

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

1. The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - Middle/Junior high schools
 - High schools
 - K-12 schools
- TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	28	34	62
K	21	18	39
1	24	28	52
2	29	29	58
3	21	26	47
4	28	28	56
5	29	37	66
6	47	25	72
7	43	37	80
8	49	37	86
9	39	44	83
10	43	37	80
11	49	28	77
12 or higher	38	49	87
Total Students	488	457	945

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: <01%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

n/a

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	956
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<01

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %
 Total number students who qualify: 15

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %
27 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>85</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>89</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>26</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	12
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	84
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	24
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 11:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2012	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	77
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Athens Academy seeks excellence with honor in the educational and personal experience of each student.

PART III – SUMMARY

Athens Academy is a coeducational, independent, college preparatory day school that offers a traditional liberal arts curriculum and innovative approaches to teaching and learning for approximately 950 students from Pre-K through 12th grade. Drawing from nineteen counties, Athens Academy has a reputation for academic excellence throughout the region. The school benefits not only from its picturesque 154-acre campus, but also from its proximity to the University of Georgia, with which it collaborates frequently. Since 1967, the school has sought students from diverse social, economic, religious, and racial backgrounds throughout northeast Georgia who can benefit from a challenging academic program. Athens Academy faculty and staff are dedicated, accomplished professionals who are keenly sensitive to the individual needs of students. The school shares with the family a concern for the intellectual, moral, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of the child.

All decisions are guided by the mission: “Athens Academy seeks excellence with honor in the educational and personal experience of each student.” To accomplish this mission, the school community uses the following ten operating principles:

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity to prepare students for college and life-long learning. Recognizes individual differences in learning styles and academic needs within the stated purpose of the school.

Is sensitive to the students’ emotional and physical wellness in and out of the classroom.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Is guided by the Judeo-Christian ethic and fosters respect for the heritage and beliefs of others.

Believes that personal integrity is essential to any achievement.

Expects students to assume increasing responsibility for their own educational development.

Encourages individuals to recognize the effects of choices and their consequences in the larger community.

Expects individuals to respect the dignity, property, and person of others.

THE COMMUNITY

Uses the founding principles of the United States to prepare students to become responsible citizens in our democratic society and to become responsible global citizens.

Engages with the community by sharing school resources and facilities and by participating in community, cultural, and service opportunities.

The school’s programs are based on four “pillars”: Academics, Fine Arts, Athletics, and Service and Leadership.

A challenging, college-preparatory curriculum equips students for college and life-long learning. In addition to innovative course offerings such as Evolutionary Genetics, Advanced Media Production, Robotics, Global Challenges, and The World Peace Game, there are a number of culminating activities that focus on curriculum integration: Rainforest Day in 4th grade, Zeus’ Birthday and Greek Olympics in 5th grade, The Peace Council (based on *The Outsiders*) in 6th grade, Coming to America (a simulated immigration experience) in 7th grade, and Model United Nations in 8th grade.

Athens Academy’s student body is diverse, not only in terms of racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, but also in the ways in which students learn. A Learning Resource Center supports students, families, and teachers with a range of services, including accommodations, modifications, academic tutoring, and specialized services for students with language-based learning disabilities. Teachers embrace this diversity and understand the importance of helping each student achieve success.

The visual and performing arts are another vital component of every student’s education at Athens Academy. The school cultivates an understanding and love of the arts by providing a positive environment in which students and teachers appreciate and explore the creative process. The comprehensive program

includes strings instruction during the day for all 2nd graders, and offerings in music education courses, band, chorus, orchestra, drama, painting, drawing, 3D design, photography, ceramics, and more.

There is a rich tradition of athletic participation and success at Athens Academy. The school offers twenty varsity team programs and seventeen junior varsity and eighteen middle school teams in twelve sports. In addition to being a three-time winner of the prestigious GHSA Class A Director's Cup, given annually to the top athletic program in the state, teams from Athens Academy have also won 50 state championships and over 200 region championships in the school's history. The physical education program has also been recognized at both the state and national levels.

The Service and Leadership program at Athens Academy encourages all students to develop social responsibility, empathy, and connection to their local and global community. A notable example is Service Day (now in its 19th year), when all students in grades 9-12 spend a school day engaged in community service projects throughout Athens. Younger students also participate in raising funds and collecting donations of food, clothing, and supplies throughout the year.

