosters | To fund new staff members | yearly |
| Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties | Responsible Parties |
| Vice President of Operations, Principal | Vice President of Operations | Vice President of Operations, Principal |

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

*· What are your plans, if any, for securing other sources of funding, including funding from corporations, individuals, foundations, philanthropic groups, or any other source?*

The Main Street Academy has always been a community-based school, and community-based fundraising and volunteerism has been at the core of its experience. This helps to keep the parent community financially committed to the school and engaged in its operation and success. It has been a part of the school’s story from the beginning. During the first charter term (2010-2015), TMSA depended upon volunteers logging more than 10,000 hours every year. Volunteers built the playgrounds, mulched the playgrounds, painted classrooms, helped out teachers, stuffed envelopes, and otherwise helped keep the school operating during financially challenging years. The second charter term saw a shift in volunteer focus away from essential operations to enhancements. Volunteers helped build an outdoor classroom, a school garden, start-up sports teams, and supported the school band, theater, and art departments. Volunteers will always be critical to TMSA’s existence, even when their role changes.

Large-scale fundraising (as distinguished from the small-scale fundraising done by the PTO and by extracurricular activities) within the community raised more than $44,000 in FY2019. The two largest events are the Tri-Cities 5k/10k and the TMSA Silent Auction.

The Governing Board has pursued external grants. In its second charter term (2015-present), TMSA sought and won grants from Kaboom! and the Georgia Department of Education (see petition question 16 for details). During this time, TMSA has unsuccessfully sought grants from both corporate and nonprofit entities. But grant writing is an endurance game. Success comes only with repeated attempts and improvement of our circumstances. TMSA had, for instance, repeatedly applied for a grant from Kaboom! before successfully winning its grant in the last charter term. The Governing Board will also pursue external grants.

The TMSA Governing Board will look into the option of creating a full-time staff position for development, fundraising, and grant writing during its next charter term. The Governing Board has reviewed this option in the past, but has been reluctant to dedicate significant resources to such a position if it will mean taking away resources from instruction. While grant writing and seeking outside partnerships remains an important strategic goal for TMSA, the school’s six months of reserves, liquid position, and budget discipline, the school functions autonomously without fear of disruption of its educational services to students.

· *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase financial effectiveness.*

· *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique school.*

Statistics have shown that most charter schools fail due to the lack of financial controls. These goals and innovations are designed to increase financial effectiveness through multiple levels of oversight, providing checks and balances to avoid exceeding budget expenses. These policies help ensure conformance to requirements associated with legal compliance, conflicts of interest, signature authorities, government access to records, accounting procedures, cash management, budget development, financial reporting, property management, and procurement.

Fundraising goals and volunteer hours are appropriate for The Main Street Academy because they are in line with the mission of creating a community-based school. While volunteer hours may save on labor costs, there is an incalculable value to bringing parents together to maintain the playground and buildings or to assist with large school events. It builds community and reinforces the value of a school of which the students, parents, and teachers are all an integral part. TMSA also looks forward to developing corporate and nonprofit partnerships.

The financial goals of this petition (become financially sustainable and balance the reduction of debt with campus and instructional improvements) are both timely and important for TMSA. Five years ago, financial sustainability was more of a worry, and the diligence of the Governing Board and the Vice President of Operations (same staff member since the school began) has built a strong reserve and even purchased a building!

*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.*

|  |
| --- |
| **Action:** TMSA seeks a waiver of the expenditure requirements of QBE Funds. Funding for the students attending TMSA should be controlled by the funding provisions of the Georgia Charter Schools Act and the accompanying regulations. TMSA will spend all public funds in accordance with the laws and rules applying to charter schools and in a manner that is consistent with the policies and programs set forth in this charter. TMSA will rollover any excess money from such funds to be used the following year to improve upon or expand TMSA’s programs or resources. |
| **Specific Waiver:** O.C.G.A. §20-2-167 |
| **Expected Outcome:** Rollover of funds will allow TMSA to build up reserves equal to six months of expenses, save money for permanent facilities, invest in teacher training, enhance classroom resources and otherwise invest in targeted academic areas that will directly impact student performance. |

