



Amana Academy
Fulton County Public Charter School

Est. 2005

Charter Renewal Application

July, 2014 – June, 2019 Charter Term

Submitted to Fulton County Schools on September 20, 2013

PART B: PETITION ESSENTIALS

THE CASE

1. Why do you want a charter school?

“Where Students Come First” – Fulton County Schools’ tagline is an appropriate start to Amana Academy’s charter petition, because serving the needs of students has inspired parents and community members to pursue this chartered public school. Guided by an ethic of stewardship, Amana Academy organizers recognize the value for children to pursue education that positions them well academically & competitively, encourages them to bridge cultural gaps, and allows them to affect positive change in society.

These aspirations have inspired Amana Academy’s focused educational approach – in a K-8 format – that does not exist at other schools in the Fulton County system, and therefore aligns with the charter school paradigm of a “public school of choice”. Petitioning for its third charter term, Amana Academy seeks to build on its successful track record with organizational standing and student achievement. Named the Coca-Cola Foundation’s Georgia Charter School of the Year in 2011 and called one of [Georgia’s] best charter schools by State Superintendent Dr. John D. Barge in August, 2012. Amana Academy successfully purchased a permanent facility in April, 2013; and we are poised to more effectively engage community resources and to make data-informed adjustments to our program to improve student achievement in specific areas.

At the heart of this approach the use of the Harvard-based Expeditionary Learning (EL) framework, one of the Nation’s most innovative and acclaimed whole-school design instructional models. Through the model’s design principles and core practices, Expeditionary Learning’s non-profit organization provides Amana leaders and teachers with professional development, curriculum planning resources, and new school structures to boost student engagement, character, and achievement. The EL Core Practices address five key dimensions of life at Amana Academy including Learning Expeditions, Instruction, Culture & Character, Assessment, and Leadership. Amana Academy continues to apply EL norms, practices, and structures to all aspects of the school, and extends it to new priorities that have

emerged as a result of student achievement data (presented in the petition addendum), such as our implementation of STEM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) in a form we have named “Expeditionary STEM”.

As Amana Academy has matured and evolved, so has Expeditionary Learning. The model today truly reflects educational best practices, and it has enriched the learning experience for Amana Academy students. Learning at Amana Academy is active. Students are scientists, urban planners, historians, and activists, investigating real community problems and collaborating with peers to develop creative, actionable solutions. Learning is challenging. Students at all levels are pushed and supported to do more than they think they can. Excellence is expected in the quality of their work and thinking.

Learning is meaningful. Students regularly apply their skills and knowledge to real-world issues and problems. In many cases, the topics they tackle have local relevance; and students have made a positive change in the community through their work, for example the building of a stand-alone hut for homeless people through an 8th grade STEM-focused learning expedition that engaged Mad Housers, a local non-profit that seeks to shelter the homeless. This type of community engagement is a hallmark of the Expeditionary Learning model and is much more possible at Amana as the school has grown in enrollment, especially in the middle school grades. Students can see the relevance of their learning and are motivated by understanding that learning has purpose. Through formal structures of presentation, exhibition, critique, and data analysis, students and teachers can build a shared vision of pathways to achievement. Learning is collaborative. Amana Academy leaders, teachers, students, and families share rigorous expectations for quality work, achievement, and behavior. The Expeditionary Learning framework has enabled trust, respect, responsibility, and joy in learning to permeate the school culture.

Building on the Expeditionary Learning framework, Amana Academy organizers have included research-based programs and structures that position students for greater success. Amana families recognize the importance of learning a foreign language early in a student’s educational experience as supported by research presented in the petition addendum. Responding to this need, Amana Academy’s offering includes implementation of the Georgia Elementary School Foreign Languages (ESFL) Model in

teaching the Arabic language, one of six UN languages, as a connections class. Learning any foreign language improves overall student learning and serves as competitive advantage to students pursuing a college education while providing them with valuable cross-cultural skills critical in a globally connected world. Arabic is a less commonly taught foreign language in the United States, and the National Security Education Program has requested public schools produce more Arabic speakers. Amana Academy is unique among Fulton County schools in offering world language instruction at the elementary level, and the only one of its kind among Georgia schools offering Arabic at the elementary and middle school levels.

Another structure that Amana features is single-gender but equal classroom instruction in grades of its option, founded on the compelling evidence of scientifically based research. Gender friendly classroom instruction has had a positive effect on academic achievement, and classroom behavior during previous charter terms. Enrollment growth has enabled the school to increase the number of classes per grade to four, which in the case of some grades where we had an odd number of classes (for example fourth and fifth grade) makes it now possible to implement single-gender instruction in these grades. Based on analysis of student achievement data and our experience with implementation of single-gender classroom instruction, we see upside potential in performance for our focus on Expeditionary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math); as single-gender instruction facilitates learning for under-represented populations without social distractions allowing students to take risks regardless of subject-specific role stereotypes or negative peer pressure.

Additionally, when possible, we implement classroom-looping in elementary grades where a teacher stays with her/his class for two years. This scientifically based research approach is encouraged by Expeditionary Learning and has been shown in research studies to improve academic results, accelerate efficiency, and solidify relationships between student and teacher. Classroom looping in elementary grades has been very appealing to Amana Academy families, as it is atypical that parents request a different teacher for the second year of the loop.

It is this collection of innovative approaches that differentiates Amana Academy at the elementary and middle grades and positions it well as an independent “start-up” charter school authorized by Fulton County Schools under the jurisdiction of the Fulton Board of Education Policy IEB “Charter Schools”. Obligations pertaining to the performance based contract between Amana Academy and Fulton County Schools are bound by all the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, O.C.G.A. 20-2-2060 et. seq., and all State Board of Education Rules and guidelines implementing the Charter Schools Act as if such terms were set forth in the charter.

Amana's approach has attracted a multi-cultural and diverse student body reflective of broader international heritage with even subgroups of White, African-American, and Asian students. Amana Academy more effectively serves its community than existing public schools in the area because of its innovative set of educational approaches working in concert to produce citizen scholars. Amana Academy's vision is representative of a unique school of choice guided by a stewardship ethic embodied in the school's namesake Amana, an Arabic term meaning stewardship for the things we are entrusted with and exemplifying responsibility, integrity, and commitment.

Our Vision – To create an environment where parents, teachers, administrators and partners collaboratively offer an educational experience that develops Citizen Scholars who possess a healthy balance of intellect and ethical character – students with a positive self-image who are motivated for lifelong learning and achievement, who respect others and the environment and who can skillfully express their interests and passions.

Our Mission – To prepare students for high academic achievement beyond what they think possible, so that they become active contributors to building a better world.

Our Approach – Our approach is grounded in the Expeditionary Learning model, respecting teachers and school leaders as creative agents in igniting each student's motivation and critical-thinking skills

through in-depth, experience-based, integrated instruction across STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and the Humanities. Our definition of student success combines academic achievement, exemplary communication skills, world language proficiency in Arabic, single-gender classroom instruction, and relevant co-curricular and extracurricular activities. We believe that academic success is built on strong character qualities of mutual social respect, positive discipline, collaborative learning and an ethic of civic and environmental responsibility shaped through engaging and challenging academic work.

Guiding Principle – Stewardship - Stewardship for the things we are entrusted with, connoted in the Arabic word “Amana”, is the guiding principle and mindset of Amana Academy’s philosophy. It is not only our goal to teach stewardship, but also that it to be *actualized* in personal habits. Beyond our educational philosophy, Amana Academy’s community shall adopt this principle as the basic value that steers decision-making, staff selection, financial decisions and other activities related to its operation.

Inherent in the concept of stewardship is a developed sense of responsibility - a sense of being a trustee. This developed and integrated sense of responsibility translates into service, which is manifested in the following hierarchy of responsibility:

I. Individual Responsibility

- Seeking knowledge is a responsibility. The pursuit of self-excellence in our education and the proper development of personal abilities and skills enable us to realize our potential.
- Avoiding what harms and seeking what benefits the mind and body in a healthy environment (place/people) benefit our character, education and physical being.

II. Responsibility Toward Community

- As a school community, our first responsibility is the education of future citizens, by modeling teamwork, life-long learning and personal integrity.
- As stewards of knowledge, skills and abilities, we each have the responsibility of putting our capabilities to use by serving and positively influencing society.

- Our responsibility as an institution is to create a welcoming atmosphere of openness, efficiency and accountability with all of the stakeholders.
- We serve our community when personal interactions exemplify civil treatment, principled modest conduct, a respectful demeanor and humble attitude.
- By persevering to work together as a united community, we gain a continuous source of renewal and positive peer pressure that helps us attain our goals.

III. Responsibility Toward Humanity and Environment

- Our priority in addressing global human issues, sustainable development and environmental stewardship is to use reality-based scientific, social and cultural study combined with hands-on community experience.
- By understanding our unique purpose in this world and how our simple daily choices affect it, we will be in a better position to make contributions to humanity and the environment.
- Excelling as global stewards requires understanding the causes and effects of detrimental forces such as materialism, excessive consumerism, pop culture, sexism, and prejudice and developing the means to counter them.

Located in Alpharetta, Georgia, Amana Academy draws 90%+ of its students from the North Fulton County community with the majority hailing from Alpharetta and Roswell. North Fulton schools generally outperform State averages, and the area features one other charter school with elementary grades and several highly regarded private schools. According to the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce, the area is represented statistically by six distinct cities with the following demographics:

Alpharetta, population 57,551

Johns Creek, population 76,728

Milton, population 30,180

Mountain Park, population 570

Roswell, population 88,346

Sandy Springs, population 93,853

Household Incomes	
Per Capita	\$42,270
Average Household	\$108,991
Median Household	\$86,703
Bachelors Degree or Higher	
Alpharetta	62.7%
Johns Creek	63.5%
Milton	66.4%
Mountain Park	36.0%
Roswell	53.4%
Sandy Springs	58.9%
Population 2010	359,336
White	69.2%
African-American	12.9%
Hispanic	10.9%
Asian	10.7%

Since the establishment of Amana Academy in 2005, the school has engaged parents at all levels of involvement and decision making. With this latest charter petition renewal, the school has enlisted the help of parents serving on the governance board, working at the school as staff members, and others from the PIE “Partners in Education” parent organization to update the charter petition. This core group’s work has been informed by years of experience and feedback from multiple parent surveys conducted

since the school's establishment, the SACS CASI accreditation process, and feedback from community organizations. The parents who served on the Charter Renewal Crew reflected the breadth of skill-sets and experience of the school's parent community. They included educators, business people, corporate leaders, financial experts, non-profit leaders, and others. Specific activities included:

- Parent involvement in the drafting and editing of the Charter.
- Experience from parent ambassadors working with community organizations and educational agencies & institutions including the Chattahoochee Nature Center, the Georgia Department of Education STEM Advisory Committee, and the Education Committee of the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce.
- Ratification by the Governance Board, which is made up of majority of parents, on August 24th, 2013.
- Parent reviews and feedback of the draft version of the petition between August 16 and September 3, 2013.
- A majority vote by parents between September 10 and September 17, 2013. [See [Exhibit 20](#) at the end of this petition for evidence of this process.]

Amana Academy is committed to full partnership between the family and the school, as parental involvement and investment in the school is considered central to Amana's educational structure and success. Amana Academy will continue to support the development, implementation and regular evaluation of a parent involvement program consistent with Joyce Epstein's research on family and community involvement in education (*School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools, 2001*). The framework for this program will include, but not be limited to, the following components:

- Parenting – Amana will regularly help families establish/maintain/enrich home environments that support children as students;

- Communication – Effective two-way communication between Amana Academy and homes will be maintained and regular monthly meetings will be established that keep parents informed and engaged;
- Volunteering – Parents will be encouraged to help and support Amana in a variety of capacities;
- Learning at home – Amana will provide opportunities for parents to learn additional ways to support student learning at home;
- Decision making – Parents will be included throughout the school’s decision making structure; and
- Collaboration with community – Resources from the community will be valued and integrated to strengthen Amana programs, family practices and student learning.
- [Grievance Procedure - [Exhibit 15](#)]

Another proven way to build high-level parental involvement in schools is the establishment of a Parent Center. Resources such as *“Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs”* (National PTA, 2000) as well as *“Organizing a Successful Family Center in Your School: A Resource Guide”* (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1996) will be used in the development of Amana Academy’s Parent Center. This space, set aside for parent use inside the school facility, will:

- Provide parents with a room or space for their own use at the school and facilitate communication between families and the school;
- Provide opportunities for parents to get to know each other and network;
- Offer educational and socializing opportunities; and
- Serve various needs of families so that parents and other adults can turn their attention to help and support their children.

Parent-School Covenant - The success of Amana Academy is dependent on local school control through shared governance between educators and parents who have a vested interest in the school. A meaningful partnership involves the Administration and teachers being responsive to the concerns of parents. In turn, parents have a responsibility to respect the professional experience and expertise of the educators. While parents will be involved in most levels of decision-making at Amana Academy, their primary role will be to assist, enhance, facilitate and extend the ability of the educational staff to conduct the school's educational activities.

While the level of parental involvement in the school varies from parent to parent, depending on availability and personal inclination, all parents are expected to support the academic learning of their students by maintaining high expectations for both the students and the school. At the beginning of the academic year, parents are asked to sign a form indicating they have read the student and parent handbook, charter petition, codes of conduct, as well as an agreement between the parents and the school known as the Parent-School Covenant.