A commitment to continuous improvement and community involvement are apparent in the careful, steady progress the school has experienced throughout its history. As Athens Academy's programs and facilities grow, the heart of the school remains the same. More than fifty years later, the goal is still to prepare students to become successful, responsible, and involved citizens of the community, the country, and the world.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

While Athens Academy has four divisions--Preschool (K3, K4, Pre-first), Lower School (1st-4th), Middle School (5th-8th), and Upper School (9th-12th)--the curriculum is carefully coordinated within and across grades and divisions to ensure a continuous, age-appropriate scope and sequence. The school uses a curriculum mapping database to document the specific objectives, essential questions, skills, content, activities, assessments, and resources for each unit, course, and grade level. All teachers access this tool to understand the standards for a given grade level or subject, and to trace skills developed prior to or after that level. The maps enable curriculum leaders to analyze such things as the frequency of a particular skill, concept, or key word throughout the school. To execute the curricular goals outlined in the curriculum, teachers and administrators meet throughout the year as grade-level teams, departments, ad hoc committees, and school-wide vertical teams to coordinate and share resources.

English/ language arts instruction at Athens Academy is guided by a goal of helping students to become critical readers of fiction and nonfiction, and effective writers in a variety of modes of expression. Standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English strongly influence this approach. The Lucy Calkins writing program is integrated throughout grades 1-4, and the writer's workshop is a mainstay of the Middle School curriculum. Upper School offerings are patterned more after college courses and the writing comes most often in the form of literary analysis. Recently, English/language arts teachers have participated in a year-long Orton-Gillingham training to help students with language-based learning disabilities. The school has discovered that this approach to teaching spelling and reading also benefits those students without disabilities. The school has also developed a student writing center, schedules a double-period of language arts each day in 5th and 6th grades, and administers an annual writing assessment from grades 3-8. Examples of civic learning in English include students researching, discussing, and writing about issues of social justice, politics, and more in the classes, the student newspaper, and the literary magazine.

Mathematics at Athens Academy begins in the Preschool with Math Their Way and becomes Everyday Math in the Lower School. The math sequence in grades 5-12 (tracking begins in 7th) enables many students to reach AP Calculus (AB or BC). To serve the needs of accelerated students who complete Calculus before the senior year, a multi-variable calculus/linear algebra course is offered. Standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics inform many aspects of the program. Recently, math-related course offerings have increased to include AP Statistics, Algebra III, non-AP Calculus, and Algebra and Modeling.

Science at Athens Academy is designed to encourage exploration, discovery, and hands-on learning. Discovery centers and instructional gardens in Preschool and Lower School reinforce for students the importance of understanding our surroundings, asking questions, and conducting research. Science instruction is augmented by visits to the lab at least one time each week. In Middle School, students explore more formal science topics, but the emphasis on learning by doing is no less critical. Students analyze water samples from the lakes on campus, monitor plant growth in the instructional garden, or race solar cars as part of a scientific competition. In Upper School, students take core science courses in biology, chemistry, and physics, but they also have many elective options, including Evolutionary Genetics; Introduction to Engineering; and Science, Technology, and Society. In all science courses, students are encouraged to examine their impact on the world around them and seek solutions to problems facing our world.

Social studies at Athens Academy focuses on helping students, as the operating principle states, "to become responsible citizens in our democratic society and to become responsible global citizens." In Preschool, this manifests itself in students learning about their local community, state, and nation. In Lower and Middle School social studies classes, students engage in more sophisticated analysis of ancient civilizations and current world cultures. In Upper School, students complete core requirements such as World History and United States History but also take Global Challenges, World Religions, International Relations, and

Visions in Literature and Film. Extracurricular opportunities such as Model United Nations and Mock Trial encourage many students to understand and engage with social issues in our communities and throughout the world.

As a college-preparatory school, Athens Academy has been focused on college readiness for fifty years. A comprehensive, challenging curriculum forces students to capitalize on their strengths, identify and address weaknesses, and seek assistance whenever necessary. Students apply to a wide range of colleges and universities and are accepted to more than 75% of all schools to which they apply. Moreover, most complete their undergraduate studies in four years and pursue graduate work and/or fulfilling careers. Alumni feedback demonstrates that graduates were well prepared for college with strong study skills, time management, and the rigorous content they had at Athens Academy.