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

*· What is the school’s attendance zone?*

*· Under federal law, charter schools may automatically admit students prior to a lottery who are in specified categories. Please specify in the petition if the school will use any of the following enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) that apply. If the school will not utilize any enrollment priorities, please state that as well.*

*o A sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up charter school*

*o A sibling of a student enrolled in another local school designated in the Charter*

*o 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*

*o Students matriculating from (NAME OF A SPECIFIC SCHOOL HERE)*

*• What are the rules, procedures and timelines that will govern admission and registration? The school system will need a listing of registered students and students drawn by lottery to be placed on the wait list by March 1.*

*• 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?*

*• FCS honors charter school expulsions. What will be the student discipline and expulsion process and what role does the charter school wish the school system to play in the process?*

The Main Street Academy will be open to any student who resides within Fulton County. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1), The Main Street Academy will enroll students who reside within Fulton County. Proof of county residency will be required as part of the registration process. Should the number of applications exceed the number of available seats in any program, class, grade level or building, all applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process.

The school has an open enrollment process and fully complies with Georgia laws regarding admission policies and procedures, as well as other applicable state and federal provisions. Admission to the school will not be unlawfully restricted on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, gender, disability, race, creed, national origin, religion, or any other ground that would be unlawful. The school is nonsectarian in all respects, and complies with state and federal laws applicable to public schools concerning the separation of church and state.

Enrollment preference is given to applicants in order of priority who are: 1) a sibling of a student enrolled in the school, or 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 preference will not be given to an applicant who is: 1) a student of a sibling enrolled in another local school designated in the charter, or 2) students matriculating from a specified school.

In 2016, the TMSA Governing Board moved from a manual to an electronic lottery system for admissions and enrollment and in 2017 adopted its current system, Schoolmint. Schoolmint simplified lottery procedures and enhanced communication with parents on the waitlist. Schoolmint allows for a dynamic tagging system that automatically gives siblings priority during the admissions and waitlist process, as per school policy in accordance with Georgia law. Schoolmint automatically communicates with families of students, informing them of admission or waitlist status, and dynamically updates their status on the waitlist and informing the parents. This system enhances communication while at the same time guarding families’ privacy during the admissions process.

The timetable for the process of recruiting, registering and admitting students each year will be as follows:

* Beginning of January: (first week back to school after holiday break): Post information and timeline for admission, enrollment and lottery process.
* First week of January: Re-enrollment forms sent home with current students (current families may list siblings who wish to enroll for the next school year).
* Last week of January: Re-enrollment forms due back to the school.
* First week in February: Lottery for siblings in any grade in which sibling applicants (received in re-enrollment for current families) exceed available seats in that grade.
* Second week of February: Open enrollment for new students.
* Last week of February [actual date TBD & posted each year]: Lottery for any grade in which applications received during open enrollment exceed available seats in that grade.
* March 1: Enrollment information sent to FCS.
* First week in March: Notification to open enrollment applicants with acceptance letter and timeline for submitting full registration forms, or notice that they have been placed on the waitlist.

The school continues to accept applications after March 1. Once capacity has been reached in a grade, the school may continue to accept applications adding the applicants to a sequential wait list for each grade.

Consistent with the sample timeline above, each year, a pre-enrollment session for returning students is held followed by the open enrollment registration period. Information regarding the pre-enrollment period is distributed in advance. All eligible returning students who complete registration during the pre-enrollment period are registered for the following school year. Siblings of returning students wishing to enroll are registered during this pre-enrollment period unless there are not enough spaces available in any particular grade or program. In that case they are enrolled based on a lottery to be held in an open forum on the date stated in the pre-enrollment information.

The dates and times of the open enrollment registration period are established by the School Operations Manager and approved by the Governing Board each year and end no later than February 28. All complete applications for eligible students that are received during the open enrollment period is admitted unless there are more applications than spaces available. In that case, spaces remaining in each class are awarded on the basis of a lottery. The Main Street Academy’s admission lotteries occur in a public setting where a neutral party can conduct the lottery on behalf of the school.

