



ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL

helping students learn to use their minds well

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School

Board Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 21, 2014 at 6:30 PM

Location

ANCS Governing Board Monthly Meeting

Notice of this meeting has been posted on the ANCS website and Facebook page and in the main office at each ANCS campus.

Agenda

| | Purpose | Presenter | Duration |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|----------|
| I. Opening Items | | | |
| A. Record Attendance and Guests | | Melissa McKay-Hagan | 2 |
| B. Call the Meeting to Order | | Grace Burley | 2 |
| C. Public Comment | | Grace Burley | 10 |
| D. Approve Minutes | Approve Minutes | Melissa McKay-Hagan | 3 |
| E. Principals Open Forum | | Lara Zelski | 5 |
| F. PTCA Report | | Grace Burley | 10 |
| II. FY14 Audit Presentation | | | |
| A. Presentation of FY14 Audit by Warren Averett, LLC | FYI | Mitch White | 15 |
| III. Fund Development | | | |
| A. Quarterly Performance Dashboard | Discuss | Matt Underwood | 15 |
| B. IB Task Force Update | Discuss | Cathey Goodgame | 10 |
| C. Spanish Staffing for 2015-16 SY - Preliminary Info | Discuss | Matt Underwood | 10 |
| IV. Educational Excellence | | | |
| A. ANCS Strategic Plan - 2014-2017 | Vote | Alice Jonsson | 10 |
| B. ANCS Policy Manual Update | FYI | Alice Jonsson | 5 |
| V. CEO Support And Eval | | | |
| A. Monthly Financial Statements | Discuss | Mitch White | 15 |
| B. ANCS Technology Plan - Final | Vote | Mitch White | 10 |
| C. Quarterly School Nutrition Program Report | Discuss | Kari Lovell | 10 |
| VI. Business & Operations | | | |
| A. Fund Development Monthly Update | FYI | Narin Hassan | 5 |
| VII. Board Governance | | | |

- A. Employee Hiring and Losses Report FYI Lia Santos 5
- B. Monthly Personnel Committee Update FYI Lia Santos 5

VIII. Other Business

- A. List of Upcoming Events FYI Grace Burley 2

IX. Closing Items

- A. Adjourn Meeting Vote Grace Burley 2
- B. Brief Meeting Reflection Discuss Grace Burley 5

Agenda Cover Sheets

Section: **I. Opening Items**
Item: F. PTCA Report
Purpose: FYI
Goal:
Submitted by: Melissa McKay-Hagan
Related Material: PTCA Report October 2014.docx

Section: **II. FY14 Audit Presentation**
Item: A. Presentation of FY14 Audit by Warren Averett, LLC
Purpose: FYI
Goal:
Submitted by: Matt Underwood
Related Material: ANCS 2014 Report without supps.pdf
Warren Averett audit presentation 2014.pptx

BACKGROUND:

Warren Averett conducted the required ANCS annual audit for FY14. The audit was submitted as required by law to the Georgia DOE and APS on October 1, 2014. These documents will be used in a presentation to the board by Cindy Ethridge from Warren Averett.

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Section: **III. Fund Development**
Item: A. Quarterly Performance Dashboard
Purpose: Discuss
Goal:
Submitted by: Matt Underwood
Related Material: 2014 Annual Report on ANCS Alumni.pdf
ANCS Performance Dashboard SY14-15_Oct.xlsx.pdf
Fall 2014 Standardized Assessment Report.pdf

BACKGROUND:

Quarterly Performance Dashboard along with two additional reports: (1) ANCS Alumni Report and (2) Fall 2014 Standardized Assessment Report

Section: **III. Fund Development**
Item: B. IB Task Force Update
Purpose: Discuss
Goal:
Submitted by: Cathey Goodgame
Related Material: IB Task Force update Oct_2014.pdf

BACKGROUND:

Regular update from the IB exploratory task force from chair Cathey Goodgame

Section: **III. Fund Development**
Item: C. Spanish Staffing for 2015-16 SY - Preliminary Info
Purpose: Discuss
Goal:
Submitted by: Matt Underwood
Related Material: Snow.Misconceptions.L2.Learning.pdf
Spansish program staffing FY16 - initial information.pdf

BACKGROUND:

Spanish program staffing for 2015-16 SY - preliminary information (also includes research review about age and second language instruction)

Section: **IV. Educational Excellence**
Item: A. ANCS Strategic Plan - 2014-2017
Purpose: Vote
Goal:
Submitted by: Matt Underwood
Related Material: ANCS Strategic Plan 2014 FINAL.pdf

BACKGROUND:

The strategic planning committee presents a final version of the ANCS Strategic Plan (2014-2017) for adoption. Once the plan is adopted, the committee will finalize a supplementary "Frequently Asked Questions" document to help define certain terms used within the plan and to provide references to background research supporting plan goals.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend to approve

Section: **IV. Educational Excellence**
Item: B. ANCS Policy Manual Update
Purpose: FYI
Goal:
Submitted by: Matt Underwood
Related Material: About The Manual Makers.pdf
Scope of Work Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School.pdf

BACKGROUND:

The work of finalizing update and publishing the ANCS Policy Manual began last year with the completion of board policies. We will engage with the Manual Makers to finish the task of updating and publishing remaining policies in Finance, Operations, Students & Families, and Personnel resulting in a complete set of board-approved policies that are easily accessible and updatable via a user-friendly platform on the ANCS website.

RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Section: **V. CEO Support And Eval**
Item: A. Monthly Financial Statements
Purpose: Discuss
Goal:
Submitted by:
Related Material: 10-21-14 Cash Balances Report.pdf
10-21-14 Finance Committee Report Monthly financials.pdf
September 2014 B&O Report.ppt

Section: **V. CEO Support And Eval**
Item: B. ANCS Technology Plan - Final
Purpose: Vote
Goal:
Submitted by:
Related Material:
FINAL VERSION FOR VOTE Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School Technology Plan
9-2-14.pdf

Section: **VI. Business & Operations**
Item: A. Fund Development Monthly Update
Purpose: FYI
Goal:
Submitted by:
Related Material: Fund development report Oct.ppt
Oct 2014 Report Only - Sep Donations.xlsx

Section: **VII. Board Governance**
Item: A. Employee Hiring and Losses Report
Purpose: FYI
Goal:
Submitted by: Lia Santos
Related Material: Employee hire report Oct 2014.pdf

BACKGROUND:
Employee Hire/Loss Report Oct 2014

RECOMMENDATION:
N/A

Section: **VII. Board Governance**
Item: B. Monthly Personnel Committee Update
Purpose: FYI
Goal:

Submitted by: Lia Santos

Related Material: 2014.10.14.Personnel Committee Report Oct 2014.pdf

BACKGROUND:

Monthly committee report

ANCS PTCA Board Report October 2014

Overview

We supported the school's Grant Parents and Special Friends Day at both campuses. This event is a wonderful opportunity for children to share their school with a loved one.

The PTCA has also brought the Fall Festival under its wing as an annual community event.

Challenges or Issues

We're continuing to work with Executive Director Underwood on ways to facilitate communication with parents to build collaboration and trust. We are excited about the "Data Night" in the works for the November General PTCA meeting.

We are continuing conversations with Athletic Director Hall about how we can work together to support athletics.

Monthly Highlights

- We received 8 requests for mini-grant funding and were able to fully or partially fund 7 of them. Look for a new irrigation hoses and a faucet to support the 2nd grade garden, a couple accordion chairs at the MC, a new book truck for the MC Media Center, an author visit for 3-5th grade, headset for one of the computer labs at the MC, and a compound microscope for 2nd grade all funded by the PTCA.
- The Executive Committee also approved \$2,000 for the purchase of document cameras and I-pads for the EC.
- Individual photos are now available to parents for ordering. Thirty percent of the proceeds go to the PTCA to continue supporting the school.

Upcoming PTCA Events

October 31: Principal's Coffee MC

November 11: PTCA General Meeting 6:30 Middle Campus and Dine Out at Tin Lizzys.

November 21: Third Friday Coffee EC

December 9: Dine out with Six Feet Under.

December 13: Barnes and Noble Shopping Day

**ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD
CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2014

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
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JUNE 30, 2014

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors
Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, Inc.
Atlanta, Georgia

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, Inc. (a Georgia not-for-profit organization) which comprise the statement of financial position as of June 30, 2014 and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, Inc. as of June 30, 2014, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Report on Summarized Comparative Information

We have previously audited Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, Inc.'s 2013 financial statements, and our report dated September 26, 2013 expressed an unmodified opinion on those audited financial statements. In our opinion, the summarized comparative information presented herein as of and for the year ended June 30, 2013, is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial statements from which it has been derived.

Warren Averett, LLC

Atlanta, Georgia
September 29, 2014

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
JUNE 30, 2014 AND 2013

| ASSETS | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| | 2014 | 2013 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash | \$ 844,592 | \$ 538,502 |
| Certificates of deposit | 431,301 | 416,656 |
| Receivable from Atlanta Public Schools-Title 1 | 71,641 | 5,441 |
| Grants receivable | 162,376 | 118,253 |
| Prepaid expenses | - | 7,357 |
| Total current assets | 1,509,910 | 1,086,209 |
| OTHER ASSETS | | |
| Reserve accounts | 536,219 | 91,250 |
| Loan closing costs, net | 14,889 | 5,476 |
| Property and equipment, net | 1,832,736 | 1,829,906 |
| Total other assets | 2,383,844 | 1,926,632 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$ 3,893,754 | \$ 3,012,841 |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | |
| | 2014 | 2013 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | \$ 686,366 | \$ 634,139 |
| Current portion of capital lease obligation | - | 849 |
| Current portion of notes payable | 34,093 | 29,089 |
| Total current liabilities | 720,459 | 664,077 |
| LONG TERM LIABILITIES | | |
| Notes payable, net of current portion | 1,440,907 | 1,162,424 |
| Total long term liabilities | 1,440,907 | 1,162,424 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 2,161,366 | 1,826,501 |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| Unrestricted | 1,732,388 | 1,158,390 |
| Temporarily restricted | - | 27,950 |
| Total net assets | 1,732,388 | 1,186,340 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | \$ 3,893,754 | \$ 3,012,841 |

See notes to financial statements.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2014
(with comparative totals for 2013)

| | 2014 | | | 2013 Total |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Total | |
| PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE | | | | |
| Atlanta Public School Funding | \$ 6,606,708 | \$ - | \$ 6,606,708 | \$ 5,373,905 |
| Contributions | 335,854 | - | 335,854 | 365,692 |
| Title I funding | 105,101 | - | 105,101 | 24,455 |
| Government grants | 352,128 | - | 352,128 | 608,878 |
| Other grants | 100,225 | - | 100,225 | - |
| In kind contributions | 8,995 | - | 8,995 | 18,364 |
| After school program | 245,897 | - | 245,897 | 216,747 |
| Student meal income | 140,279 | - | 140,279 | 151,231 |
| Other program income | 148,001 | - | 148,001 | 72,575 |
| Other income | 486,604 | - | 486,604 | 41,835 |
| Net assets released from restrictions | 27,950 | (27,950) | - | - |
| TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE | 8,557,742 | (27,950) | 8,529,792 | 6,873,682 |
| EXPENSES | | | | |
| Program services | | | | |
| Instructional expenses | 6,109,306 | - | 6,109,306 | 5,599,819 |
| Facilities expenses | 473,136 | - | 473,136 | 441,183 |
| Staff development expenses | 112,848 | - | 112,848 | 130,555 |
| Educational materials expenses | 196,559 | - | 196,559 | 222,984 |
| After school program expenses | 206,514 | - | 206,514 | 201,704 |
| Other program expenses | 343,610 | - | 343,610 | 217,936 |
| Supporting expenses | | | | |
| Fundraising expenses | 53,310 | - | 53,310 | 41,215 |
| General and administrative expenses | 488,461 | - | 488,461 | 483,179 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 7,983,744 | - | 7,983,744 | 7,338,575 |
| CHANGES IN NET ASSETS | 573,998 | (27,950) | 546,048 | (464,893) |
| NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR | 1,158,390 | 27,950 | 1,186,340 | 1,651,233 |
| NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR | \$ 1,732,388 | \$ - | \$ 1,732,388 | \$ 1,186,340 |

See notes to financial statements.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED JUNE 30, 2014 AND 2013

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Changes in net assets | \$ 546,048 | \$ (464,893) |
| Adjustments to reconcile changes in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities: | | |
| Depreciation and amortization | 172,369 | 185,363 |
| Income reinvested in certificates of deposit | (14,645) | (641) |
| Decrease in prepaid expenses | 7,357 | 58,257 |
| Increase in receivables | (110,323) | (76,204) |
| Decrease in deferred revenue | - | (38,528) |
| Increase (decrease) in accounts payable and accrued expenses | 52,227 | (42,333) |
| Net cash provided by (used in) by operating activities | 653,033 | (378,979) |
| CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Purchase of property and equipment | (169,723) | (22,393) |
| Net cash used in investing activities | (169,723) | (22,393) |
| CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES | | |
| Loan closing costs | (14,889) | - |
| Proceeds from borrowings | 310,000 | - |
| Payments into reserve accounts | (444,969) | (550) |
| Principal payments on note payable | (26,513) | (25,594) |
| Principal payments on capital lease obligation | (849) | (16,099) |
| Net cash used in financing activities | (177,220) | (42,243) |
| NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH | 306,090 | (443,615) |
| CASH AT BEGINNING OF YEAR | 538,502 | 982,117 |
| CASH AT END OF YEAR | \$ 844,592 | \$ 538,502 |
| SUPPLEMENTAL DISCLOSURES | | |
| Interest paid during the year | \$ 76,639 | \$ 79,112 |

See notes to financial statements.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

1. ORGANIZATION

Neighborhood Charter School, Inc. (NCS), a Georgia not-for-profit organization, was formed on November 20, 1998 to operate a charter elementary school in Grant Park to serve Grant Park, Ormewood Park and other in town areas of Atlanta, Georgia. Southeast Atlanta Charter Middle School, Inc. (ACMS), a Georgia not-for-profit corporation, was formed on June 20, 2003 to operate a charter middle school in Ormewood Park to serve Grant Park, Ormewood Park and other in-town areas of Atlanta, Georgia.

Effective May 19, 2011, the two schools merged and became Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, Inc. (the School). The School was granted a charter by the Board of Education of the City of Atlanta for the five-year term ending on June 30, 2016. The Charter permits the School to operate as a Charter School under the Atlanta Public School system, provided the School operates within the guidelines of the Charter and the applicable state and federal laws. Under the terms of the Charter, the School receives an allocation from the Atlanta Public Schools which is based on enrollment. The School's support comes primarily from state and local funding through the Atlanta Public Schools and from grants and contributions.

The mission of the School is to provide a learning environment for all students that demands high educational standards and high levels of parent/guardian involvement and responsibility.

Combined enrollment for the two campuses for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013 was 669 and 635 students, respectively.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of Accounting

The School prepares its financial statements in accordance with Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Accounting Standards Codification (ACS) 958-205, *Not-For-Profit Entities*. Under FASB ACS 958, the School reports information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. As of June 30, 2014 and 2013, the School did not have any permanently restricted net assets.