This Covenant, entered as [Exhibit 19](#) at the end of this petition, is intended as an instrument in which parents and the school agree to assume mutual responsibility for the child's learning program. In signing the form, parents will pledge to:

- Support the Amana Academy mission;
- Establish a safe and supportive learning environment; and
- Support and work with school staff to promote their child's learning.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

2. Complete the Academic Performance Goals form.

Academic Performance Goals	
Goal 1 - Performance in State Level Content Mastery	
<p>The charter school will perform above the level that would place it on the Priority Schools list, the Focus Schools list, or the Alert Schools list. The charter school will also meet all targets (currently CCRPI and State Performance Targets), as defined by Georgia state requirements and the state's waiver of No Child Left Behind, subject to any amendment, waiver or reauthorization thereof. Students will demonstrate proficiency and improvement over prior year's performance.</p>	
Objective 1 - Mandatory	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the charter school will meet or exceed all State Performance Targets and all other statewide-accountability requirements as established by the Department each year for all content areas of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), the End of Course Test (EOCT) and the graduation rate.</p>	
Objective 2 - Mandatory	
<p>In each year of the charter term, the charter school will have performance percentages in each of the Indicators of Content Master on the CCRPI that are higher by at least 3% than similar FCS schools (as defined by FCS) or the State performance percentages, whichever is greater. This objective will become extinct when the charter school's performance percentage in an indicator is 98% or higher.</p>	3%
Objective 3 - Mandatory	
<p>In each year of the charter term, the charter school percentage of students meeting typical/high growth in each of the Indicators of Content Area Assessment on the CCRPI will be higher by at least 3% than similar FCS schools (as defined by FCS) or the State percentages, whichever is greater. This objective will become extinct when the charter school's count of students meeting typical/high growth in a content area is 98% of the total number of students with a Student Growth Percentile.</p>	3%
Objective 4 - Optional	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of students scoring in the exceeds category on the CRCT at all grade levels and subject areas will exceed the baseline average by 3%.</p>	3%
<i>*For new schools, baseline will be established in Year 1. For renewals, baseline will be established by the previous academic year.</i>	
Objective 5 - Optional	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of charter school students scoring in the meets or exceeds category on the End of Course Test (EOCT) will be greater than the State or similar typical FCS school as defined by FCS, whichever is higher, by at least __ % in all subjects in all grade levels.</p>	%
Objective 6 - Optional	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of charter school students scoring in the exceeds category in all subject areas on the EOCT will exceed the baseline average* by __%.</p>	%
Objective 7 - Optional	

The charter school will exceed state or similar typical FCS school mean as defined by FCS, whichever is higher, by __%, or exceed __%.	%/%
Goal 2 - Performance on nationally normed assessments	
The charter school will demonstrate proficiency and improvement on national norm-referenced assessments	
Objective 1 - Optional	
The percentage of students who meet or exceed annual growth goals in the national percentile value on the ITBS assessment will increase by __% each year* of the charter term.	%
Objective 2 - Optional	
The percentage of students with __ years or more of growth as determined by the Grade Equivalent value on the ITBS will increase by __% each year.	#/%
Objective 3 - Optional	
The percentage of students who meet or exceed their RTI growth targets on MAP testing, as developed by NWEA will increase by 3% each year* of the charter term.	3%
Objective 4 - Optional	
	%
Objective 5 - Optional	
	%
Goal 3 - Readiness for next school level	
The Charter school will demonstrate student readiness to matriculate to the next school level.	
Objective 1 - Optional	
__% of graduates will score at least 1600 out of 2400 on the combined SAT.	%
Objective 2 - Optional	
__% of graduates will complete a pathway within their program of study.	%
Objective 3 - Optional	
96% of students will score Meets or Exceeds on the state mandated Writing Assessment.	96%
Objective 4 - Optional	
__% of English Language Learners with positive movement from one Performance Band to a higher Performance Band as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs	%

Objective 5 - Optional	
___% of Students With Disabilities served in general education environments greater than 80% of the school day	%
<p>Goal 4 - School specific academic goal</p> <p>At the end of each year, all Amana Academy teachers, staff, leadership, and Board will demonstrate an improved ability to analyze and use data to inform instruction as measured by their implementation of Expeditionary Learning Core Practices (instructional strategies) and improved student learning.</p>	
School Specific Objective 1	
The school will create structures and systems to establish and sustain a data-informed culture to increased teacher, staff, leadership efficacy in the use of data to drive instruction as measured externally by the yearly EL Implementation Review Instrument(Exhibit 22), showing an increased score from 2 to 4 (on a scale of 0-5) by the end of the charter term	
School Specific Objective 2	
The school will develop and implement an embedded, targeted professional development program to ensure teacher, staff, and leadership growth in the use of the Expeditionary Learning Core Practices each year as measured externally by the Expeditionary Learning Implementation Review (Exhibit 22) supporting all students & delivering instruction, showing an increased score from 3 to 4 by the end of the charter term.	
School Specific Objective 3	
The school will develop and implement a targeted professional development program to ensure the Amana Board develops efficacy in the school's use of data as measured externally by the Expeditionary Learning Implementation Review (Exhibit 22) supporting all students & delivering instruction, showing an increased score from 3 to 4 by the end of the charter term.	
<p>Specific Action Items and Person(s) Responsible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share student performance data in accessible, understandable, and transparent ways. Responsible Person(s): Administration/Staff 2. Identify and monitor progress on quantitative and qualitative measures of student data. Responsible Person(s): Administration/Staff/Students 3. Facilitate dialogue about the interpretation and implications of data at grade level meetings and data team meetings. Person(s) Responsible: Administration/Staff 4. Provide descriptive feedback on the alignment between learning targets, lesson plans, instruction and results. Person(s) Responsible: Administration/Staff 5. Anchor Expeditionary Learning professional development targets in school data. Person(s) Responsible: Administration <p>Evidence of Effectiveness: Data from Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test, CRCT and other standardized tests, data artifacts, student portfolios, logs from professional development meetings, Georgia Teacher Keys evaluations, and other observation forms.</p>	

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?

At Amana Academy we emphasize assessing what students can do rather than simply what test results indicate in the areas of mathematical and linguistic intelligences. For this reason, students will be assessed and evaluated in a manner that reflects our desire to create scholars who will be motivated to learn and retain what is learned out of curiosity, desire, and willingness. Teachers will use assessment techniques showing that all students have the opportunity to be successful and to display their talents and knowledge.

We follow the Expeditionary Learning core practices, which state that our leaders, teachers, and students must embrace the power of student-engaged assessment to build ownership of learning, focus students on reaching standards-based learning targets, and drive achievement. This approach to assessment is fundamental to ensuring that schools achieve educational equity. Students continually assess and improve the quality of their own work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with experts. Staff members engage in ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from formal assessments, disaggregating data by groups of students to recognize and address gaps in achievement.

Student-engaged assessment is a hallmark of Expeditionary Learning schools. Assessment plays a key role in building an overall culture of engagement and achievement. Students take responsibility for their own learning and see themselves as the key actors in their own successes. Additionally, students and adults operate from a growth mindset – a belief that everyone is capable of high achievement and that learning comes as a result of effort. Habits of scholarship, such as perseverance, craftsmanship, and responsibility, are specific characteristics that support students’ academic achievement. All learning, whether in the realm of academic progress or habits of scholarship, is supported by the purposeful use of learning targets derived from national or state standards and school or district documents such as curriculum maps and adopted program materials. The school uses curriculum that aligns with the Georgia

standards as well as the Expeditionary Learning curriculum for grades 3-8 which is aligned to the Common Core Standards.

The school's Administration and Governing Board will use a 3-step process to set goals and track them. The first step will be to use baseline data to inform the Expeditionary Learning Workplan in August/September. In essence, the Workplan serves as the school's School Improvement Plan (SIP), and with minor formatting changes, its content is submitted to Fulton County Schools per their due date (usually September 30th).

Since Amana Academy is an established school, we will continue to rely on CRCT and MAP results for baseline assessment data, as well as IEP's, teacher comments, student work, attendance data and other documented assessment records. The nationally normed Measuring Academic Progress test (MAP) developed by the Northwest Educational Association (NWEA) dynamically adapts to a student's responses – as they take the test. Answer a question correctly and the test presents a more challenging item; miss a question, and MAP offers a simpler item. In this way, the test narrows in on a student's learning level, engaging them with content that allows them to succeed. Students will take this computer adapted test in the beginning of the school year to set the instructional direction for the year and empower teachers with very precise insights into each student's proficiency in Language Arts and Math. Pending the school's budget resources, the MAP test may be taken in May to benchmark annual student growth. Amana Academy also plans on using common-core benchmark assessments that the Georgia Department of Education is developing to measure progress throughout the year.

When there is uncertainty about the achievement level or competency of new students, we will give additional testing to further the baseline data. All Limited Proficiency English students will be tested in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 5 (Educating Special Populations) of this petition.

Arabic baseline assessments will incorporate existing student milestones/benchmarks included in the Georgia Elementary School Foreign Language model.

In terms of school-generated Interim Assessments, Expeditionary Learning core practices incorporate the following key actions:

- Teachers and school leaders create or select interim assessments that take place every 4-8 weeks and are closely aligned to college readiness standards and standardized tests-before the teaching begins. Teachers design lessons and instruction with the end goals in mind.
- Teachers and school leaders analyze the quality of interim assessments vis-à-vis standardized tests to ensure that interim assessments meet or exceed the rigor of the state assessment.
- School leaders support teachers in creating or selecting and analyzing interim assessments by providing professional development time devoted to this work.
- Teachers and school leaders conduct diagnostic item analysis to inform instructional improvements (i.e., they analyze students' incorrect answers to best understand where misunderstandings and misconceptions lie).
- Teachers and school leaders share interim assessment results with students, parents, and the school community.

Standardized Tests - As a public charter school governed by the laws set forth by the boards of education, Amana will be subject to the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. 20-14-30 through 20-14-41. Furthermore, Amana Academy will be subject to the goals, objectives and performance measures set forth by the Fulton County Board of Education; and Amana students will be required to take all state and district-mandated assessments, including the CRCT, Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA), Georgia Writing Assessment (GWA for grades 3, 5, and 8), and the End of Course Tests (EOCT for Algebra I and Geometry). Amana Expeditionary Learning core practices support student success on standardized test in the following ways:

- Students have **positive attitudes toward** and exhibit self-efficacy about standardized tests.
- To foster student motivation, the school helps families understand the purpose and value of standardized tests.

- Teachers prepare students for standardized tests throughout the school year, not as an isolated event just prior to a testing situation.
- Practice tests are used strategically for specific purposes-to help students learn how to best prepare for and take tests and analyze patterns of test performance. Students are then empowered to take charge of improving their own test performance based on understanding and adjusting personal habits and decisions.
- Teachers help students analyze the formats used on standardized tests (e.g., writing to prompts, multiple-choice questions, showing thinking in math and science) and help them improve their ability to respond to these formats by applying strategies.
- Teachers help students practice test-taking strategies (e.g., eliminating answers, using context clues).
- Teachers develop the habits of scholarship needed to build stamina (e.g., time-management skills).
- Teachers support students in identifying strategies to reduce test anxiety.

Ongoing Assessment - Per Expeditionary Learning core practices, teachers craft quality assessments, aligned with standards-based learning targets, in order to collect meaningful, accurate, and timely information about student learning. Teachers are well-versed in the methods of assessment and select the best method based on the type of learning target they are assessing. In addition, they involve students in metacognitive thinking about types of learning targets and matching assessment questions or tasks, and support students to create their own assessments. Teachers use criteria lists and rubrics to support quality work during the learning process and guide reflection and evaluation. Quality assessments are used to support assessment for and of learning.

Communicating Student Achievement – as with other Expeditionary Learning schools, Amana shares information about student achievement in a wide variety of ways, most of which feature students

as the key communicators. In this way, students are engaged throughout the assessment process. Students have individual responsibilities: they maintain a portfolio and discuss their learning during family conferences and passage presentations, and they participate collectively in communicating about achievement during public presentations of learning. EL schools implement standards-based grading because it clarifies expectations for students, families, and teachers, and separates academic outcomes from habits of scholarship. Students understand what they have learned and why. They can speak to their own strengths, struggles, goals, and processes of learning, and they are prepared for college success. Each of the measures for communicating student achievement aligns with the school's mission to create students who are articulate communicators.

Grades

- Teachers use a faculty grading guide that ensures school-wide uniformity in grading practices.
- Grades are separated from habits of scholarship levels. Success in both areas is required for credit, promotion, and graduation.
- Grades are used to communicate about skills and content understanding, not to motivate or punish.
- Grades describe students' progress toward a set of long-term learning targets that students and families are aware of at the outset of instruction.
- Teachers provide students with multiple opportunities to make and show progress toward long-term learning targets. Students understand grades not as subjective judgments of teachers but rather as documentation of how far they have progressed toward concrete learning targets.
- Grades reflect a student's current level of proficiency with skills and content rather than an average. The most recent evidence takes precedence over older evidence.
- Students and families understand the school's grading practices.

