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January 13, 2026

Georgia Discovery Academy Charter School
Ms. Kenisha Skaggs
Via email kskaggs@fellow.bes.org

Re: Charter School Petition – Georgia Discovery Academy (GDA)

Good afternoon, and I hope you are doing well.

As I am sure you are aware, the matter of the status of the Georgia Discovery Academy Charter School (“GDA”) came before the Richmond County Board of Education during the regular Board meeting on December 16, 2025. I reached out to you via email on December 19, 2025, regarding this decision, but I wanted to provide a formal written notification and to include some feedback on potential next steps.

At the Board meeting, a status summary and an update were provided to the Board, as well as several options for next steps. The recommendation was made to approve the deferred opening of the school for one year (from the 26-27 school year to the 27-28 SY) with support and oversight from the SCSC.

The Board had concerns, however, regarding changes in the charter school’s governing board and leadership, the existence of a relatively new governing board with the need for further training, as well as further need for evidence of the firewall between the SOAR private school and the public charter school. For these reasons and others, the Board voted to reverse the original approval of the charter school with the option for the charter school to reapply in this upcoming cycle (or any future cycle you may choose).

We wanted to reach out to you in order to provide this outline of the Board’s decision and to encourage you to reapply in this next charter cycle for local start-ups planning to open in 2027-2028. In your interview, you expressed a desire and willingness to delay the opening of Discovery Charter for one year in order to provide for more preparation and training, so we are hopeful that you will consider reapplying in the upcoming cycle with a revised petition.

In addition, if you did wish to submit the petition for this upcoming review cycle, we would be willing to grant you an extension of time to submit the revised petition. As you may know, S.B. 82 and the concomitant State Board Rule shifted certain charter school petition submission deadlines, which resulted in a deadline of January 1st for the petition submission to authorizers. Due to the unique circumstances surrounding this submission, the Charter Review Committee would be amenable to an extended deadline of **January 20, 2026**, (the first business day after the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday) for you to submit the petition. Due to the tight timelines of the upcoming petition cycle, as well as the unique posture of the current petition, we felt it appropriate to provide you an update so that you could consider potential options for the petition.

We wholeheartedly encourage you to reapply, which provides the opportunity to utilize portions of the existing prior petition which you feel are strong and to strengthen certain areas of the petition as may be needed or helpful for a successful resubmission. In other words, you could build on and modify, as needed, your existing petition to ensure that it reflects the growth and training you referenced in the recent interview.

During the interview in December 2025, you indicated that you and the governing board were already working on some of improvements and realignment, but in the event it is helpful to your team, we wanted to provide areas of potential growth for GDA's leadership to consider going forward and to potentially address in any resubmission of a petition:

- Evidence of a clear understanding of governing board norms and procedures
- Evidence of a clear understanding of roles of governing board versus role of school leader (e.g., accountability, conflict resolution, evaluations, day-to-day operations)
- Stable and well-functioning governing board, with members possessing a wide variety of areas of expertise (e.g., demonstration of knowledge of finances, human resources, laws impacting education such as IDEA) and plan for sustainability and retention of governing board members
- Plans for training for governing board members and school leadership (e.g., training sessions planned, training sessions attended, topics to be covered)
- Detailed information regarding how the current private SOAR Discovery Academy and the proposed charter public school would interact (if at all) and the extent of involvement by school leaders (e.g., roster of leadership positions for both, evidence of separate financial operations)
- Plans for talent development and retention (i.e., How does the school leadership plan to attract and retain highly qualified teachers?)
- Plans for professional development and training for school staff (e.g., curriculum, direct instruction, special education)

We commend you and your team for all of the hard work that was evident in the prior submission, and we look forward to working with you through the process should you decide to resubmit the petition for this upcoming cycle or in another future cycle. Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of assistance in any way.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to speaking with you sometime soon.

With kind regards,

Yours very truly,

Kim Fletcher Bowden