Contributions

Contributions are recognized when the donor makes a promise to give to the School that is, in substance, unconditional. Contributions that are restricted by the donor are reported as increases in unrestricted net assets if the restrictions expire in the fiscal year in which the contributions are recognized. All other donor-restricted contributions are reported as increases in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets depending on the nature of the restrictions. When a restriction expires, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets. During the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, the School did not receive any permanently restricted contributions.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES – CONTINUED

Contributed Services

Contributed services are recognized if the services received (a) create or enhance nonfinancial assets or (b) require specialized skills that are provided by individuals possessing those skills and would typically need to be purchased if not provided by donation. Contributed legal and accounting services during the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, totaled \$8,995 and \$18,364, respectively.

In addition, many individuals volunteer their time and perform a variety of tasks that assist in the School's activities. The School receives numerous volunteer hours each year that are not valued in the financial statements.

Revenue Recognition

Revenue from Atlanta Public Schools funding and revenue from program fees are recognized in the period the service is delivered. Revenue from reimbursement basis grants is recognized as related expenditures are made.

Cash

For the purpose of reporting cash flows, the School considers all demand notes and short-term investments with maturities of 90 days or less to be cash equivalents. The School maintains balances with the bank in excess of federally insured limits. Management believes the exposure to loss from such balances to be minimal.

Loan Closing Costs

Loan closing costs are amortized on a straight line basis over the life of the loan.

Fair Values of Financial Instruments

At June 30, 2014 and 2013, the carrying value of financial instruments such as cash, receivables, accounts payable and borrowings under notes payable approximated their fair values.

Property and Equipment

The School capitalizes all expenditures for property and equipment in excess of \$500. Property and equipment are recorded at cost or fair value, if donated. Leasehold improvements are amortized over the life of the lease. Other property and equipment are depreciated using straight line methods over their estimated useful lives as follows:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Building and building improvements | 40 years |
| Computer equipment and software | 5 years |
| Library books | 7 years |
| Other equipment, furniture and fixtures | 7 years |

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES – CONTINUED

Tax Status

The School is exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and is classified as an organization which is not a private foundation under Section 509(a) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. The School qualifies for the charitable contribution deduction.

Management does not believe there are any uncertain tax positions as defined by FASB ASC 740, *Income Taxes*. The School could be subject to income tax examinations for its U.S. federal tax filings for the current tax year and previous filings for years 2013, 2012, and 2011 still open under the statute of limitations.

Functional Allocation of Expenses

The costs of providing the various programs and other activities have been summarized on a functional basis in the statement of activities. Accordingly, certain indirect costs have been allocated among the programs and supporting services benefited.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

Events Occurring After Report Date

The School has evaluated events and transactions that occurred between June 30, 2014 and September 29, 2014, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued, for possible recognition or disclosure in the financial statements.

3. CONDITIONAL PROMISE TO GIVE

During 2014 the School received a \$260,330 grant that requires a financial match. The grant is to be used for the renovation of current facilities and development of new green construction. The School must fund \$1 for each \$1 of grant funds used on the project. Therefore, the grant is considered a conditional promise to give and grant revenue is recorded at 50% of qualifying project expenditures. For the year ended June 30, 2014 the School expended \$118,200 in total and recorded grant revenue of \$59,100. The remaining balance available on the grant, as of June 30, 2014, was \$201,200.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

4. PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Property and equipment as of June 30, 2014 and 2013, is composed of the following:

| | <u>2014</u> | <u>2013</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Buildings and building improvements | 1,255,143 | \$ 1,136,944 |
| Leasehold improvements | 1,094,727 | 1,091,027 |
| Computer equipment and software | 167,549 | 471,556 |
| Library books | 125,387 | 153,249 |
| Other equipment | 201,067 | 217,683 |
| Furniture and fixtures | 212,565 | 212,550 |
| Less accumulated depreciation | <u>(1,223,702)</u> | <u>(1,453,103)</u> |
| Net property and equipment | <u>\$ 1,832,736</u> | <u>\$ 1,829,906</u> |

Depreciation expense amounted to \$166,893 and \$179,885 for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, respectively.

5. NOTES PAYABLE AND LINE OF CREDIT

Note Payable – Building Purchase

During the year ended June 30, 2008, the School (middle school campus) purchased a building from the Atlanta Public Schools. The School financed the building purchase and cost of improvements with a \$1,300,000 loan. The note bore interest at a fixed rate of 6.41% and required monthly principal and interest installments of \$8,661 based on a 25 year amortization. The loan was secured by the building. The loan had an outstanding balance at June 30, 2013 of \$1,191,513 and was refinanced in June 2014.

Note Payable – Senior Loan

In June 2014, the School refinanced the above note with a \$1,165,000 loan bearing a 5.11% fixed interest rate. On the fifth anniversary of the closing date, the interest rate will be adjusted to the greater of 4.5% or the mid-market semi-annual swap rate for USD swap transactions with a 2 year maturity plus 3.35%. The note requires monthly principal and interest installments based on a 20 year amortization with a final payment of all unpaid principal and interest due on its July 2021 maturity date. The loan is subject to a prepayment premium. The outstanding balance at June 30, 2014 was \$1,165,000.

Note Payable – Junior Loan

The School also entered into a \$310,000 note payable to finance property improvements. This note is subordinate to the Senior Loan described above. The note bears interest of 3.85% per annum and requires monthly installments of principal and interest based on a 20 year amortization with a final payment of all unpaid principal and interest due on its July 2021 maturity date. The outstanding balance at June 30, 2014 was \$310,000. The loan was paid off in September 2014.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

5. NOTES PAYABLE AND LINE OF CREDIT- CONTINUED

Reserve Accounts

The original building purchase loan required a debt service reserve account. The Senior and Junior loans require that the School maintain a minimum balance of \$225,000 in the account providing additional collateral for the loans. The balance in the reserve account was \$226,219 and \$91,250 at June 30, 2014 and 2013, respectively.

The Senior and Junior loans also require the School to maintain a Capital Asset Account. All proceeds from the Junior loan (\$310,000) were required to be deposited into the account. Disbursements for property improvements shall be authorized by the lender. In addition, the School is required to make \$966 monthly deposits into the account to serve as an asset renewal reserve. Costs and expenses for asset replacement and renovation during the term of the loan require lender approval. The balance in the account was \$310,000 at June 30, 2014.

The Senior and Junior loans are secured by the building and improvements and require minimum liquidity and debt service coverage ratio as described in the loan documents. At June 30, 2014 the School was in compliance with these covenants.

Future maturities of the notes payable are as follows:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Year ending June 30: | |
| 2015 | \$ 34,093 |
| 2016 | 36,735 |
| 2017 | 38,657 |
| 2018 | 40,679 |
| 2019 | 42,807 |
| Thereafter | <u>1,282,029</u> |
| | <u><u>\$ 1,475,000</u></u> |

Line of Credit

As of June 30, 2013, the School had a \$450,000 unsecured bank line of credit that bore interest at prime plus 0.5%. The line expired in December 2013 and was not renewed. There was no outstanding balance as of June 30, 2013.

Total interest expense on all debt for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013 amounted to approximately \$76,000 and \$78,000, respectively

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

6. LOAN CLOSING COSTS

Loan closing costs consist of the following as of June 30:

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gross Carrying Amount | \$ 14,889 | \$ 36,289 |
| Accumulated Amortization | - | (30,813) |
| | \$ 14,889 | \$ 5,476 |

Amortization expense amounted to \$5,476 and \$5,478 for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, respectively.

7. OTHER INCOME

In August 2012 Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School and several other charter school boards filed a petition against the Atlanta Public Schools (APS), its board members and superintendent alleging that the manner in which APS is calculating funding for charter schools is in violation of state law and will result in the charter schools being underfunded. The dispute related to APS's allocation of a substantial unfunded pension liability. In December 2012 the petition was granted. APS filed an appeal with the Supreme Court of Georgia. The issues were briefed and oral argument was had in June 2013. On September 23, 2013 the Supreme Court of Georgia issued an opinion in favor of the charter schools.

During the year ended June 30, 2014 the School received \$415,169 from APS that was previously withheld from the School's APS funding for the year ended June 30, 2013. This amount is included in other income on the accompanying Statement of Activities for the year ended June 30, 2014.

8. LEASE COMMITMENTS

Operating Lease – Facility

The School (elementary campus) leases its building from the Atlanta Public Schools. The lease extends through August 31, 2016 unless the School loses its charter or Atlanta Public Schools needs the property in which case the lease requires sixty days notice to be given. The School is not responsible for payment of any rent, however is responsible for maintaining and repairing the property.

Operating Leases – Equipment

The School leases office equipment and a modular building unit under non-cancelable operating leases. Rent expense for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013 amounted to approximately \$9,000 and \$24,000, respectively. All leases expire in 2015 and the future minimum lease payments for the year ending June 30, 2015 is \$7,332.

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2014

8. LEASE COMMITMENTS – CONTINUED

Capital Lease

The School also leased computer equipment under a capital lease. The cost (\$279,319) and accumulated amortization (\$278,470) of equipment under capital lease are included in property and equipment in the accompanying financial statements as of June 30, 2013. The lease was paid off in the year ended June 30, 2014 and the equipment was disposed of. Amortization expense is included in depreciation expense on the accompanying statements of activities and cash flows.

9. RETIREMENT PLAN

The School participates in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia. Participation is available to all full-time public school employees as defined by the Plan. Participant employees contributed 6% of their annual salary for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013. The School contributed 12.28% and 11.41% of each participant's annual salary for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, respectively. Employer contributions totaled approximately \$521,000 and \$460,000 for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, respectively.

10. RESTRICTIONS ON NET ASSETS

Temporarily restricted assets consisted of the following as of June 30, 2013.

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Capital campaign | \$ 20,000 |
| Music program | 1,000 |
| Building improvements | <u>6,950</u> |
| | <u>\$ 27,950</u> |

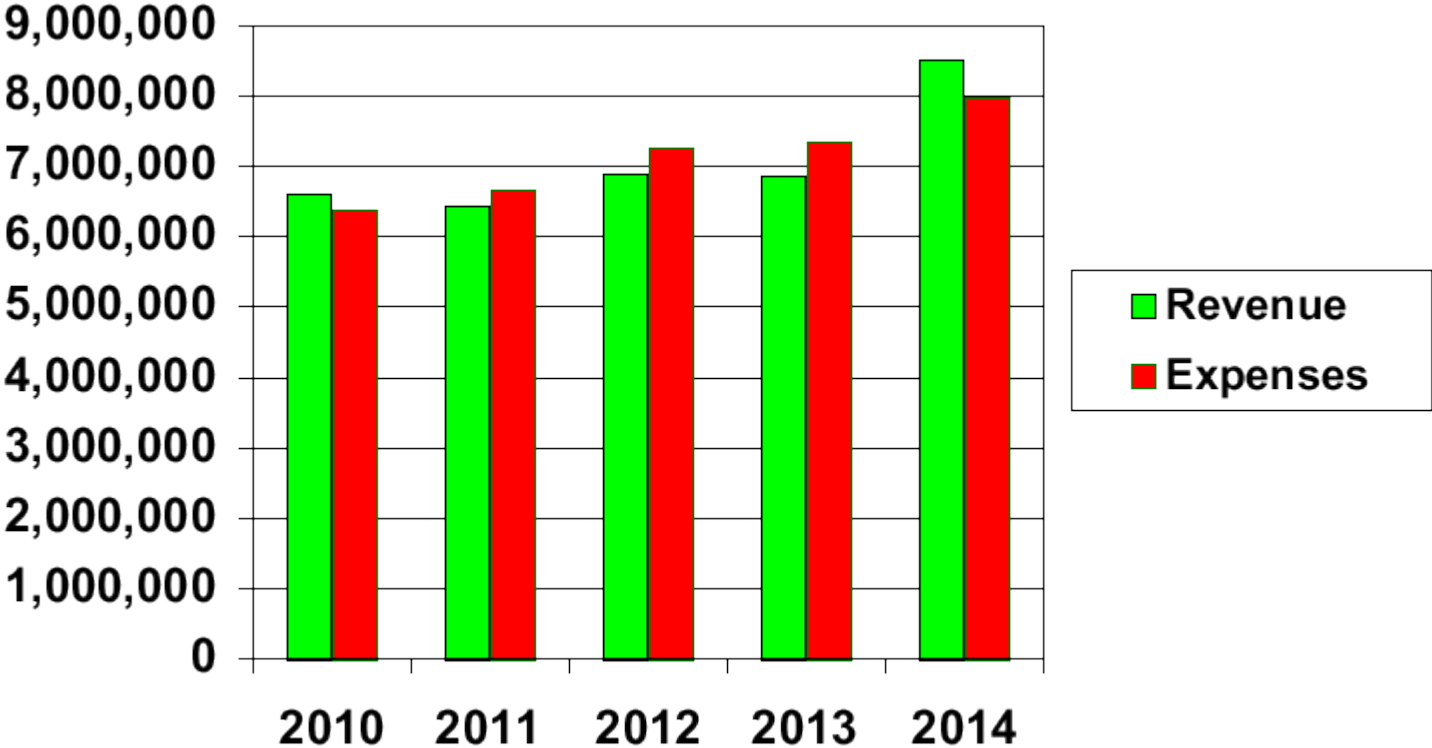
These restrictions were satisfied during the year ended June 30, 2014.

