



130 Trinity Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-802-2815

Mr. Allen Mueller
Senior Director, Office of Charter School Compliance
State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia
1356 Twin Towers East
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

August 19, 2025

Dear Mr. Mueller,

At its legislative meeting on August 11, 2025, the Atlanta Board of Education voted to deny the charter petition for Academy in Innovation in Medicine (AIM). The reasons for the denial are outlined below. AIM was given details about how to re-apply to Atlanta Public Schools (APS) if they are interested in doing so. AIM proposed a district-wide attendance zone to serve students in grades 6-12 within APS, therefore, please see below for a summary of academic performance for APS as a whole in those grade bands as well as existing school choice options for students zoned to APS.

Assessing Academic Performance of Existing APS Schools

- On 2025 Georgia Milestones EOG assessments for grades 6-8 in Math, 31% of APS students scored Proficient or Above, an increase of 8 percentage points since 2023.
- On 2025 Georgia Milestones EOG assessments for grades 6-8 in ELA, 36% of APS students scored Proficient or Above, an increase of 4 percentage points since 2023.
- On 2025 Winter/Spring administrations of the Georgia Milestones EOC assessments across all tested subjects for grades 9-12, 32% of APS students scored Proficient or Above, an increase of 7 percentage points since 2023.
- In 2024, the four-year graduation rate for APS students was 88.4%, an increase of 1.8 percentage points from 2023 and 3 percentage points higher than the Georgia average.

Existing Access to School Choice Options for APS Students

- 19 charter schools (13 of which serve grades 6-8 and/or 9-12) are currently available to APS students.
- Additionally, 13 APS schools serving grades 6-12 and 9 APS schools serving grades 9-12 are accepting general administrative transfers for out-of-zone students for the current school year.
- The Atlanta College and Career Academy (ACCA) is open to all APS high school students and currently offers several pathways proposed by AIM.

If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matt Underwood'.

Matt Underwood
Executive Director
Office of Charter + Partner Schools

CC: Dr. Kristy Beam, Founding School Leader, Academy for Innovation in Medicine
Mr. Eric Gonzalez, Proposed Board Chair, Academy for Innovation in Medicine

Although the Academy for Innovation in Medicine (AIM) petition demonstrated several positive attributes, APS's administration holds several concerns about AIM's capacity as well as the potential impact of AIM on district operations:

Overlap with Existing and/or Future APS Program Offerings:

- Within the Accelerated Career Diploma path, the offerings from AIM overlap with some existing CTAE pathways currently offered within APS in Allied Health, Patient Care, and Phlebotomy and may overlap with potential expanded Health Care Science pathways at Atlanta College and Career Academy.
- This potential duplication of specific pathways could impact both enrollment at AIM and/or the sustainability of APS program offerings.

Enrollment and Financial Sustainability:

- While the school generally demonstrated a solid plan for financial sustainability at full enrollment, if the school does not meet the enrollment targets in its proposed budget, several fixed costs (particularly related to facilities) could put the school in a challenging financial position in the first years of operation.

Special Education Staffing:

- The number of special education staff indicated in the school's organizational chart and budget would be on the low end of the required number of staff (or the school would need to attempt to secure contracted special education providers) to effectively implement a special education program. Additionally, given the need for content area certification as well as special education certification (which cannot be waived by charter schools), special education staffing projections for AIM's high school grades may be too low.

Impacts on School Enrollment on District-Run Schools and on District Budget:

- A significant number of APS school facilities continue to have less than 65% utilization based on student enrollment vs. facility capacity, including several middle and high schools. AIM's proposed total student enrollment of 870 students across grades 6-12 would likely negatively impact enrollment at already underutilized district-run schools.
- Connected to the enrollment concern, the creation of a new charter school in APS would obligate the district to certain financial supports for AIM. Given current constraints on the district's overall budget, investing in the creation of another charter school would not be the best use of APS's limited resources at this time.