Athens Academy's Preschool focuses on the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development of each child. A typical Preschool day includes free play, show and tell, circle/calendar time, recess, art, snack time, etc. Integrated into this structure are age-appropriate periods of instruction and hands-on learning that include science, music, mathematics, handwriting, early literacy skills, and library time (consistent with NAEYC principles). Teams of teachers and administrators meet periodically to ensure a smooth transition to Lower School. Approximately 25% of most graduating classes have been at Athens Academy since Preschool. Much of their success can be attributed to foundational work done in these early years.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Athens Academy's other offerings are comprehensive and are designed to enhance students' understanding of the core academic subject areas as well as the world around them. In terms of the arts, every student in grades K3 through 4th grade performs in an annual grade-level play for fellow students, teachers, family, and friends. Fourth grade students even write the script for their performance. Students attend two music classes each week in K3 through 4th grade, one art class per week in pre-first, and two per week in grades 1-4. In second grade, all students play the violin or cello during the school day, and then have the option to continue with strings through their senior year. In Middle School, students have a choice of general music, string orchestra, chorus, band, art, drama, and video production that they attend every other day. They can also participate in the Middle School play in grades 7 and 8. In Upper School, arts offerings expand to include painting and drawing, studio art, chorus, band, jazz band, string orchestra, photography, 3D design, ceramics, videography, and a senior portfolio capstone course. Finally, the school's campus includes five art galleries so that students and teachers are continually reminded of the importance of the arts in our daily lives.

Physical wellness has been a primary focus of Athens Academy since its founding, and research about physical activity and cognitive acuity validate this commitment. Preschoolers benefit from daily recess and physical education periods, and Lower Schoolers all have two recess periods per day (in addition to three periods of PE each week). The physical education department recently completed its annual President's Challenge spring fitness testing for 2016, and over 500 Middle and Lower School students took part in the testing: 81% received National or Presidential recognition. The school has won accolades for such results over ten consecutive years, until that awards program was discontinued at the state level. A new strength and conditioning center was recently completed, and students use the facility for supervised workouts as early as 6:30 every morning, throughout the school day during free periods, and after school as well.

Athens Academy has a long-standing commitment to the study of world languages and the understanding of other cultures. Lower School students have a World Languages class twice a week and explore the vocabulary, essential phrases, culture, history, geography, traditions, cuisine, etc. of two or more countries or regions each school year. When they complete the 4th grade, they will have stamped their passport in eight to twelve countries while learning the basics of several different languages. In Middle School, students take Latin throughout the fifth grade year and into the sixth grade year (every other day). In 7th grade, students take four different quarters--Spanish, French, Latin, and a history of the English language--in order to help them decide which one they will pursue as a full-credit academic course in 8th grade and into Upper School. The Upper School World Languages program includes Spanish, French, and Latin, and students must complete at least the third level of a language in order to graduate. Athens Academy is in

compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

Students enjoy ample access to technology--interactive whiteboards, chromebooks, laptops, graphing calculators, 3D printers, drones--throughout the school. Lower Schoolers use computers in classroom carts, and Middle Schoolers have a 1:1 ratio to computers, with the machines staying at school in grades 5 and 6, and going home with students in grades 7 and 8. Upper School students have their own computers that they take home on a daily basis. Technology is integrated throughout the curriculum in meaningful and creative ways, from simulated case studies in science classes and coding and robotics; to webcasting and interactive, real-time feedback throughout the writing process.

Other noteworthy elements of the non-core curriculum include a focus on incorporating fundamental skills like public speaking, graphic design, coding, tinkering, and creative writing into the school day, thanks to a redesigned schedule. Students also take educational, overnight trips off campus every year, starting in 4th grade and continuing throughout Upper School. Destinations include Atlanta, Birmingham, Washington DC, Savannah, and the multi-state junior college trip.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Athens Academy's teachers and instruction support staff employ a broad range of pedagogical methods and strategies to maximize their students' opportunities to be successful learners and to achieve the school's mission of seeking "excellence with honor in the educational and personal experience of each student." Instructional strategies include explicit instruction, differentiated instruction, individual and small-group instruction, project-based learning, flipped classroom, service learning, and experiential/hands-on learning. With suggestions and support from specialists in the learning resource center and learning teams (all teachers in a grade, along with counselors, division directors, etc.) teachers are encouraged to examine the effectiveness of different instructional approaches on a regular basis. Whenever a student is not performing at his or her potential and/or grade level, the learning team develops a plan and works closely with the family and one another to monitor its impact of the student's performance thereafter. There is also a focus on helping students with very strong innate abilities to perform at an equally high level or beyond. This is most often accomplished through individualized instruction, alternative assessments, and providing students with an element of choice in what they learn and how they demonstrate that understanding.