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School

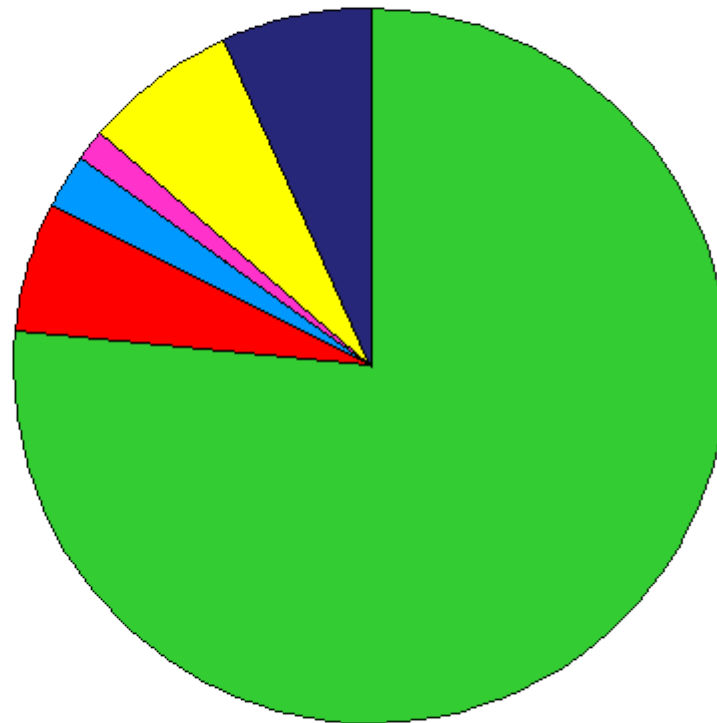
June 30, 2014

Board Meeting
October 21, 2014

ANCS Revenue and Expenses 2010 – 2014



ANCS 2014 Expenses



Instruction (77%)

Facilities (6%)

Materials (2%)

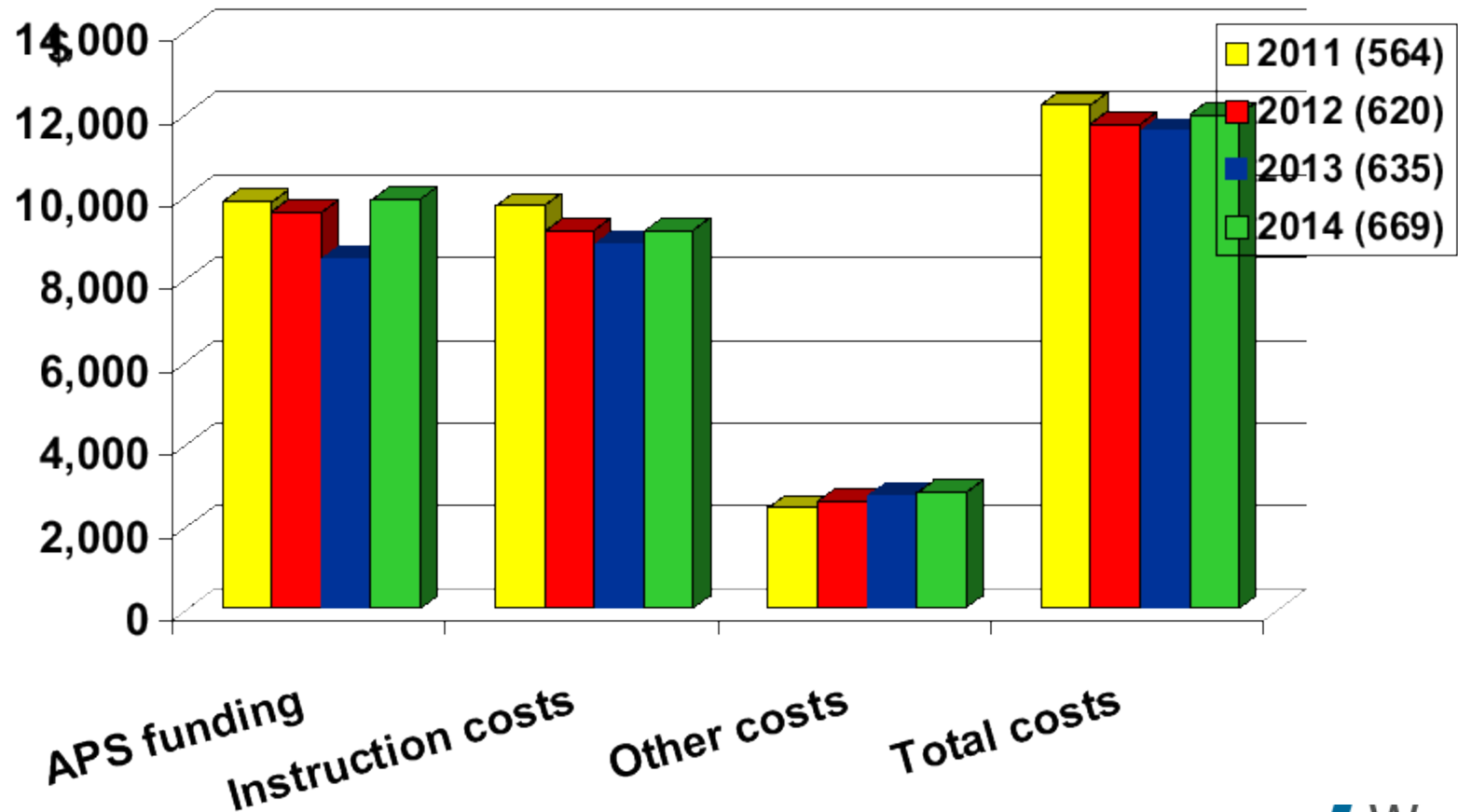
Staff dev (1%)

Other program (7%)

Support (7%)

ANCS

Per Student Funding / Costs



2014 Annual Report on ANCS Alumni



Class of 2013 – End of Course Test Performance

For the first time ever, we were able to secure comprehensive End of Course Test performance data for all of the most recent ANCS graduates who took an EOCT in the spring of 2014.

9th Grade Literature

- 97% of ANCS alumni met/exceeded (as compared to 78% of APS overall met/exceeded)
- If ANCS alumni were their own high school, the cohort would be ranked #2 out of 26 APS schools administering the test
- At Maynard Jackson High School (school with the highest number of ANCS alumni), 100% of ANCS alumni met/exceeded (as compared to 72% of MJHS overall met/exceeded)

Coordinate Algebra

- 47% of ANCS alumni met/exceeded (as compared to 28% of APS overall met/exceeded)
- If ANCS alumni were their own high school, the cohort would be ranked #5 out of 26 APS schools administering the test
- At Maynard Jackson High School (school with the highest number of ANCS alumni), 51% of ANCS alumni met/exceeded (as compared to 16% of MJHS overall met/exceeded)

Biology

- 81% of ANCS alumni met/exceeded (as compared to 61% of APS overall met/exceeded)
- If ANCS alumni were their own high school, the cohort would be ranked #4 out of 26 APS schools administering the test
- At Maynard Jackson High School (school with the highest number of ANCS alumni), 78% of ANCS alumni met/exceeded (as compared to 61% of MJHS overall met/exceeded)

All Classes – Survey Responses

Each year ANCS sends surveys to all alumni and their parents to gather information about their high school experience. The 2014 edition of this survey went out in July and August. A total of 40 parents and 18 students responded to the survey.

Alumni survey highlights:

- 60% of survey respondents attended ANCS for 5 or more years
- 76% of survey respondents attended a traditional public high school (APS or elsewhere) in 2013-14 SY
- 82% of survey respondents had a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher in 2013-14 SY
- 90% of survey respondents were enrolled in at least one honors or Advanced Placement course in 2013-14 SY
- 82% of survey respondents participated in at least one extracurricular activity in 2013-14 SY
- 90% of parent survey respondents and 89% of student survey respondents chose “very well” or “fairly well” to the question *“How well did ANCS prepare your student/you for high school?”*
- Of student survey respondents, the percentage of students choosing “excellent” or “good” to the question *“What was your experience with managing each of the following aspects of your 2013-14 school year?”*:
 - Academic content of classes: 89%
 - Teachers’ teaching styles: 89%
 - Amount of work for classes: 78%
 - Interactions with classmates: 83%
 - Size of school: 84%
 - Extracurricular activities: 89%

Monthly Overview

| ANCS Performance Dashboard | K-8 | | Elementary | | Middle | |
|---|------------|------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|
| 2014-15 SY | Aug | Sept | Aug | Sept | Aug | Sept |
| Student Academic Performance | | | | | | |
| Percentage of students meeting standards in each skill area | | | | | | |
| % of 5th grade students meeting ANCS standards in writing | | | | | | |
| % of 8th grade students meeting ANCS standards in writing | | | | | | |
| National norm referenced test - Reading (% of students showing NPR growth) | | | | | | |
| National norm referenced test - Math (% of students showing NPR growth) | | | | | | |
| National norm referenced test - Reading (average NPR) | 71 | | 73 | | 66 | |
| National norm referenced test - Math (average NPR) | 66 | | 73 | | 56 | |
| | | | | | | |
| School Climate & Culture | | | | | | |
| Level 3/4 behavior incidents | 3 | 11 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| % of students who feel safe at school (based on survey responses) | | | | | | |
| Mobility (% enrolled on day 1 who are currently enrolled) | 99% | 99% | 100% | 100% | 98% | 98% |
| Average Daily Student Attendance | 96% | 98% | 95% | 98% | 97% | 98% |
| | | | | | | |
| Stakeholder Satisfaction | | | | | | |
| Student Satisfaction | | | | | | |
| Parent Satisfaction | | | | | | |
| Staff Satisfaction | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Leadership & Organizational Performance | | | | | | |
| Employee evaluations (% of employees proficient/exemplary in formative evaluations) | | | | | | |
| Number of formative evaluations completed | | | | | | |
| Average Daily Faculty/Staff Attendance | 96% | 96% | 96% | 94% | 96% | 97% |
| | | | | | | |
| Financial & Operational Management | | | | | | |
| Annual campaign on track to financial goal | | | | | | |
| Annual campaign family participation % | | | | | | |
| Expense categories within budgeted amount | Yes | Yes | | | | |
| Positive net operating income | Yes | Yes | | | | |

Fall 2014 Standardized Assessment Report

This fall all students at ANCS were administered two standardized reading and math assessments:

1. **STAR:** Grade-level appropriate versions of reading and math tests administered via computer to all students K-8 at ANCS. STAR is the most widely used national benchmark assessment series. Results provided included scaled score (criterion-based) and national percentile rank (norm-referenced). On average, it takes a student about 30-45 minutes to complete each test.
2. **Scantron Performance Series Computer Adaptive Assessment (CAAS):** Grade-level appropriate versions of reading and math tests administered via computer to all students K-8 at ANCS and all Atlanta public schools (which means eventually comparative data will be available). Results provided included scaled score (criterion-based) and national percentile rank (norm-referenced). On average, it takes a student about 1-2 hours to complete each test.

READING

| Grade Level Cohort | % of Students Meeting/Exceeding (CRCT - Spring 2014) | % of Students "Above Benchmark" 40th NPR (STAR - Fall 2014) | % of Students at or above 50th NPR (CAAS - Fall 2014) |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| K | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 1 | N/A | N/A | 99 |
| 2 | N/A | 61 | 97 |
| 3 | N/A | 74 | 75 |
| 4 | 99 | 77 | 83 |
| 5 | 100 | 87 | 78 |
| 6 | 100 | 76 | 79 |
| 7 | 100 | 66 | 66 |
| 8 | 100 | 70 | 73 |

MATH

| Grade Level Cohort | % of Students Meeting/Exceeding (CRCT - Spring 2014) | % of Students "Above Benchmark" 40th NPR (STAR - Fall 2014) | % of Students at or above 50th NPR (CAAS - Fall 2014) |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| K | N/A | N/A | 100 |
| 1 | N/A | 72 | 97 |
| 2 | N/A | 76 | 76 |
| 3 | N/A | 75 | 75 |
| 4 | 87 | 82 | 74 |
| 5 | 100 | 90 | 75 |
| 6 | 100 | 82 | 70 |
| 7 | 88 | 80 | 62 |
| 8 | 96 | 77 | 55 |

The charts on the preceding page show a grade level by grade level cohort comparison of the following data points for both reading and math:

- Percentage of grade level cohort meeting/exceeding on spring 2014 CRCT
- Percentage of grade level cohort above 40th NPR benchmark (performing better than 40% of students who took same test at same time nationally) on fall 2014 STAR
- Percentage of grade level cohort above 50th NPR benchmark (performing better than 50% of students who took same test at same time nationally) on fall 2014 CAAS

Note: Test companies set benchmark thresholds.

IB Task Force Update

▶ Team members

- Cathey Goodgame, MC Principal
- Nickey Hardon, MC MST Teacher
- Alice Jonsson, Board Member and parent of ANCS 4th grader
- Lesley Michaels, 4–8 Instructional Coach
- Beth Wells, Parent of ANCS 4th and 7th graders and MJHS 9th graders
- Layne Wiggins, Guardian of ANCS 8th grader

▶ Meeting Frequency

- Semi-monthly beginning in September
- Goal is to have a recommendation to the board no later than January 2015

IB Task Force Update

▶ Major Questions (from Board Resolution)

- What would be the benefits to students of an IB programme while at ANCS?
- What would the costs – financial and otherwise – be?
- What – if anything – about the ANCS experience would change for students and/or teachers by becoming IB authorized?
- If ANCS were to become IB authorized, what are the advantages to ANCS students if they attend an IB programme in high school? If ANCS does not become IB authorized, would there be any disadvantages to students who go on to the IB programme at MJHS or elsewhere?
- If ANCS were to become IB authorized, would authorization be focused on the middle school grades at ANCS or should it also include the elementary school grades?

Related “big” questions to consider:

What would IB provide our students that they are not already experiencing?

Would the support and cohesion of the IB assist us in doing our work better than we can do it on our own?

IB Task Force Update

▶ Initial Process

- Use “Sample Application for Candidacy” to guide work with sections assigned to different members
 - Philosophy (Layne)
 - Organization (Nickey and Cathey)
 - Curriculum (Lesley)
 - Budget and other financial considerations (Alice and Beth)
- Find Areas of alignment and misalignment to determine level of fit

▶ Other opportunities

- Meeting with Cheryl Nahmias, Decatur High School IB Coordinator
- Site visit to Sutton Middle School (date TBD)

Three Misconceptions About Age and L2 Learning

**STEFKA H. MARINOVA-TODD,
D. BRADFORD MARSHALL, and CATHERINE E. SNOW**

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States

Age has often been considered a major, if not the primary, factor determining success in learning a second or foreign language. Children are generally considered capable of acquiring a new language rapidly and with little effort, whereas adults are believed to be doomed to failure. Although older learners are indeed less likely than young children to master an L2, a close examination of studies relating age to language acquisition reveals that age differences reflect differences in the situation of learning rather than in capacity to learn. They do not demonstrate any constraint on the possibility that adults can become highly proficient, even nativelike, speakers of L2s. Researchers, in other words, have often committed the same blunders as members of the general public: misinterpretation of the facts relating to speed of acquisition, misattribution of age differences in language abilities to neurobiological factors, and, most notably, a misemphasis on poor adult learners and an underemphasis on adults who master L2s to nativelike levels. By clarifying these misconceptions, we hope this article will lead to a better understanding of L2 learning and, in turn, better approaches to L2 teaching.

The term *critical period* for language acquisition refers to a period of time when learning a language is relatively easy and typically meets with a high degree of success. Once this period is over, at or before the onset of puberty, the average learner is less likely to achieve nativelike ability in the target language. It is generally accepted among psycholinguists that a critical period for L1 acquisition exists, but controversy arises when the critical period claim is extended to L2 learning. The existence of a critical period for second language acquisition (SLA) would have serious implications for foreign language teachers working with older students, not the least of which would be a need for a complete overhaul of expectations and methods of evaluation. If older students are biologically incapable of mastering another language to a

very high level, then they should not be graded in comparison to native speakers. As expectations are lowered, so too should teaching methodologies be modified to promote limited proficiency, allow for a greater number of errors, and avoid even broaching the unreachable goal of native fluency. Furthermore, if a critical period for L2 learning does exist, then schools should obviously introduce foreign languages earlier, and all states should introduce policies to accelerate the exposure to English of immigrant children, as California has done. Clearly, knowing the facts about the critical period for SLA is relevant to policy and to practice in education.

The purpose of this article is to analyze some common misconceptions about L2 learning by examining the relevant literature; it does not present a comprehensive review of critical period research.¹ We conclude from this analysis that older learners have the potential to learn L2s to a very high level and that introducing foreign languages to very young learners cannot be justified on grounds of biological readiness to learn languages. Rather than focusing on the low probability that adults will acquire fluency in L2s, we argue, it is more productive to examine the factors that typically lead to nativelike proficiency in L2s for any learner. Such an approach can also inform sensible decisions about the allocation of resources for foreign language or L2 teaching.

