

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Kenan Sener  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Fulton Science Academy Private School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3035 Fanfare Way  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Alpharetta State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30009-2244

County Fulton

Telephone (678) 366-2555 Fax (678) 366-2333

Web site/URL http://www.fultonscienceacademy.org E-mail ksener@fultonscienceacademy.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* N/A N/A E-mail ksener@fultonscienceacademy.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Fulton Science Academy Tel. N/A

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Ayhan Korucu  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave .blank*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature 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.

1. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 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.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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

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Data should be provided for current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	4	14	18
K	14	24	38
1	26	26	52
2	25	27	52
3	29	34	63
4	29	34	63
5	49	31	80
6	46	39	85
7	39	43	82
8	39	26	65
9	23	18	41
10	22	12	34
11	15	18	33
12 or higher	19	11	30
<b>Total Students</b>	379	357	736

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 49 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 31 % White
  - 9 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 2%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	673
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Arabic, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Cantonese, French, Hebrew, Hindu, Igbo, Kiswahili, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %  
20 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 4 %

26 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism                   | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                 | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness           | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay      | <u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance    | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment       | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>14</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: 9

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	64
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 10:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%

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 2020.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	16
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.

To deliver an educational framework designed to achieve the highest academic results and instill enduring strength of character by leveraging innovation and STEAM curriculums for college preparedness and lifelong student success.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

We have a hybrid model this year, offering both online learning and campus learning. Families decide between online education and campus learning for each month. Our families appreciate the flexibility that comes with the hybrid model.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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FSAPS dedicates itself to serving and supporting the needs of its unique population of advanced and gifted students. Through the collaborative partnership of administration, faculty, parents, and students, we have created a nurturing, inclusive, and safe environment that allows continuous academic progression, personal discovery and shapes positive characters from the moment of enrollment.

Our school is located in Alpharetta, Georgia, a predominantly college educated middle-class suburb of Atlanta, bordering the cities of Roswell and Milton. The community in which we live has over 700 technology companies, and we leverage them as a professional resource. Nine years ago, FSAPS opened with a little over 100 students and has evolved into one of the fastest growing private schools in Georgia. We now serve 736 students in Pre-K through the 12th grade. At the time we began, we were located in a leased 40,000 sq. ft. converted warehouse facility with no green space and employed only 15 faculty members. Since those humble beginnings, FSAPS has grown and improved substantially. We now reside in a 102,000 sq. ft. brand new school facility built specifically to serve our needs and employ 86 faculty members.

In 2016, we were the Technology Association of Georgia's STEM Education Award recipient, and we have been voted the Best Private School in our area for two years in a row. One of our most recent accomplishments was receiving our school-wide STEM Certification. Notably, FSAPS ranks in the 97th to 99th percentile across all grades and subjects, as measured by the nationally normed NWEA MAP assessment. As further confirmation of our academic program's success, FSAPS students and teams have repeatedly represented Georgia at the state, national, and international levels in math, science, robotics, technological innovation, history, global relations, foreign language, and many other competitions. In 2018-19, FSAPS students represented Georgia in twelve national and international competitions. Our Science Olympiad team holds 24th place in the nation among over 7,000 teams.

In addition to core classes, we offer physical education, art, music, robotics, STEAM, and computer classes to our Pre-K through 8th grades, as well as many different secondary elective classes. Our program also includes daily foreign language classes beginning in Pre-K. We offer 75 individual sessions in 52 unique very rigorous courses at the high school level. A total of 90% of all HS courses offered are either AP or honors level with AP courses constituting 55% of all those offered. FSAPS also boasts 100% graduation and college acceptance rates.

The school boasts extra-curricular athletic and arts programs and provides a variety of after school clubs and academic teams that allow our students the opportunity to explore, expand, and more fully develop their own personal interests and pursuits. We have found that creating extra-curricular activities and opportunities for more in-depth study and practice with a social component reinforces students' academic lessons in a more meaningful and enjoyable way for better retention. A large majority of our students participate in academic teams and interest-based clubs.

