

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Staff Recommendation for the 2014 Petition Cycle August 27, 2014

School:	Brookhaven Innovation Academy
Attendance Zone:	Statewide Virtual with a brick-and-mortar location in DeKalb County
Grade Levels:	K-12
Staff Recommendation:	SCSC staff recommends that the petition for Brookhaven Innovation Academy be denied .

Rationale:

1. The petition presents components of a strong and innovative educational program; however, neither the petition nor the interview demonstrated a cohesive plan for a consistent educational program. For example, the school proposes to implement curriculum with an intensive focus on technology and the inclusion of foreign language in the core curriculum coupled with the use of many educational products, assessments, and local partnerships, but neither the petition nor the interview demonstrated a strategy for integrating all aspects of its educational model into an organized and interrelated educational model, particularly with the relationship between the school's brick-and-mortar campus and its virtual program.
2. The petition indicates that school's use of a virtual program bolsters its ability to offer blended learning and technology education, yet the interview indicated that conducting the virtual program is primarily to ensure financial viability for its brick-and-mortar program. This inconsistency is further evidence of the school's need to refine its educational model to ensure the school will present a cohesive and committed instruction once operational.
3. The petition indicates that the educational program would be conducted in accordance with applicable state and federal laws regarding students with disabilities and other educational needs, there is no detail as to how the educational program will meet those needs.
4. The proposed governance structure for the school does not provide clear oversight or decision making authority. While there is strong and significant support from the leadership of Brookhaven, there is not a clear understanding of the role of the governing board that oversees a charter school that operates as its own Local Education Agency (LEA). The governing board relies heavily on an independent consultant with the assistance of an advisory board, but it is not clear at this time that the governing board could effectively manage those relationships and exercise decision-making authority over school policy, direction, and finances.
5. The proposed school intends to rely heavily on community partnerships that are currently in varying degrees of formality. Most notably, the school is looking to be supported by and partnered with the

DeKalb County School District for various services; however, the extent of this partnership cannot be ascertained. Accordingly, it is difficult to accurately evaluate the proposed school plan.

6. The proposed school's attendance zone and enrollment priorities submitted in its petition are inconsistent with state law. While the governing board did provide clarifying information regarding its intent in the interview, it is difficult to adequately evaluate the need and viability of the attendance zone without a more meaningful connection between the school's brick-and-mortar campus and its virtual program.

**Link to Petition and
Related Materials:**

[Click here to view Brookhaven Innovation Academy](#)