The idea of a critical period was first introduced by Penfield and Roberts (1959), who argued that language acquisition is most efficient before age 9, when “the human brain becomes . . . stiff and rigid” (p. 236). Later Lenneberg (1967) claimed that during this period of heightened plasticity, the human brain becomes lateralized. He argued that puberty represents a biological change associated with the firm localization of language-processing abilities in the left hemisphere. He also claimed that postpubertal language acquisition was far more difficult and far less successful than acquisition occurring during the prepubertal period of rapid neurological development. Krashen (1973), among others, challenged Lenneberg’s characterization by showing that brain lateralization may be completed by the age of 5. Lamendella (1977) argued that Lenneberg’s conclusion regarding the critical period was overstated and introduced the term *sensitive period* to emphasize that language acquisition might be more efficient during early childhood but was not impossible at later ages. Today, many researchers in the field use the two terms interchangeably, as we do throughout this article.²

¹ Attempts at a more or less comprehensive overview of the literature include, for example, McLaughlin (1984, 1985), Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), Harley and Wang (1997), and Birdsong (1999).

² When citing other people’s work, however, we preserve the term chosen by the original authors.

Case studies of several individuals who began to acquire an L1 late in life, and who were generally not very successful, are available. Most concern *wolf children*, children reared in isolation without any linguistic input (e.g., Genie in Curtiss, 1977) or congenitally deaf children whose hearing was improved with the help of hearing aids only after puberty (e.g., Chelsea in Curtiss, 1989). Such cases, though rare, demonstrate the effortfulness and poor outcomes associated with language learning in later childhood or adolescence as compared with its normal course in early childhood. Furthermore, most people can think of dozens of acquaintances who have attempted to learn an L2 after childhood, found it a challenging and frustrating task, and achieved only rather low proficiency. These two phenomena seem on first view to be quite similar and to converge to support the credibility of a critical period for language learning. It is thus not surprising that the notion of a critical period for L2 learning is widely taken for granted. We argue, though, that the cases of children deprived of an L1 and those of L2 learners who encounter obstacles to high-level achievement are entirely different and that the critical period that limits the learning of the first group is irrelevant to explaining the shortcomings of the second.

Neither researchers nor others can ignore the overwhelming evidence that adult L2 learners, on average, achieve lower levels of proficiency than younger L2 learners do. However, this evidence is not sufficient to conclude that a critical period for SLA exists; a careful reexamination of the arguments offered in support of the critical period hypothesis suggests that each of them is subject to one of three fallacies: misinterpretation, misattribution, and misemphasis. The person in the street will offer as support for the existence of the critical period the observation that children “pick languages up so quickly.” This claim, not accepted by researchers who have actually carried out age comparisons, represents a straightforward misinterpretation of the facts. Other researchers, especially those in the field of neurobiology, report differences in the brain organization of early and late L2 learners and then misattribute presumed language proficiency differences to these brain organizations, often without any direct measures of proficiency. Finally, another set of studies documents that some adults have poor L2 outcomes and then imply that no adults are capable of achieving nativelike proficiency, ignoring the existence of proficient adult learners. We argue that this body of work suffers from the fallacy of misemphasis. In this article we review studies on the critical period in SLA to analyze these misconceptions and to present an alternative view.

MISINTERPRETATION

Many people have misinterpreted the ultimate attainment of children in an L2 as proof that they learn quickly and easily. It is not uncommon for a teacher to hear adults lament how easy a new language would be “if only I had studied it when I was young.” A recent article in the news magazine *The Economist* typifies this misconception; the author claims in passing that bilingual children in English-only classes “can absorb the language within months” (“Ron Unz,” 1998, p. 32). Research shows, however, the exact opposite (see Table 1 for a brief review of relevant studies). Significant work in the 1970s (e.g., Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1977, 1978; and summarized in McLaughlin, 1984, 1985) focusing on learners in an L2 environment showed that older learners are generally faster and more efficient in the initial stages of L2 learning. These results are continually confirmed.³ Rivera (1998) found that, at early stages of phonological acquisition, adolescents performed better than children. Evaluations of French immersion programs in Canada show that English speakers receiving late immersion (L2 introduced in Grade 7 or 8) have performed as well as or better than children in early immersion programs (L2 introduced in kindergarten or Grade 1) (Genesee, 1987). Genesee argued that older students are more efficient L2 learners than younger students, and he speculated that more intensive L2 programs introduced at the secondary level may “offset any possible advantages associated with amount of exposure” (p. 61) to the L2. Finally, foreign language educators also widely recognize that the progress of young foreign language learners is considerably slower than that of language learners at the secondary level. Even researchers who argue that younger learners tend eventually to achieve greater proficiency have admitted that older learners initially acquire a new language more rapidly (Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979). These findings call into question the alleged advantages of younger learners in foreign language programs and demonstrate that older students can learn more than younger ones in the same period of time.

Another type of misinterpretation is epitomized by a widely cited study by Johnson and Newport (1989) that has been accepted as the best evidence in support of the critical period in L2 learning (Long, 1990). The study is based on the speculation that, once children master general problem solving, their ability to acquire new languages diminishes.

³ It is interesting to note that, in studies comparing the L1 acquisition rates of children with specific language impairment (SLI) and of their language-matched, normally developing counterparts (who are younger in chronological age), the older children with SLI showed higher rates of language acquisition despite their impairment (Nelson, Camarata, Welsh, Butkovsky, & Camarata, 1996).

TABLE 1
Summary of Studies Discussed Under “Misinterpretation”

| Study | Age of subjects | Major findings | Authors' interpretation of results as support for critical period hypothesis | Comments |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Johnson & Newport (1989) | Early arrival (before age 15); late arrival (after age 17) | Age on arrival correlated strongly and negatively with performance on L2 grammaticality judgment test. | Yes | Study used different scales to present results and did not emphasize adults who performed as well as the youngest subjects; early arrivals were too old. |
| Rivera (1998) | 10, 12, 17–18 | Adolescents did better than children in early stages of L2 phonological acquisition. | No | Subjects were learning L2 in formal instruction. |
| Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle (1977) (laboratory) | 5–31 | Oldest subjects performed the best, and youngest performed the worst on a pronunciation task. | No | Short-term study showed that older learners were faster at L2 learning than children. |
| Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle (1977) (naturalistic) | 3–60 | Young children had no immediate advantages in learning L2 pronunciation. | No | Study claims that adults are better than children on vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, but no data are given. |
| Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978) | 8–10, 12–15, adults | Adolescents were the fastest and achieved the highest proficiency in pronunciation, morphology, and syntax, followed by adults; youngest children performed worst. | No | Age differences were addressed only cross-sectionally. |

Johnson and Newport studied native speakers of Chinese and Korean who had first been exposed to English either before puberty (which they somewhat oddly place at 15 years) or after puberty (17 years or older). The subjects, who completed a grammaticality judgment test that assessed knowledge of various English grammatical rules, showed a decline with age in correctness of the judgments.

However, upon reexamination of Johnson and Newport's (1989) data, Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) found age-related effects for only some of the structures examined. Furthermore, when there were such effects, they concerned structures that are very different in English and in Chinese/Korean (e.g., determiners, plurals, and subcategorization of verbs). Bialystok and Hakuta recalculated the correlation between age on arrival and scores on the grammaticality judgment test and showed deterioration in subjects' proficiency only after age 20, much later than biological changes associated with puberty. Other studies have also shown that age effects in L2 learning continue well after a critical period is terminated by physiological changes in the brain or by puberty (Birdsong, 1992; Oyama, 1976).

MISATTRIBUTION

The field of SLA lacks a uniformly accepted theory of how L2s are acquired. As a result, some researchers have turned their attention toward neuroscience in the hope of finding new and more conclusive evidence based on which they could create more coherent theories of SLA (Danesi, 1994). Given the glamour of brain science and the seemingly concrete nature of neurophysiological studies, the conclusions have often been readily accepted by the public. However, neuroscientists have often committed an error of misattribution, assuming that differences in the location of two languages within the brain or in speed of processing account for differences in proficiency levels and explain the poorer performance of older learners (see Table 2).

For example, a recent, widely reported study (Kim, Relkin, Lee, & Hirsh, 1997) looked at the localization of languages learned at different ages, though it did not report data on the L2 proficiency of the bilingual subjects. The authors used functional magnetic resonance imaging, a procedure for scanning brain activity during specific tasks, with early and late bilingual subjects; the early bilinguals had first been exposed to the L2 during infancy, whereas the late bilinguals had had their first exposure during adulthood. Both age groups were given a sentence-generation task, which they performed silently while their brain activity was recorded. The results indicated that the late bilinguals had two distinct but adjacent centers of activation in Broca's area (the language

TABLE 2
Summary of Studies Discussed Under “Misattribution”

| Study | Age of subjects | Major findings | Authors' interpretation of results as support for critical period hypothesis | Comments |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Furtado & Webster (1991) | Adults who were bilingual before age 6 (early bilinguals); other bilingual adults (late bilinguals) | Early and late bilinguals showed similar lateralized interference patterns that were language specific, regardless of L2. | No | Effects of language were more important than those of age. |
| Kim et al. (1997) | Adults with first exposure to L2 in infancy; adults with first exposure in adulthood | Two separate areas were found in brain for production of L1 and L2. | Yes (unclear) | Early learners were too young; this implied that younger learners have better L2 pronunciation due to brain differences. |
| Weber-Fox & Neville (1992) | Adults | Native speakers and early L2 learners showed different brain patterns for processing function and content words, which were absent in older learners. | Yes | Brain processing was assumed to be responsible for different language performance. |
| Weber-Fox & Neville (1996) | Adults exposed to L2 at age 1–3, 4–6, 7–10, 11–13, or > 16 | When subjects detected semantic anomalies in L2, brain responses altered only for subjects who were first exposed to L2 after age 11. | Yes | Connection between different brain responses and L2 learning outcome is unclear. |
| Wuilemin & Richardson (1994) | 18–36 | Left-hemisphere advantage was found for processing words in languages learned before age 9; right-hemisphere advantages were found for languages learned after puberty; proficiency declined with age. | Yes | Study did not reveal relationship between L2 proficiency and brain lateralization. |

area of the brain responsible for speech production) corresponding to their L1 and L2, whereas in the brains of the early bilinguals there was no separation of the areas of activation associated with the two languages.⁴ The authors related their findings to work (e.g., Kuhl, 1994; Werker & Tees, 1984) showing that infants limit the phoneme distinctions they hear to those that are present in their environmental languages by about 1 year of age. In other words, they claimed, phonemes from two languages become permanently represented in the organization of Broca's area in the early bilinguals. They further argued that

it is possible that representations of languages in Broca's area that are developed by exposure early in life are not subsequently modified. This could necessitate the utilization of adjacent cortical areas for the L2 learned as an adult. (Kim et al., 1997, p. 173)

Although Kim et al.'s (1997) results are intriguing, they are in fact irrelevant to the possibility that adults can achieve nativelike proficiency in an L2. Nor do they incontrovertibly demonstrate age effects on brain organization. Perhaps adults who have in fact learned to make phonemic distinctions in the target language (which is entirely possible, with good training and sufficient exposure) show brain activation patterns equivalent to those of the early bilinguals, and the findings Kim et al. reported simply reflect the fact that the late bilinguals studied were less proficient in the target language than the early bilinguals (which, on average, is very likely). Snow (in press) argues in commenting on Kim et al.'s findings that "the real question about age differences in brain localization is whether it implies anything about behavior or about critical periods." At a bare minimum, Kim et al. should have looked at differences in late bilinguals' L2 proficiency as related to the differentiation of L1 and L2 brain activation patterns.

Other neurobiological studies have purported to provide evidence in support of the critical period hypothesis by showing that older learners process L2 information differently from younger learners. Weber-Fox and Neville (1992, 1996, 1999) have performed a series of experiments utilizing various brain-imaging techniques and different stimuli, and their results have consistently shown differences between younger and older learners in activation patterns and location of language processing. Weber-Fox and Neville demonstrated that when learners responded to semantic anomalies, their brain responses also varied as a function of age

⁴ On the other hand, in the late and early bilingual subjects, similar or identical cortical regions served both L1 and L2 within Wernicke's area (where speech perception occurs). That is, there was no separation of activity based on the age of language acquisition. This implies that even if there are differences, they concern only certain tasks (such as speech production) and not every aspect of using an L2.

at L2 learning, and the effect was most prominent in the older age group. When subjects were presented with sentences containing grammatical anomalies, the brain response typical of younger L2 learners was considerably altered in subjects who had first been exposed to L2 after the age of 11. Furthermore, the type of grammatical anomaly was related to the parameters of the age change, with the response to some grammatical anomalies suggesting that age 4 constituted the end of a sensitive period and the response to others suggesting age 11.

Like the results reported by Kim et al. (1997), those reported by Weber-Fox and Neville (1992, 1996, 1999) fail to relate differences in brain activation patterns to differences in target language proficiency and thus are essentially irrelevant to any claim concerning a critical period. All of these studies are subject to two possible misattributions. First, there is no strong evidence that the localization of the processing of any of the experimental tasks in a particular part of the brain was associated with better processing; it is entirely possible that adult and child learners localize their learning differently without showing different levels of learning, or alternately show similar localization but different learning outcomes. The different patterns of language processing in adult brains reported by Weber-Fox and Neville (1996) might simply mean that adults are better able to attend to grammatical anomalies than are children, who may not even be aware that the sentences are ungrammatical. Confirming this view, Wulfeind and Richardson (1994) have shown that the different localization of L1 and L2 cannot account for poorer knowledge of one of the languages. Wulfeind and Richardson examined the relation between degree of lateralization of the two languages in bilinguals' brains and their L2 proficiency. Their subjects learned English at various ages, from early childhood through the end of adolescence. The results showed that the younger learners displayed a significant left hemisphere advantage for processing words in the L1 and L2, whereas in older learners there was an increase of right hemisphere involvement in the processing of second or subsequent languages. However, there was no relationship between proficiency in the L2 and right hemisphere involvement. Another study (Furtado & Webster, 1991) compared subjects who were first exposed to their L2 before age 6 with those exposed to it after that age. When asked to read and translate a list of words from their L1 into their L2 while they were tapping with their fingers, both groups showed similarly lateralized, language-specific interference patterns. Once again, it seems that any difference in proficiency in an L1 or L2 cannot be attributed to the different localization of the two languages in a bilingual brain.

Alternately, it is entirely possible that the presumption that any type of processing has an optimal localization in the brain is correct, but that the adult learners assessed in these studies were poorly selected and do not

represent highly proficient adult bilinguals. It seems obvious that low-proficiency speakers of an L2 will process it differently, and likely with different brain localization parameters, than high-proficiency speakers will. The critical study yet to be undertaken would compare the brain activation patterns of child and adult learners who have achieved equivalent levels of proficiency in the target language.