FSAPS students work independently and collaboratively to answer complex questions and/or find solutions through research, data collection, observation, and problem solving. Accordingly, project/problem-based learning and the engineering design process are integral to our student learning methodology. Student projects and performance assessment products are regularly presented in classes and displayed in hallways.

Differentiation is another component of our instructional practices. Students are placed academically based on their abilities and knowledge, rather than their age. We use acceleration and progression to ensure that students' needs are met at the appropriate instructional level within each core subject area. As part of our comprehensive assessment policy, students can demonstrate their understanding of content in various targeted learning areas, including conceptual understanding, application of knowledge, process skills, and responsible for their own learning assignments.

Other resources and initiatives further enhance our program. Our daily 26-minute SEL classes help students to improve their social skills. We also provide daily College Prep Time for our secondary students. This is a

dedicated period for them to improve SAT skills, receive AP writing and course support, and participate in a study hall to assist them in completing their assignments. FSAPS faculty also enjoy daily 35-minute collaborative professional learning time sessions designed to equip them with the skills and resources necessary to prepare their weekly lesson plans and STEAM units.

All students are provided with one-to-one technology. Weekly computer and engineering courses enable our students to utilize technology naturally. Also, their acquired technological skills are applied throughout their coursework. Our technological investments in large classroom screens and high definition cameras have allowed us to successfully adopt a hybrid model during COVID-19, where teachers are able to interact with both on-campus and remote students at the same time seamlessly. FSAPS's program is designed for student success and continuous improvement.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

At FSAPS, the academic program has been developed to challenge and meet our advanced and creative student body's individualized needs. Students acquire the knowledge of a particular subject and the skills necessary to use that knowledge to solve complex problems. The curriculum focuses on developing and applying skills and knowledge as defined by the National Common Core Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, Georgia Standards of Excellence, and learning objectives unique to our students.

In elementary, students start the day with 85 minutes of reading and language arts classes. This extended period helps us to meet the needs of young students through differentiated activities. We utilize the Houghton-Mifflin-Harcourt Collections curriculum for middle and high school ELA instruction to help students develop the ability to analyze complex texts, determine evidence, reason critically, and communicate thoughtfully. Separately, FSAPS uses the WriteSource program to develop K-12 writing skills and create common writing expectations across all departments. This writing curriculum prepares students to master the writing process, key writing forms, Six Traits, grammar, usage, and mechanics. Our social studies department works closely with the language arts department to integrate these two disciplines throughout the year. Different than many other schools, our social studies classes are offered daily beginning at Pre-K to help our students make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. Our middle school and high school classes use two document-based questions (DBQ) project units each semester to build on students' curiosity and increase motivation and confidence through compelling and authentic questions.

FSAPS uses Math in Focus, from kindergarten through 8th grade, which emphasizes problem solving as the center of math learning, and concepts are taught with a concrete–pictorial–abstract learning progression through real-world, hands-on experiences. In high school, we move to Pearson curriculums and Georgia Tech Distance Math. We utilize various curriculums, hands-on labs conducted in our specialized laboratories, and teacher designed science modules for science instruction. Students in 6th through 12th grade participate in Science Fair, while elementary students work on semester-long grade level science projects.

During COVID-19, we installed Zoom Room systems with large TVs and high definition cameras. This setup created an interactive environment with audio and visuals to provide quality instruction. However, since about 60% of our students chose to attend their classes online, we have adjusted the curriculum, instruction, and assessments. For example, we have adjusted our labs to be virtual and take-home. PHET and Pivot are software sites that have been used extensively to create virtual lab experiences. In some cases, teachers had to film demos of the labs or send lab data to students; students then interpret and analyze the data. Collaboration within teams is an essential part of our daily instruction in math classes. We adjusted this using zoom breakout rooms to easily set students into homogeneous or diverse ability groups. We started using Google Docs more often during daily instruction, and students now turn in their individual work using Google Classroom. In Language Arts, teachers are now using more apps than previously (i.e., Jamboard). Assignments that previously were handwritten are now done on laptops and submitted to Google Classroom and Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. In social studies and history courses, we have found that using platforms like AP Classroom for student writing assignments provides a more streamlined and thorough method of giving students feedback and assistance with developing stronger analytical skills.

