

Academic, Common Application Pitfalls & Interview Tips

State Charter Schools
Commission of Georgia



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Overview

- Academic Program – Things to Remember
- Application Tips & Pitfalls
- Interview Tips

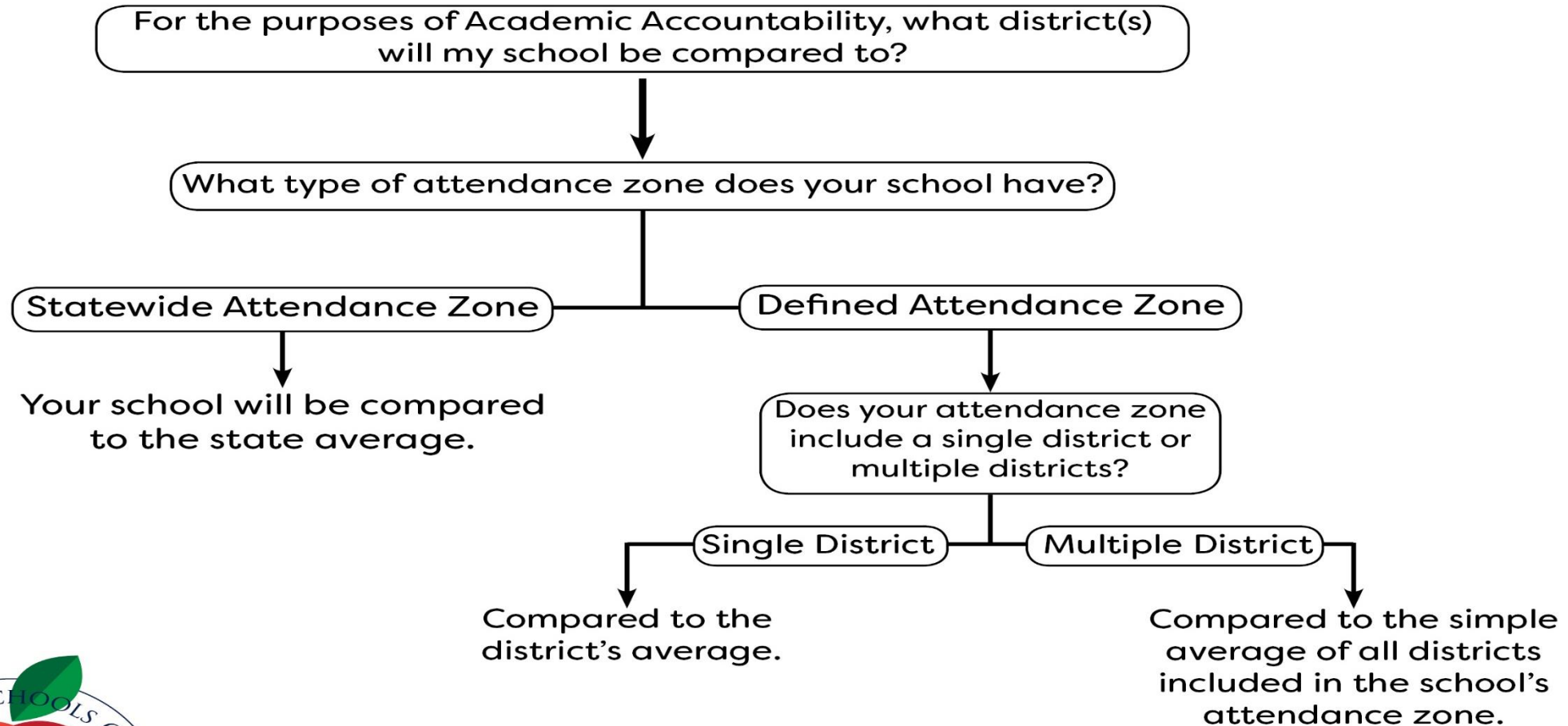
Academic Program – Things to Remember

Academic Program

- Your petition should provide an overview of your academic program.
- It is not necessary to include all details, but petitions should include enough detail to provide the reviewer with a good understanding of what the school will offer.
- Components: education model, instructional methods & educational practices, curriculum, standards, assessment.
- Understand the SCSC's Comprehensive Performance Framework and how the school will be measured academically.

Understanding the Implications of Your Attendance Zone for Accountability

To meet SCSC academic performance standards a state charter school must outperform its comparison district in all relevant grade bands on any one of the following measures: 1) CCRPI achievement score, 2) CCRPI progress score, 3) CCRPI single score, or 4) Value-Added score.



For more information about the State Charter School Commission's petition process, visit: www.scsc.georgia.gov.

Attendance Zone – Quiz Yourself!

- Scenario: Nice Charter School is a blended learning charter school with predominantly virtual instruction planning to locate and target students living in the Clayton County School District. However, in order to sustain high enrollment, the school would also like to enroll students from the surrounding districts of Henry County and Fulton County.
- CCRPI Scores:
 - Clayton – 64.2
 - Henry – 72.9
 - Fulton – 74.7
 - State of Georgia – 75.5
- Questions to Answer:
 - Based on the information available, what would be the best choice for an attendance zone? Why?
 - Based on the attendance zone selected, who should the school submit to?
 - Based on the attendance zone selected, who will the school be compared to for academic accountability?

Academic Program Components

- Education model
- Instructional Methods & Educational Practices
- Curriculum & Standards
- Assessment

Education Model

- The overall approach to teaching and learning in the charter school
- STEM, Arts-Infused, Dual Language, College Prep.
- Provide reasoning for the chosen model
 - Example: According to the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, STEM jobs are growing faster than non-STEM jobs at a rate of 17%, compared to 10%.
- Someone reviewing your petitions should have a good idea of what a school day would look like for a student in a particular grade at your charter school
- Description should be cohesive across elements of the program and concise, providing just enough detail to convince readers your plan is achievable.