Although localization has been the most frequently researched brain correlate of age of acquisition, another line of research in the field of neurobiology has focused on the process of myelination as a factor in limiting plasticity and thus perhaps determining the critical period. *Myelination* refers to the covering of neural axons with myelin, a process that occurs after birth and that allows for more efficient transport of neural impulses (Jacobs, 1988). As myelination slows, it “results in reduced neural plasticity and, consequently, in difficulty in learning” (Pulvermuller & Schumann, 1994, p. 719). Researchers in neuroscience have admitted that the exact connection between learning and the state of the neural network is unknown. Still, the loss of plasticity in the brain is cited as an important factor in explaining the existence of the critical period for language acquisition (Jacobs, 1988). Indeed, it is commonly believed that children outperform adults due to greater brain “flexibility.”

Pulvermuller and Schumann (1994) agree that even if plasticity were related to learning, it could only account for the better performance of younger learners when they are viewed as a group and would not explain the great variation in ultimate achievement in the L2 among older learners. However, as the authors are unable to determine exactly how plasticity might influence learning, they conclude by suggesting that motivation plays a determining role in the success of SLA, noting that all younger learners, but only some adults, will be highly motivated to learn an L2. As we shall see, motivation is not an insignificant factor in language learning, though its relation to brain plasticity is tenuous to say the least.

MISEMPHASIS

Perhaps the most common error that has led to the widespread belief in a critical period in L2 learning is that of placing an enormous emphasis on unsuccessful adult L2 learners and ignoring the older learners who achieve nativelike L2 proficiency. Numerous studies and abundant anecdotal evidence have shown that many adults do have significant problems in learning another language. Yet researchers and nonspecialists alike have mistakenly assumed that this somehow implies that all adults are incapable of mastering an L2. First, adults are not a homogeneous group of linguistically incompetent creatures. In fact,

many studies, both for and against the idea of a critical period, have shown that whereas younger learners tend to perform fairly similarly to one another, older learners show great variation in their proficiency (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Birdsong, 1992; Bongaerts, van Summeren, Planken, & Schils, 1997; Coppieters, 1987; Johnson & Newport, 1989; Oyama, 1976, 1978; Riney & Flege, 1998; Seliger, Krashen, & Ladefoged, 1982; Shim, 1993, Singleton, 1995; White & Genesee, 1996). Unfortunately, only very few of the studies (Birdsong, 1992; Coppieters, 1987; Seliger et al., 1982; Shim, 1993) have reported details on the individual performances of their older subjects. Most researchers have provided only average scores for each age group and have paid little or no attention to the adults who performed at the native or near-native level. A recent study by Johnson, Shenkman, Newport, and Medin (1996), for example, reported age differences but made no mention of the degree of variation among the older learners tested. Another, by Shim (1993), also concluded that older learners are less proficient than younger learners, yet the study actually contained a few examples of adolescent and adult learners who outperformed some of the early learners both in speed of language processing and in the number of correct responses in the L2 (see Table 3).

In a more in-depth study, Birdsong (1992) made a significant contribution when he showed that, although the average performance of a group of near-native speakers of French was below that of native speakers, the near-native-speaker group did include adults who performed well above some of the native subjects. Birdsong also questioned another long-standing belief, that adults' L2 skills eventually fossilize, plateauing at some point prior to reaching native proficiency (see Selinker, 1972). Clearly some adults, albeit not the majority, are capable of mastering an L2. In his discussion, Birdsong pointed out that it is important to study these most advanced L2 learners in order to understand the factors that contribute to an adult's success in an L2.

Problems in Testing

Successful adult L2 learners may go undetected due to problematic testing conditions. For example, many adults have been evaluated as having "poor" or nonnative accents. Rarely, however, have researchers clearly established either the exact margins of what is considered a standard accent in the target language or the degree of variability among native speakers. Most of the studies designed to examine the foreign accent of L2 learners have used judges who are adult native speakers of the language in question. Yet these studies have often ignored the fact that native speakers have accents that themselves vary from the standard.

TABLE 3
Summary of Studies Discussed Under "Misemphasis"

| Study | Age of subjects | Major findings | Authors' interpretation of results as support for critical period hypothesis | Comments |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Asher & Garcia (1969) | 7-19 | Young subjects and those who resided longer in L2 country had the best pronunciation. | Yes | Study involved small amount of oral data, no spontaneous speech. |
| Bialystok & Miller (in press) | Adults who were either early (<15 on arrival) or late (>15 on arrival) L2 learners | No difference was found between early and late L2 learners (Chinese); younger learners performed better than older (Spanish). | No | Age influenced proficiency level achieved through all ages rather than defining a critical period. |
| Birdsong (1992) | 35-40 (average) | Some L2 learners performed as well as natives; age on arrival in L2 country affected some grammar tasks. | No | Study tested few tasks but highlighted possible adult L2 proficiency. |
| Bongaerts et al. (1997) | Adults | Some learners pronounced better than natives; need to establish "standard accent." | No | Authors specifically studied good L2 learners. |
| Bongaerts et al. (1997) | 19-52 | Some learners pronounced as well as natives. | No | Few details on good L2 learners are given; perhaps motivation or type of L2 exposure played a role. |
| Champagne-Muzar et al. (1993) | Adults | Special phonetic training improved pronunciation. | No | First 6 hours of training involved only listening. |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|------|--|
| Coppieters (1987) | Adults | Natives and near-natives showed differences in grammar performance. | No | Performance of near-natives varied greatly. |
| Ehrman & Oxford (1995) | 39 (average) | Many factors were shown to influence L2 proficiency more than age did. | No | Important variables were cognitive aptitude, beliefs about self, reading skills, and education. |
| Flege et al. (1997) | 2.6–9.6 on arrival | All bilinguals had at least slight accent in L2; judges of L2 accent did not always agree. | No | Study implies effect of L1 use on L2 but did not study L1 use or proficiency. |
| Flege et al. (in press) | Adults 1–23 on arrival | With increased age on arrival, foreign accents grew stronger and grammaticality judgment decreased. | Some | Effect of age on arrival disappeared when variables confounding with age were controlled for. |
| Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret (1997) | University age | L2 achievement correlated most strongly with factors such as anxiety about language learning and self-confidence. | No | Authors did not study age. |
| Ioup et al. (1994) | 21–23 | Adults achieved native proficiency in grammar and pronunciation. | No | Study was small ($n = 2$). |
| Jia & Aaronson (1998) | 1–38 on arrival; length of residence at least 5 years | Younger arrivals switched to L2; late arrivals maintained L1. | No | L1 proficiency plays a role in L2 learning. |
| Johnson (1992) | Adults | Written version of Johnson & Newport (1989) found weaker correlation found between age and proficiency. | Yes | Study did not focus on adults' greater improvement between tests. |
| Johnson et al. (1996) | Adults | Older learners improved on retest, confirming Johnson & Newport (1989). | Yes | L2 oral proficiency was worse than native but improved between tests; sample was small ($n = 10$). |

TABLE 3, Continued
 Summary of Studies Discussed Under “Misemphasis”

| Study | Age of subjects | Major findings | Authors' interpretation of results as support for critical period hypothesis | Comments |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| MacIntyre & Charos (1996) | Adults | Factors such as willingness to communicate and attitudes toward target culture for L2 achievement are important. | No | Authors did not study age. |
| Neufeld (1979) | Adults | Native L2 pronunciation was achieved after special training. | No | Training involved 12-hour silent period (listening, no speaking). |
| Oyama (1976) | Adults | Younger learners had better pronunciation regardless of length of exposure. | Yes | Authors studied only phonology. |
| Oyama (1978) | 14–37 | Younger learners had better L2 comprehension. | Yes | No research was done into environment of young learners. |
| Riney & Flege (1998) | Adults | L2 exposure affects L2 pronunciation; some adults do as well as natives. | No | Study highlights learning environment. |
| Seliger et al. (1982) | <9 to >16 | Older subjects believe they have stronger L2 accents, regardless of length of exposure. | Yes | In self-reported study, those with strong L2 accents were said to have more L1-speaking friends. |
| Shim (1993) | Adults who were early (3–8), adolescent (9–17), or late (20–30) L2 learners | Proposed a critical period before age 3; language-processing speed and error rate decreased with increase of age of onset of L2. | Yes | Study reported only mean scores for different ages and did not emphasize observed individual differences. |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|------|--|
| Singleton (1995) | Adults | Performance on vocabulary acquisition tasks showed no major difference relating to age. | No | Older learners showed greater variation in proficiency. |
| White & Genesee (1996) | 16–66; average 29 | Access to universal grammar did not decline with age. | No | Most young learners become proficient in L2, as do almost one third of older learners; authors did not study effect of L1. |
| Yeni-Komshian et al. (1999) | Adults who were 1–23 on arrival | Most subjects were more proficient in either their L1 or their L2; young learners (1–5) achieved near-native L2 pronunciation; older learners (12–23) achieved native L2 pronunciation. | Some | Language use affects both L1 and L2; deviation from native pronunciation resulted from interactions between L1 and L2. |

As a result, different judges have been shown to rate the same L2 speaker quite differently (Bongaerts et al., 1997). Thus, a nonnative speaker could be perceived as native in some parts of the host country and as foreign in others. In addition, native speakers' perception of a foreigner's accent may be influenced by the amount of background information they are given about the L2 learner; judgments are themselves influenced by the generally held belief that adults cannot and children can achieve nativelike pronunciation.

Studies of pronunciation that elicited spontaneous speech from their subjects have tended to report better performance by older learners than studies that used only reading-aloud and imitation tasks (Asher & Garcia, 1969; Bongaerts et al., 1997; Seliger et al., 1982). These results could be explained by the fact that the learners' pronunciation of spontaneous speech in the L2 may have been flawless due to their familiarity with the words and phrases they chose to use. However, given that adults usually have literacy skills that are greatly advanced over their knowledge of the target language from direct exposure, they are often unfamiliar with the pronunciation of words they are asked to read. This can be a particular problem for languages such as English (and French), in which the relationship between spelling and pronunciation can be rather complex.

Still another example of the problems in testing is found in Johnson's (1992) follow-up to Johnson and Newport's (1989) study, previously mentioned. Johnson presented the same test to her subjects, but in written form, whereas in the original study subjects had judged the grammaticality of sentences heard orally. Results on the written task showed fewer and less severe age-related effects on proficiency in the L2. Similarly, in a follow-up study, Bialystok and Miller (in press) found a significant effect of the modality of test presentation, replicating the older learners' better performance on the written test. They even found that native-speaking control subjects responded faster to written stimuli, although the instances of errors in the oral and written conditions were equal, thus confirming Bialystok and Hakuta's (1994) suggestion that such differences often reflect a general decline with age in auditory processing and attention, not in linguistic capabilities (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1999).

The Role of Environment

Even with proper testing, many older learners reveal considerable difficulties in SLA. However, one must avoid extrapolating to the conclusion that adults have problems because they are adults. The truth is that myriad factors are involved in successful L2 learning, many of

which may be correlated with age but have nothing to do with changes in the brain. Notable among these is the environment in which the language is learned. A study by Champagne-Muzar, Schneiderman, & Bourdages (1993) showed that the amount of phonological training before testing had a significant positive effect on the pronunciation of a group of university students who were at the beginning level of French as an L2. This finding, in fact, confirms the results of a series of earlier studies by Neufeld (1979). He demonstrated that adult L2 learners could attain nativelike pronunciation in the target language after experiencing a *silent period* during which they were asked to listen to L2 speech without speaking it (conditions replicating the learning situation of young children).

A recent study by Riney and Flege (1998) shows that living in an environment where the target language is the standard has a positive effect on older L2 learners' global pronunciation. The authors observed a group of Japanese university students who were initially tested at the beginning of their first year in college and then were retested 42 months later. The pronunciation of the group of students who spent most of the time between the two tests in English-speaking countries improved significantly more than that of the students who remained in Japan. Similarly, learners who live in a foreign country but interact primarily with speakers of their native language tend to have stronger accents than those who use their L1 less often (Flege, Frieda, & Nozawa, 1997).

Lately, researchers have extended their attention to age effects on both the L1 and the L2 of bilinguals. The critical period hypothesis would predict that learning any language prior to the termination of that period would result in proficiency undistinguishable from that of monolinguals. Yeni-Komshian, Flege, and Liu (1999) studied the level of perceived pronunciation proficiency in the L1 and L2 of Korean-English bilinguals. Although their results showed a general decrease in L2 pronunciation with age, none of their age groups, including the youngest learners, who had arrived in the United States before age 5, had L2 pronunciation ratings indistinguishable from those of monolingual English speakers. Moreover, their results indicated that even the youngest learners (those who arrived before age 11) were rated as having pronunciation proficiency significantly different from that of monolinguals in both Korean and English. Yeni-Komshian et al. concluded that learners who live in an L2 environment do not automatically achieve nativelike pronunciation in the L1; only those who depart from their L1 environment after age 8 consistently retain a nativelike pronunciation in their L1. This suggests that prepubescent children may attain high levels of proficiency in their L2 only at the expense of their L1 and that older learners tend to retain nativelike proficiency in the L1 at the expense of their L2.

Older immigrants are more likely to structure heavily L1 environments for themselves, thus retarding their own L2 exposure and acquisition. Jia and Aaronson (1998), studying Chinese immigrants to the United States, showed that the richness of the English language environment correlated negatively with the richness of the Chinese language environment available to the learners. Obviously, the older arrivals had access to relatively richer Chinese environments (because they could choose their own friends and seek out films, TV, and literacy experiences in Chinese more effectively), and the younger arrivals all reported preferring to talk and read in English by the end of 1 year in the United States. Jia and Aaronson also reported a stronger correlation between age on arrival and maintenance of exposure to Chinese than between age on arrival and proficiency in English, suggesting that even some older learners with relatively impoverished English learning environments acquired reasonable proficiency in English. Jia and Aaronson's study raises an issue often ignored in studies of age differences in SLA—that older learners are more likely to maintain their L1 at a high level, whereas younger learners are more likely to switch to dominance or even monolingualism in the L2.

Flege (1999) has recently explained that the general decline in L2 pronunciation with age does not result from a loss of ability to pronounce but is “a function of how well one pronounces the L1, and how often one speaks the L1” (p. 125). In another study, Flege, Yeni-Komshian, and Liu (in press) also found a significant effect for age on arrival on their subjects' performance on phonological and morphosyntactic tests. However, the authors claim that changes in how the L1 and L2 phonological systems interact as the L1 system develops better explain the older learners' poorer performance on the phonological test. They explain the age effects on the morphosyntactic measures as a result of variation in the education and language use of their subjects, factors they found to be highly correlated with age on arrival.

The Role of Motivation

Ioup, Boustagui, Tigi, and Moselle (1994) examined the acquisition process of two native speakers of English who had achieved nativelike proficiency in Arabic. Both women had first been exposed to Arabic in their early 20s, both were married to native speakers of Arabic and lived in Egypt, and both had a strong desire to master the new language. These women were judged to have achieved native or near-native proficiency in their L2 based on the quality of their speech production, their ability to recognize accents in the L2, and their knowledge of syntactic rules for which they had not received explicit feedback. Their

success in L2 learning was attributed to their high degree of motivation to learn the language, their exposure to a naturalistic environment, and their conscious attention to grammatical form.