After the open enrollment lottery is held for available seats, each additional name drawn in the lottery system is assigned, per grade level, to a sequential waiting list.

After a student is selected from the lottery results, the student is notified of the timeline to submit the required registration forms. The following registration documents are required along with the admission application for new and transfer students to enroll at The Main Street Academy:

* Official Certificate of Birth.
* Proof of residence of parent or legal guardian.
* Child’s immunization records and health screening (form 3231 and 3300).
* Child’s records from previous school (report card, school withdrawal form, discipline record).
* Proof of legal guardianship.
* Home Language Survey.
* IEP (for students with disabilities only)

If a student from the lottery results list does not complete the registration process (within the time allowed) or chooses not to attend the school, the first person on the sequential waiting list will be given the opportunity to register. Should the sequential waiting list be exhausted, students will be selected randomly from the general waiting list. This procedure will continue throughout the school year. The waiting list will only be in effect for one school year; waiting lists will not be carried over year-to-year.

The Main Street Academy’s lottery policies and processes are clearly written, posted, and distributed to reflect state laws regarding random selection.

An analysis of the school’s demographic population over the school’s first 5 years indicates the following:

Population Comparisons

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Population Group** | **% White** | **% Black** |
| Tri Cities (ACS 2017 for College Park, East Point, and Hapeville) | 16% | 84% |
| The Main Street Academy (2017-2018) | 4% | 89% |

It is quite common for census data to not match school enrollment data. For instance, Fulton County as a whole looks like the following:

Population Comparisons

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Population Group** | **% White** | **% Black** |
| Fulton County (2018 estimates Census Bureau) | 45.8% | 44.6% |
| Fulton County Schools (2017-2018, Governor’s Office of Student Achievement) | 29% | 42% |

Considering a strong representation is present at the Woodward Academy (student body is 29% Black), located in College Park and other smaller private schools in the Tri-Cities area, the demographics of The Main Street Academy clearly match the demographics in the neighboring communities.

To attract a large and diverse pool of applicants, the school employs the following strategies:

* The implementation of an enrollment process that allows for broad-based recruiting and inclusive applications.
* Promotional and informational material (in all appropriate languages) that appeals to all of the various groups in our enrollment zone.
* Use of the web site and advertising in local papers
* Contacting various civic and community associations in our target area and use our current community support parents as an entry to these meetings.
* Leveraging enrolled families to assist in marketing to new families.
* PTO outreach within the community.

Different media will be used to mount an extensive public information campaign about the school. The goal is that students attending the Main Street Academy reflect the broad range of ethnic and socio-economic diversity that makes these communities vibrant.

Although student enrollment is open to all students in Fulton County, The Main Street Academy conducts the bulk of grassroots efforts to parents primarily in the College Park, East Point, and Hapeville established school zones.

The Main Street Academy follows the Fulton County Schools policy regarding student discipline and expulsion.

*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.*

In the spring of 2015, TMSA purchased the property at 2861 Lakeshore Drive, College Park, GA 30337 from Fulton County Schools. The property was the site of the former Lakeshore High School and Harriet Tubman Elementary School. The building has adequate classroom space to house all of our classrooms from K-8, as well as space for two art rooms, two music rooms, a gym and multi-purpose center, a playground for younger students, and two athletic fields. This facility has allowed TMSA to expand its extra-curricular offerings in both sports and the arts during its second charter term (2015-present).

The campus is a well-built structure, but it does show its age. It was completed in 1966, and many of the systems are original. It has required nearly one million dollars in renovations during the last charter term and will require more in the next charter term.

The Governing Board’s renovations to the building during the last charter term have followed the Board’s student-centered focus. After initially occupying the building and then assessing its needs during strategic planning, the Governing Board identified several different areas for improvement. First and foremost were security enhancements and addressing the building’s ancient HVAC system. But the Governing Board also identified in its strategic plan the many possibilities that the campus presented: the unused basement space; the large playground area and other green spaces; and the athletic fields. In addition to updating HVAC and security systems, the Governing Board wanted to develop unused and underutilized space.