Instructional Methods and Educational Practices

Instructional Methods: The “how to” in the delivery of lessons.

- Project-based, blended, differentiation, mastery learning

Educational Practices: the structuring of classrooms and school operations to support the academic program.

- Looping, multi-grade classrooms, year-round school calendar
- Provide researched reasoning behind the selected methods and features how it ties to the academic program model
 - Example: As Soltero describes in Chapter 6: Instructional Practices and Resources in her book, *Dual Language Teaching and Learning in Two Languages*, the most frequently used teaching strategies will include heterogeneous grouping; pattern language; predictable books; print-rich environments; preview/review; and a choice of literature that is translated in both languages as often as possible.
 - There is a word limit, hit the highlights, don't repeat the entire source text

Curriculum and Standards

Curriculum: The lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program

- Curricula can be developed in-house by teachers or administration or purchased from a vendor (or a combination of the two)
 - Examples: Singapore Math, Wit & Wisdom, Edgenuity & Compass
- Curricula for all courses should be determined before the time of the interview
 - Petition contents should clearly explain the school's vetting procedure and timeline for when curriculum decisions will be made if not solidified at time of submission
- Make sure it is aligned to state standards!
 - All curriculum providers will claim they are aligned!
 - Teachers and leaders often do curriculum mapping to ensure alignment.

Standard: Concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to know “how good is good enough.”

- Example: S4E1. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to compare and contrast the physical attributes of stars and planets.
- <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/default.aspx>

Assessment

- The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs in order to assess what students know in order to improve learning and development.
- Assessment plans should include information from *variety of sources* collected during *various points in time*, including but not limited to, benchmark assessments (ex. MAP, ITBS, etc.) and summative assessments (ex. Georgia Milestones).
 - Ensure alignment to state standards!
- State Charter Schools are not exempt from and cannot waive participation in mandatory state assessments.
 - Georgia Milestones, GKIDS, ACCESS for EL Learner, Georgia Alternative Assessment

Exercise

- Fill in the Curriculum, Instructional Method, and Assessment columns for the given Standard
- Example:

Standard	Curriculum	Instructional method	Assessment
MGSE6.G.1 Find area of right triangles, other triangles, quadrilaterals, and polygons by composing into rectangles or decomposing into triangles and other shapes; apply these techniques in the context of solving real-world and mathematical problems.	Singapore Math	Teacher instruction and demonstration Individual activity Group project	Teacher built rubric for project Singapore Math 6b Unit test MAP Growth Assessment (3 times a year) Georgia Milestones

Application Tips & Pitfalls

Process Pitfalls

■ DO NOT:

- Fail to submit your petition to the appropriate local board of education.
- Fail to submit a letter of intent or adhere to all other local requirements if you designate a defined attendance zone.
- Submit a petition to the SCSC that is not substantively the same petition you submitted to the local board of education.
- Submit a petition to the SCSC in a form other than that of FluidReview platform.
- Fail to use the required templates contained within FluidReview (e.g. the budget template).
- Attempt to submit revisions or additional documents after the submission deadline.

Content Pitfalls

■ Academic Plan

- Lack of integration and cohesiveness
- Failure to address unique aspects of a program

■ Capacity to Operate as an LEA

- Failure to sufficiently address this in its entirety

■ Governance

- Out-of-state governing board members are not allowed!
- Failure to sufficiently address conflicts of interest

■ Staffing

- Failure to sufficiently articulate how the school will meet staffing needs

Content Pitfalls

■ Finances

- Amortizing up-front expenditures without documentation
- Underestimated expenditures
- Budgeting to create an exorbitant surplus
- Incorrectly including external revenue without documentation

■ Partnerships

- Lack of written support for professed partnerships

■ Attendance Zone

- Lack of community support with a defined attendance zone.
- Lack of adequate rationale for a statewide attendance zone.

■ Facility Plan

- Lack of sufficient progress toward securing a facility.

Schools with Statewide Attendance Zones

- A charter school should not claim a statewide attendance zone to circumvent submitting its petition to the local board of education.
- The SCSC is committed to ensuring that state charter schools that designate a statewide attendance zone genuinely serve students from across the state or a large geographic area.
- SCSC staff will closely examine the petition of each school for demonstration of its capacity and infrastructure to serve students from across the state. Factors considered include:
 - Expected student enrollment across a large geographic area;
 - Marketing plans targeting the entire attendance zone;
 - Transportation strategies;
 - Governing board representation; and
 - A well-situated facility

Passing Legal and Substantive Review: Tips for Success

Petitioners should:

- Address all requested topics in your petition.
- Include all required appendices.
- Describe HOW you will implement your program.
- Describe HOW you will comply with applicable law.
- Avoid any implication that the school is religious or sectarian.
- Avoid the delegation of the responsibility of managing school operations to someone (or entity) other than the governing board.
- Avoid the expectation that personnel will work for free or substantially less than that provided by the LBOE.
- Address the concerns of the SCSC when submitting a subsequent petition

Interview Tips

Practical Interview Tips for Success

Make sure to:

- Use your time wisely.
- Answer the question asked.
- Allow all governing board members to participate.
- Demonstrate your capacity for implementation.
- Bring all necessary stakeholders.

Practical Interview Tips for Failure

You really shouldn't:

- Waste time on long introductions.
- Deliver prepared statements or presentations.
- Respond to questions by stating that the answer is in the petition.
- Allow your partners or EMO to dominate the discussion.
- Overly emphasize your passion while underemphasizing knowledge and expertise.
- Bring a huge contingency.

Interview Tips from the SCSC



Questions