S.T.E.A.M. education is provided to all students to meet the growing demand for higher-level logic and reasoning skills. Starting in Pre-K, students participate in S.T.E.A.M. units and project-based learning activities. Differentiation is another major component of our instructional practices. Our students are placed academically based on their abilities and knowledge rather than their age. When needed, we use acceleration and progression to ensure that students' needs are met at the appropriate instructional level within each core subject area. Our students also enjoy one-to-one technology from kindergarten through high school with access to online versions of books and research databases of EBSCO and Galileo.

As part of our comprehensive assessment policy, students can demonstrate their understanding of content in  
NBRS 2021

a variety of targeted learning areas throughout the school year. These areas include conceptual understanding, application of knowledge, process skills, and responsible for their own learning assignments. Within the classroom, teachers use pre-assessments, formative, and summative assessments. Pre-assessments are used to determine instructional focus areas, formative assessments are used to monitor for student understanding, and summative assessments are used to determine concept mastery. Summative assessments may be written assessments, online tests, projects, and/or performance-based assessments. Lastly, for more objective data and to measure student growth, the nationally normed NWEA MAP assessment is administered three times each year.

**1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

Our goal is to promote academic excellence, instill 21st-century skills, develop confident leaders that can compete against others on a national and global level, and inspire our students to become positive contributors to society. Accordingly, we offer a rigorous curriculum with the goal that every student obtains the knowledge and skills necessary to reach their fullest potential. A large majority of our students receive either AP, honor, or dual enrollment classes.

Every day, there is a designated 26-minute College Prep Time for all students to support AP courses, college essay writing, employability skills, and SEL. We invite professional speakers from various industries to share their field expertise and outlook with students and the steps it took to reach this point of their career.

Each high school student must complete a minimum of 100 hours of community service as a graduation requirement. Service-learning opportunities are regularly promoted and coordinated at the school level. We utilize the x2VOL portal to track these efforts. Every semester, there is a professionalism event that promotes skills for college and career readiness. We regularly host career panels, college representatives, mock interviews, college exploration workshops, various seminars, and mentorship events.

Club time is built into the school day with many offerings to promote skills in areas like business, drama, and history, to name a few. We offer exclusive leadership groups, such as NHS, Beta, and Student Council, that require students to be elected, collaborate, organize, and execute tasks simulating workplace skills. Our academic and athletic teams offer another venue for students to showcase their leadership skills.

A weekly newsletter shares opportunities such as internships, academic programs, college fairs, and additional information. A student resource website is maintained to provide an electronic archive of opportunities. We have a 100% graduation rate and a 100% four-year college-bound rate.

**1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

The Pre-K program at Fulton Science Academy is an academically centered program set in a nurturing classroom environment. We utilize a rigorous early learning curriculum to develop foundational skills in core subject areas such as Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. We also focus on developing students in self-help skills to establish school readiness and help students excel socially and academically.

We use Georgia Pre-K standards and integrate Common Core kindergarten standards, preparing students for a seamless transition from our Pre-K program into elementary grades. Our early learners leave our Pre-K program reading, recognizing up to 30 sight words, and performing well on the MAP assessments taken in Kindergarten. We often find our re-enrolled students tend to perform higher compared to students enrolled from outside schools. Our Pre-K students have strong phonemic awareness and number concepts. To ensure that we meet each student's needs and that they have the opportunity to meet their full potential, we assess students throughout the year. Assessments include a series of benchmark tests incorporated within our curriculum, the ESGI assessment data tool, and additional assessments used in the classroom.

In response to COVID-19, we have provided our families with the option to join on-campus learning or participate virtually this school year. While many of our Pre-K students have chosen on-campus learning, we also have online learning students who join Zoom in real-time with their peers in the classroom.