Communicating about Habits of Scholarship

- Schools communicate the relationship between habits of scholarship and academic grades to students, families, and staff members.
- Schools determine language to describe progress toward the habits of scholarship and a consistent system for collecting quality evidence about progress.
- Schools report on student progress toward the habits of scholarship through structures that involve students (e.g., written reflections, student-led conferences).
- Progress toward the habits of scholarship is reported separately from progress about academic achievement.

Progress Reports, Report Cards, and Transcripts

- Progress toward specific learning targets (not just grades) forms the basis of communication about student learning.
- Parents and students understand how to make meaning of progress reports, report cards, and transcripts. The link between grading policies and reporting practices is clear.
- Schools have a succinct document that explains how a student's grades were derived and what they mean. This document accompanies student transcripts when they are sent to outside audiences (e.g., private school or college admissions offices).

Celebrations of Learning

- Schools organize grade-level or school-wide events such as exhibition nights or formal performances/presentations to celebrate the learning of all students.
- Families, community members, and school partners participate in exhibitions to act as an authentic audience, learn about the work of the students and the school as a whole, and honor student learning.

Student-Led Conferences and Portfolios

Student-led conferences are scheduled twice per year to engage students and their families in conferences in which progress toward both academic learning targets and habits of scholarship are communicated. Families are engaged in the process by sharing expectations, schedules, and information in advance of the conferences. Families understand their role, the student's role, and the purpose of the conference. Teachers support students in selecting expedition and project work that demonstrates mastery of learning targets. Students practice specific communication skills when presenting their work in portfolios at the conferences including, establishing eye contact, articulating ideas clearly, and presenting supporting evidence of learning. The school schedules time at least twice per year to engage students and their families in conferences in which students communicate their progress toward both academic learning targets and habits of scholarship. The percentage of parent participation in student-led conferences averages 95% in grades K-4 and 80% in grades 4-8.

Passages

Passages are an extension of portfolios and require students to orally present their learning and achievement in different subject areas as a culminating event at specific grade levels. Students present to their families and to the broader school community exemplary work from artistic and/or athletic endeavors, technology accomplishments, service learning contributions, and growth toward relational and performance character.

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?

Amana Academy's curriculum is an academically rigorous, interdisciplinary project-based learning approach aligned to the National Common Core Standards and the Georgia Common Core Performance Standards. As stated in our vision/mission statements, Amana Academy's curriculum seeks to develop citizen scholars who demonstrate: critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, exceptional written and oral language and presentation skills, global and cultural awareness, ethical character and

personal integrity, civic and environmental responsibility, and a stewardship mindset through individual responsibility, responsibility toward community, and responsibility toward humanity and environment. The school has been successful on many fronts, and in terms of academic performance its students have generally outperformed state and district averages on standardized tests during previous charter terms – especially in reading and math – with half of our students performing at the exceeding expectation level. Having said that, some of the performance goals set during the most recent charter term were unrealistic and were driven by State pressure to meet obligations of the No Child Left Behind Act. As we reflect on the previous charter term and the performance data analysis presented in the charter addendum, our plan moving forward will build on our existing approaches and must increase the percentage of students in the exceeding expectations category and specifically improve performance in the areas of Science and Social Studies. This plan includes the following key actions that consider structures and protocols in curriculum & instruction and data analysis .

- [See Exhibits 4 and 5 at the end of this petition - [13-14 School Calendar](#) and [Draft Daily Schedule](#)]
- Amana Academy will measure progress against objectives using a variety of quantitative and qualitative instruments including but not limited to the Georgia CCRPI index, the CRCT, NWEA’s Measuring Academic Progress (MAP) Test, the annual Fulton County School Improvement Plan, the annual Expeditionary Learning Work Plan, and the end-of-year Expeditionary Learning Interim Review (IR). Progress will be reviewed periodically throughout each year and from year to year by the appropriate stakeholders.
 - a. Amana Academy will expand on its use of the Expeditionary Learning model as the foundational framework of core practices to accomplish its performance objectives. The curricular standards are “what” we teach; the Expeditionary Model is “how” we teach them. When implemented robustly, the Expeditionary Learning core practices create an environment that promotes deep engagement in learning and supports students to achieve at high levels. Students gain skills critical to college readiness and lifelong success –

literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, persistence toward excellence, and active citizenship – as well as mastery of subject-area knowledge. Data from the EL Implementation Review speaks to a need for a more pervasive, consistent use of EL Core Practices in order for Amana to fully actualize the EL Model which will result in increased student achievement. Increasing teacher efficacy in the use of EL is a key strategy for the upcoming charter term. This innovation will be implemented through targeted, embedded professional development to build staff capacity in the effective use of the EL Core Practices including the use of student engaged assessment and ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from informal and formal assessments, and disaggregating data by groups of students to recognize and address gaps in achievement. Within this framework of professional development are the components of: 1) using data with students where student-teacher and student-student critique is practiced, 2) student-led conferences and other presentations of learning where home-to-school communication regarding student performance and achievement is celebrated and nurtured, 3) intentional use of assessment for learning strategies throughout instruction. Grade level data teams regularly convene monthly to analyze student data and student work. Ongoing professional development in this area increases teacher proficiency in using data to drive instruction. Additionally, teacher teams meet monthly to map the curriculum vertically and horizontally to ensure seamless instruction across and within grade level. Research studies from Expeditionary Learning and other schools shows that increasing teacher efficacy through targeted professional development and frequent feedback increases student achievement. Research also indicates that this innovative practice closes critical achievement gaps for English language learners and for Hispanic, African-American, special education, and low-income students. [See [Exhibit 9](#) at the end of this petition].

Additionally, the school makes use of the EL-mentor schools in the metro-Atlanta area. Teachers conduct peer observations at mentor schools as well as within Amana to provide peer critique and feedback to each other.

Per data presented in the Charter Addendum, Amana Academy will need to address and boost student achievement in Science. We will continue to ramp up implementation of a comprehensive STEM-based education program within the context of the Expeditionary Learning model (we are calling it “Expeditionary STEM”) to increase students’ critical thinking and problem-solving skills with real-world applications. Expeditionary STEM will leverage purchased award winning inquiry-based tools such as Engineering is Elementary and FOSS (Full Option Science System) science curriculum approved by the National Science Foundation and Discovery Education. Additionally, Amana Academy will implement structures and interim assessments to ensure content delivery in classrooms, and we will provide targeted professional development to build staff knowledge and capacity in the use of STEM-based education practices. [[Exhibit 9: Women in STEM: A Gender Gap](#)]. These actions will be implemented through the completion of the Georgia DOE STEM school certification process, which will serve as a roadmap for accountability and recognition of our innovative program once fully implemented..

Also, based on data presented in the Charter Addendum, Amana Academy will need to address and boost student achievement in Social Studies. While the Expeditionary Learning model provides teachers with a framework that enlivens the humanities with real-world experiences and problems to solve, Amana Academy will build our teachers’ capacity in terms of curricular pacing to ensure all the content is delivered. Teachers will also use Georgia OAS as an interim assessment, since Amana does not have access to Social Studies MAP data. Structures, especially semi-departmentalization, will allow humanities teachers (teaching ELA/Reading/Social Studies) to go deeper into the social studies curriculum.

Amana implements single-gender classroom instruction to increase male performance in core academic subjects such as English and foreign languages and increase female performance in math and

science. This innovation will be implemented in grades of Amana Academy's option with support of core teachers who will receive targeted professional development in gender-based education to increase instructional practice and student achievement. [[Exhibit 9: Women in STEM: A Gender Gap](#)]

Amana implements world language (Arabic) instruction to increase students' cognitive skills, creativity, perspective, and appreciation for cultural diversity while building global competencies. This innovation will be implemented through direct language instruction in grades K-8. [Exhibit 9: [Global Competence](#) and [ACTFL Cognitive Benefits](#) and [Research](#)]

Amana offers environmental education implemented through specific curriculum and instruction for students in grades K-8 to enhance cognitive skills and broaden students' perspectives and appreciation of the natural world.

Amana provides character instruction to foster a school culture of mutual, social respect, positive discipline, and collaborative learning while increasing student achievement in reading and mathematics. This innovation will be implemented through the robust use of the Responsive Classroom program – a social character curriculum, [[Exhibit 9: Responsive Classroom Increases Mathematics Practices](#)] and the Expeditionary Learning Design Principles which are the core value statements of the school.

Amana Academy will provide extracurricular and co-curricular activities, consistent with the school's vision/mission and values, which seek to develop the whole child - intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. By participating in school clubs, athletic, cultural and community-service programs formed out of their unique interests, Amana students will have diverse opportunities for exploration and personal growth. We will also cultivate innovative learning experiences for our students forged out of solid, "real-world" partnerships with an array of institutions (see partnerships section). Educational opportunities and solid, real-world applications evolving from these partnerships will enhance the experience for all Amana students. Participation in the extracurricular activities will not be an academic requirement, and will not influence the student evaluation by Amana Academy officials. Amana

Academy supports the following but not limited to extracurricular and co-curricular activities, some of which the school envisions collaborating with Fulton County Schools on.

- Athletics – Club Sports – Soccer and Basketball. Amana Academy envisions continuing to collaborate with Fulton County Schools by participating in the System’s extramural program and competing with other schools.
- Alpharetta (PAL)
- Art Club
- Basketball Club - UWKS
- Boy Scouts
- Chess Club
- Filmmaking Club
- Future City Engineering Club
- Garden Club
- Girl Scouts
- Honor Societies
- Jogging Club
- Kickboxing
- Makers Space Club
- MDJunior
- Model UN / Model Arab League
- Music Club
- Outdoor Adventure Club
- Robotics Club (non-competitive)
- Robotics FIRST LEGO League Competition
- Running/Track Club
- Science & Engineering Fair - Amana Academy envisions continuing to collaborate with Fulton County Schools by participating in the System’s Fair and competing with other schools.
- Science Olympiad
- Spanish Language Club
- Taekwondo
- Technology Fair - Amana Academy envisions continuing to collaborate with Fulton County Schools by participating in the System’s Fair and competing with other schools.
- TEDx Amana Academy
- Tennis Club
- Theater Club
- Zumbatomic Club

The teacher-to-student ratio has been a vital factor to Amana Academy's structure since the inception of the school. The governing board's goal set teacher-to-student ratios to be as follows:

- 1:11 Kindergarten
- 1:22 Grades 1-3
- 1:24 Grades 4-8

These ratios are not expected to change over the next five years. Smaller class sizes facilitate the Expeditionary Learning model and increased teacher-student interactions allowing for more individualized student learning. Research studies indicate that smaller class sizes particularly impact students who perform at lower academic levels. Amana believes that maintaining these ratios allow all students the best possibility of success in learning. [[Exhibit 9: Effect on Class Size Study](#)]

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

Amana Academy is designed to support and enhance the social and emotional development of all its students, as well as their academic growth. . Amana's special need students *uniquely* benefit from the level of differentiation and small group instruction that is delivered in two different formats dependent on student needs: 1) co-teaching within the regular education classroom; or 2) pull out into a one-on-one or small group format.. Our project based/service learning approach creates opportunities that capitalize on student interests and offer enhanced opportunities beyond the classroom walls to enrich our inclusion approach to better serve special needs students.

Through the assistance of our school model partner, Expeditionary Learning, Amana has developed a program that emphasizes the natural world and time to reflect. This provides additional downtime, social communication and movement necessary to recharge students and add focus to learning in the classroom. Amana has developed applications that will serve the Amana target population in all of these areas.

The small collaborative group emphasis enables special needs students to get attention from the teacher and peers that they would not receive in an environment with longer periods of time devoted to whole group instruction. Additionally, special needs students and their families are assisted by the bonds that develop with the teacher through the practice of looping. Lastly, special needs students find that the emphasis on training for positive, respectful classroom management results in classroom environments that are peaceful, nourishing and welcoming places that allow students to flourish.

Amana Academy complies with all regulatory requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 50 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973, Title 11 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and shall serve all eligible students as defined in O.C.G.A 20-2-152 (d)(1)(2)(3)(4)(5) regardless of severity and disability.

To ensure its compliance:

- **Amana works** with the District to develop a system that meets the needs of the students and provides students with services from licensed/certified staff or consultants in a manner consistent with state and federal law Staffing needs are determined by a needs assessment. Recruits undergo a rigorous hiring process to ensure the school is providing certified/qualified instructors for special needs students. Special Needs teachers receive orientation and continued professional development coordinated by the on-site special education coordinator, who is responsible for the individual case management of all Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and coordinates all related services required by a student's IEP. Amana Academy provides all special education and related services or contracts with a third party service provider to serve students;
- **Amana maintains** a list of the names and positions of school employees who can access student records. Amana Academy understands that student records are private and all school personnel must obtain parental consent before showing the records to anyone not involved in their student's education. All employees are required to sign confidentiality agreements and each student's

folder contains a checkout record showing who reviewed the files and the date of each review;
and

- **Amana follows** the required procedures, informing parents of their rights and giving them a copy of the procedural safeguards each time there is any correspondence or any meeting is held, in addition to adhering to those specific procedural safeguards as described in IDEA.