A good deal of research in motivation and learning strategies sheds light on adult SLA, but this research has rarely been connected to work on the critical period. Ehrman and Oxford (1995) identified a number of factors, including age, that may affect the success of adults in achieving proficiency in speaking and reading an L2. They found, however, that variables such as cognitive aptitude and beliefs about oneself were more strongly correlated with success of L2 learning than was age. Another study by MacIntyre and Charos (1996) revealed the importance of factors such as self-efficacy and willingness to communicate. Gardner, who has done extensive research on motivation, published findings with Tremblay and Masgoret in 1997 highlighting the importance of over 30 motivational variables, a number of which (notably language anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence) are strongly correlated with L2 proficiency.⁵

CONCLUSION

The misconception that adults cannot master foreign languages is as widespread as it is erroneous. We argue in this article that this misunderstanding rests on three fallacies associated with the uncritical acceptance of a notion of a critical period for SLA. The first fallacy is misinterpretation of observations of child and adult learners, which might suggest that children are fast and efficient at picking up L2s. Hard data make it clear that children learn new languages slowly and effortfully—in fact, with less speed and more effort than adolescents or adults. The second fallacy is misattribution of conclusions about language proficiency to facts about the brain; connections between brain functioning and language behavior will no doubt in time be confirmed, but their exact nature cannot even be guessed from the data currently available on brain functions in early versus late bilinguals. Finally, the common fallacy of reasoning from frequent failure to the impossibility of success has dogged L2 research. Most adult learners of an L2 do, in fact, end up with lower-than-nativelike levels of proficiency. But most adult learners fail to engage in the task with sufficient motivation, commitment of time or energy, and support from the environments in which they find themselves to expect high levels of success. Thus, researchers and laypersons alike have been misled by a misemphasis on the average attainment of

⁵ For a summary of motivational research, see Oxford (1996).

the adult learner. This misemphasis has distracted researchers from focusing on the truly informative cases: successful adults who invest sufficient time and attention in SLA and who benefit from high motivation and from supportive, informative L2 environments. We hope this review of thinking about the critical period for L2 learning will dispel the persistent myths that children learn more quickly than adults and that adults are incapable of achieving nativelike L2 proficiency.

IMPLICATIONS

Age does influence language learning, but primarily because it is associated with social, psychological, educational, and other factors that can affect L2 proficiency, not because of any critical period that limits the possibility of language learning by adults. We see the work reviewed in this article as relevant to three crucial areas of language policy and teaching practice.

Foreign Language Teaching in the Early Grades

This work should be of some interest to schools and school districts contemplating the introduction of foreign language teaching in the early grades to satisfy desires to benefit from the hypothesized critical period. We certainly would not argue against the value of excellent foreign language instruction for learners of any age, but administrators and parents should not proceed on the assumption that only early foreign language teaching will be effective, and they need furthermore to be realistic about what can be expected from younger learners (McLaughlin, 1992). Typically, the early elementary foreign language course will be able to cover only half as much material in a year as the middle school course, which in turn will progress much more slowly than the secondary or university course. Research has shown that in formal settings early L2 instruction does not prove advantageous unless followed by well-designed foreign language instruction building on previous learning (Singleton, 1997). Children who study a foreign language for only a year or two in elementary school show no long-term effects; they need several years of continued instruction to achieve even modest proficiency.

Investment in elementary foreign language instruction may well be worth it, but only if the teachers are themselves native or nativelike speakers and well trained in the needs of younger learners; if the early learning opportunities are built upon with consistent, well-planned,

ongoing instruction in the higher grades; and if the learners are given some opportunities for authentic communicative experiences in the target language. Decisions to introduce foreign language instruction in the elementary grades should be weighed against the costs to other components of the school curriculum; as far as we know, there are no good studies showing that foreign language instruction is worth more than additional time invested in math, science, music, art, or even basic L1 literacy instruction. In fact, Collier (1992) interpreted studies of bilingual children in the early grades as indicating that L1 instruction is more important than L2 instruction for ultimate literacy and academic achievement in the L2. Furthermore, it has become obvious that many immersion programs violate the principles we would like to see instantiated in an optimal L2 learning environment—access to rich input from many native speakers, for example. Older immersion learners have had as much success as younger learners in shorter time periods (Swain & Lapkin, 1989), and late-immersion students have achieved results similar to those of early-immersion students on literacy-based tests (Turnbull, Lapkin, Hart, & Swain, 1998). However, neither early- nor late-immersion students have typically emerged with nativelylike skills in the L2, an observation that further supports our and Singleton's (1997) regard for the importance of continued L2 education.

Bilingual Education

The argument presented here would also suggest that the widely declaimed “failure” of bilingual education has nothing to do with the postponement of English instruction for children attending bilingual classes. First, much evidence would suggest that access to and acquisition of English for immigrants to the United States begins quite early, with or without bilingual instruction. Second, the robust evidence that children in late-exit bilingual programs do better than those in early-exit programs (Ramírez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991), as well as the evidence that children who arrive as immigrants in U.S. schools in later grades show better academic performance than those who start in kindergarten (Collier, 1987), directly contradicts the predictions of the critical period hypothesis. Third, children who start learning English after the early elementary years, even as late as during high school, can become nativelylike speakers if their instructional environments are well structured and motivating (Singleton, 1995).

L2 Teaching

Finally, the work we have reviewed spells good news for ESL and other foreign language teachers of older students, for even though teachers can do little to “improve” a student’s age, they can do much to influence a student’s learning strategies, motivation, and learning environment. Thus, such teachers are justified in holding high expectations for their students and can give their motivated students research-based information about how to improve their own chances for learning to a high level.

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Spanish Staffing for SY 2015-16 – Initial Update

In the updated version of the ANCS strategic plan, we have laid out a three-year objective of enhancing the educational program in “the arts, technology, foreign language, and health/wellness”. Budget constraints brought about by funding reductions from 2009-2014 forced us to reduce staffing, increase student-to-teacher ratios, and hold off on material purchases in many of these areas. Now that we are entering a period of relative financial stability, we are able to focus on strengthening these aspects of the student experience over the next three years. The board has asked for an initial update about foreign language in particular, and so this report aims to give preliminary thinking about the Spanish program and staffing for next school year and beyond. First, though, a bit of recent history about the program at each campus for context:

Elementary campus:

- *2007-10*: Core class for all students - 30 minutes twice per week (1 FTE staffing)
- *2010-12*: Core class for all students - approximately 45 minutes once per week due to six-day related arts rotation (1 FTE staffing)
- *2012-present*: No foreign language offered during regular school day; Spanish and French class option in after school program

Middle campus:

- *2007-08*: Spanish offered for first time as an elective class to interested 8th grade students - one hour daily (0.25 FTE staffing)
- *2008-09*: Elective for interested 8th grade students - one hour daily (0.25 FTE staffing)
- *2009-present*: Core class for all 6th and 7th grade students - one hour twice per week; elective class for interested 8th grade students - one hour daily (2 FTE staffing 2009-12; 1 FTE staffing 2012-present)

With an emphasis in our mission on preparing students to be “informed citizens in a global society”, it is critical for all students at ANCS to gain foundational foreign language skills before they matriculate to high school where they hopefully continue their foreign language studies. As it stands, the current staffing and structure of the Spanish program in the middle school grades could be bolstered, and our attention will be placed there first by prioritizing the addition of another Spanish teacher FTE for next school year, with any changes to the structure of the program to be determined once a decision has been made regarding IB authorization. Beyond next school year, our focus will continue to be on developing students’ Spanish skills through more intensive and frequent instruction in the upper grades rather than in the lower grades. Why? Because a review of research on second language learning¹

¹ For more on this research review and its implications see *Three Misconceptions about Age and L2 Learning*, Stefka H. Marinova-Todd, D. Bradford Marshall, & Catherine E. Snow (Harvard University) *Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESOL) Quarterly* Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 9-

reveals that:

1. There is not necessarily a critical period for acquiring the skills of a second language. Students who begin receiving foreign language instruction as adolescents are not at a disadvantage. In fact, adolescents may be better equipped to make more meaningful progress than elementary school-aged students. Adolescents have more developed cognitive skills and better command of their primary language, both of which make learning a second language easier.
2. The early learning demands at the elementary school level usually mean that foreign language instruction can be offered in small doses (a few times a week for 30-45 minutes) that show no long-term impact because of an inability to retain vocabulary and sustain conversation in the second language.

For these reasons, all ANCS students will receive Spanish instruction in the middle school grades—and potentially eventually in the upper elementary grades—as the best investment of time and resources towards the goal of second language acquisition for students prior to high school.

ANCS Strategic Plan 2014-2017 – Background and Introduction

In July 2011, the Neighborhood Charter School and Atlanta Charter Middle School merged to form the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS), a K-8 public charter school with two campuses in southeast Atlanta. The 2014-15 school year marks the 13th anniversary of the opening of the school's elementary campus, with ANCS today serving approximately 675 students, supported by 93 teachers and staff members, and guided by the common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

Since the merger that formed ANCS, the school has faced numerous external challenges, including significant declines in local and state funding and changing accountability requirements for charter schools. Despite these challenges, ANCS is succeeding in fulfilling its mission. The school has exceeded the academic goals in its charter, with ANCS students outperforming peers in APS and Georgia on the CRCT and writing tests. Over 90% of students, parents/guardians, and faculty/staff survey respondents are satisfied with the educational experience at ANCS, and over 90% of alumni student and parent/guardian survey respondents feel ANCS prepared them well for high school. ANCS has been awarded over \$1.3 million in grant funding to support programs and development. The Georgia Charter Schools Association named ANCS one of three finalists for its "Charter School of the Year" Award in 2014.

In order to continue to provide an exceptional experience for its school community, ANCS is building on its history of success by undergoing a strategic planning process over the past 10 months aimed at identifying key strategic issues to improve the school's ability to carry out its mission and achieve its vision. During this process, an outside consultant conducted a situation analysis through a review of data and feedback from the following sources:

- Interviews of ANCS leadership team and governing board members
- Surveys distributed to all faculty/staff and parents
- Nine separate focus groups: students, faculty/staff, and parents
- Interviews and/or surveys of 30 different external stakeholders, including representatives from APS, local funders, elected officials, and national education experts

The consultant then worked with a diverse strategic planning committee of faculty/staff, board members, and parents to review the situation analysis and determine a draft of key strategic issues in the following areas:

1. Teaching & Learning
2. Diversity
3. Faculty & Staff Development
4. Parent & Community Partnership
5. Fundraising & Resource Development
6. Facilities & Operations
7. Governance Capacity

On the pages that follow you'll find the following documents that form the 2014-2017 ANCS Strategic Plan:

1. ***One page overview of plan*** that shows how the mission and vision drive three-year objectives for each strategic priority and the strategic initiatives aligned with those objectives for this school year (*What is the most strategic use of our resources to move us towards our goals?*)
2. ***A page detailing the strategic initiatives in each area for this school year*** with a greater context for the initiative and what the expected outcome and timeline for the initiative (*Why is this an important initiative and how will we know when it has been accomplished?*)

Following a final feedback period with the school community and external stakeholders, the strategic planning committee presented the strategic plan to the ANCS Governing Board for adoption at its October 21, 2014 meeting.

The time and commitment of the strategic planning committee members during this process is greatly appreciated:

- Cheryl Booth – Faculty
- Susan Cannon – Faculty
- Elizabeth Hearn – Faculty
- Mary Campbell Jenkins – Board Member
- Kari Lovell – Staff
- Suzanne Mitchell – Board Member
- Michelle Newcome – Board Member & Committee Co-Chair
- Terry Roth – Parent
- Erik Speakman – Consultant
- Matt Underwood – Executive Director & Committee Co-Chair



**2014-2017
STRATEGIC PLAN
FINAL – 10/21/14**

VISION

To be a dynamic learning community where students become life-long learners, develop self-knowledge, and are challenged to excel.

MISSION

ANCS uses the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools to: **BUILD** an empowered and inclusive community of students, parents, and educators
ENGAGE the whole child—intellectually, social-emotionally, and physically
HELP all students to know themselves and to be known well by their community
CHALLENGE each student to take an active role as an informed citizen in a global society
COLLABORATE with the larger community to advocate for student-centered schools

Priority Goals

Teaching & Learning: To support academic, social-emotional, & physical growth of all students with high expectations for all, including exceeding external accountability standards.

Diversity: To build upon current diversity by creating proactive program to improve, retain, and realize benefits of student diversity that reflects socioeconomic and racial diversity of Jackson cluster.

Faculty & Staff Development: To be a school of choice for talented educators through competitive compensation, quality professional development, and emphasis on employee well-being.

Parent & Community Partnership: To strengthen the partnership between the school and its families and to engage the wider community—especially within APS—in partnerships for collaborative learning.

Fundraising & Resource Development: To strengthen fundraising infrastructure to expand and diversify sources of funding with a goal of 20% non-public funding and a reserve fund to weather funding drops.

Facilities & Operations: To plan for and implement facilities and technology improvements that result in consistency between campuses, enhanced school image, and promote sustainability.

Governance Capacity: To continue development of board capacity in strategic governance, resource development, and community outreach.

Three Year Objectives

1. Develop K-8 learning expectations & desired outcomes
2. Develop plan for enhancing arts, technology, language, & health/wellness
3. Establish student assessment system

1. Develop diversity plan for outreach & support
2. Address enrollment/retention obstacles for underserved families
3. Develop plan to maximize benefits of student diversity

1. Enhance recruitment with focus on diversity, excellence, and high potential
2. Strengthen levers for retention (compensation, support needs)
3. Enhance development opportunities

1. Enhance parent/school partnership
2. Strengthen ANCS/APS/Jackson cluster relationship
3. Institute collaborative learning center for outreach and dissemination to wider community

1. Increase parent giving to 100% participation
2. Enhance donor outreach, management, & recognition efforts
3. Establish reserve funds of at least \$1 million & policy for their use

1. Develop long-term facilities plan
2. Build facilities reserve fund
3. Implement multi-year technology plan
4. Implement "farm to school" program

1. Establish advisory council or add community members to board
2. Develop plan for ongoing governance training
3. Create metrics to assess board performance

Strategic Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Investigate IB authorization
2. Develop common K-8 grading practices
3. Determine student assessments
4. Map plan for phased class size reduction

1. Reinstitute staff diversity coordinator role to facilitate diversity taskforce
2. Work with GaDOE & APS to consider enrollment priority options

1. Configure calendar/schedule for collaboration & planning needs
2. Evaluate compensation structure
3. Implement TKES/LKES and assess impact

1. Establish collaborative guidelines for parent/school partnership
2. Develop initial plan for collaborative learning activities at ANCS via NTRP

1. Develop campaign to increase parent giving to at least 50% participation
2. Create major donor program
3. Develop external marketing materials

1. Create long-term facilities plan task force
2. Approve multi-year technology plan
3. Implement phase 1 MC projects
4. Implement "in-house" food service

1. Develop plan for enhanced board governance capacity (composition, training)
2. Assess High Bar membership impact on board performance



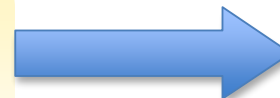
Teaching & Learning Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Investigate IB authorization: There are many similarities between the ANCS educational program and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. At the same time, our neighborhood high school, Maynard Jackson High School (MJHS), has an IB diploma option. Therefore, in consideration of strengthening the educational outcomes for students while at ANCS and as they matriculate to high school, IB diploma option at MJHS, we will explore whether it would make sense for ANCS to become IB authorized.