Teachers teach using a hybrid format, teaching both sets of students simultaneously. While we have needed to adjust the spacing, seating arrangements, procedures, and the use of shared materials in the classroom, we have worked to maintain the hands-on learning experience necessary at this early age.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At FSAPS, all students take art, music, robotics, STEAM, computer, and physical education classes every week beginning in Pre-K. Starting in 5th grade, students select their music classes to continue with the band, orchestra, or general music education. To help students excel in learning to play their selected instrument, our music teachers offer a zero period every morning for extra practice purposes. Additionally, our drama players, band, and orchestra students perform twice a year for our community.

Students exhibit their art products in school hallways throughout the semester and take their whole portfolio home at the end of each semester. Some of our students work on art and music related STEAM projects to build on their artistic interests. Students have an opportunity to enter their work in competitions and exhibitions. Physical education contributes to a healthy body and mind. Other than weekly physical education classes, students also enjoy 30 minutes of recess every day to allow them a period to recharge. During hybrid learning, we have additional recess times for elementary students. We also offer basketball, swimming, cross country, golf, tennis, volleyball, badminton, wrestling, soccer, taekwondo, and fencing as part of our athletics program.

Foreign language is another area of strength. Beginning in Pre-K, all students take a foreign language course every day. Our foreign language department includes eight teachers offering foreign language studies on our students' varying ability levels. While we offer Spanish and Turkish at school, other languages such as Russian, Arabic, and German are offered virtually for interested students. Additionally, Chinese and French are offered during club time.

Beginning in Pre-K, students take one hour of both computer literacy and engineering/STEAM classes weekly. Some of our STEAM classes utilize specific modules from the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum. The commitment to these programs has resulted in our robotics teams representing Georgia in national and international robotics competitions for four consecutive years. We also offer numerous elective classes to students at the high school level, such as web design, AP research, AP seminar, art history, music theory, psychology, current issues, and drama.

We have adjusted these courses during COVID-19. For example, in physical education, we utilized materials such as ball shaped objects found around the house, video/recording technology, and other creative measures to engage students. In world language, our materials were already online, but we incorporated Zoom. This enabled students to see gestures and body/lip movements, which provided cultural references and a better understanding of the foreign language. In our music ensemble classes, online/hybrid learning has caused us to shift our focus from performing music to more holistic music education with more activities to create and respond to music. Students have been able to explore different music technology platforms and have learned individual music skills, resulting in more student-based learning. Robotics and automation classes used an online simulation web app to successfully implement our course objectives for each grade allowing self-paced learning, better time management, and acquisition of the latest technical skills.

## **3. Academic Supports:**

At FSAPS, we work to provide a well-rounded education for all of our students. Differentiation is a major component, allowing us to meet the needs of each student individually. Differentiation begins with class placements. We utilize various sets of data to appropriately place students in the course best suited to their particular skill set and needs regardless of age or grade level. Differentiation is also included in lesson planning with varied instructional approaches. Teachers provide differentiated lessons, allowing them to give support and/or enrichment when necessary at the classroom level. We also use small groups or one-on-one tutoring for a more individualized layer of differentiation.

We recognize that having a large population of advanced and gifted students brings a wide range of ability levels and learning styles. We work to provide support for all students and continually improve our instructional program. Our curriculum is reviewed annually and updated as needed to keep the instruction up to date with best practices, instructional strategies, and philosophies.

Our counseling department identifies students with individual needs and communicates with their respective teachers and parents to establish any necessary accommodations. In elementary, we use resources such as Eyewords for students showcasing difficulty with the English language. We also provide ESL support to our international students.

At the elementary level, teachers utilize small group instruction daily. These groups are oftentimes created using student ability grouping, allowing teachers to tailor the lesson to a particular small group. Teachers provide additional support, reinforcement, or enrichment opportunities. Outside of regular class times, elementary students are provided with small group and one-on-one tutoring sessions regularly. In middle school, students are placed in their Math, Language Arts, and World Language classes depending on their ability level. Students' class schedules can be updated during the academic year based on student progress and needs.

We utilize MAP testing scores and classroom performance to monitor student progress. Students are also provided with digital resources such as Study Island and Skills Navigator, which are tailored to their MAP assessment reports. These resources are individualized and provide reinforcement, introductions, or practice for content above grade level based on their assessment data.

