

Amana Renewal Recommendation

Amana Academy has submitted a renewal petition per FCS policy deadlines. The school has been in operation since 2004 under the control and management of Fulton County Board of Education. It proposes to continue operations in its current location (285 S Main St, Alpharetta, GA 30009). The school features Expeditionary Learning (EL) approach, single gender core courses in the upper grades and Arabic instruction in both elementary and middle school levels, French in middle school and became Georgia's first STEM certified K-8 school. It proposes to have its enrollment reach 752 students at the end of its next charter term.

Since its last charter renewal, Amana has demonstrated many successes, including:

- First K-8 STEM certified school in Georgia
- National recognition as an EL Education Credentialed school
- Department of Education CSP Grant Award for the dissemination of Innovative Practices around culture and character
- Top performing elementary and middle school within Fulton County schools as measured by CCRPI

The school has performed well during the last 5 years of its charter. This memo and the additional documents presented here will outline how students benefit from attending Amana Academy, namely:

- The concept of Expeditionary STEM is unique to Amana Academy.
- The governing board has helped to increase community involvement
- The leadership and governance team is functioning well and well organized.
- The petitioner continues the practices which have led to the school's strong academic performance.
- The school has worked to ensure that the faculty is both diverse and representative of both the community and the student body it serves.
- The school has been successful at securing additional resources to supplement FCS funding levels and support.

Academic Performance

In the last five (5) years Amana has performed better than the district and the state in the grade bands that it serves.

Amana's CCRPI Score vs. the District and the State

SY	ES	MS	Comb	FCS	GA
17	81.9	92.2	85.3	78	75
16	75.4	90.6	80.1	74.7	73.6
15	74.7	92.3	80	74.7	75.5
14	83.7	92.2	86.2	73.4	72.3

In SY2018, Amana had the highest combined CCRPI score of any start-up charter school in the state of Georgia and was among the ten (10) elementary schools and the top five (5) middle schools in Fulton County.

Alpharetta Schools		CCRPI	Roswell Schools		CCRPI
Amana Academy		91.9	Fulton Academy of Science & Technology		89.9
Creekview Elementary		90	Crabapple Middle School		85.5
Alpharetta Elementary		87.7	Elkins Pointe Middle School		83.1
Lake Windward Elementary		95.7	Jackson Elementary		70.7
Manning Oaks Elementary		79.9	Hembree Springs Elementary		74.6
New Prospect Elementary		85.2	Hillside Elementary		87.2
Haynes Bridge Middle School		81.4	Mimosa Elementary		73.3
Holcomb Bridge Middle School		72.4	Mountain Park Elementary		85.1
Webb Bridge Middle School		93.1	Northwood Elementary		88.7
			River Eves Elementary		87
			Sweet Apple Elementary		84
			Vickery Mill Elementary		79.2

Using the EL educational model, student success is measured across three dimensions mastery of knowledge and skills, character and high-quality student work. Through semester-long learning expeditions, students integrate literacy, numeracy and critical thinking in all content areas. At Amana, students in the upper elementary and middle school are outpacing their county and district peers when we look at the percentage of students reading on grade level

Students Reading on Grade Level SY2018

Grade	State	Fulton County	Amana
5	69.6	73.2	87.1
6	60.7	65.2	78.1
7	70.9	75.6	91.1
8	73.2	74	91.3

and scoring developing and above on the math EOC tests.

Students Scoring Developing and Above on Math EOC SY2018

Grade	State	Fulton County	Amana
5	75.3	77.6	97.6
6	76.5	75.8	90.6
7	77.3	77.9	85.9
8	74.5	72.0	93.8

Amana students are not only achieving academically but they are also growing at a higher rate than their peers. According to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Amana's elementary students' academic growth is higher than 91% of elementary schools in the state and more than 99% of the middle school students in the state.

Grade	ELA Median Growth Percentile		Math Median Growth Percentile	
	SY17	SY18	SY17	SY18
4	54	63	38	70
5	69	54	55	77
6	67	73.5	52	78
7	58.5	48	61	61
8	69	85	87.5	72

Amana has met its academic goals and objectives during its last charter term by meeting and exceeding the performance of the district and state as well as traditional peer comparison schools. In the last charter term, the school has concentrated on building a cohesive school vision

focused on student achievement, continuous improvement, student engaged assessment and service learning.