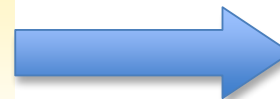
Outcome: By February 2015, the IB exploratory task force chaired by Dr. Goodgame will bring a fully-vetted recommendation to the ANCS Governing Board as to whether ANCS should pursue IB authorization

2. Develop common K-8 grading practices: The development of common grading practices will help to align expectations about how we communicate across the school, with families, and with external audiences about student performance relative to standards



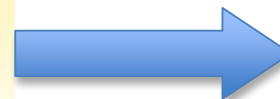
Outcome: By September 2014, faculty/staff will adopt common grading practices that reflect (1) the Coalition of Essential Schools common principles, (2) consistency across grade levels/campuses within developmental differences as appropriate, and (3) a need for clarity in communicating information to students and parents.

3. Determine system of internal & external assessments for program evaluation: As a school that emphasizes more than can be measured solely by a single standardized test, it is important that we have meaningful and reliable assessments of “the whole child”—academic, social-emotional, and physical. A holistic system of assessments will allow us to benchmark and set high expectations for all students.



Outcome: By January 2015, the leadership team will present to the board a system of student performance assessments to measure student progress across all domains. This presentation will include an explanation of each assessment tool (including the new Georgia Milestones tests), what it measures, initial benchmarks where possible, and any associated costs.

4. Map plan for phased class size reduction: Significant decreases in local and state funding from 2009-2013 led to an increase in class sizes across the school. Though funding has begun to increase again, returning to pre-2009 class sizes at our current funding would cost nearly \$1 million. Therefore, a plan for phased class size reduction must be developed to outline a realistic path for arriving at optimal class sizes.

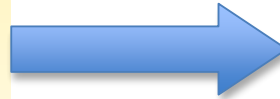


Outcome: By March 2015, the leadership team will present to the board a plan for the phased reduction in class sizes across the school to support teaching and learning objectives and to align with budget priorities.



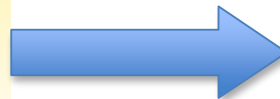
Diversity Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Reinstitute diversity coordinator role on staff to facilitate diversity taskforce: Achieving socioeconomic diversity among the student population is a priority goal because of the educational and social benefits to students that come from learning with and from people of different backgrounds. With this goal in mind, we must recommit to a role on staff focused on helping orient the school towards the enrollment, support, and retention of a diverse student population. The first priority for this role would be to form a diversity taskforce of faculty and parents develop a plan for new student/family outreach.



Outcome: By October 2014, diversity coordinator will be named. By December 2014, diversity coordinator and taskforce will present to leadership team a plan for new student enrollment outreach that insures the school's enrollment process is well-publicized across the city and steps to mitigate barriers for families to enter into the enrollment process (language, lack of information, inability to attend information sessions, etc.).

2. Work with GaDOE and APS to consider enrollment priority options: Alongside a strengthened approach to new student/family outreach, a range of options will be discussed with the GaDOE and APS to increase the likelihood of a diverse student population, including weighted enrollment lottery or enrollment priority based on socioeconomic status. As a part of the charter renewal process, we will weigh these options.



Outcome: By June 2015, the ANCS board will approve as a part of the school's charter renewal petition an enrollment policy that (1) defines student enrollment diversity target and (2) a means to achieve that target in accordance with all applicable state and federal policies and regulations. Upon renewal of our charter, this policy would take effect with enrollment for the 2016-17 school year.



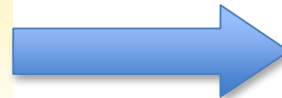
Faculty & Staff Development Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Configure calendar/schedule for collaboration and planning needs: With the increasing demands of accountability and alignment of programs across campuses while serving a diverse student population, there is a need to shift the traditional school calendar and schedule to provide for greater time for faculty planning and collaboration in order to better serve students.



Outcome: By November 2014, leadership team will present a proposal to the ANCS Governing Board for recommended changes to the ANCS school calendar and schedule for the 2015-16 school year. The proposal will first undergo a period of review and feedback among parents and faculty/staff to be attuned to the needs of the full school community.

2. Evaluate compensation structure: For many years, our school has used the Atlanta Public Schools salary schedule as the basis for our own compensation structure. At this point in our school's development, this approach deserves fuller review to determine what changes might be needed so that compensation is considered alongside other mechanisms for attracting and retaining high-quality faculty and staff.



Outcome: By January 2015, a combined subgroup of the ANCS Governing Board's Finance/Operations and Personnel/Governance committees will present a report to the full board—including any recommendations for changes—regarding the school's compensation structure.

3. Implement TKES/LKES and assess impact: Changes in state law will require ANCS to use the state's teacher and school leader evaluation systems in the 2014-15 school year. We will implement TKES and LKES with fidelity to the requirements while attempting to emphasize the process as ones for supportive feedback. The impact of this new evaluation system on teachers and school leaders will be assessed by the Executive Director.



Outcome: By April 2015, the Executive Director will present to the board a report on the first full year of implementation of TKES and LKES and its overall effect on teachers and school leaders at both campuses with an emphasis on the quality of feedback delivered, impact on improving teaching and leading, and time spent on TKES/LKES implementation activities as compared to other professional activities.



2014-2017 STRATEGIC PLAN – *Strategic Initiatives for 2014-15*

Parent & Community Partnership Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Establish collaborative guidelines for parent/school partnership at ANCS: The CES common principles include these statements:

- Decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff
- Parents should be key collaborators and vital members of the school community
- The school should...model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school.

As our school has grown, there is a need for more formal guidance about what these principles mean to us at ANCS and what they look like in how parents and faculty/staff partner effectively in service to students—from engagement in the school life of an individual student to collective decision-making.

2. Develop initial plan for collaborative learning activities facilitated by ANCS:

Our school is looked to as an example of what works in public education. As a charter school, we have an obligation to use this platform as a catalyst for creating collaborative learning opportunities that can transform classrooms and schools and influence larger discussions of teaching and learning in Atlanta and beyond, while at the same time providing leadership experiences for our most talented teachers and staff in their career development.

Outcome: By November 2014, leadership team and PTCA will jointly present to the school community guidelines for what the parent/school partnership at ANCS should look like—from an individual parent-teacher relationship to schoolwide practices.

Outcome: By December 2014, the Executive Director and New Teacher Residency Project Director will present to the ANCS Governing Board an initial plan for collaborative learning activities facilitated by ANCS, which will include:

- Defining the specific activities, viability, and potential impact
- Process for determining who would carry out the work of these activities
- Sources of funding and partnership



Fundraising & Resource Development Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Develop a campaign to increase parent giving to at least 50% participation: Increased outreach to foundations has revealed that, in order to be more attractive to potential funders, our school must increase its level of parent participation in the ANCS Annual Campaign. We will focus efforts in this year's campaign to increase the percentage of parents giving from around 30% to at least 50%.



Outcome: By September 2014, the ANCS Annual Campaign will launch with an emphasis on increasing giving at any level from all parents. The campaign will feature mailings, phone solicitations, and small group sessions with parents from different grade levels to help educate parents about how ANCS is funded and its unique funding challenges as a charter school.

2. Create a major donor program: Within the ANCS community, there are individuals and families who are able to make contributions of at least \$1,000. The development of a major donor element to the ANCS Annual Campaign is crucial for sustainable funding for our school.



Outcome: By November 2014, the Executive Director and Fund Development Chair will present to the ANCS Governing Board a plan for a major donor program that focuses on donor management and recognition and the role of the ANCS business office to support such a program.

3. Develop external marketing materials: With a successful track record of achievement and organizational sustainability over more than 12 years, our school is poised to be of interest to external partners and funders. An external marketing campaign is needed to powerfully capture what makes ANCS unique and a strong investment for funders.

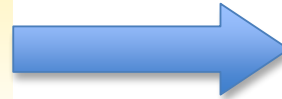


Outcome: By March 2015, an external marketing campaign will be developed (in print and other media) to highlight the successes of our school and identify important areas of investment of financial resources.



Facilities & Operations Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Create task force to develop long-term facilities plan: By refinancing our school's Middle Campus facility and determined overall enrollment is not anticipated to increase above present levels, we have more certainty about working within our existing facilities. Clearly, there are facilities needs at both campuses which must be articulated and improvements planned.



Outcome: By April 2015, the Business & Operations office will oversee the completion of a facilities assessment, including existing needs and identifying potential upgrades and improvements. This assessment will include information gathered from students, faculty/staff, and parents.

2. Approve multi-year technology plan: As funding increases, our school is in a position to make new investments in technology. These investments should be guided by a plan that emphasizes the CES principle of personalization and collaboration so that technology purchases are driven by a goal of student learning.



Outcome: By October 2014, a multi-year technology plan will be presented to the ANCS Governing Board for adoption. The plan will include recommendations for equipment, systems, staffing, and ongoing maintenance and assessment of technology needs.

3. Implement phase 1 Middle Campus projects: Supported by a major grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, ANCS will partner with Southface to implement energy-efficiency improvements at our school's Middle Campus. These projects represent the first phase of facilities improvements with future projects to be outlined in the longer-term facilities plan.



Outcome: By December 2014, the projects targeted for implementation using the CFGA "Grants to Green" grant will be completed within budget.

4. Implement "in-house" food service: For the first time ever, ANCS will be running its entire food service in house without working with an outside vendor. With the hiring of a new school chef/nutrition director, this change holds the potential to result in a more efficient food service program that is focused on providing high-quality meals and making the school kitchen a place for learning.

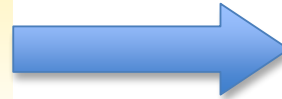


Outcome: Beginning in October 2014, the Executive Director and Director of Business & Operations will provide quarterly reports to the board about the implementation of food service program changes with data on program participation among students and faculty/staff, financials, and compliance.



Governance Capacity Initiatives for 2014-15

1. Develop plan for enhanced board governance capacity: In year 13 of our school's existence, the role of the governing board has evolved and matured. We now need to articulate a plan to enhance the capacity of the board to sustain a focus on governance, fundraising, and advocacy through changes in board membership in order to carry out the mission of the school.



Outcome: By February 2015, the Governance Committee of the ANCS Governing Board will present to the full board recommendations for enhancing board governance capacity, including training, board composition, and role of community members who are not ANCS parents in the governance structure.

2. Assess High Bar membership impact on board performance: The ANCS Governing Board has joined the High Bar, the premier resource for charter school governance support. Our board will take full advantage of this membership and determine what impact it has on the ability of the board to work effectively and efficiently.



Outcome: By June 2015, the ANCS Governing Board will take part in a collective assessment of High Bar membership and its impact prior to making a decision about renewing membership for the following school year.



About

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to getting to know you.

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The Manual Makers Team

It's in our name—we're a team of "makers."

Every member of our team is a "maker." What do we mean by that?

Documentation can be a dry field, but we approach it with two minds: analytical and creative. These two hemispheres allow us to create a productive work atmosphere that is logical and interesting, but also fun and creative. This is what helps us attract bright and engaged minds that love a challenge. Because in order to be a maker you have to be able to break down complex topics into chunks that can be easily understood, and then present them in a format that is engaging. Definitely a challenge!

Our work stands out because of our drive to create and connect with our audience. This is what has kept us busy for more than ten years. Our documents can be found in the offices of restaurants and retail stores across the world. We've done work for some really famous names and also for some obscure up-and-comers, but each client gets a level of personal engagement that makes even the most complex process understandable and (we hope!) enjoyable.

Almost all of our work is carried out by a team of dedicated makers who excel at thinking, writing, editing, formatting, and engaging. The Manual Makers principals, Michelle Newcome and Katherine Guntner, have experience in a variety of fields and came together to found the company after experiencing success doing this kind of work in other companies. Our team works both in our office and remotely, and we enjoy giving them this structured flexibility.

It's hard to find people who do what we do. It's even harder to find people who make it as enjoyable as we do.

The Process

Moving the project from idea to product in three steps.

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time! For the complex work we do, it's easy to get mired in the details, but after more than ten years of making manuals we've gotten the elephant down to bite-sized and digestible pieces. We apply the same three steps to every project we undertake.

Definition and Discovery

To know where you want to go with your project we need to immerse ourselves in your world. We read everything you've already developed, then we research industry best practices. We literally consume words and ideas looking for the underlying philosophy and thinking about areas where there are holes in the information. We usually complete this stage with a thorough understanding of every aspect of your brand and business. From this immersion we are able to begin to define the skeleton and structure of the project. Once we have a good understanding of the background and the defining philosophies, we spend time learning your people and observing their processes. This step includes interviewing any subject matter experts, visiting your location if that's practical, poking around in the back room a little, and generally getting a feel for how your environment dictates how your product needs to develop.

Content Development and Design

Because our goal is to make excellent documents, we spend time shaping all of our research and content into formats that will reach your audience and be truly useful. Behind everything must be a unifying philosophy that drives how the content is written and presented. We know your audience—we understand that the document has to not only cover the bases, but must also be easily understood by someone in a harried and fast-paced atmosphere. The framework we develop will not only put the right content in the right hands using the right format, it will look visually appealing and be a great representation of your brand.

Implementation and Execution

We oversee the project from start to finish. We coordinate with the printer, IT department, communications department, legal department, and seek their approval at every turn.

We research and present options for the final product and how it reaches your audiences, and make the best option happen.

The Manual Makers Philosophy

We follow an approach that emphasizes that document management is a process, not a task. We believe that the materials and programs we create yield sustainable processes and a clean and well-documented operational approach, which in turn leads to an increase in profit and a pleasant engagement between audiences.

Who? We are The Manual Makers, a full service documentation company specializing in operations, marketing, training, emergency/crisis response, and human resources.

Our Name: It's what we do—we make things. For us, those things happen to be manuals and documents, but it's important to us that the word “make” is in our name.

Our Start: We got our start as an off-shoot of another company, Gossamer Marketing, which specialized in creating marketing systems and manuals for franchised restaurant systems way back in 1999. We spun off into our own company in 2011.

Our Principals: Michelle Newcome and Katherine Guntner. Michelle has over 15 years of experience providing operational and marketing services. Her background is in education. She also has an MFA in poetry, which is not great for earning potential, but excellent for making succinct bullet lists. Katherine is a documentation specialist with over 20 years of experience; she also provides copywriting and editing services to many marketing agencies in the Atlanta area. Katherine's eye for detail is the foundation of the beautiful formatting of our projects.

Our Clients: We've done work for franchise clients such as Brinker International/Chili's Bar and Grill, FLIP Burger Boutique/Richard Blais, Raving Brands (Moe's Southwest Grill, Shane's Rib Shack), Schlotzsky's Deli, Ross Stores, Hyatt Hotels, Kohl's, and Stevi B's Pizza.

Our Standards: The Manual Makers is a values-driven company. We prize integrity, service, creativity, and a strong work ethic. We are proud of building our company with old-fashioned principles. We only work with people who share our ethical standards. We believe in bootstraps and hard tugs.