In high school, a large majority of our students either take AP or honors classes to continue with a rigorous and challenging curriculum program. We use PSAT data, course averages, and teacher recommendations for course placement. Each student meets with their designated counselor to review course placements annually. ASCA recommends a school counselor ratio of 1:250, and we currently have 1:70 at the high school level. Our small student-teacher ratio of 10:1 allows us to provide this individualized attention. High school students have 26 minutes of College Prep Time daily, providing the opportunity to meet students at their individual level for academic and SEL needs. We also offer free after school tutoring in every subject. Additionally, our teachers organize before school tutoring sessions or weekend reinforcement studies. Finally, we also have a peer tutoring club run by our students.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

At FSAPS, our students' best interests are always at the heart of our decision-making process. Academically, we strive to provide an environment in which each student can be comfortable yet challenged. We accomplish this through flexibility of scheduling which enables our students to take different levels of classes in the core and elective subjects. For example, our students are placed in math classes based upon their appropriate learning level beginning as early as first grade. This ability allows us to provide the ideal level of challenge which engages and motivates our students to actively participate in their learning.

Our objective, although many of our students are choosing to join classes virtually while some choose on-campus learning, has remained the same: to provide consistent, quality instruction while striving to provide as many engaging opportunities as possible, so our students can stay connected, motivated, and valued during this unique time. Accordingly, we have adjusted our programs to engage all of our learners. For example, we now changed our home visits to virtual home visits and allowed online learners to join the same club as the campus learners through the Zoom Room system.

We include Social Emotional Learning objectives and standards throughout our curriculum to improve students' social skills and engagements. This is accomplished through daily SEL time using Caring School Community curriculum in which students are assigned to small groups and the utilization of the SEL standards in other courses. This SEL focus facilitates discussions and provides a space for students to express their ideas and practice these life skills in a collaborative and safe environment. To personalize this process, each student has yearly goals in academics or personal/social growth.

FSAPS also has a strong emphasis on academic teams, athletic teams, and clubs. Students improve their social and leadership skills by starting and running student-led clubs and actively serving in leadership organizations such as National Honor Society and Future Business Leaders of America. FSAPS students are provided with learning opportunities outside of the classroom through various in-house and off-campus field trips, project-based competitions, speaker series, and various school programs to extend the learning process. Students are also encouraged to get involved in the surrounding community by completing a number of required volunteer hours each semester. These additional inclusive activities, events, and initiatives provide further opportunities for community members and our students to interact with each other, thereby expanding the learning process beyond the traditional classroom experience.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

FSAPS has determined that transparency, communication, and offering meaningful opportunities for both students and families to be part of decision making are integral to the process of creating an engaged school community. We openly communicate challenges, seek feedback on possible changes, and look for ways to utilize parent expertise to enhance our school offerings.

COVID-19 changed the way we engage with our families. Therefore, this year we created a student parent engagement committee to find new ways to stay connected with our community. We now organize many of our events through Zoom. We noticed that more families could engage in our events as we made them available online. For example, we saw an increase in home visits after starting virtual home visits. Families also enjoy events such as "Mental Matters," a three-part family wellness series, song contest, and recognition ceremonies.

We work to effectively communicate in all forms of social media, weekly newsletters, and through our web site. Our weekly school newsletter reaches over 7,000 people in our community. However, our families especially love our emailed daily student academic summary update and our custom developed FSACConnect software that keeps parents apprised of everything from behavior to academics.

As a school, we strive to provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to become involved and invested in the learning process. Our Parent Support Organization has its own non-profit status with the mission to support our school. Our families actively serve FSAPS in many ways, from advisory roles to classroom volunteers, but most notably, they serve as academic team coaches. Approximately fifty percent of academic team coaches are parents. The amount of time, energy, and passion that they demonstrate is unparalleled. They bring their various degrees, work experience, and commitment to furthering our students' education to their coaching roles, and it shows in the incredible success and growth of our academic teams.