Organizational Goals

The school has met or made progress with each of its organizational goals and measurements during the last charter term as the chart below indicates:

Organizational Goal 1: The Charter School will be economically sustainable.								
Measure 1: Operate in fiscally sound manner as measured by audit		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		
Measure 2: Actual/proposed budgets effective resource allocation		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		
Measure 3: Yearly balance sheets demonstrate adequate reserves		Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Met	Met		
Measure 4: Meet GAGAS as demonstrated by annual audits		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		
Measure 5: Meet financial reporting deadlines set by GaDOE		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		
Organizational Goal 2: All Governing Board Members shall receive effective training.								
Measure 1: All GB members participate in training at least annually		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		
Organizational Goal 3: Promote positive school experience that engages students, parents and teachers.								
Measure 1: <10% students absent 15 days; reduce to <5%		Met	Met	Met	Met	Met		
Measure 2: 90% of parents indicate they are at least "satisfied"		Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made		
Measure 3: 90% of teachers indicate they are at least "satisfied"		Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made	Porgress Made		
					Legend:	Met	Porgress Made	Not Met

The school has improved its school climate rating from two stars to four stars (out of 5).

Financial Goals and Performance

Amana has maintained strong organizational viability, practices sound decision-making and fiscal management thus ensuring the responsible stewardship of public monies.

- Each year, Amana has operated in accordance with all board approved policies.
- The FCS Budget department found that Amana had sound financial plans and demonstrated proper fiscal oversight. The annual operating has been balanced.
- The school enrollment variance is between 2% – 8% which allows the school to project enrollment and adequately budget.
- The school is making a concerted effort to better manage the balance sheet and has gotten to a 34 days-cash-on-hand as of FY 2018 and plans to improve to 60 days cash-on-hand by the end of FY 20.
- Amana has met all Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) on its external, annual audit reports. They have always received a clean audit review.
- Amana has not experienced financial struggles or allegations of fraud.

Sustainability ratio is measured as unrestricted net assets divided by average monthly expenses. Sustainability ratio should indicate more than a two-month reserve. Amana is in line with its peer charter schools.

Amana	CHCS	FAST	Hapeville	KSFA	LGS*	LCP*	Skyview	TMSA
2.31	1.87	1.23	3.27	7.81	2.83	2.34	1.19	4.91

Liquidity ratio is measured as (current assets less current liabilities) divided by total expenses. Liquidity ratio should be greater than zero (0) and less than one (1). The school has a strong liquidity ratio.

Amana	CHCS	FAST	Hapeville	KSFA	LGS*	LCP*	Skyview	TMSA
0.06	0.15	0.09	0.26	0.02	0.22	0.28	0.09	0.40

Occupancy costs are defined two ways: (1) as rent, taxes and insurance on building, depreciation, and amortization expense; (2) Additionally, utilities, repairs and maintenance, and interest on mortgage.

Occupancy expense is measured by rent, taxes and insurance on building, depreciation and amortization expense (total occupancy costs) divided by total revenue. Amana is at an acceptable expense level.

Amana	CHCS	FAST	Hapeville	KIPP	LGS*	LCP*	Skyview	TMSA
4.76%	13.58%	17.27%	6.73%	8.84%	5.69%	3.73%	10.89%	3.70%

Occupancy expense is measured by utilities, repairs and maintenance and interest on mortgage (total occupancy costs) divided by total revenue. Amana is at an acceptable expense level.

Amana	CHCS	FAST	Hapeville	KIPP	LGS*	LCP*	Skyview	TMSA
14.16%	16.88%	19.38%	14.09%	11.22%	7.27%	5.91%	14.33%	6.93%

Debt to Asset Ratio is measured as total liabilities (excluding net pension liability) divided by total assets. Debt to asset ratio should be less than 0.90. Amana is slightly above the recommended level.

Amana	CHCS	FAST	Hapeville	KIPP	LGS*	LCP*	Skyview	TMSA
0.93	0.06	0.25	0.52	0.06	0.06	0.56	0.88	0.32

Governance

The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations and provisions of the charter contract relating to governance including but not limited to: board policies and bylaws, however, the governing board minutes and agendas are not posted on the website in a timely manner.

The board has 5 parent members and 5 community members with a diverse set of experiences. A sign of sustainability, is there are currently no founding members on the board. The average tenure is 2 years with a range of 0-6 years.

The Board does an excellent job of determining the strategic direction of the school by setting goals aligned with the school’s mission and driven by data analysis.

The Board has a strong process in place to evaluate its priorities and goals and to engage in continuous improvement. This practice was confirmed during the governing board interviews for renewal and the Charter School Department attendance at board meetings.

Board meetings are well-organized, purposeful and strategically focused as observed through observations at board meetings and reviews of board agendas and board minutes.

Recommendation:

We recommend approval of the renewal of Amana Academy’s charter for a term of five (5) years. This approval is with the understanding that the petitioner will resolve areas of concern identified in the petition to the satisfaction of FCBOE prior to submission to the GADOE Charter Division.