Standardized assessments administered at Athens Academy include the Comprehensive Testing Program 4 (CTP4) by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) in grades 1-8. Each year, student performance data is collected shortly after the ERB tests and shared with teachers and administrators to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction as well as individual student and group progress in a range of areas. The data is also shared with the Education Committee of the Board of Trustees in an exhaustive annual report, during which academic administrators share the results and also discuss the strategies being developed to address areas of relative weakness or capitalize on instructional methods that are yielding stronger than expected results. Parents receive the results of ERB testing and are encouraged to meet individually with school leaders for discussions about the ways in which they can support their student's progress at home. While Athens Academy takes a systematic approach to the use of student performance data and engaging the necessary stakeholders in the process, the school stresses whenever possible that quantitative measures do not always provide a complete perspective on a student's overall academic development. When work ethic, effort, attitudes, and other qualitative assessments of student progress are taken into consideration, teachers, parents, and school leaders have an even more accurate picture of how a student is progressing.

Other tests used to gather data about each student's individual ability and/or achievement include the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (given during the admission process and again in 5th grade), Fountas and Pinnell assessments in Lower School, and traditional college-admissions related tests such as ACT, (P)SAT, and AP in the Upper School. While testing does not dictate the program, the results that Athens Academy gathers enable individual teachers, committees, and administrators to make important decisions regarding the pace and depth of curriculum, effectiveness of instruction, instructional groups, and much more.

Within individual classrooms, teachers are urged to provide alternative assessments and activities to enable students to demonstrate what they have learned in the most effective way(s). Athens Academy does its best

to eliminate the anxiety associated with standardized testing. In general, testing is viewed by the school community as a form of intrinsic motivation aimed at continuous individual and institutional improvement. This may be one factor--in addition to highly motivated students, teachers, and parents--that contributes to the school's success on a variety of nationally normed measures.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Athens Academy has a school climate characterized by high expectations, high achievement, and honorable behavior. It is an environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves or trying new things. It is an atmosphere in which it is cool to be successful in school, where working hard and studying hard are valued by all members of the community. Students have several sources of support--teachers, advisors, counselors, division directors, and coaches--who reinforce the culture of self-respect, respect for others, and the development of a strong work ethic. At the same time, this network of academic and personal support strives to help each student develop independence, responsibility for his/her own learning, awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses, and ability to advocate for him/herself when necessary.

The schedule and the curriculum themselves help to reinforce many of these traits and skills. Time in homeroom classes for individual and group discussions, Lower School lessons about digital citizenship, the Skills for Adolescence program in grades 5-8, the Upper School advisory and seminar programs all seek to foster social and emotional growth and an overall culture of positivity and support throughout the school.

Several programs have been established to support the faculty and staff as they help their students to develop their emotional and social maturity. For more than twenty years, the Pursuit of Excellence program has provided four faculty and staff members each year with an opportunity for personal development in any way they choose. Travel, publishing a book, mastering an instrument or a foreign language, and learning to skydive are just a few examples of what teachers have accomplished recently with this stipend. The school understands that supporting the faculty and staff in such a way fosters an environment in which they feel valued and appreciated. There has clearly been a “trickle down” effect to the students; not only are the faculty and staff modeling the concept of lifelong learning and self-improvement that they continually espouse to the students, but these new experiences inevitably result in more enriching instruction, resources, and activities in the classroom. Other programs focused on research and curriculum development for faculty have also helped to perpetuate a climate of collaboration, discovery, and respect. When the school gives the teachers the time and support to develop new and engaging approaches, units, or courses, these innovative efforts are far more likely to be successful and sustainable.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Athens Academy is an educational community where the students, the school, and the parents are partners. The school shares with the family concern for the intellectual, moral, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of each child. Parental support and involvement are essential to the success of each student as well as to each of the programs at Athens Academy. Representing the University of Georgia and the medical, legal, arts, and business communities, Athens Academy parents are active in all divisions of the school.