Amana Academy follows Fulton County regulations and procedures in regards to the Response To Intervention (RTI) mandated program. Every student begins in Tier 1 of RTI. The procedures are as follows:

1. When a student is identified as needing a classroom intervention the teacher shall contact the parent to let them know of the concern.
2. Teachers must attempt different strategies with that student for at least a period of six weeks and document all attempts and results. Teachers must make confirmed contact with the student's parents at least twice regarding the concerns within the classroom.
3. If a student still does not show progress with classroom interventions, the student is moved to Tier 2 of the process where they would receive smaller group strategies and support from the instructional coach.
4. Student is monitored for six weeks with Tier 2 interventions. If student still shows no progress with small group interventions, they will move to Tier 3. Parent must receive confirmed contact at least two additional times. Tier 3 are individual interventions.

Several steps are used in determining the appropriate educational program to be provided to children with learning, physical and behavioral/emotional difficulties per the following:

Existing IEPs: an IEP Committee collects and reviews of all existing IEP records (enrolling students). The aim is to properly identify and intervene as early as possible and to support and include children with disabilities in the regular education program to the maximum extent appropriate. Amana Academy supports responsible inclusion, and all efforts will be made to serve exceptional students in regular, self-contained classrooms to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) guidelines mandated by federal law.

Pre-referral: Consistent with Amana's educational philosophy, the school's faculty will focus on adapting/modifying instructional/management techniques to a child's needs before he/she is evaluated for specialized services. When classroom teachers notice a student who is displaying difficulties in learning, a variety of different approaches (RTI Tier1 interventions) will be tried and documented to accommodate the needs of the student. After these interventions, a teacher may decide to bring the child to the attention of the Response to Intervention Team.

Response to Intervention (RTI)/Referral: In compliance with IDEA guidelines, Amana Academy identifies a Response to Intervention Team (RTI) to review an individual student's strengths and areas of concern. This multidisciplinary team, comprised of general teachers, the school counselor, the Instructional Coach and an administrator, plans strategies and organizes resources for redressing problems and concerns about a student.

The Response to Intervention meeting indicates the suspected area(s) of disability, provides school history and documents the modifications that have been tried and proven unsuccessful prior to making a referral. An assessment plan is developed. Student referrals for comprehensive educational evaluation to determine eligibility and the need for special education shall be preceded by interventions at the classroom, small group and individual level.

Assessment/Evaluation: Once a student is referred to special education from the Response to Intervention Team (RTI) or other appropriate source, the evaluation and placement process is completed without undue delay and in accordance with state rules and federal regulations. Prior to conducting an

initial evaluation, a school representative contacts the parent/guardian and sets up a conference to discuss the following:

- Review the reasons for assessment.
- Describe the materials and procedures that will be used to obtain information about the child.
- Explain the rights of the parent/guardian and school district related to assessment.
- Determine the student's primary language and proficiency.
- Describe alternate means as appropriate.
- Obtain written consent for release of confidential information.

Parents are strongly encouraged to contribute pertinent information throughout this entire process. Their perspectives and experiences with the student are of great value and will be considered throughout the evaluation process. Licensed staff and/or consultants perform the evaluation(s) and share results with parents and other faculty members. The parent conference may convene without the parent under the following conditions:

- The parent waives his/her responsibility to attend, or
- The parent has neglected to respond to documented communication efforts.

In accordance with state rule 160-4-7-.05, Amana parents receive a copy of their "Procedural Safeguards" in the following circumstances:

- Upon initial referral for evaluation;
- Upon each invitation to an IEP meeting;
- Upon re-evaluation of the student;
- Upon receipt of a request for mediation or for an impartial due process hearing; and

- Upon any proposed change in the eligibility or the educational placement of the student.

At Amana, parents are encouraged to join in the identification and referral process. Parents questioning their child's progress, either developmentally or academically should first request a conference with the teacher. At any time, parents may request an evaluation by submitting a written request for evaluation to the school.

Amana Academy ensures that all evaluation procedures and eligibility determinations are established and implemented in accordance with state rule 160-4-7-.07. This program contains annual goals in each area of need as well as the objectives the students should take to reach each goal. The IEP states what special education and related services Amana Academy will provide, and when and where those services will be provided. The IEP is reviewed and revised at least every year.

The school's application does not identify student characteristics and should not do so to ensure the school does not violate the public trust by selecting only certain types of students during the admission process. However, after admission and upon enrollment, the school is required to accept student permanent records and may, at that time, learn that an admitted student's IEP requirements cannot be implemented at the charter. While the charter is required to provide the same continuum of services as that of typical schools in Fulton County Schools, the charter is not required to provide all levels of services offered in the entire school system. Just as with typical schools, it is anticipated that, in limited cases, student IEP requirements may not be possible at the charter and may dictate placement at another FCS school that offers the required services. The process to be followed in these instances will be the same process used by typical FCS schools and will be in alignment with FCS practices. Such a determination can take place upon enrollment or if the student's learning needs change during their time at Amana.

Individual Education Plan: If the student's assessment/evaluation shows that he/she meets any of the criteria established under the IDEA Categories of Eligibility section (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150; 20-2-152; 20-2-160; 20-2-161; 20-2-168; 20-2-1160) and is in need of special education services, the student, parent(s) and staff will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to address the areas of deficit in accordance with the required procedures.

At this stage, the student's parents become an equal member of the child's IEP Committee which will also include: the regular teacher, the special education teacher, the school administrator, the assessment professional when assessment is discussed and possibly a representative from Fulton County School System. Other members as required are present such as the LPAC representative when the student is limited English Proficient, the student when appropriate and other related service personnel or individuals that the parent or school deems appropriate to be present.

This program contains annual goals in each area of need as well as the objectives the students should take to reach each goal. The IEP states what special education and related services Amana Academy will provide, and when and where those services will be provided. The IEP is reviewed and revised every year.

For students obtaining an IEP for the first time, the eligibility process must be initiated. This commences once the parent signs the consent for evaluation. The next step includes testing, data collection by teachers and a completed RTI folder. Once these actions are completed, the IEP team meets to evaluate all of the information required for eligibility. This information is then presented to the eligibility committee. If the student is deemed eligible, an IEP Form is completed describing the special services and the parent or guardian signs a Placement Consent for Special Education Form. Once this process has been completed, the IEP becomes effective immediately.

Review: Each student's IEP is reviewed at several points throughout the school year and updated at least one time each year.

Transportation: The goal of Amana Academy is to provide free door-to-door transportation as a related service when it is specified in a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Amana Academy will work in conjunction with Fulton County Transportation Department to provide these services to qualified students.

Amana Academy hereby provides the following assurances:

- Amana Academy follows the State's middle school concept model by ensuring that the minimum number of minutes is allotted for each subject area, that teachers that teach the same students have common planning periods, that students have Connections classes offered for at least the number of minutes required, and that the curriculum followed is the state mandated standards.
- Amana Academy provides, by contracting Fulton County or by a third party provider, all special education and related services, including free, door-to-door transportation, as required by a student's IEP.
- Amana Academy provides appropriately licensed/certified personnel for all students with disabilities. Students classified as Intellectually Gifted, are not included here and may be taught by teachers who fulfill Amana's teacher hiring criteria (refer to waiver #11 in section 4.2 of this petition).
- Amana Academy implements the same identification, evaluation, placement, reporting, and due process procedures and uses the same special education forms as other schools in the System and provides copies of all IEP's to the School System.
- Amana Academy provides all resources including all materials and equipment for all students with disabilities.
- Amana Academy submits to program review by state and local officials to the same extent required of other schools in the System.
- School social work services are provided as needed in accordance with Fulton County School System guidelines.
- All Amana Academy teachers are required to participate in workshops, in-service programs and/or training offered by the Special Education Department to the same extent required of other teachers in the System.
- Students identified with severe disabilities who require more intensive services may be served at the appropriate location according to the IEP in the Fulton County School System.

- Discipline issues regarding special education students are handled in accordance with state rules and federal regulations.
- Amana Academy indemnifies the School System in the event the School System is held liable for the charter school'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.
- Amana Academy includes continued services for students who are expelled, as determined by the IEP. IEP goals will be appropriately addressed as per the curriculum and academic options chosen.

Limited Proficiency English Students (ESOL)

Qualifying English Learner (EL) Students participate in a program that combines an English immersion model and a pull-out model. Amana has allocated resources for an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Specialist who provides small group instruction for beginning EL students through pull-out sessions, while assisting the regular classroom teachers with instruction for intermediate and advanced students. ESOL Specialists push-in to classrooms when possible to facilitate English immersion and acquisition of language skills. Furthermore, all EL students have the opportunity to interact with their English-speaking peers, whom also model English usage, and take part in core subjects in the regular classroom.

Amana Academy, in compliance with Federal, Georgia, and Fulton County laws and regulations, utilizes the current Fulton County instruments when determining eligibility for the ESOL program identification and instruction.

At-Risk and Gifted/Talented

Research contained in the report titled *Comprehensive School Reform and Student Achievement: A Meta Analysis 2002* [[Exhibit 9](#)] conducted by the Center for Research on the Education for Students

Placed At Risk (CRESPAR) supports the Amana approach to all students. The report states *“CRESPAR believes that schools must replace the “sorting paradigm” with a “talent development” model that sets high expectations for all students and ensures that all students receive a rich and demanding curriculum with appropriate assistance and support.”*

Amana Academy assumes that all children can enjoy learning and will strive for excellence if given the right environment. This philosophy parallels that of our model partner EL and together the Amana Academy learning community will work to establish this environment for all of our students. To the greatest extent possible, gifted/talented and at-risk students at Amana Academy are integrated into the regular classroom. Classes in which at risk students are placed will be maintained at a smaller student to teacher ration whenever possible at each grade level. This is achieved by scheduling specialized intervention staff as team teachers with the classroom teacher during Reading, ELA, and Math instruction.

Amana Academy will provide supplemental educational services pursuant to the SBOE Rule 160-4-5.03 in the following manner:

- Set specific achievement goals for each student, which shall be developed in consultation with each student’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
- Provide a description of how each student’s progress will be measured and how each student’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and teachers will be regularly informed of that progress.
- Establish a timetable for improving each student’s achievement.
- Agree to terminate services if student progress goals are not met.
- Agree not to exceed a tutor/student ratio of 1:1-8 for non-computer-based instruction and 1:1-10 for computer-based instruction.
- Agree not to disclose to the public the identity of any student eligible for or receiving supplemental educational services without the written permission of each student’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

- Agree to meet all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and civil rights laws.
- Ensure that all instruction and content are secular, neutral, and non-ideological.
- Ensure that instruction is consistent with student achievement goals and that the LEA is not billed for homework assistance.
- Ensure that requests for information and access to service site(s) for monitoring and evaluation purposes by the Georgia Department of Education are provided in a timely manner.

Amana Academy will provide remediation pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01 in the following manner:

- The student has been through the formal student support team process as specified in Rule 160-4-2-.32 Student Support Team and has documented evidence to support the placement in remedial education.
- The student has failed either a language arts or a mathematics course in grades 6-12.
- The student is receiving services under Part A of Chapter 1 of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
- The student has been recommended by the teacher who has documented any of the following student information:
 - Low performance in reading.
 - Low performance in mathematics.
 - Inability to verbally express ideas or to write or dictate a meaningful sentence.
- Current standardized test information in the student file indicates the student has a score at or below the 25th percentile in reading, writing, or mathematics.
- For participation in middle school remediation programs, the most recent Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores indicate the student has a score in the “Does Not Meet” category in reading, or English/language arts, or mathematics.

- For participation in high school remediation programs, the most recent state assessment scores indicate the student has a score in the “Does Not Meet” or “failed” category in reading, or English/Language arts, or mathematics.
 - The number of students eligible for participation in REP shall not exceed 25 percent of the school’s most recent FTE count for grades 6-12.
 - Schools with more than 50 percent of their students eligible for free or reduced price lunches may provide remedial education services for a higher percent of students up to 35 percent of the school’s full-time equivalent population in grades 6-12.

Amana Academy will follow all identification processes and procedures as determined by Fulton County for identifying gifted and talented students. Amana uses multiple criteria (mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation) for student identification as required by GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38. As an Expeditionary Learning school, Amana will serve these students following the Collaborative Teacher Model of indirect services as outlined in the Gifted Regulations published by the Georgia Department of Education. The Georgia Department of Education Standard for Learning Environments mirrors the Expeditionary Learning model and requires:

- Learning experiences which foster personal and social responsibility, multicultural competence, and interpersonal and technical communication skills for citizenship in the global environment of the 21st century.
- A curriculum that includes interdisciplinary, real-world learning experiences which incorporate advanced research and communication skills.
- Resources designed to specifically address the needs of gifted learners, including critical and creative thinking, problem-solving activities, and social and self-awareness, that are incorporated into the curriculum.
- Opportunities for students to learn with and from intellectual peers and experts.

In addition to students coming to Amana who have an existing IEP, it is the Amana Academy practice to establish an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for all students. The staff assesses each student when he/she enters school to determine his/her particular learning styles, academic strengths and challenges. Teachers review records from previous schools, along with any other relevant evaluations. This continual process is key in identifying and addressing the needs of at-risk and gifted students. A goal of the school is to have 100% of the instructional staff TAG certified before the end of this charter renewal cycle. All teachers will be trained by TAG certified personnel in specific strategies for the teaching of gifted students with ongoing professional development to sustain this effort.