We leverage our post-secondary and business/industry partnerships through their engagement in school projects and activities. One example is that we have several Georgia Tech undergraduate students working with students on our Robotics and Future City academic teams. Other examples include robotics teams partnering with the Alpharetta Recycling Department on projects and our students working with the City of Roswell Rivers Alive initiative to enhance environmental science awareness. Together, we achieve better student outcomes. We have over 25 different community partners that work with us regularly throughout the year.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

We recognize that professional development is a key component of our continued success. At FSAPS, professional development efforts are designed based on annual Professional Development Needs Assessment and Individual Professional Development Goals. Consequently, we noticed that the faculty needed more time to collaborate and more exposure to best teaching practices. Accordingly, we incorporated daily 35-minute professional learning time. On Mondays, teachers receive training on various instructional strategies and best practices. On Tuesdays, we focus on instructional technology and STEAM. On Wednesdays, teachers meet for a staff meeting. On Thursdays, teachers work on vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum and interdisciplinary through Atlas Rubicon platform. Fridays are mainly used for SEL and AP course support discussions.

Our monthly and yearly professional development calendars are developed based on faculty and student needs. There is a seven-day pre-planning period each year, consisting of new staff orientation, review of policies, procedures, and practices, as well as updated training on assessment systems, safety measures, and data analysis. Weekly committees such as professional development and data analysis committees also serve as venues to help our faculty grow professionally. Finally, instructional coaching also takes place throughout the school year for professional development and instructional advancement.

To assist teachers with their individual professional development goals, the school offers a variety of opportunities, including allocating funds to all faculty members for specific professional development purposes, in-house training provided by selected faculty members and outside sources, incentives for completing specialized training, and opportunities to continue their formalized education through endorsement and master degree programs. As new teachers are on-boarded, we host additional gifted endorsement cohorts every two years to assist our newest teachers in obtaining their gifted endorsements.

Our teacher leaders and administrators annually attend national conferences to stay informed of the latest educational research and academic practices and view new tools and curriculums that have become available. Additionally, the leadership team receives partial or full tuition reimbursement for their leadership certificate training, master or doctoral degrees within policy guidelines.

In transition to the hybrid model, we noticed that teachers needed much more support for their well-being. Accordingly, we have created a teacher-wellness committee and organized regular appreciation and wellness events such as National Taco Day or Room Service Coffee to keep our teachers happy during this difficult time. We have also moved many of our training and meetings online to keep everyone safe.

### **4. School Leadership:**

FSAPS leadership is focused on constant improvement. While we celebrate our achievements, we also actively look for areas of opportunity to address so that we can consistently find better ways to serve our

community.

To keep our community safe during COVID-19, our leadership team created a hybrid model with a comprehensive plan shared on our website and a committee to oversee the plan. We have updated our communication plan and created teacher-wellness and student parent engagement committees knowing that it is much needed during this challenging time. Thanks to the success of our implementation, we have observed approximately a 10% increase in our enrollment this year.

The overarching leadership structure starts with the Board of Directors, which provides governance, financial, and academic oversight while managing risk and ensuring that the school is legally compliant. The Principal is the head of school leadership and responsible for managing its academic, business, and operational duties. The principal works with four assistant principals, business team members, academic administrative positions, counseling team, academic department chairs, and grade level chairs. Outside of actual leadership roles, the advisory committee, Mustang Support Organization, school improvement team, student council, and various need-based ad hoc committees play a role in the school's decision-making process.

School leadership takes a collaborative, inclusive, and thoughtful approach to decision-making where all voices are represented and valued. All the policies, practices, procedures, and decisions of FSAPS are looked at through a lens of how they will impact our students. To illustrate, the school's administrative team realized that our language arts curriculum was not providing the writing gains that they felt were necessary for students to reach their full potential. The Principal solicited feedback from the faculty, advisory committee, school improvement team, and parents about their thoughts, and they agreed with the administration's conclusions. An ad hoc committee of an assistant principal, language arts department chair, two grade level chairs, and a few language arts teachers was created to vet writing curriculums and make a recommendation to the Principal. The Principal then went to the Board of Directors to ask that a new writing curriculum be included in the budget and presented the reasoning, several options, and the committee's recommendations. As a result, the new writing curriculum was approved, purchased, and implemented, culminating in an increase in our students' writing skills competency.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

