

SCSC Annual School Performance Review Report 2018-19 School Year



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School Selection & Process

State charter schools are annually evaluated on the Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF), a set of performance expectations in the areas of Academics, Finance and Operations. Schools that fail to meet CPF standards in one or more CPF sections are required by the SCSC to participate in an annual performance evaluation. The SCSC Annual Performance Review process typically includes completing an evaluation survey and presenting improvement plans to commissioners at the April, May or June SCSC board meetings.

However, due to COVID-19 and the resulting school closures that occurred in the Spring 2020, the SCSC provided flexibility to schools for 2018-19 school year performance reviews (school performance reviews occur in the spring following the completion of CPF results from the prior school year). Flexibilities included extending the survey submission deadline to June 30, 2020 and waiving the presentation obligation.

Table 1 lists the schools that were required to participate in 2018-19 performance reviews and submit survey responses. Schools that met performance expectations and/or went through the renewal process in 2019-20 are exempt from participation. Survey questions are targeted to the areas of the CPF in which the school did not meet expectations. All schools submitted survey responses by the noted deadline. Some school responses necessitated additional follow-up. Those schools were contacted by SCSC staff and asked to send supplementary documentation, all of which complied.

Table 1. Schools Participating in the 2018-19 SCSC Annual Performance Review and Corresponding CPF Scores

School	ACA	FIN	OPS
Brookhaven Innovation Academy	98	50	74
Cherokee Charter Academy	62	75	98
Cirrus Charter Academy	62	45	79
Fulton Leadership Academy	62	45	98
International Charter Academy of Georgia	98	75	87
Ivy Prep Academy at Kirkwood	98	45	82
SAIL – School for Arts-Infused Learning	96	55	92
SLAM Academy	98	65	89
Southwest Georgia STEM	60	65	53

Note: Green numbers represent areas of meeting standards. Approaching standards is represented in yellow and not meeting standards in red.

Overall, state charter schools continue to struggle to meet financial expectations at higher rates when compared to academic and operational performance. In response, SCSC staff have strengthened the finance sessions offered at governance training and are exploring targeted financial services and guidance.

The following pages of this report includes a profile for each participating school. Findings related to each school's performance and staff recommendations for improvement are provided.

School Summaries

Brookhaven Innovation Academy (BIA)

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	98	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable
Finance	50	<p>The BIA financial CPF score showed the need for improvement in the areas of enrollment projections and maintaining an appropriate balance between assets and liabilities over time. Regarding enrollment projections, the BIA submission showed that the school uses an online lottery system to track confirmed enrollments and submits an "Intent to Continue Enrollment Form" to families in January of each year to assess continuing enrollment numbers. The BIA performance review submission did not indicate that the school had evaluated its procedures to determine the source of its challenges with enrollment projections. Further, the performance review submission did not indicate the extent to which its current efforts were continuing or newly implemented. Thus, BIA may need to conduct a more thorough review in this area and implement additional strategies to ensure accurate enrollment projections.</p> <p>With respect to balancing assets and liabilities, generally, BIA reported that its Finance Committee meets monthly to review and discuss the school's financial statements. Discrepancies are reported to the school's independent auditor. Further, the school revised several financial policies and provided staff training on the same. The document submission included meeting minutes from January, February, and March reflecting Finance Committee monthly reports.</p> <p>As it relates to the balance of assets and liabilities, evidence of the board's financial improvement plan is limited to policy revisions and staff training. It is unclear whether these revisions were specifically related to (and thus likely to address) the issue of balancing assets and liabilities.</p>	<p>As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which the school received no points).</p> <p>Additionally, Brookhaven will continue to participate in the SCSC's "red flag" monitoring. SCSC staff will review quarterly and YTD projected to actual as well as fund balance.</p>
Operations	74	<p>BIA's operation score showed need for improvement with regard to timely data collection submission and federal program compliance. The school's submission states that BIA has implemented a process of establishing in-house data collections deadlines to ensure the data is submitted to state authorities in a timely manner. BIA states that the school has been timely in submitting all data in the last 6 months.</p>	<p>The school is working with GaDOE Federal Programs Division to increase compliance in deficient areas. SCSC will continue to receive notice from GaDOE when a school is at risk of not submitting data by noted deadlines.</p>

Cirrus Charter Academy

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	62	Cirrus Charter Academy (CCA) did not meet academic standards for the third year in a row. However, the school did improve from previous years by outperforming their attendance zone on CCRPI Progress in the middle school grade band. After last year's low performance, SCSC staff required the school use its administrative withhold funds for professional development. The school has seen improvements in teacher capacity and student performance. The school has documentation of becoming more data-driven in its decisions.	SCSC staff encourages CCA to continue to contract with a quality professional development provider to build teacher capacity in the areas of literacy and differentiated instruction.
Finance	45	Cirrus struggles with substantial debt relative to its assets as well as cash flow. To better control its expenditures, CCA has implemented a number of procedures aimed at reducing supply costs and implementing controls to better manage purchasing processes. To address cash flow concerns, the school has increased its enrollment by nearly 100 students and received a number of grant awards. The CCA board has committed to fundraising to generate additional revenue.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which the school received no points). Additionally, Cirrus will continue to participate in the SCSC's "red flag" monitoring. SCSC staff will review quarterly and YTD projected to actual as well as fund balance
Operations	79	CCA's operations score showed need for improvement with regard to federal program compliance.	The school is working with GaDOE Federal Programs Division to increase compliance in deficient areas.