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

<p>Action: Amana Academy wishes to allow flexibility in class size in order to achieve its unique goals. Although Amana intends to keep classes within County/State guidelines, there will be instances where instructional formats such as, but not limited to, learning expeditions and service learning where larger class sizes may be more appropriate; or remediation where a smaller class size would make more sense and thereby improve student performance.</p>
<p>Specific Waiver: Class Size – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-182(i) and SBE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Appendix A</p>
<p>Expected Outcome: Student achievement in specific areas such as project work, field-work for learning expeditions (EL), Arabic language, and remediation will be improved through the granting of this Waiver.</p>

<p>Action: Amana Academy’s intent is to hire and retain the most highly qualified teachers to achieve the charter’s mission. Such flexibility in the hiring of its teachers will improve student performance/achievement in specific areas such as Arabic, project-based learning expeditions (EL) that integrate multiple curricular content areas (literacy, social studies, science, mathematics, etc.), and service</p>
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learning through the granting of this waiver. Highly qualified teachers in these areas may or may not have been certified. For this reason, Amana requests flexibility in the hiring of non-certified teachers.

Specific Waiver: Certification Requirement of Hired Professionals - O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-200, Professional Standards Commission Rule 505-2-.09 1(a) and Fulton County Schools Policy GBBD for Professional Certification

Expected Outcome: Improved student performance/achievement in specific areas such as Arabic, project-based learning expeditions (EL) that integrate multiple curricular content areas (literacy, social studies, STEM, etc.), and service learning through the granting of this waiver.

Action: All teachers will be required to pursue continuing education courses in order to obtain or retain their certification status in addition to other continuing education training to help achieve Amana Academy's high academic and ethical character achievement goals. However, Amana Academy wishes to waive the State's requirement that this training be provided by local areas of administration and "other appropriate organizations". Amana Academy requests the flexibility to hire skilled professional development consultants to provide services on-site that will provide the teachers and other hired professionals guidance and improvement on their teaching skills. These consultants may not possess the certification requirements of the State, but will possess knowledge and skills needed in order to further the staff's skills in educating the students and providing them with the best education possible in alignment with Amana's unique curriculum and vision and thereby improve student performance. Amana Academy will want the opportunity to participate in courses relevant to its EL instructional approach as described in the petition, the Arabic curriculum, and any other courses which facilitate Amana's high academic and ethical standards. Through the granting of this waiver student performance/achievement will be improved in specific areas such as Arabic, EL project-based learning expeditions that integrate multiple curricular content areas (literacy, social studies, science, mathematics), and service learning.

Specific Waiver: Appropriate Organizations to provide In-Service or Continuing Education –

O.C.G.A. 20-2-201(c)

Expected Outcome: Through the granting of

this waiver student performance/achievement will be improved in specific areas

such as Arabic, EL project-based learning expeditions that integrate multiple

curricular content areas (literacy, social studies, science, mathematics), and

service learning through.

Action: Amana Academy wishes to have flexibility to create a schedule which best accommodates the needs of the students and teachers. While Amana Academy intends for teachers to have a duty-free time during the day, it may be necessary for some teachers to be available to assist the students during the lunch hour. This option will afford Amana the flexibility to (a) promote a “we are crew” culture per EL design principles – see Appendix M, and (b) manage expenses associated with substitute teachers and paraprofessionals/instructional assistants.

Specific Waiver: Duty Free Lunch Period – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-218

Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver will provide this extra “teacher” time with their students that allows for a closer relationship with students and will lead to improved student performance/achievement in all subject areas and in classroom behavior.

Action: Given its unique educational program elements, such as but not limited to Arabic language, Amana Academy wishes to have flexibility in the selection of textbooks and the electronic copy requirement to improve student performance/achievement. A textbook selection committee intends to choose the best textbooks and curricular resources, which improve Amana’s ability to implement its curriculum.

Specific Waiver: State Board to prescribe textbooks: O.G.C.A. 20-2-1010 and Electronic Format of

Textbooks: O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-1015 and SBE Rule 160-4-4-.10(k).

Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver will improve student achievement in specific areas such as Arabic language and project based learning expeditions, which will benefit from textbooks that align well with EL’s instructional approach.

Action: Because of its smaller size, Amana Academy’s intends to serve the needs of Intellectually Gifted children to the greatest extent possible within the context of the regular classroom where teaching staff may not be State certified. The flexibility to meet the needs of Intellectually Gifted students using non-State certified personnel will prompt Amana to hire highly qualified teachers who possess the qualifications to fulfill on Amana’s program while maintaining a manageable school size. The relatively small size of the school will allow for stronger personal relationships between students, staff, administration, and families, ensuring that no student "falls between the cracks" and will improve overall student performance.

Specific Waiver: Category VI Special Needs Eligibility for Intellectually Gifted Students: O.C.G.A. 20-2-152(6), Qualified Personnel Standard for Special Needs Students SBE Rule 160-4-2.38, Fulton County Program for Intellectually Gifted Policy IDDD

Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver will improve student achievement in areas such as project-based learning expeditions that integrate various subjects around a central theme. EL promotes differentiated teaching skills within the classroom versus “tracking”. This approach may not require State TAG certified teachers.

Action: Any student desiring a unique curriculum with high academic expectations and who lives in the Fulton County School District will be able to attend Amana Academy.

Specific Waiver: Limited Public School Choice – SBE Rule 160-5-4-.09

Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver shall improve overall student achievement and behavior, since Fulton County residents will attend this school by choice and will have a vested interest in the educational programs and approaches the school offers. This vested interest will translate into higher levels of parental involvement in students’ learning, which has been shown to improve student achievement.

ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS AND WAIVERS

7. What are the school’s Organizational Goals, Objectives, Measures and Targets?

Organizational Health and Stability							
Objective 1	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Become an Expeditionary Learning Schools (ELS) Credentialed School	ELS has established a 100 point scale to measure student work, mastery of knowledge, and character as well as school implementation of the Expeditionary Learning model. ELS created annual implementation targets for a four year plan.	Obtain rating	47 points	66 points	84 points	100 points	100 points
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed		Responsible Party			
Evidence related to progress toward the benchmarks above is collected and analyzed annually by an ELS school designer.		Costs absorbed in ELS annual contract		Elementary and Middle School Administrators			
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection		Responsible Party			
Implementation Review data, and Work Plan data serve as evidence to support a school’s eventual application to be a credentialed EL school.		Annual		Executive Director			
Objective 2	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Improve parent and employee, favorability	Annual Surveys used by AdvancedEd for their Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic. Rating based on a 0 - 5 point scale with 5 being	4,15 for parents 3.52 for overall staff Based on	4.3 for parents 3.75 for overall staff	4.45 for parents 4.00 for overall staff	4.60 for parents 4.25 for overall staff	4.75 for parents 4.50 for overall staff	4.80 for parents 4.75 for overall staff

	highest approval.	2013 SACS Accredit ation					
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed		Responsible Party			
Georgia Department of Education - Georgia Schools' Parent Survey		N/A		Executive Director			
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection		Responsible Party			
Improvements in Parent Survey Results from the State Department of Education in overall parent satisfaction as well improvements across all demographics and learning abilities		Annually		Executive Director			
Objective 3	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Position Amana's middle school as a destination educational experience	Middle school return rates based on the Fulton County 10-day count. Baseline percentages based on 2013 – 2014 returning students - 92% for 6 th grade, 85% for 7 th grade and 79% for 8 th grade.	85% return across grades	88% return across grades	91% return across grades	94% return across grades	96% return across grades	98% return across grades
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed		Responsible Party			
Spring recommitment notifications from parents		N/A		Middle School Director			
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection		Responsible Party			
Percentage of parents indicating recommitment in Spring semester for rising 6 th , 7 th and 8 th grade students		Annual		Data Specialist/Student Information Coordinator			
Objective 4	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Build/enhance collaborative relationships with authorizers, agencies, partners, local businesses, and community organizations	Shared collaborative activities with authorizers, agencies, partners, local businesses, and community organizations	9 shared activities with authorizers or external organizations	12 shared activities with authorizers or external organizations	15 shared activities with authorizers or external organizations	18 shared activities with authorizers or external organizations	20 shared activities with authorizers or external organizations	24 shared activities with authorizers or external organizations
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed		Responsible Party			
Master calendar reflects annual target		\$500/year		Executive Director			
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection		Responsible Party			
Review of master calendar		Quarterly		Executive Director			

Objective 5	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Complete construction of new elementary school classrooms from the northeast wing of the school building	Complete three stages of a capital campaign to meet foundation giving criteria and secure donations.	Increase parent giving above 80% of households	Increase Annual Fund giving above \$150 thousand	Raise \$2.25 million from foundations, parent contacts, corporations and individual donors,	Complete construction of new elementary wing		Complete construction of new elementary wing
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed		Responsible Party			
Parent pledge forms, Feasibility study		\$35,000		Board Fund Development Committee Chair			
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection		Responsible Party			
Percentage of parent households contributing and total pledge amounts. The dollar amount committed by foundations in the feasibility study matches the \$900 thousand required to meet construction costs		Pledge forms – Monthly Feasibility Study – Year 2		Pledge Forms - Institutional Advancement Specialist Feasibility Study –Board Fund Development Committee Chair			

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

In order to maintain a constantly improving academic culture, the school will seek to become an Expeditionary Learning Schools (ELS) Credentialed School before the end of the next charter period. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, Expeditionary Learning will implement a credentialing process in order to formally recognize schools that are both implementing the EL model with fidelity and achieving corresponding gains across all three dimensions of EL's expanded definition of student achievement. The credentialing process helps define clear benchmarks for schools and establishes consistent steps to monitor progress. Specifically, the credentialing process revolves around documenting evidence of progress in the following areas:

- Student Mastery of Knowledge and Skills as measured by student performance on state assessments in comparison with district peers.

- Student Character and Engagement as measured by evidence drawn from the school's system for assessing and tracking student progress toward habits of scholarship.
- High-Quality Student Work as measured by evidence drawn from an annual Quality Work Protocol.
- Implementation of Expeditionary Learning as measured by the annual Implementation Review.

The second objective deals with fostering a collaborative school climate between stakeholders, which is a bedrock value set forth in the Charter. The school shall conduct AdvancEd surveys to measure school climate. It will continue to implement a comprehensive orientation program for new parents, and shall engage stakeholders through events such as the Annual State of the School address, monthly Board meetings, semi-annual Board Town Hall meetings, monthly Cafe Conversations, social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), and Faculty Forum.

Amana Academy has an excellent middle school experience that is unique to Fulton County Schools, and the school wishes to maintain high standards and optimal enrollment in middle school grades. To that end, the school shall seek feedback from students and parents to gain insight into stakeholder needs. The school shall create a vibrant and academically challenging middle school experience (including co-curricular and extracurricular activities) that prepares students for high school and college. Amana will regularly market middle school accolades and happenings to internal stakeholders as well as the broader community via news outlets.

From the inception of Amana Academy, our founders and leadership have sought to maintain a complementary and collaborative working relationship with our authorizers. Amana is proud to be part of the Fulton County Schools system and has benefited greatly from Fulton County services. The school shall continue this tradition by meeting and/or exceeding compliance requirements of our authorizers. Amana shall contribute and share best practices with Fulton County Schools and the Georgia Department of Education. Good schools are an integral part of the community and drive economic development. Now that Amana Academy has a permanent home, the school is in a better position to actualize the community outreach reflected in the school's mission and guiding principles. The school shall also

support the efforts of the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce’s Education Committee, and connect with other local agencies.

In order to maintain financial stability, the school has taken the step of purchasing its leased building for the purpose of creating predictability in the facilities-related expenses without the possibility of having to move at the end of a lease agreement. Once the building was purchased, the school began construction of a new middle school and a STEM club shop in the southwest wing of the building that was completed in October of this year. The school's CFO and Board have been keen on maintaining a reserve fund and, working with the Executive Director, they have successfully engaged in a fund development campaign. The Board supports a Fund Development Committee and has won numerous governmental agency and foundation grants. The next phase of Amana Academy's facilities improvements will be the construction of a new elementary school in the northeast wing of the building before the 2017-18 school year. This new phase will be accomplished using a three-stage approach recommended by consultants from Coxe Curry & Associates, to include the generous donations of our parents, staff, foundations, corporations and community contacts.

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

<p>Action: Rather than rely on a local school council, Amana Academy wishes to create its own governing body to govern the school. This Governing Board will be comprised of a majority elected parents, Founding Board members, and local community leaders who understand and support the unique mission of Amana Academy.</p>
<p>Specific Waiver: Formation and Duties of Local School Councils – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-85 and 20-2-86</p>
<p>Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver allows Amana Academy to create its own governing body to be more efficient in meeting its goals so it can provide the unique collection of educational programs and appropriate school community atmosphere to improve overall student performance and</p>

achievement across subject areas.

Action: Amana Academy wishes to waive the State’s teacher salary schedules and increases requirement in order to better match teacher educational credentials, experience, and motivational fit to Amana’s guiding principles, vision, mission, and instructional approaches (including but not limited to EL design principles and core practices).

Specific Waiver: Teacher Salary Schedules and Increases – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-212, 20-2-212.1, 20-2-212.2 and SBE Rules 160-5-2-.04 and 160-5-2-.05

Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver will better preserve the integrity of the charter, improve student performance/achievement in specific areas such as Arabic and EL derived project-based learning expeditions that integrate subject areas, and improve the opportunity for successful school operational and financial outcomes.

