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It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service.

**The Mission of
Gwinnett County
Public Schools**

is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia
c/o Guin Jones and Allen Mueller
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE
1356 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) received a letter of intent from Achievement Preparatory Academy (APA) on October 1, 2025. The petitioner voluntarily moved forward in the district's process and submitted the full petition for a start-up charter school proposing to open 2027-2028 on December 18, 2025. The Gwinnett County Board of Education voted to deny the APA's petition on June 18, 2026. The packet contains the decision rationale and all required artifacts in accordance with SB 82.

This year's review cycle was unprecedented for GCPS in three ways:

- **Use of External Reviewers:** Because APA's Founding Director, Dr. Rodriguez Johnson, is currently employed by the district, GCPS engaged external reviewers to ensure the fidelity and integrity of the review process. The district contracted two reviewers from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), and the State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC) provided the name of an additional reviewer employed with Teach For America-Atlanta.
- **Adoption of the State-Approved Rubric:** This marks the first time the district was required to utilize the state-approved petition review rubric, which was officially released by the SCSC on January 20, 2026.
- **Revise and Resubmit:** The Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) voted to permit APA to revise and resubmit its petition - marking the first time in recent years, and possibly ever, that the district has offered a formal revision and resubmission process to a petitioner.

Gwinnett County Public Schools appreciated the opportunity to review Achievement Preparatory Academy's charter petition. The district embraces the opportunity to provide students a choice of educational experiences that align with the mission and vision of the Gwinnett County Board of Education. If you have additional questions or points of clarity regarding the district's review process, the Board's majority vote of denial, or any of the documentation provided in this letter, please reach out to Dr. Emily Coady at emily.coady@gcpsk12.org or at 470-589-0517.

In partnership,

Dr. Nicole White
Interim Chief Learning Officer



GCPS 2026 Charter Petition Review Cycle

Date	Action
August 29, 2025	GCPS published the review cycle's timeline on the district's website.
October 1, 2025	APA Submits Letter of Intent to GCPS.
October 22, 2025	APA attends the virtual Petition Information Session.
December 18, 2025	APA submits a start-up petition to GCPS and the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia (SCSC).
December 19, 2025	GCPS commences its internal review process.
January 20, 2026	SCSC publishes the FY26 required petition review rubric.
March 4, 2026	GCPS hosts APA Board for a panel interview.
March 17, 2026	Review committee presents a recommendation for denial to the Gwinnett County BOE at the March work session.
March 18, 2026	Gwinnett County BOE votes to allow APA to revise and resubmit their start-up petition (5-0).
March 24, 2026	APA formally accepts the opportunity to revise and resubmit its petition and confirms its intent to proceed in writing.
May 15, 2026	GCPS hosts APA Board for a second panel interview.
June 17, 2026	Review committee presents its recommendation to approve the revised petition at the Board's June work session.
June 19, 2026	The Gwinnett County BOE votes to deny APA's revised petition (3-2).

Reasons for Denial *SB 82, Section 3, Subsection (d)(2), 85-86:*

While the revised submission reflected some improvements in response to the original recommendation report's feedback, several concerns persisted. Specifically, the Gwinnett County BOE found that key issues related to demonstrated community need in the proposed areas of service, as well as the proposed facility and financial plan, remained insufficiently addressed to support approval.

External Review Ratings	Original Petition Ratings	Revised Petition Ratings
Mission & Vision	Meets the Standard	N/A
Academics	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Community	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Governance	Meets the Standard	N/A
Operations	Approaches the Standard	N/A
Special Populations	Approaches the Standard	N/A
Finance	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard

Academic Program

The proposed academic model integrates elementary CTAE programming with a focus on STEM, Entrepreneurship, and Agricultural, Food & Natural Resources pathways, providing students with early exposure to career-connected learning. This approach is supported by experiential learning opportunities, including field trips, community-based mentoring, and structured career exploration. Instruction is grounded in interdisciplinary, project-based learning aligned with Georgia Standards and the Science of Reading, ensuring both academic rigor and real-world application. To support implementation, the school may seek flexibility through waivers related to seat time, scheduling, and instructional delivery.

APA has addressed all requested revisions to its academic program. The school now provides a clear, research-informed articulation of its Project-Based Learning (PBL) framework, including a detailed description of the instructional approach, implementation methods, defined roles of instructional staff, and evidence of rigorous curriculum and lesson design aligned with Georgia Standards. The academic program also clearly demonstrates how APA's approach is uniquely designed and meaningfully distinct from those offered in existing district schools.

In addition, APA has developed a comprehensive staffing plan outlining the roles, qualifications, and allocations necessary to implement services with fidelity from day one. This includes detailed provisions for specialized services such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling, with clear identification of whether these services will be delivered through direct hires, contractual arrangements, or external partnerships.

Budget & Finance

Achievement Preparatory Academy has addressed all requested revisions to its financial and operational plans. The school has revised teacher compensation to reflect a competitive and realistic pay structure and aligned its staffing plan with the operational demands of the proposed academic model.

The updated budget incorporates accurate assumptions for insurance, benefits, and retirement costs, and includes a financial contingency plan to mitigate potential gaps in FTE funding. APA has also provided supporting documentation for proposed external funding sources, including agreements or submitted applications, as well as documentation of proposed banking relationships.

Additionally, the revised budget reflects adequate funding for all required student support positions—including a school nurse, counselor, and social worker—and demonstrates clear alignment between the staffing model and the delivery of required services. APA has also identified potential facilities within the proposed service area to support successful program implementation.