At FSAPS, we address students, families, and staff's diverse needs and backgrounds, which begins with supporting our staff members' continual learning. Through daily professional development sessions, staff members are supported through best practices and collaborative learning communities. A teacher wellness committee makes the celebration a priority among our staff. We build relationships with our families through home visits, where families and teachers develop a deeper understanding of each other's backgrounds. Academically, students are given the opportunity to be in advanced courses, meeting their individual educational needs. Teachers get to know students' unique needs through daily 26-minute social emotional learning sessions and continue to build equitable relationships throughout the year.

Equity, cultural awareness, and respect are components of our school's core values. Cultural awareness is addressed via faculty training, such as multiculturalism and implicit bias training. Teachers have opportunities to make suggestions to curriculum resources and seek to offer multiple forms of representation within their content areas. Teachers approach classroom curriculum and planning with the mindset that all students bring valuable opinions and perspectives. Our leadership team gathers feedback from staff and families before making decisions that impact our students.

Another integral component of our school's services and supports is addressing current events and social movements that directly impact our students, their families, and their communities. Specifically, we offer a current issues course to high school students; each week, one student

chooses a current event to research and leads a class discussion surrounding that event. Additionally, we host seminars to assist families with current challenges. For example, we are hosting “Mental Matters,” a three-part family wellness series to help students cope with anxiety amidst the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

We support students, staff, and families through a variety of methods. Each student is paired with an educational advocate, who helps them create and achieve individualized academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals. Teachers have designated tutoring days to provide additional support. To support families, we host informational meetings, such as our “Rising Freshman” transition night. Administrators have an open door policy so that families can work with administrators to address issues quickly. Our leadership team took a course on “Transformational Coaching,” equipping them with skills to support our teachers in their pursuit to serve all students equitably. Our varied approaches and practices have created a school culture that recognizes and prioritizes all stakeholders' needs.



## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Our team agreed that the addition of a daily 26 minutes session between first and second periods dedicated to social emotional learning and college preparation is the one practice that has most impacted our students' success both academically and socially.

For daily social emotional learning classes in kindergarten through eighth grade, we use the second edition of the Caring School Community, which is based on CASEL's social emotional learning framework and includes interactive daily 26-minute advisory lessons for students, one-on-one conferences, weekly class meetings, and occasional home connection activities. Our faculty collaboratively decided to name this social emotional learning program "IMPACT" (Intentionally Making Positive Actions Count Together) instead of "Caring School Community" to make the name more appealing to students. We have also integrated social emotional learning standards into all other courses using Atlas Rubicon unit planning and lesson preparation to support this daily class time. Our principal conducted a mixed evaluation study about our daily social emotional learning time as part of his doctorate dissertation and found a great need among students for daily SEL education related to interpersonal skills, self-management skills, social awareness, friendship, confidence, relieving stress, and building a caring community. One student said, "IMPACT helps us improve our social skills and teaches things like kindness, empathy, and respect."

In high school, we use this 26-minutes time for college preparation. Our College Prep Time includes support sessions for AP courses, SAT studies, college essay writing assistance, speakers, social emotional learning sessions, employability skills, and guidance sessions. Since all of our teachers are available during this time, we had the opportunity to individualize College Prep Time for our students. For example, while students who needed support with their AP courses received AP course support from their teachers, those who needed support with SAT are given that opportunity to improve their SAT scores. College preparation time continues to greatly impact the success of our college and career readiness efforts. As it stands, we have a 97% AP pass rate, 100% graduation rate, and 100% four-year college-bound rate. Our students regularly receive acceptance to some of the nation's top universities. Just this week, we learned that two students were accepted to Stanford University.

During the transition to our hybrid program, we made IMPACT and College Prep Time available for both on-campus and online learners just like our other classes, and it is working well based on the surveys.

## **PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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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?      \$12500  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$7000
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      4%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      4%

## PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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*Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)<sup>1</sup>. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.*

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup<sup>2</sup> in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments<sup>3</sup>).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

<sup>3</sup> Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)