Action: To mitigate financial pressures and the unpredictability of starting and expanding a new school, Amana Academy would like to waive the requirement of having a written contract for its teachers. Specific student achievement in the areas of project-based expeditionary learning and Arabic will be improved through the granting of this waiver because specific teaching skills will be required for these unique elements.

Specific Waiver: Teacher Contracts – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-211(a), 20-2-211(b), and 20-2-211(c) and Fulton County Schools Policies GBL and GBO:

Expected Outcome: The granting of this waiver will afford Amana Academy’s Governing Board and the Executive Director flexibility in making timely decisions to best align human resources to meet the needs of students and to ensure sound and smooth operational/financial management thereby improving student performance/achievement in all subject areas.

<p>Action: Amana Academy’s intent is to hire and retain the most highly qualified administrators to achieve the charter’s mission.</p>
<p>Specific Waiver: School Administrator – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-042(1.1)</p>
<p>Expected Outcome: Such flexibility in the hiring of its administrator, whether certified or not, will improve student performance/achievement in all subject areas since there are uncertified administrators who possess the general management & educational qualifications to adequately manage Amana Academy with its semi-autonomous nature and unique educational approaches.</p>

<p>Action: Amana Academy’s name embodies the school’s guiding principle of “stewardship for things we are entrusted with” and its emphasis on academic excellence. The school’s Founding Board has approved this name for the school with the intent that the profound meaning of the “Amana” name will instill a sense of purpose throughout the school’s community thereby improving student performance.</p>
<p>Specific Waiver: Naming Facility – Fulton County Board Policies and Procedures FDC:</p>
<p>Expected Outcome: Through the granting of this waiver, student achievement will improve in most subject areas and also in character building, since “stewardship” has such broad application potential. This broad application even extends to the operation and management of the school, and the school’s relationship/interaction with the community and environment.</p>

GOVERNANCE

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

Amana Academy is incorporated as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization in the state of Georgia [\[Exhibit 1\]](#).

Amana means responsibility, a trust. The Amana Academy Governing Board (otherwise referred to as the Board) holds the trust (Amana) of the community. Holding the trust is about holding the

responsibility to deliver the educational experience as expressed in the Vision Statement of this institution. The Board bears full responsibility for the school achieving its academic goals and meeting its performance criteria as well as staying faithful and in complete compliance to the charter in developing and maintaining the character defined in the school Vision Statement. The Governing Board is the entity that holds the charter and is held accountable by the State and the Fulton County School Board for the operation of the school. It is the Governing Board's responsibility to ensure that Amana Academy is a viable, financially solvent and professionally staffed institution. **Amana Academy shall utilize this Governing Board rather than the local school council as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85.**

The Governing Board shall have the responsibility of reporting to the Fulton County School Board. Amana Academy shall be subject to the control and management of the Fulton County School Board in a manner consistent with the 1998 Charter School Act and the Georgia Constitution. Amana's governing Board is the holder of the charter contract.

Governing Board members shall not receive any compensation for service. Additionally, all members of the Governing Board of Amana Academy shall comply with the Conflict of Interest Policy adopted by the Board.

Being a member of the Amana Governing Board means a personal belief in the principle on which Amana is founded. It is also a personal commitment not only to apply these principles in Amana Academy related decisions, but also as personal values expressed in every aspect of life.

The Amana Academy Governing Board shall be committed to the following main responsibilities:

Planning

- Strategic Planning: Amana Academy Governing Board has and will continue to keep and maintain a 5 year strategic plan. The Board revisits the plan at least once a year.
- Financial Planning: The Board maintains a 5 year projection of the school income, and develops financial goals based on those 5 year projections.

- Other Planning Activities: The Executive Committee of the Board collaborated with the Director and Administrators to ensure operational annual plans are in place and meet the needs of the community. These operational plans are directly linked to the strategic plan in an annual joint Board-Administration session.

Oversight

The Board has several responsibilities related to ensuring a successful operation and proper monitoring of the school.

- Hiring the Leadership team: The Board is directly responsible to seek, identify and hire the Executive Director for the school. The Board also evaluates the performance of the Executive Director consistent with the Personnel Performance Management Policy adopted by Amana in 2009. Additionally the Board participates in the process of hiring Administrators and approves all the new hires. The Board is responsible for reviewing and approving the staffing plan for each school year.
- The Board must approve all major personnel action including termination of employment of any staff members.
- The Board business committee leads the budgeting process and the Board has the responsibility for financial monitoring. At a minimum, the Board reviews and approves monthly financial reports. Ensuring the financial health of the organization as well as the integrity of the financial processes are the Board responsibilities. Additionally, the Board is responsible to use the budgeting process to see that the school resources are used in the best manner to meet its goals.
- Operational oversight is done by the Board through committees. The Executive Committee works with the leadership team to ensure operations are well run in a manner consistent with the Charter. The Committee reports to the Board at least once a month.
- The Board is responsible to develop accountability tools to be able to measure progress and effectiveness. This includes the academic performance and the progress Amana is making.

While the Strategic Plan and Annual Plans are visited in a major way once a year, the monthly executive director report and executive committee report offer Board members an opportunity to learn about the monthly progress on all academic and operational matters, as well as the opportunity to ensure consistency with Charter and annual plans. All academic data is analyzed by the leadership team and presented to the Board as soon as it is available so the Board is able to adjust resources or other decisions as needed.

Policy Making

The Governing Board establishes direction through policy. Since the board is fully accountable for the organization and since the Board must rely on others to carry out the work, it is essential that the Board give special attention to the principle of sound delegation. Precise and systematic delegation and clear expectations are crucial to effective implementation. Additionally, the Board must be able to recognize the need to adopt or develop new policy. In developing and adopting policy, the Board shall engage the appropriate elements of the Amana community and proactively seek community input on proposed policy prior to final adoption.

Fund Development and Partnerships

Formally and informally, all Board members are ambassadors of the Amana Community. They have the responsibility to represent Amana Academy in a manner that is consistent with its Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles. Additionally, Board members are responsible for developing and maintaining positive relationships with partners and community leaders. Additionally, Board members are responsible to seek and develop opportunity for the school to develop additional revenue streams through building community support and donor relations.

Board Membership and Elections

Currently, the Board membership includes six (6) elected parents/guardians and three (3) founding members. Elected Board members are elected by the parents/guardians. All parents/guardians are eligible to participate in a general vote. For the proposed renewal term, Amana Governing Board will

implement a succession plan which will maintain the number of elected parents and integrate the selection of three (3) community leaders to replace the three (3) founding members. The succession will take place over three years. By March 2015, one community leader will be selected and will replace one of the founding members. The same pattern will repeat in March 2016 and March 2017.

Board Elections

The six (6) elected parent community members shall be elected by February of every year. Each elected Board member will serve a term of 2 years. Every year, the community will elect 3 Board members, so the membership is staggered so that a maximum of 3 Board members can be new to the Board. Members are eligible to be nominated for additional terms. Nominations must be submitted to the election committee appointed by the Board by the end of January of each year. All parents and guardians shall be offered the opportunity and be encouraged to participate in the elections. Every family with students attending Amana Academy is eligible for one vote, regardless of the number of Amana students in that family. All nominees are to make themselves available for questions from the community and must make a statement regarding their qualifications and objectives during their service. Nominees are also asked to present a resume to the nomination committee to demonstrate the skills and competencies they offer. This allows the community to know the professional background that each nominee can bring to Amana. The process has worked well in the past and the Amana Board has historically been very strong and diverse in terms of professional skills. Elections shall be supervised by the Board acting at the time. The elections must be completed by the end of February of each year. Newly elected Board members start their service on March 1 of each year. By the end of the school year the Board shall elect Board officers (Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) from the newly formed Board. The Executive Director shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting Board member.

For the three community leader Board seats, nominations can be presented to the Board from any party. A nominee must present his/her statement of qualifications and resume to the full Board for consideration. The Board will interview and select one Board member every year. The term will be three years staggered so that only one vacancy becomes available every year. A Board member may be re-

nominated for additional terms. Upon approval of the Charter renewal by FCS Board of Education and the State of Georgia Board of Education, Amana Academy's shall amend its bylaws to reflect this transition in Board membership. The addition of members from the local community that may not be parents will bring the school and local community closer as Amana grows and becomes an important and vibrant element of the local community. Creating the connections between the school and the larger community is essential. The service Amana provides serves the community and impacts the local residents and businesses. Having members from the larger community serve on the Board will help solidify the bond and connection with our community.

Board Member Removal

Based on current bylaws [[Exhibit 2](#)] the Governing Board or members may vote to remove a board member at any time, only for good cause. Good cause for removal of a board member shall include the unexcused failure to attend four consecutive meetings of the Governing Board. A meeting to consider the removal of a board member may be called and noticed following the procedures provided in the bylaws. The notice of the meeting shall state that the issue of possible removal of the board member will be on the agenda and the notice shall state the possible cause for removal. The board member shall have the right to present evidence at the meeting as to why he or she should not be removed, and the board member shall have the right to be represented by an attorney at and before the meeting. At the meeting, the Board shall consider possible arrangements for resolving the problems that are in the mutual interest of the school and the board member. Upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote (excluding the member of the Board in question), the Board may cause removal of a member.

Board Meetings

The Governing Board shall hold regular monthly meetings. **The Board meetings shall be open for the Amana Academy community to attend. Board meetings are subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq.** All meeting minutes are to be kept on file at the school office and made available for review by community members, **subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.**

One (1) representative from Fulton County School Board and the Executive Director shall be invited to all regularly scheduled board meetings. Should a replacement of a Board member be necessary prior to the end of the term, the Chairperson shall select a replacement to serve the rest of the term. Executive sessions for the Board may be held when necessary.

Board Development

The Governance committee is responsible for creating and maintaining a Board member development program. Such programs are developed based on surveys of Board member skills and professional background. All new Board members shall be required to attend an Amana specific Board member orientation in addition to the Board member orientation offered by Fulton County Schools. Additionally, Board members are offered the opportunity and are encouraged to participate with training and development opportunities such as the session offered by the Georgia Charter School Association Annual Conference. This training includes development of skills specific to the Board member roles such as financial management and strategic planning.

Board performance assessments are conducted through the school wide survey at least once a year. Additionally the Board will conduct a Board member assessment as well as a general Board assessment once a year. Results of these assessments shall be used to enhance board development plans and communicate gaps and expectations to Board members.

Finally, Amana Academy is accredited by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) and had just had its accreditation renewed in the school year 2012/2013.

Stewardship in Decision-Making

The Amana Academy Governing Board (and the initial Founding Board) is an entity that has one voice. The Board displays a great sense of stewardship by delivering policy decisions to the Amana community based on consultation with the most appropriate individuals and community members. It is

the responsibility of the Chair Person of the Board to facilitate Board decisions. The Consultative Model in decision-making includes the following steps:

When the need to make a decision arises, the Chairperson of the Board shall determine to take one of four potential methods of decision-making:

1. The decision is a managerial decision and will be passed to the leadership team.
2. The decision is a relatively simple policy decision and a direction on the subject matter is already established by existing policy or previous Board decision on a similar matter. Therefore, the Chair Person may proceed and make the decision on behalf of the Board.
3. The decision is significant and unique enough that a formal Board decision must be made.
4. The decision is significant and will set precedent; therefore, a policy regarding the subject matter must be developed and adopted by the Board following a formal policy making process with community input. The Board may utilize forming a Board subcommittee to investigate and develop a proposed policy. Board subcommittees may include any Amana community members.

If the Chairperson determines that a formal Board decision is needed (options 3 or portions of option 4 above), consultation shall be used to facilitate a Board decision per the following process. All of these activities are conducted in open meetings unless the session is an executive session, per the Georgia Open Meeting Act:

1. Board members shall express their recommendations; and, to ensure all members are heard, the Chairperson shall seek Board members recommendations along with rationale for reaching such recommendations.
2. The Chairperson shall facilitate a deliberation of the different options in making the decision among Board members
3. The Chairperson shall facilitate an analysis by the Board in evaluating each of the options and weighing them against the Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles for Amana Academy

4. Based on the analysis, the Chairperson shall make the decision on behalf the Board and provide detailed justification on how the decision is in the best interest of Amana Academy, and that it is in harmony with the Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles for Amana Academy.
5. The Board has the responsibility to communicate the decision to all parties as appropriate.
6. Every Board member has the full responsibility of supporting the Board decision.

The intent of using this consultative decision-making process is to encourage consensus building and to analyze issues and freely debate matters. On matters when discrete and timely decisions are needed, the Board Chair will conduct voting when deemed appropriate.

Board subcommittees may be assigned specific tasks by the Board. In general, the board subcommittees shall be assigned Board related responsibilities and not “management” tasks.

Amana is About Community - Parents and Community

As evidenced by the most recent Advanc-Ed SACS reaccreditation report in 2013, Amana’s parents participated in a feedback survey where they rated the school highest in the Purpose & Direction and Governance & Leadership standards with scores of 4.36 and 4.26 respectfully (out of a 5 point scale). The SACS review team specifically viewed these standards as strengths for the school. All stakeholders in the Amana community are and shall be involved directly or indirectly in school governing issues. Parents, partners and community leaders shall have the majority representation on the Governing Board (four elected members). Non-board-member parents and guardians are always encouraged to provide input to the Board as well as to the leadership team. The Board and the leadership team shall proactively seek parents and guardians input on a systematic basis.