Athens Academy’s Parent Service Organization (PSO) is a dedicated group of parents who work with the school’s administration to enhance the quality of programs and academic life offered at Athens Academy. The PSO seeks to provide a structured program of support for volunteers to share their time and talent for the benefit of Athens Academy. Parents support the school by serving as volunteers in the media centers, on field trips, and with academic projects.

The Grade Representative program is another integral parent/school partnership at Athens Academy. Each grade is represented by two families selected by the administration. Additionally, each division is represented on the PSO Executive Board by one family. Grade representatives: serve as a sounding board and information channel for the school’s families; serve as a discussion group on substantive matters relating to the school and its students; seek to promote the school in the community; support the school’s efforts for growth and development; assist in organizing and sponsoring parent orientation and social functions; facilitate school-related social activities; and assist the school in organizing parent

communication.

Over 100 parents hold key positions of leadership in the school's volunteer organization as grade representatives and/or PSO chairs and co-chairs.

Community engagement has always been a top priority for Athens Academy. It is one of the school's ten operating principles, and it has been part of the school's strategic plans. Athens Academy contributes to the community by providing facilities for use by local non-profit organizations, hosting annual Special Olympics basketball tournaments and super-regional robotics tournaments, serving as a polling place for elections, opening presentations by visiting lecturers and performers to the entire community, and contributing to organizations in the area through student volunteer activities and fundraising. Overall, parents' investment of time, resources, and expertise, combined with the civic engagement emphasized throughout the program, enriches the community and each student's educational and personal experience.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is a top priority at Athens Academy. It is a focal point of the current and previous strategic plans, an annual requirement for all faculty and staff, and an area of considerable emphasis throughout the hiring and orientation processes. Sustaining a high quality educational program begins with a strong professional development program. Athens Academy understands that its teachers and staff members need and want to continue learning and developing their skills in order to fulfill the school's mission. Athens Academy encourages teachers and staff members each year to attend local, regional, and national conferences, workshops, and seminars in their respective fields. Whether exploring a new program or instructional strategy, visiting another school, taking a graduate course, or presenting at a conference, Athens Academy's faculty are continually engaged in professional development. Teachers also benefit from a variety of on-campus offerings, including guest lectures, workshops, and faculty development days.

It is important to note that Athens Academy's approach to professional development is aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the school. On average, faculty and staff members spend 4,000-5,000 hours outside the classroom working on professional growth. The Summer Curriculum Development Program provides opportunities for groups of teachers to continually evaluate and enhance their content and instruction. When properly aligned with the school's mission, operating principles, and strategic objectives, such collaboration promotes the sharing of ideas, demonstrates a commitment to thoughtful innovation, and results in meaningful, sustained discussions of the best approaches to teaching and learning. Summer is an ideal time for thorough curriculum development efforts within and across disciplines, grade levels, and divisions, and this program, now in its ninth year, has enriched the academic program significantly. Through the Pursuit of Excellence Program, Athens Academy seeks to recognize and honor faculty and staff members who strive to make the school a better place in which to learn and work. Recognizing that faculty members who have opportunities to develop personally will inevitably draw upon those experiences to enrich the educational and personal experiences of their students, the program promotes personal development among the faculty and staff. Four individuals are awarded this stipend each year, and Athens Academy believes that all employees will profit from the promotion of a better working and learning environment and a pursuit of excellence through innovation and creativity.

4. School Leadership:

Athens Academy's leadership structure clearly reflects its commitment to communication, collaboration, inclusivity, and transparency. The school is governed by an independent, self-sustaining Board of Trustees that acts as the guardian of the school's mission and establishes school policy. Athens Academy adheres to all NAIS principles of good practice and guidelines related to trustee training and procedures. The Board of Trustees empowers the Head of School with the supervision of all day-to-day school affairs and operations, including academics, athletics, discipline, and personnel matters. The Board is responsible for initiating, overseeing, and approving all strategic planning and is divided into four committees: Education, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Development.

The Head of School's leadership council (directors of Academic Affairs, Admission, Athletics, Development, Finance and Operations, Fine Arts, Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, and Upper

School) assists the Head in overseeing daily operations in each area of the school. Job descriptions for all positions convey the importance of continual interaction and communication among employees and divisions of the school.