Cherokee Charter Academy

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	62	<p>Cherokee submitted governing board minutes; however, the level of detail regarding academic performance shared with the board remains unclear. Although the minutes specifically state that students were showing "growth", the level of improvement and whether the board fully understands the data being presented is unclear.</p> <p>SCSC staff remain concerned regarding governing board oversight as it relates to academic success.</p> <p>The school typically struggles to outperform the attendance zone in the elementary grades, but shows growth in middle grades.</p>	<p>As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will ask the school to explain the academic reports provided to the governing board. Appropriate guidance will be provided as needed.</p> <p>SCSC staff encourages the school to continue teacher professional development in the area of aligning curriculum to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and focus on</p>

			increasing student performance in the lower grades.
Finance	75	Enrollment variance is the school's biggest challenge. The school reports a new position will assist with family engagement and student enrollment; however, the specific impact of these changes on the school's enrollment variance is unknown.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information the school's financial improvement and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. in which it received no points).
Operations	98	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable

Fulton Leadership Academy

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	62	<p>Fulton Leadership Academy (FLA) did not meet SCSC academic standards, yet the school responded that it did in the initial submission of the survey. After follow-up, the school identified its academic struggles; however, the school's plan to remedy the issues lacks an adequate level of detail. SCSC staff remain concerned that school leadership has the capacity to make the necessary changes.</p> <p>FLA struggles to outperform its attendance zone in the high school grades. The school continues to struggle with teacher retention and student enrollment. A relatively low percentages of students persist/stay enrolled from year to year , specifically in the high school grades.</p>	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's academic improvement plan, specifically how school leadership will assess and track the quality and effectiveness of professional development.
Finance	45	<p>FLA struggled with a number of financial measures on the CPF. The school's submission revealed that the board is aware of these issues (e.g. overspending relative to budget) but did not identify a specific plan or remedy. The school anticipates having enough enrollment to offset costs, but it is unclear whether the school can maintain a surplus to eliminate a fund balance deficit.</p> <p>The school must find ways to cut costs and eliminate overspending; however, SCSC staff remain concerned that the financial position of the school is impacting the quality of the academic program.</p>	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which the school received no points).
Operations	98	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable

International Charter Academy of Georgia

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
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Academics	98	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable
Finance	75	Enrollment variance is the school's biggest challenge. Information submitted by the school indicated significant interventions and corrective action. These changes reduced the school's variance from 30% to 5% within one year.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which the school received no points).
Operations	87	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable

Ivy Preparatory Academy at Kirkwood

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	98	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable
Finance	45	With regard to CPF performance, Ivy specifically struggled with Enrollment Variance, Default and Debt-to-Asset ratio. The school's submission indicates that cash balance is increasing, and it is projecting a financial CPF score of 50, an improvement of 5 points but still not meeting standards. The school indicated plans to sell large amounts of property in July 2020, which may positively impact its financial position.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which the school received no points). Additionally, Ivy will continue to participate in the SCSC's "red flag" monitoring. SCSC staff will review quarterly and YTD projected to actual as well as fund balance.
Operations	82	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable

School for Arts-Infused Learning (SAIL)

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	96	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable
Finance	55	SAIL struggled with Debt-to-Income Ratio, Efficiency Margin and Debt-to-Asset ratio on the CPF. The school identifies facility financing as its main issue. The answers provided by the school as a response to the survey were somewhat cursory in nature; however, it does appear that SAIL has a plan to address the facility financing issue.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which it received no points).
Operations	92	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable

SLAM Academy

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	98	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable
Finance	65	SLAM's CPF results indicated struggles with Enrollment Variance and Unrestricted Days Cash. With regard to Unrestricted Days Cash, the school's submission yielded several positive indications: the Profit and Loss statement was positive for both the month of March and YTD and the budget submitted was balanced with a small surplus. However, the submission also indicated substantial departures in both revenue and expenses, which causes concern. With regard to enrollment variance, the school's enrollment plan considers a 20% no-show rate; however, it is unknown if this approach will yield a positive impact on enrollment variance.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which it received no points).
Operations	89	No findings, school met standards	Not applicable

Southwest Georgia STEM (SOWEGA)

CPF Section	CPF Score	Summary of Findings	Staff Recommendation for Next Steps:
Academics	60	Southwest Georgia STEM (SOWEGA) did not meet academic standards for the third year in a row. However, the school did improve from previous years by performing the same as their attendance zone on CCRPI Achievement. In the past, SOWEGA has struggled with board engagement. However, SOWEGA has a new school leader and board chair and provided documentation of becoming more data-driven in its decision making.	SCSC staff encourage school leadership to continue implementing professional development strategies to improve teacher capacity and student achievement. SCSC staff will monitor to ensure the board is appropriately engaged.
Finance	65	The SOWEGA financial CPF score showed deficiencies in ensuring that school spending was aligned with the budget. SOWEGA has engaged a law firm to assist with updating and implementing appropriate financial policies. In addition, the new School Leader worked closely with the governing board finance committee to develop the school's FY21 budget. The governing board will regularly review financial reports.	As part of 2020 on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will gather additional information on the school's financial improvement plan and alignment with CPF deficiencies (i.e. areas in which it received no points). Additionally, SOWEGA will continue to participate in the SCSC's "red flag" monitoring. SCSC staff will review monthly and YTD projected to actual as well as fund balance.
Operations	53	The SOWEGA operations CPF score showed a need for improvement in the areas of data collections and legal compliance. The SOWEGA school leader has	As part of on-site monitoring, SCSC staff will discuss with the school the need to develop an

		implemented a system for monitoring data submission deadlines from school departments to provide oversight in this area. Although the SOWEGA submission references engaging an attorney, it does not provide specific details on ensuring legal compliance.	operational compliance improvement plan.
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