Historically, at every major adjustment Amana has made, the Board actively sought community feedback. For example, when Amana grew to the level where the leadership structure was not effective and there was a need to adjust the model, the Board reached out to the parent and teacher community and developed a 17-member committee that was tasked with researching appropriate leadership models that

would better fit Amana's stage of growth and help the school be more effective and responsive to community needs. The process resulted in introducing the current Executive Director model.

In addition to the 10 to 20 minutes of time allocated at every Board meeting for public comment, the Board conducts town hall meetings twice a year and maintains a public email address to make sure all community members have the opportunity to participate and share their feedback. Finally, the annual survey sent to all parents and teachers include specific questions about Board performance and the state of governance to develop specific measurements of parent satisfaction with Board performance. during the year – one combined with an annual State of the School Address by the Executive Director. Board representatives also meet with faculty by grade level or department multiple times a year to gauge school climate and address resource concerns. Amana Academy's Board members have individually served in other local community organizations such the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce and at civic organizations and churches of different faith traditions in the area in an effort to gain community input on strategic decisions.

Board Communication

The Governing Board maintains an electronic mail box that is accessible to the public. All parents and non-parents are free to communicate directly with the Board. The email box distributes all messages to all Board members. One of the Board members is assigned responsibility to respond within 24 hours to address any concerns. Individual Board members email addresses are also posted on the Amana Website. All Board meetings (aside from the executive sessions) are open to the public per Georgia Open Meeting Act. A 10-minute time period is allocated in every monthly Board meeting for the public to address the Board or ask questions. Additionally, the Governing Board holds one to two town hall meetings every school year. These meetings allow the public to communicate directly and ask questions in person. Finally, when major change is made on the leadership team, the Board sends written and electronic communication to all parents and stakeholders.

In addition to communication with the parents and public, the Board maintains communication with officials at FCS and the Georgia Department of Education as needed. These communications may come from specific Board officers who have responsibilities of specific tasks on the Board. For example, the Board Treasurer maintains communication with FCS CFO (Mr. Morales) to ensure that FCS has all the documentation and information relevant to the school’s financial decisions. This was specifically critical during the time of preparing for the facility financing through the bond issuance. Regular communication took place with the FCS CFO to make sure FCS was fully aware of the process and how Amana was proceeding.

Parents and guardians are a central component in the operation of the school as well as in implementing the community stewardship featured by Amana Academy. Furthermore, Amana Academy “requires” parents and guardians to be involved in school activities and encourages them to support the school’s Mission and Guiding Principles.

Amana has an existing conflict of interest policy consistent with State law (O.C.G.A. 20-202065(b)(5), O.C.G.A. 20-2-63). [\[Exhibit 18\]](#).

FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS AND WAIVERS

Fiscal Health and Sustainability							
Objective #1	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Maintain positive annual operating cash flow	Revenues exceed Expenditures each fiscal year	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed			Responsible Party		
Annual Budget projects Revenues exceeding Expenditures, and Actuals are compared to Budget for potential negative variances.		See 5 Year Budget Projection [Exhibit 8]			Business Manager and Executive Director		
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection			Responsible Party		
Operating Budget Actual to Budget P&L comparison		Annually Monthly			CFO and Board Treasurer		
Objective #2	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level

Maintain 10% operating reserve each fiscal year end	Minimum Reserve = Total Operating Expenses less grant & contribution funded programs (i.e. lunch service, field studies, after-school) x 10%	\$505,000	\$530,000	\$550,000	\$565,000	\$580,000	
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed			Responsible Party		
Annual Budget projects ending cash balance sufficient to meet minimum reserve, and Actuals are compared to Budget for potential negative variances.		See 5 Year Budget Projection [Exhibit 8]			Business Manager and Executive Director		
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection			Responsible Party		
Operating Budget Actual to Budget P&L comparison		Annually Monthly			CFO and Board Treasurer		
Objective #3	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Meet all debt service payments and financial covenants	Debt service payments per Bond documents are remitted	\$592,175	\$685,300	\$685,300	\$685,300	\$685,300	
	Financial Covenants per Bond documents:						
	- # Days Cash on Hand @ June 30 - Debt Service Coverage Ratio	30 days 1.1	30 days 1.1	30 days 1.1	30 days 1.1	30 days 1.1	
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed			Responsible Party		
Budget including annual debt service payments project sufficient cash flow to meet debt covenant, and Actuals are compared to Budget for potential negative variances.		See 5 Year Budget Projection [Exhibit 8]			Business Manager and Executive Director		
Data to be collected indicating interim progress		Frequency of Collection			Responsible Party		
Operating Budget Actual to Budget P&L comparison		Annually Monthly			CFO and Board Treasurer		
Objective #4	Performance Measure(s)	Year One Baseline	Year Two Target	Year Three Target	Year Four Target	Year Five Target	Extinction Level
Maintain Financial Stability	Creating and implementing a comprehensive fund development plan that expands and diversifies our revenue base	4% of revenue sourced externally	8% of revenue sourced externally	10% of revenue sourced externally	12% of revenue sourced externally	14% of revenue sourced externally	25% of revenue sourced externally
Interim Indicators of Progress		Budget/Resources Needed		Responsible Party			
Pursuing five to ten government and foundation grants each year that complement Amana's goals		\$5000/year		Board Fund Development Chairperson			

Data to be collected indicating interim progress	Frequency of Collection	Responsible Party
Income collected from external sources	Monthly	Business Manager

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

Amana Academy has demonstrated a solid track record of financial management and fiduciary responsibility during its first two terms of operation. Were it not so, the school would not have been able to successfully purchase its facilities through the proceeds from a tax exempt bond. The school has performed well on financial criteria in the annual Fulton County Schools State of the Charters Report (available at

http://portal.fultonschools.org/departments/Strategy_Innovation/charter/Documents/State%20of%20the%20Charter%20Report%20for%20SY%2011.12%20FINAL%20.pdf). To achieve our future financial

objectives, the school will continue to rely on the practices that have served us well in the past while expanding our effort to seek outside funding sources through government grants and foundations.

From a personnel resources perspective, the school will continue to employ a qualified Business Manager to manage the day-to-day financial transactions and compliance obligations of the school. The school will also continue to adhere to Georgia Department of Education criteria for our Chief Financial Officer. And the school will continue to encourage Board nominations that feature financial/business experience, as the school has been very fortunate to have Board members who serve in significant financial roles in the corporate sector. Amana Academy has had an unblemished history of audited financials, and our stewardship ethic reminds us of our fiduciary responsibility to the public trust. Controls shall continue to be in place to ensure this responsibility. On a more operational level, Amana Academy must run with great efficiency, since the school does not benefit from capital allowances from our authorizers nor revenues from the most recent SPLOST referendum (something we will advocate for the next opportunity). Capital expenses are a significant portion of the normal operating budget – during the past charter term ranging from 17-18% due to high lease rates in North Fulton County. The purchase

of our facilities helps us in that we have a more predictable income statement, yet the school will need to continue to run a lean organization, especially front office staff, and in most cases hire staff members at lower salaries than comparable Fulton County Schools employees with similar roles. Staff members understand our realities, and they choose Amana because of the work environment and their passion for the school's mission and the Expeditionary Learning methodology. The school also caps credit for past experience to seven years for new-hires to maintain average salaries at a more manageable level (for example, in the most recent year Amana teacher salaries averaged \$41,281 vs. \$52,952 for Fulton Teachers). These and other measures are necessary for Amana Academy (and other start-up charter schools) to fulfill on carrying out our instructional program. Even so, Amana Academy's aspirations are higher and seek the highest quality instruction and resources. Therefore, to achieve these financial performance objectives, Amana will continue to pursue funding from outside sources. Through the efforts of the school's Executive Director, the Board's Fund Development Committee, parents, and teachers, and our Institutional Advancement Specialist (as of 2013) . Amana has a successful history of winning grants for educational innovation which we hope to expand. The following is a partial list of the grants we have won:

2013 – Marjac Poultry Education Grant - \$7,500 Award

2013 – Bosch Community Foundation Grant for STEM Education - \$4,500 Award

2012 - Georgia Department of Education Facilities Grant Recipient - \$150,000 Award

2011 - First School to Receive the Georgia Department of Education Dissemination Grant
Award for STEM Education - \$143,500 Award

2011 - Georgia Department of Education Facilities Grant Recipient - \$75,000

2011 - Coca-Cola Foundation Georgia Charter School of the Year - \$50,000 Award

2011 - Annie Casey Foundation Award Recipient - \$50,000 Award

2011 - Verizon Foundation Award for STEM Education - \$10,000

2011 - Toshiba America Foundation Grant for Science and Math Education - \$5,000

2010 - Georgia Department of Education Grant Facilities Recipient \$91,000

2010 - Captain Planet Foundation National School of Environmental Excellence - \$500

2007 - Youth Clean Community Challenge - Awarded by Keep Georgia Beautiful Awards Program
First place - \$500 Award

2006 - Broadcom Technology Grant - \$5,000 Award

2006 - GA Power Co. Community Service Award - \$1,500 Award

2006 - Weyerhaeuser Excellence in School Recycling Award - \$1,500 Award

2005 - Energy Smart Schools Energy Audit - \$5,000 Award

2004 - Walton Family Foundation Grant - For Innovative Start-Up Charter Schools - \$180,000 Award

The school will build upon this success by applying for similar grants to those won above. Each year during the charter period, Amana will continue to pursue the Georgia Department of Education Dissemination and Facilities Grants for \$150,000 each, the Marjac Poultry Education Grant for \$7,500, the Broadcom Technology Grant for \$5,000, and the Toshiba America Foundation Grant for Science and Math Education for \$5,000. New grant opportunities will also be pursued with the Office of Naval Research for \$200,000/year, the Honda America Foundation for \$75,000, the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta for \$75,000, the Robert Bosch Foundation for \$250,000, the Home Depot Foundation for \$5,000, and the Robert Woodruff Foundation for \$200,000. These grants will help the school improve its academic capabilities by providing additional teacher professional development, student research opportunities, STEM laboratory equipment and improvements to facilities and grounds.

Business Partnerships

Amana Academy employs project based Expeditionary Learning and STEM educational models. A critical component of these models is to provide students with project scenarios that require solutions to realistic challenges. Amana's business partners generously give time, insights and resources to our students and teachers to better prepare students to enter business environments after they complete their academic careers. In the past eight years, Amana Academy has formed strong strategic alliances with several organizations, such as:

The Kimberly-Clark Corporation's North Fulton County facilities are committing to organize and schedule volunteer scientists and engineers from amongst Kimberly-Clark's 1,200 local employees to work with Amana teachers and students to advise STEM projects, mentor students and provide personal accounts of their work lives. In addition, Kimberly-Clark employees provide chemistry demonstrations to Amana students as part of their National Engineers Week Programs.

The **Verizon Wireless** Corporate Office in Alpharetta partners with the Verizon Foundation each year to provide volunteers for the Amana Academy-Verizon Fun Walk and a \$10,000 donation as part of the Verizon Matching Gifts Program. For three consecutive years, up to ten Verizon employees have donated their time and money to support the Amana Annual Fund.

Amana Academy has been actively engaged with the **Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce** Education Committee since 2011. The Chamber provides it facilities to the school for volunteer trainings and has led to partnerships with organizations such as Junior Achievement and North Point Mall. As evidence of the strong relationship, Amana's Executive Director has recently been asked to lead the Chamber's Annual Partners in Education event.

Partnerships, such as these, will be pursued and enriched during the next charter period to provide human and capital resources to the school. New avenues will be sought to provide students with more in-depth work life understanding and the school with additional classroom technology. Some examples of additional partnerships that will be pursued during the next charter period are with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the Naval Research Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Lockheed-Martin Corporation, the AT&T Corporation, the Rheem Manufacturing Company, the Home Depot U.S.A., Inc. and Porsche Cars North America.

12. Financial Waivers - Which of the specific actions in the financial plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

Action: Since Amana Academy is a start-up charter school and in the process of building and expanding
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its program over the duration of the charter, the school wishes to waive expenditure requirements of Quality Based Education Funds. Amana wishes to rollover any excess money from such funds to be used the following year to improve upon or expand Amana's programs and resources rather than return such funds to the State treasury.

Specific Waiver: Expenditure Funds – O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-167

Expected Outcome: By reinvesting these funds into the school, Amana will have a greater ability to directly improve student performance and achievement in targeted academic areas. These funds will be used for things like increased teacher training through EL, lab resources, the media center, classroom resources, technology, learning expeditions, and future facilities improvements. In general, student achievement in all areas can be improved through the granting of this waiver, and in particular areas that rely on teacher skill, classroom resources, and field-work.

STUDENT ADMISSIONS

13. How will students be admitted to the charter school?

Amana Academy will admit students on a space-available basis, with an initial registration posting in the spring of 2004 (see timetable below). Any student who is a resident of Fulton County (outside the Atlanta city limits) and who meets the minimum age and grade requirements is eligible to attend. Amana Academy will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion or disability. Being a public charter school, Amana Academy will not charge tuition. Amana Academy shall not accept students who reside outside the School System, as they are ineligible to attend schools in the Fulton County School System.