Progress was made on both fronts. In 2018, TMSA secured a facilities grant of $100,000 from the Georgia Department of Education to update and enhance its security systems. The grant was used to upgrade and replace security cameras for the school, as well as to purchase additional security cameras and provide for a mobile surveillance system which would allow for off-site monitoring and response. New gates were purchased for the driveway entrance of the school, and a set of security doors installed just outside the main office, creating a vestibule-style entrance to the school. Other improvements included retrofitting classroom doors and exterior doors to allow them to be locked from the inside, a new monitoring system for guests arriving at the school, and equipping the classrooms and front office with “duress/panic” buttons that directly connect faculty and staff to 911 emergency response.

The HVAC system provided the single biggest challenge for the school. Given the enormous expense of replacing the building’s HVAC system, the Governing Board moved in a deliberate fashion. In 2017, the Governing Board renovated the HVAC units that served the school’s cafeteria, $100,000 of which was funded by a Georgia Department of Education grant. In 2018, the Governing Board approved approximately $800,000 in capital improvements. Thirty-five classrooms received brand new individual units. There is still work to be done on the HVAC. Both the gym and administrative office units require replacement. But the investment has paid off in terms of creating a comfortable educational space for TMSA students and teachers.

Part of the Governing Board’s strategic plan for the facility was to develop underutilized parts of the campus, and here the Governing Board recorded great progress. In 2017, TMSA ripped out its old playground and installed a brand new one. A committee of teachers, students, parents and board members helped design the new playground, with the goal of being able to increase students’ physical activity and to provide opportunities for kinesthetic learning. Part of the renovation involved the creation of an outdoor classroom on another portion of the campus. This playground renovation was secured through a Kaboom! and Cox Enterprises matching grant. TMSA Governing Board members, parents, and community members contributed approximately $8,500, secured 250 volunteers for the build day and contributed food, water, and t-shirts for the two-day project. The playground renovation was completed on 11/3/2017. Other large-scale fundraisers, primarily the 5k/10k and the TMSA Silent Auction, have allowed for bathroom renovations, the complete replacement of water fountains, replacing the curtains and sound system in the gymnasium/concert stage, and refinishing the gym floor.

While TMSA’s facility is now a safe and comfortable learning environment, future renovations will help unlock more potential. In its first strategic plan, the Governing Board identified the facility’s basement as both a potential hazard and an opportunity. The basement had been largely used for storage prior to TMSA’s occupancy, and before that it had been a locker room. The space was dilapidated and largely unusable. In accordance with the strategic plan, the Governing Board locked up the basement to secure it and prevent it being a hazard for students. During its next charter term, the TMSA Governing Board plans to renovate the basement and turn it into usable classroom space. Developing the basement will require a survey analysis to establish both the best uses for the space and to determine what steps will be necessary to bring the new space up to Georgia code. TMSA has applied for a facilities grant from the Georgia Department of Education to help defray these expenses, and will look for that and other facilities grants in order to renovate the basement during its next charter term.

*17. Does the charter school have an MOU for the facility pending charter school and facility approval and is it provided as an 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.*

TMSA does not have a MOU for its school located at 2861 Lakeshore Drive, College Park, GA 30337.

18. *Does the charter school have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the proposed facility and is it provided as an Exhibit? If not, what is the date by which the charter school will have a CO?*

*· Please note that schools must obtain a CO no later than 45 days before the start of the charter term on July 1.*

TMSA has a Certificate of Occupancy for its school located at 2861 Lakeshore Drive, College Park, GA 30337.

*19. Does the charter school have an emergency safety plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 for the proposed facility and is it provided as an Exhibit? If not, what is the date by which the charter school will submit a plan to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and FCS?*

*· Please note that schools must submit an emergency safety plan to Fulton County Schools no later than 45 days before the start of the charter term on July 1.*

TMSA has an emergency plan. Every year, it is approved by the security staff through Fulton County Schools.