In Athens Academy's fifteen-word mission statement, the operative words are “excellence,” “honor,” “academic,” “personal,” and “each.” Careful consideration is given to each of these elements of the mission when any decision is made or goal is determined. The school engages in the strategic planning every five years. The process begins with the review of the mission and operating principles and includes participation from stakeholders in every facet of the community we serve. The process culminates with a strategic planning document that serves as a “road map” for the next five years and beyond. The entire school community is encouraged to participate in the strategic planning process by serving on committees and subcommittees, attending public sessions, conducting research, and completing surveys. When overall objectives for teaching and learning are proposed by the Education Committee and adopted by the full Board of Trustees, the other committees— Buildings and Grounds, Finance, and Development—then determine how they can support and facilitate them in pursuit of the mission.

At the division or grade level, the personal and educational experience of each student is considered in every decision related to curriculum and instruction. All teachers and administrators participate in regular faculty meetings and professional development activities to discuss best practices, educational research, and new approaches to achieve and advance the mission and operating principles. Academic administrators collaborate continuously to ensure that the mission is always evident in all of the school's programs.

PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Unlike many organizations that perform at a high level, Athens Academy is unquestionably inefficient (by design) in its work with each student, each day. Put differently, students could be educated with fewer supports in place; however, the school's mission focuses on EACH student's educational and personal experience. To accomplish this goal, Athens Academy employs an array of strategies and structures. Middle and Upper School faculty teach an average of four classes per day so that they can have additional time to assist and interact with students outside the classroom. Small class sizes, coupled with teachers who have more time to focus on teaching and learning, provide unparalleled opportunities for learning. Moreover, each teacher serves as an advisor for 13-15 students, helping them address challenges and develop individual strengths. This close, continual interaction between teachers, students, and their families results in meaningful relationships that contribute to student achievement. One teacher succinctly states, "This environment requires me to be a student of my students."

Outside of the classroom, there are yet more support systems in place for students. Specially-trained guidance counselors in each division of the school support the emotional well being of students and parents through curriculum integration and individual support. Students with learning disabilities and/or those who struggle academically benefit from a Learning Resource Center that helps students and teachers with a range of support from accommodations to specialized remediation for language-based learning disabilities. Beginning in the 9th grade, college counselors help students and their families prepare for the college application process. After school, students (on average, more than 80% of students in grades 7-12 participate in extracurricular activities) have additional support from athletic coaches, club sponsors, drama coordinators, and more.

As the school helps students develop self-advocacy skills, Athens Academy is a place where ALL personnel are focused on the educational and personal well being of EACH student. A recent example demonstrates how supportive Athens Academy's community of learners can be. A student seeking assistance with his chemistry homework was found in the technology help desk working with a technician who understood his problem and took the time to teach it to him. As inefficient as it may be, the safe and nurturing environment is what Athens Academy feels is directly responsible for its students' ongoing academic success, their success at competitive colleges and universities throughout the country, and their success in their lives and careers beyond that.

PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

1. Non-public school association(s): Independent

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No

3. What is the educational cost per student? \$18147
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$6658

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 15%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 31%

PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math

Test: ACT

Grade: 12

Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Publisher: ACT

Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	26
Number of students tested	74
Percent of total students tested	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 3
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	311
Number of students tested	57
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 4
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	331
Number of students tested	55
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 5
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	344
Number of students tested	60
Percent of total students tested	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: One student (out of 61) did not complete the test due to an illness.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Math
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 7
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	356
Number of students tested	86
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: ACT
Publisher: ACT

Grade: 12
Scores are reported here as: Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	28
Number of students tested	74
Percent of total students tested	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 3
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	344
Number of students tested	57
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
Records Bureau

Grade: 4
**Scores are reported here
as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	353
Number of students tested	55
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES:

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 5
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	358
Number of students tested	60
Percent of total students tested	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: One student (out of 61) did not complete the test due to an illness.

REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Reading/ELA
Edition/Publication Year: N/A

Test: CTP 4
Publisher: Educational
 Records Bureau

Grade: 7
**Scores are reported here
 as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2016-2017
Testing month	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES	
Average Score	360
Number of students tested	86
Percent of total students tested	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
SUBGROUP SCORES	
1. Other 1	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
2. Other 2	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
3. Other 3	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

NOTES: