

**ALABAMA NEW CHARTER
SCHOOL APPLICATION
EVALUATION REPORT**

Covenant Academy of Mobile

February 7, 2022



Alabama Public Charter School Commission

**ALABAMA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
Spring 2022 Charter Application Evaluation
Executive Summary**

Covenant Academy of Mobile

Non-Profit Information			
Non-Profit:	Covenant Academy of Mobile	Education Service Provider (ESP)	NA
		Name (# of ESP schools)	NA
School Information			
School:	Covenant Academy of Mobile	Home District:	Mobile County
Grade Configuration at Start:	K-5	Districts Served:	Mobile County
Grade Configuration at Scale:	K-12	Year Opening:	2023-2024
Enrollment at Start:	270	Enrollment at Scale:	952
Proposal Summary			
<p>Academy Model: The school plans to gradually transition from starting as a K-5 provider and adding an additional grade each year, becoming a K-12 program by 2031.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the F.L.I.P.S. character education model, the schools offers to provide a positive and relevant learning environment that promotes engaging learning and prepares students for graduation and employment. Positive Action, an evidence-based intervention, has been chosen to establish a healthy school climate and culture and to promote positive student behavior. Student performance and graduation standards/requirements are clearly stated and in line with state standards. <p>Financial Model: The financial plan is strong, and the school has the resources to expand without relying on outside funding.</p> <p>Organizational Model: The school's organizational structure is well designed, allowing for growth and transition over time. School leadership, especially at the board level, includes a wide range of critical knowledge and experience, from strong financial management to extensive instructional experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting the first year of operation with grades K-5, the school will add a grade each year until it reaches K-12. Once funded, the school will appoint more members to the Board of Directors, hire the principal and personnel for the management team; and, if later recommended by the Board of Directors, it will hire a superintendent. 			
Statement of Assurances Included:			Yes
Potential conflicts of Interest Identified:			Yes



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Section	Points Possible	Points Awarded
Educational Program	107	87
Operations Plan	69	67
Financial Plan	20	15
Overall Alignment & Viability	15	10
Experienced Operators (If Applicable)	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	211	179
Link to Rubric	http://www.alchartercommission.com/media/qqzlnbkg/apcsc-application-rubric-6-2020.pdf	

Strengths of the Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has a comprehensive, sequential, and strategic operation plan that accommodates future growth and address potential challenges. For example, the organizational structure is well designed, the Governing Board is experienced and representative, the staffing plan is goal oriented and allows for transition and growth, professional development and performance management tools are intentional and creditable, the facilities are adequate and allow for expansion. • The applicant has a strong financial plan and adequate resources to sustain and expand its operation. • The applicant’s student standards and requirements for performance and graduation are clear and align with the state standards. • The desired school culture described as is Positive Action and its role in promoting the culture. • Clear and strong plan to meet the requirements for Special Populations and At-Risk students. • Detailed and extensive student conduct and discipline plans are included.
Areas Needing Further Attention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant needs to provide more details on what community it will serve, how it will transition from being a pre-school provider to a K-12 program, what specific and measurable goals it will target, and how the goals are connected to their mission and vision. • The applicant needs to fully develop their curriculum and instructional design plan to: show the evidence of effectiveness of the F.L.I.P.S. educational model and the Positive Action model, provide details on their instructional strategies and professional development, explain how their models and students’ cognition and skills will be evolved from K-5 and what faith, a component of the F.L.I.P.S. model, means in the context of a public school. • The applicant needs to further develop their recruitment and enrollment plan beyond drawing students from the families already enrolled or graduated from their pre-school program; applicant needs to identify the geography of their community and what kind of students will be recruited and how, providing evidence of engagement with the larger community. • The applicant needs to elaborate more on the expected outcomes that will stem from the culture it desires to instill.



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SECTION 1. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Category	Score	Evaluative Comments
Educational Program Overview	Fair (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section focuses too much on a general critique of the Mobile County Schools and too little on how applicant proposes to successfully move from being a pre-school provider to a successful K-12 program. • Where are the specific, measurable goals (3-5 per the rubric) stemming from the mission and vision statements? It is unclear if headings such as "Organizational Skills" are supposed to be goals or just guiding principles. • Applicant does not adequately describe the community they will serve, especially in regard to the diversity of the community and how they will recruit based on that diversity.
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Very Good (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The F.L.I.P.S. character education model is the foundation of the school operations, yet it is homegrown and no evidence of its effectiveness is offered. • No evidence of the effectiveness of the Positive Action model is provided in this section. • Details regarding instructional strategies and professional development are lacking. For example, the summary states "Marzano's researched based strategies will be implemented daily to meet the needs of all students regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, or gender." Marzano's researched based strategies will be implemented daily to meet the needs of all students regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, or gender." Yet, Marzano's strategies are not described in detail nor do they note where those strategies are later in the application. • More detail is needed on instructional professional development. It is not clear what specific PD is planned to help teachers master and integrate the F.L.I.P.S. model, Positive Action and Marzano's strategies. • Clearer discussion is needed regarding how the F.L.I.P.S. model, Positive Action and proposed instruction design elements (e.g., Literacy Rich Environment and STEAM) will be adapted/evolved from grades K-5. • Contingency plans are not provided that describe how the curriculum and instructional design will be modified or changed if needed as the program progresses.



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Student Performance Standards	Very Good (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student performance standards are clearly stated, including both standards for promoting students from one grade to the next, as are the school’s exit standards for graduations. • The source/rational for the chosen standards is clearly stated. • In this section, the connection is not explicitly made between the listed 8 core competencies and the strategies described. • Service learning for students is a performance requirement with specific hours; however, no justification for the hours listed is provided, nor does this section provide evidence about the effectiveness of service learning. • The applicant does not spell out how student performance standards are aligned with their program, mission, and vision. • The cultural responsiveness of the student performance standards is not articulated.
HS Graduation Requirements (HS Only)	Very Good (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section clearly describes most of the requirements listed in the rubric.
School Calendar and Schedule	Very Good (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although most elements of the rubric are covered, more detail is needed regarding the professional development calendar for employees (for example, “Excellence by Design” – the apparent overarching theme of the two-week PD session planned for all employees – is not described in any detail. • There is no clear discussion of how the proposed school calendar will be able to be adjusted due to factors such as inclement weather or other external factors such as the pandemic.
School Culture	Very Good (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The desired school culture is described as is the role of Positive Action in promoting school culture. • There is no description of the specific outcomes expected. • Uniforms will be required as part of promoting the school’s culture, however, no evidence is provided supporting the stated positive impact of uniforms.
Supplemental Programming	Very Good (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is vague, which the application acknowledges. The applicant argues that critical information for determining supplemental programming needs is currently unavailable. This will be addressed once the school is up and running. • This plan needs to address students’ emotional and behavioral health needs in more detail. • The application states that Shamika Battle-Packer will provide professional development in “Yoga Ed” and “Mindfulness” professional development. As she



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		is also listed as a school board member, creating the appearance of a potential conflict of interest. This needs to be checked with their legal counsel.
Special Populations and At-Risk Students	Excellent (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section clearly describes how they will meet the requirements as laid out in the rubric.
Student Recruitment & Enrollment	Very Good (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without a specific description of the diversity or specific geography of their community, the appropriateness of their recruitment and enrollment plan is difficult to assess. Need more clarity on the recruitment strategy. What kind of students will be recruited and how? There is insufficient discussion of how at-risk students are targeted or why those students and or their families would want to choose Covenant Academy over the existing public schools.
Student Discipline Policy & Plan	Very Good (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed and extensive student conduct and discipline plan have been developed. Applicant has not clearly articulated how these plans are culturally responsive.
Family & Community Involvement	Fair (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no evidence of engagement with the larger community (parents and other community members not already involved with Covenant Academy) beyond anecdotes. The small survey of parents of their pre-school programs (40+ respondents) mentioned later in the application also doesn't demonstrate engagement with the broader community.
Educational Program Capacity	Excellent (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant has assembled diverse and highly qualified leadership team with a range of skills, expertise and experience.

SECTION 2. OPERATIONS PLAN

Category	Score	Evaluative Comments
Organization Structure & Partnerships	Very Good (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organizational structure is well designed. The organizational structure is well planned and deliberate, allowing for succession and transition over time.
Governing Board	Excellent (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governing Board is appropriately credentialed and experienced. The constituent communities are well represented on the board. There is a balanced process for selection of Board of Directors members.
Staffing Plans	Excellent (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Staffing Plans are visionary, accommodating anticipating growth.



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plans are goal directed and oriented to succession and transition planning.
Professional Development	Excellent (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Professional Development plan is compatible with the AASB model. Flexibility is built into the plan in anticipation of challenges that are certain to arise in the future.
Performance Management	Excellent (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation tools for administrative needs were commendable. The evaluation tools for instructional needs were commendable. Potential conflict resolution was factored into performance management.
Facilities	Very Good (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities as described are adequate for the school's needs. The facilities plan accommodates potential growth and expanded programming. Financials demonstrate capacity for expanding facilities as needed.
Startup & Ongoing Operations	Excellent (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic planning is a strength. Flexible planning is also a strength.
Operations Capacity	Excellent (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development and evaluation processes are addressed. Performance management for staff and students are appropriately addressed. The operation plan is comprehensive, sequential, and designed to accommodate future growth as needed.

SECTION 3. FINANCIAL PLAN

Category	Score	Evaluative Comments
Financial Plan & Financial Management Capacity	Fair (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salaries are competitive and the budget includes potential incentives for high-demand instructors such as special education, math, and science teachers. Budget includes assumptions regarding revenue that are not reliable because, as noted in the budget justification, estimates of revenues from key sources are not yet available to the applicant.

SECTION 4. OVERALL ALIGNMENT AND VIABILITY

Category	Score	Evaluative Comments
Overall Alignment & Viability	Fair (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership team members appear well versed in the academic program.



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial concerns do exist due to the absence of key revenue projections; this is reflected in the provisions of two separate revenue models presented in the budgets.
Experienced Operators if Applicable		N/A

Conflict of Interest	Yes/No
The description of the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest does not exist or is lacking sufficient detail (Attachment 16): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Ethics Policy. Conflict of Interest Policy. 	No (Applicant has both Code of Ethics Policy and Conflict of Interest Policy)
The applicant has provided a signed, conflict of interest statement for every: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant team member Identified board member 	Yes
The applicant has provided a statement of Assurances agreeing to requirements should approval be granted.	Yes