Based on the updated assumptions and supporting documentation, the proposed plan is financially feasible if all outlined assumptions are fully realized. Accordingly, as a condition of moving forward, the following items will be required as part of the school's pre-opening checklist to ensure financial viability and operational readiness:

- Submission of legal documentation supporting the Social Security tax exemption (e.g., a tax attorney opinion or equivalent verification)
- Securing a confirmed facility within the proposed service area by October 21, 2026

- Final budget review and approval by the Business and Finance by January 30, 2027
- Full alignment of the staffing plan to meet the needs of all enrolled students, with 100% of positions filled by June 30, 2027
- Achieve at least 90% of projected enrollment, equating to 180 enrolled K–3 students by March 1, 2027

These conditions are necessary to ensure that the school’s financial model, staffing structure, and operational plans are fully executable and aligned with student needs prior to opening. The Office of Program Development & Improvement will oversee Achievement Preparatory Academy throughout the pre-opening period, from August 2026 through the first day of school in August 2027.

Community Need, Demand, & Engagement

A strong indicator of projected enrollment is verified family commitment, demonstrated through completed applications, registrations, or other concrete actions, and supported by evidence of sustained demand and successful conversion from interest to enrollment. In alignment with these expectations, Achievement Preparatory Academy has strengthened its enrollment case through increased intent-to-enroll metrics, securing 116 documented signatures from Gwinnett County residents, as well as 58 letters of support from community members and families. These endorsements include notable support from Representative Scott Hilton (48th District), the Georgia Charter Schools Association, and Mr. Bernard Levett, reflecting a broad base of community backing.

In addition, APA has developed a clearly defined marketing and recruitment plan designed to meet enrollment targets and build awareness within the proposed attendance areas during their planning year (SY26-27). The application also includes additional data to further substantiate demonstrated demand among families residing in the Duluth, Norcross, and Meadowcreek communities. Collectively, these elements are supported by a narrative that connects demonstrated community interest to realistic and supportable enrollment projections, providing a more comprehensive and evidence-based rationale for meeting projected enrollment goals.

Existing School Choice Options

Gwinnett County Public Schools provides a comprehensive menu of school choice options for students in the local school system; *SB 82, Section 3, Subsection (d)(2), 86-87*. All programs or schools are hyperlinked to their landing page to provide additional information. Student numbers presented are actual enrollment for the 25-26 school year or projected enrollment for the 26-27 school year.

1. [New Life Academy of Excellence Inc.](#) 614 students
2. [Maxwell High School of Technology](#) 1114 students
3. [Paul Duke STEM High School](#) 1468 students
4. [McClure Health Science High School](#) 1203 students
5. [Grayson Technical Education Program](#) 548 students
6. [Phoenix High School](#) 734 students

7. [CHARGE^{north}](#) 381 students
8. [GIVE East Center](#) 516 students
9. [GIVE West Center](#) 361 students
10. [SOTA \(School of the Arts\)](#) 192 students
11. [Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology](#) 1269 students
12. [Gwinnett Online Campus](#) 2316 students
13. [Play 2 Learn](#) 2175 students
14. [North Metro Academy of Performing Arts](#) 182 students
15. [Anniston Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 240 students
16. [Baldwin Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 240 students
17. [Bethesda Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 450 students
18. [Camp Creek Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 270 students
19. [Hopkins Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 85 students
20. [Ivy Creek Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 270 students
21. [Level Creek Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 270 students
22. [Meadowcreek Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 240 students
23. [Mulberry Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 135 students
24. [Trip Elementary French Dual Language Immersion](#) 240 students
25. [Parsons Elementary Korean Dual Language Immersion](#) 240 students
26. [Jones Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 100 students
27. [North Gwinnett Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 40 students
28. [Radloff Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 40 students
29. [Shiloh Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 100 students
30. [Summerour Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 100 students
31. [Sweetwater Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 130 students
32. [Trickum Middle School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 100 students
33. [Bay Creek Middle School French Dual Language Immersion](#) 100 students
34. [Hull Middle School Korean Dual Language Immersion](#) 100 students
35. [Berkmar High School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 60 students
36. [Grayson High School French Dual Language Immersion](#) 50 students
37. [Shiloh High School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 50 students
38. [Norcross High School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 20 students projected
39. [Parkview High School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 40 students projected
40. [Seckinger High School Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 30 students projected
41. [Paul Duke STEM Spanish Dual Language Immersion](#) 32 students
42. [Anderson-Livsey Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
43. [Beaver Ridge Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
44. [Benefield Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
45. [Hopkins Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
46. [Lawrenceville Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
47. [McKendree Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
48. [Nesbit Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students

49. [Norton Elementary Pre-K Program](#) 32 students
 50. [Norcross High School International Baccalaureate](#) 1447 students
 51. [Shiloh High School International Baccalaureate](#) 70 students
 52. [Shiloh Middle School International Baccalaureate](#) 230 students
 53. [Peachtree Elementary School International Baccalaureate](#) 670 students
 54. [Pinckneyville Middle School International Baccalaureate](#) 1111 students
 55. [Summerour Middle School International Baccalaureate](#) 1301 students
 56. [Norcross High School 3DE by Junior Achievement](#) 400 students
 57. [South Gwinnett High School 3DE by Junior Achievement](#) 315 students
 58. [Parkview High School 3DE by Junior Achievement](#) 406 students
 59. [Mountain View High School SUMMIT](#) 159 students projected
 60. 56 [middle](#) and [high schools](#) offer CTAE Pathways 60731 students
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District Academic Performance

The academic performance for all 142 GCPS schools can be found at the following hyperlinked locations; *SB 82, Section 3, Subsection (d)(2), 87-88.*

- o [GCPS School Profiles](#)
- o [GCPS Milestones Data Dashboard](#)
- o [GADOE Milestones Data Dashboard](#)
- o [GOSA Dashboards, Data, Report Cards](#)
- o [GADOE CCRPI Portal](#)