Recruitment of students shall be the responsibility of Amana Academy. In the first three operational years, Amana used different recruitment techniques including notice through newspaper advertisements, direct mail, community information sessions, and announcements in neighboring civic organizations (as necessary). Amana enrolment has consistently increased every year. As Amana's solid reputation and uniqueness has attracted many families in the District, many of the grade levels were filled

to capacity prior to May 2008. After the initial operational year Amana has provided the District with enrollment projections by March 1 of every year. Amana will continue to provide this information annually for the duration of the Charter.

Amana Academy shall continue to provide the Fulton County School System with necessary data for state funding reporting and enrollment monitoring; Amana Academy has been using the School System's student information system in accordance with School System specifications. One Administrator has attended every training opportunity to continue the effective use of eSchoolPlus.

Amana provides school tours to interested families to learn about the school and the application process prior to submitting applications. The purpose of the session is to help parents make an informed choice for their child and to provide parents of potential students with accurate information about the programs, services and amenities available at the school. In filling out the application form, students will complete a developmentally appropriate biographical sketch and parents/guardians will complete personal information. A translator or similar services will be provided to parents who make such requests in order to participate in an information session. To be eligible for admission, the following must be provided for the student:

1. proof of residence in Fulton County;
2. proof of minimum age of five years as of the date established by law or by regulation for students entering kindergarten or first grade;
3. a completed application form

The pre-enrollment form [[Exhibit 3](#)] requests the following information: student's name; date of birth; grade level; address; names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents/guardians; names of siblings also applying; and a signature verifying that the information is correct and that the parents/guardians are choosing education at Amana Academy for their child. Application forms must be submitted to the school by the annual deadline determined by the Board.

Timetable for Registering and Admitting Students

Month	Activity
January of each year (except the initial year of operation)	Open enrollment begins for the following school year.
February	Lottery conducted if necessary.
March of each year	Enrollment begins for following school year.
March 1 of each year	Admitted student information for the following school year provided to Fulton County School System

Amana agrees to begin enrollment for the upcoming school year and provide the names, addresses and home school of all accepted students to the School System no later than **March 1** and that failure to do so may result in the termination of the charter. It is understood that the school can continue to accept students after this date, and that it will continue to update the system on the number of students registered and all other student information as requested.

If the number of applicants exceeds the school's enrollment cap, admission preference will be given according to the following enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-2066 (a)(1):

- a sibling of a student already enrolled at Amana
- a student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of Amana or is a full-time teacher, professional or other employee at Amana

After those students are placed, a random lottery will be held to fill remaining spots.

1. The pool of applicants will be sorted according to admissions preferences provided for by statute and by grade level, starting with kindergarten;
2. Within each grade level, applications will be sorted according to these categories, arranged in order of admissions preference: a) returning resident student; b) child of board member or full-time staff member; c) sibling of returning resident student; d) new resident applicant;

3. The Admissions Committee will reserve spaces for returning students and those students granted enrollment priority. Any remaining spaces will be allocated by holding a drawing of names by category in admissions preference order starting with category d).
4. After all grade levels have been completed, names that remain will be placed by preference category, in drawing order, on the school's waiting list.

Names are drawn one by one; as each student is drawn, that student and applicant siblings are immediately placed in their respective grade levels

When the lottery process is completed, sibling applicants of admitted students will be placed on the waiting list. Twins and members of other multiple births applying together will be entered separately in the lottery. If one twin or multiple-birth sibling is admitted, the other sibling(s) will also be admitted provided there is still space available. If no space is available, they will be placed on the waiting list. Should attrition reduce the number of enrolled students after completion of the admissions process, Amana Academy will fill openings from the waiting list, in order by category, or if no names remain on the list, it will hold a secondary admissions process to fill available spaces after a suitable period of full public notice.

Admission decisions will be made by the process described above on the date set by the Governing Board. Parents/guardians will be notified of each child's admission status and will have no less than seven calendar days after the postmarked date on the notification to return a signed enrollment registration application for each child offered enrollment or signed waiting-list applicant card for wait-listed children. If no form has been returned by the stated deadline, the child's admission space or waiting-list order will be forfeited and given to the next eligible candidate. Parents who will not be available at the home address listed on the application form during the notification period should contact Amana Academy to make alternate arrangements. No Students will be admitted after the first ten days of any semester unless otherwise authorized by the Executive Director, for example to fill out enrollment in a particular grade. The Executive Director may consult with the Governance Board on such exceptions.

At Amana, diversity is seen as an asset that enriches the classroom experience. To deny our children a real multicultural education is to leave them unprepared for the world in which a multiplicity of viewpoints and practices abounds. A major strength of Amana's is its incredibly diverse student body – 30% African-American, 30% Asian, 30% Caucasian, 7% Multi-racial and 3% Hispanic. Amana reflects ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. Amana's marketing plan will actively tap into this diversity to encourage students, teachers and staff from a broad spectrum of backgrounds.

Amana Academy Administrators and Governing Board members will regularly work to develop its program consistent with the 8 benchmarks for assessing and maintaining an effective multicultural school outlined in J.A. Bank's *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (<http://www.intime.uni.edu/multiculture/index.htm>). Listed below are some of the mechanisms we intend to establish:

- A multicultural policy statement that supports diversity. Amana Governing Board members and administrators will develop policies consistent with how teachers should relate to students of diverse cultures based on an interpretation of the traditions and communication styles of those particular groups.
- Staff development to help teachers promote positive attitudes and expectations toward diverse students and to help them understand the customs and behaviors of the cultures from which their students come. Amana teachers will be expected to model an enthusiasm for learning about “other” cultures and draw upon the personal experiences of students so that the students learn from each other.
- A school staff that reflects ethnic and cultural diversity.
- A curriculum that will evolve (throughout the charter's term) to consciously expose students to the diversity of histories, values and philosophies and cultural practices of non-dominant cultures that are currently underrepresented in standard curriculums.
- Active parent participation that provides a cultural context for teaching and a link with student personal/cultural knowledge.

- Constructivist, personalized, empowering and participatory teaching strategies.
- Teaching materials that present diverse racial, ethnic and cultural perspectives on events, concepts and issues.
- Ongoing monitoring by Amana board members and administrative staff.

In terms of recruitment, Amana Academy is open to all students who are eligible to attend Fulton County Public Schools during the specified open enrollment period without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, disabling condition, or English proficiency. All of Fulton County will serve as Amana Academy's attendance zone, and all students who are residents in any of the 11 unincorporated cities of Fulton County will be eligible to enroll. Fulton County Schools Transportation has defined a smaller transportation zone that they use to determine bus allocation and routes. Bus service is an important enabler for our school to recruit economically disadvantaged families.

Recruitment of students shall be the responsibility of Amana Academy. The recruitment process will include public notice through the school's website (which is referenced on the Fulton Schools website) newspaper advertisements, direct mail, community information sessions, and announcements in neighboring civic organizations.

Amana will request interested families to attend an informational presentation or school tour to learn about the school and the application process prior to submitting applications. The purpose of the session is to help parents make an informed choice for their child and to provide parents of potential students with accurate information about the programs, services and amenities available at the school.

Amana Academy will follow the Fulton County Code of Conduct based on Policy JD as approved by the FCS Board [[Exhibit 14](#)]. The code is in place to ensure "a safe, nurturing and well-disciplined environment for all of our students and employees to promote student self-discipline and academic achievement." As stated in the Code:

"Progressive discipline processes [are] designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline imposed will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline and will

take into account the previous discipline history of the student and other relevant factors, while ensuring that each student receives the due process mandated by federal and state law.”

Amana Academy retains the right to impose modifications to the discipline cycle based on the individual discipline history and other relevant factors. In the event a student is accused of committing serious or chronic misbehavior, the consequences may result in a school transfer and/or long-term suspension or expulsion. School transfers and/or long-term suspensions or expulsions require the completion of the discipline hearing process. *“The purpose of the discipline hearing is for the Student Discipline Hearing Officer [and Discipline Committee] to receive evidence/testimony regarding the alleged violation and determine what, if any, consequence should be imposed when a violation has been proven.”* For Amana, the Hearing Officer and committee members “considers the student’s academic and discipline history to determine the appropriate discipline to be imposed and/or appropriate school placement.”

Following the protocols outlined by Fulton County schools, Amana hearings imposed will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline and will take into account the previous discipline history of the student and other relevant factors, and are closed and confidential.

FACILITIES

14. Describe the school facility that the charter school proposes to use.

After a three-year effort to secure a permanent home Amana Academy has closed on the 100,000 square foot Alpharetta Square shopping plaza on Main Street, where it has been operating since 2007. The school was able to secure more than \$8.665 million in bonds without the use of any county or school district capital program dollars to acquire the property. With this purchase, Amana Academy has joined the elite handful of chartered public schools capable of building or purchasing their own facilities.

In addition to purchasing the 10.66-acre site, the school intends to use the proceeds from the bonds to renovate 18,000 square feet of the plaza for new middle school classrooms and STEM labs

including a “Club Shop”. Evergreen Construction, whom Fulton County Schools used to build Cambridge High School, was chosen by Amana to complete the middle school renovation project.

Currently the building includes 35 classrooms, cafeteria, a small gymnasium, Media Center and office space. It is immediately adjacent to 95-acre Wills Park in the city of Alpharetta. Amana has a partnership with the City of Alpharetta that allows Amana students to access playing fields and other facilities at Wills Park.

This location provides a safe environment well suited for the education of our 718 students. It is in compliance with all State and local requirements. A copy of the current Certificate of Occupancy is filed as [Exhibit 12](#) at the end of this petition. Amana has just updated its emergency safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A 20-2-185, which is filed as [Exhibit 13](#) at the end of this petition.

The Amana Academy facility is fully compliant with all building-code standards and regulations and fire, safety, environmental and accessibility requirements. All future construction and renovation projects undertaken during the term of the charter will be carried out by experienced and appropriately licensed and insured construction professionals who will perform all work in accordance with the construction specifications, drawings and other documents, as directed by the design professional. Amana Academy will contract directly with and pay for the services of appropriate design professionals, i.e. architects registered in the State of Georgia and experienced in school design, engineers registered in the State of Georgia and experienced in their respective disciplines, and experienced and appropriately licensed and insured construction professionals to:

1. Prepare schematic designs and complete construction documents meeting all applicable codes and the requirements of all applicable code-enforcing agencies having jurisdiction over the project;
2. Obtain full permits for land disturbance, erosion and sediment control, traffic control measures, civil, structural, architectural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, mechanical and fire protection, etc., as required by the scope of work necessary to obtain from the appropriate jurisdiction a valid Certificate of Occupancy for the intended educational use; and

3. Provide full “contract administration services,” i.e., oversight of the construction project from conceptual design through issuance of the final Certificate of Occupancy.

Copies of deeds, leases, construction contracts, drawings and other documents relating to the facility must be provided to the School System when deemed necessary by FCS.

Amana Academy realizes that regarding the School System's school construction program, the Fulton County School Board has determined that it is not feasible at the present time to include start-up charter schools in its building program or to provide charter schools with a facility, land for a facility, or funding for a facility.

Security

The security and safety of children and staff are the highest priority at Amana Academy. The school provides a secure educational experience that fosters learning, not fear. Prior to enrollment, parents are required to attend an “on boarding seminar” that reviews some safety procedures at school. A similar seminar is required for new and returning staff during preplanning, educating them on safety procedures among other things. To further promote a secure and safe environment, the school works closely with Fulton County security specialists and the Alpharetta Police Department to define safety procedures. Additionally the school operates a security procedure during drop-off and dismissal through parent volunteers, staff and Alpharetta Police officers. The current emergency and safety plan is enclosed as [Exhibit 13](#).

Amana Academy is envisioned as a place of learning, free of unnecessary facilities related distractions. To that end, the school will exercise a maintenance process. The process will include the following:

1. The school’s Administration is responsible for understanding State and County regulations and for managing the maintenance process, ensuring that paid staff, service companies, parents and students work collaboratively to keep Amana Academy clean and in good working condition.

2. One fulltime custodian is on the school's payroll or contracted by the school. This person is responsible for maintaining the general cleanliness of the school and for minor repair work.
3. The school contracts with a professional cleaning company to thoroughly disinfect and clean the school on a nightly basis.
4. The school encourages parents to participate in school-wide cleanups or beautification events.
5. Students, as part of their stewardship goals, take responsibility for maintaining their classroom and school environment. They are not asked to perform functions more appropriate for adults or professionals, yet they work collaboratively in keeping things tidy and neat.
6. Finally, the Administration audits and evaluates the condition of the school on a periodic basis.

Should the school close for any reason, the existing reserve fund that Amana Academy has is sufficient to cover expenses associated with any legal, accounting, personnel and moving activities.

15. Does the charter school have an MOU for the facility pending charter school and facility approval and is it provided as an Exhibit?

Amana Academy does not have an MOU for the facility.

16. Does the charter school have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the proposed facility and is it provided as an Exhibit?

Amana Academy does have a Certificate of Occupancy. It is [Exhibit 12](#) at the end of this petition

17. 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?

Amana Academy does have an emergency safety plan, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185, that is submitted to Fulton County Schools annually. It is offered as [Exhibit 13](#) at the end of this petition.