Our Tools

We do not believe there is a one-size-fits-all way to make a documentation product. For every client, there is a differing need and a tool that will suit that need. For this reason we won't sell our clients on any one way of making their product. Like any good "maker" we have a workbench neatly organized with various tools to get the job done and we are experts at the use of each one.

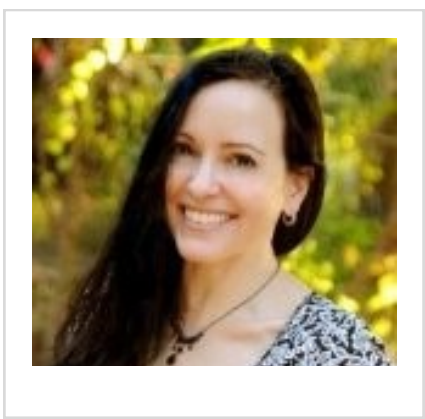
We employ these tools (but are always open to learning and exploring more tools as things change. We like being early adopters and on the cutting edge!):

- ◆ Microsoft products (Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, One Note)
- ◆ Multi-platform content management systems (Madcap Flare is our favorite, but we can also use others out there)
- ◆ Adobe products (Acrobat, Photoshop, InDesign, PageMaker)
- ◆ Content sharing systems (SharePoint, SMF, FTP systems)
- ◆ Cloud-based solutions (Dropbox, ShareFile, Google-docs)
- ◆ Team work solutions/Project management (Huddle, Sage, Workforce, Podio)
- ◆ Wiki development
- ◆ Presentation systems (join.me, GoToMeeting, WebX)

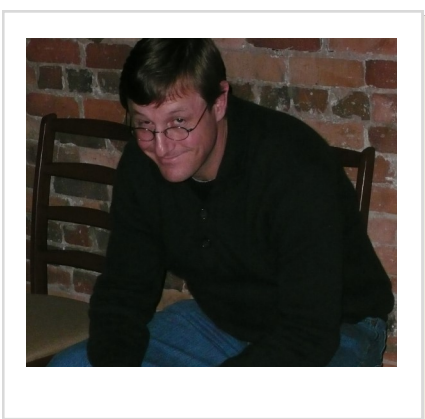
Team Bios



Michelle Newcome, Principal As the creator of operational systems for companies as diverse as Flip Flop Shops and Chili’s Grill and Bar, Michelle has experience in a wide variety of business models. She consults for clients in process documentation, strategic business decisions, and crisis/emergency management procedures. Michelle has a deep understanding of the needs of a system – both for employees and the corporate owner – and her focus is always on the creation of guidelines that are based in common sense practices. Her documentation solutions are custom developed to meet the needs of each client and make use of current technology and best-practice technical writing. In addition to Flip Flop Shops and Chili’s Grill and Bar, Michelle has created systems for Ross Stores, Planet Smoothie, PJ’s Coffee, Shane’s Rib Shack, Schlotzky’s Deli, Mama Fu’s Noodle House, FLIP burger boutique, and Stevi B’s Pizza – to name



Katherine Guntner, Principal With over twenty years of experience in process documentation and editing for advertising campaigns and major brand catalogs, Katherine brings a critical eye for details and a finely tuned editorial sensibility. Kathy’s oversight on the final project deliverables ensure our clients get professional editing and top level design work not normally found in operational procedures. Katherine is also our resident expert in Madcap Flare and multi-platform publishing output. Her focus is on the behind-the-scenes production deadlines and the final project look and feel.



Bryan Garner, Writer/Marketing In his extensive work with franchised concepts ranging from Internet Service Providers to fast casual restaurants and package delivery & business service clients, Bryan has helped create locally based product marketing programs that adhere to corporate messaging parameters, yet are tailored to the local markets. In addition to local store marketing efforts, Bryan has helped to create several brands from scratch and worked closely with UPS subsidiary companies to coordinate electronic marketing efforts during the largest rebrand in the company’s 98-year history.

A former business consultant for Planet Smoothie, Bryan also has a marketer’s perspective of the operational side of the business. This experience helps Bryan ensure marketing programs have an immediate impact and are replicable in the field.



Julie Newcome, Technologist As the resident Geek, Julie uses her twenty years of technical writing and software help systems knowledge to build successful online content delivery systems for our clients.

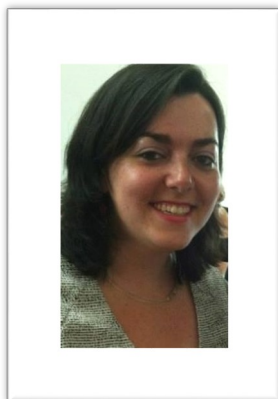
Julie’s analytical mind and ability to streamline design to deliver the best customer experience helps to keep our products and projects on the cutting edge of document design and platform delivery.



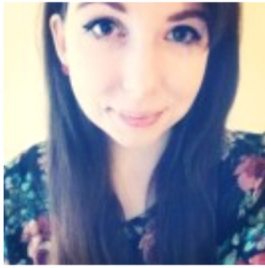
Nick Hassiotis, Client Management Prior to joining The Manual Makers, Nick was a General Manager for FLIP burger boutique at locations in Atlanta and in Birmingham, where he helped develop and implement training procedures and manuals.

From 2002 to 2008, Nick worked with PF Chang’s as a National Trainer and Manager. In this role, he worked closely with the Regional Training Director to create and update training materials and guides to ensure a smooth and efficient training/opening schedule. Additionally, Nick has helped open six other full service restaurants ranging from fine dining to fast casual.

Nick’s deep understanding and first-hand perspective of what restaurant operators need in terms of materials and support ensure a great client relationship.



Grace Duggan, Document Specialist Grace is an editor and proofreader with an eye for the details—and the big picture—thanks to her experience in journalism, communications, and advertising. Before she joined The Manual Makers, she was the Managing Editor of an art magazine in New York City, where she also consulted for multiple non-profits on writing and editing projects in both English and Spanish, taught copyediting classes, and wrote for various publications, including *The New York Times*. She has worked for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Road Runners, the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and the New England Review. A graduate of Middlebury College, Grace was awarded a Fulbright in 2009 to teach in Madrid, Spain.



Megan Reid, Copyeditor As a product of Georgia State University’s Fiction Writing program, Megan’s creative knack for detail keeps her editing and proof-reading skills on point. She works onsite for multiple agencies in the Atlanta area and is well-versed in both editorial and catalog proofing. With a controlled command of the English language, Megan ensures that clients receive grammatical precision, consistency, and above all: perfection.



Kelly Guntner, Designer Focusing on the aesthetic aspects in the development of each project, Kelly utilizes her creativity to bring visual communication to a new level. She first began her passion for design as a child drawing sketches whenever possible, then as a student enrolling in several art classes, and finally as a graduate from Texas A&M University Corpus Christi with a Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design. After four years of practicing as a freelance graphic designer, Kelly joined The Manual Makers in 2014, bringing forth new ideas and a dedication to fulfill the needs of long-term and prospective clients.



Dianne Hartness, Policy Generalist With experience in policy and procedure writing, human resources, and office management, Dianne is the sweeper of our team. Dianne has run the offices of several major Atlanta-area homebuilders, as well as performing as the HR coordinator for a chain of restaurants.

Dianne writes employee handbooks for our clients and consults on employment-related issues for our franchise system clients. She is an active member of SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management).

Work Samples

Parties

Parties are another area for Stevi B's stores to increase sales. Many Stevi B's have room for a large group in the dining room or a designated party room to accommodate our guests and their party needs. Whether it is a birthday party, sports team party or church party for kids we can accommodate many different needs. For specific operational guidance on parties, please refer to the Operations Manual.

| Primary Target Markets | Materials and Equipment |
|------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools Party brochures Party hats Loot bags Balloons Tokens Party Managers Party sign Balloon man Table/Room signage Party's name at register Fun with party hat |

THE APPROACH

FOR BIRTHDAY PARTIES:

- Train your staff to upsell party packages by educating the customer on the added benefits of higher priced packages. Use words like "For an additional \$2.00 per child we can take care of everything. Our Stevi B's loot bags are full of toys for your kids to leave with!"

Blocked Drain/Wastewater – Background

A wastewater backup may occur anywhere there are floor drains in the restaurant or in the rest rooms, and may or may not involve a backup of grease, food waste or raw sewage. A wastewater backup is more than just a slow drain or a clogged drain. A wastewater backup can be distinguished from a blocked or clogged drain when wastewater is flowing back into the facility from a drain or from several drains. Clogged drains will have standing water, but water will not be flowing back into the restaurant. Once a backup occurs, typically any further water that is used in the facility from ware washing, sinks or rest rooms tends to cause further backup because the drain lines are linked together.

Err on the side of caution!
Because of the significant public health risks associated with this type of situation, always best to err on the side of caution. If it is unclear whether or not the facility should close, begin the closing procedures and contact the Corporate Office.

Blocked Drain/Wastewater

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Once it has been determined that there is an actual backup, contact the appropriate corporate team. Refer to the Operations Manual for more information. |
| 2 | Contact drain-cleaning service immediately. Have lines cleared. |
| 3 | Destroy food that may have been exposed to sewage. Employees do not walk through the backed-up water. Water use should be reduced because the drains may be clogged. |
| 4 | Post a manager at the door during rush periods to direct traffic. |
| 5 | Once sewage backup has been eliminated and clean-up using proper floor cleaning procedures and floor mats with sanitizer solution. Clean any remaining residue. |
| 6 | Allow employees with contaminated clothing to change in a designated area. Employees should wash their hands and clean their face. Especially those directly cleaning the affected area. |
| 7 | Contact Regional Facilities Manager / Restaurant Manager for backup and course of action to prevent future backup. This may include preventative maintenance or repair of collapsed lines. |

Scenario #4: Natural Disaster

Examples: Flood, hurricane, power outage, fire

First Steps:

- Assess the situation—maintain crew and employee safety and security
- Alert local emergency services, if necessary
- In event of extended power outage, move customers outside of building

Get the facts

1. What was the emergency that occurred?
2. When did it happen?
3. Are there any fatalities or injuries?
4. Is law enforcement aware?
5. What damage has been made to the store, if any?
6. What was the duration of the power outage?
7. Can the store maintain operations?
8. Is the media aware?
9. Who has contacted the store?
10. Which media has reported the situation?

Alert the Crisis Team

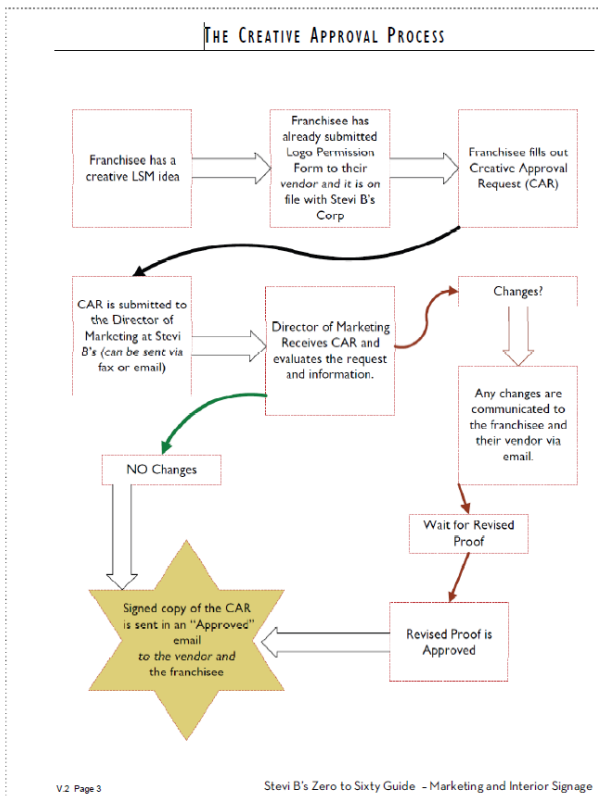
In the event of a crisis, please call the crisis hotline at 866-400-9531 and an answering service will put you in touch with an appropriate member of our Crisis Management team.

Response Procedures:

- Local Store**
- Notify appropriate authorities or organizations, if appropriate
 - Address food spoiling issues, if necessary
 - Take safekeeping measures to protect store assets
 - Notify crew members of changes in work schedules and store operations
 - Post any necessary signage
 - Coordinate media statement with Raving Brands for use on reactionary basis (Do not talk about financial impact) (Do if necessary)
 - Be prepared to manage media on-site, if necessary
 - Evaluate impact on local store marketing efforts, if any

Direct all media inquiries to the brand leader. Under no circumstances should crew members speak to the media.

RAVING BRANDS



Accounting and Financial Core Expectations

Your Franchise Agreement requires you to submit the following reports to Mama Fu's Franchise Group, LLC:

| Daily | Weekly |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aloha POS Table Service System Daily Sales Report <p>This report shows an overview of product mix, labor breakdown, general operating information, and sales details.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Statement of Gross Sales <p>Due Tuesday of each week by email or fax. Late reporting will result in \$100 late fee. Calculate royalty payment of 5% of gross sales.</p> |
| Monthly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Corporate Marketing Fund contribution <p>Mama Fu's Franchise Group, LLC is not currently requiring this contribution, but reserves the right to collect this contribution up to the limit outlined in the Franchise Agreement.</p> |
| Annually | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Profit and Loss Statement ■ Balance Sheet ■ Federal income tax return of franchised business ■ State income tax return of franchised business <p>These documents are due within sixty days of the end of the calendar year, and should be prepared by a certified public accountant.</p> | |
| <p>If you keep accurate, consistent records on a daily basis, you should have little difficulty meeting these requirements.</p> | <p>Email all reports to: reports@mamafus.com If email is down, fax to: 512.483.2657</p> |

V.1 Page 5 MAMA FU'S OPERATIONS MANUAL - SECTION 02 CULTURE & CORE RESPONSIBILITIES
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FLIP

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| Tattoos | |
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| Personal Hygiene | |
| Back of House Staff | |
| DRUG, ALCOHOL, SUBSTANCE ABUSE | |

Employee Policies and Procedures Manual V.2 09.11

Key Concepts-at-a-Glance

Pizza Sizing

Pony 11" Pasta: 45 Minutes
 Medium 12" Pizza: 20 Minutes or Less
 Large 14" No Seen = Time to Toss

Food Safety Basics

COOKED PRODUCTS must be cooked until the internal temperature of 165° F or greater is reached

PRODUCTS BEING HELD and served hot must be maintained at the internal temperature of 140° F or greater

REFRIGERATED PRODUCTS must be maintained at 41° F or below

FROZEN PRODUCT should be held at 0° F +/- 10° F

THE SUCCESS OF OUR BUSINESS DEPENDS ON TWO CRITICAL ACTIONS: RUNNING THE BUFFET AND TAKING CARE OF OUR CUSTOMERS.

| Pizza Slicing | Combining Basics | Correct Handwashing Procedure: |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Pony 8 | DO NOT Combine Specialty Pizzas or Hamburger/Sausage Pizzas. | Wet hands with running warm water (at least 100° F), Vigorously rub arms & hands with soap for 20 seconds, rinse and dry with a disposable towel, then apply approved hand sanitizer. |
| Medium Buffet 10 | | |
| Medium Take-out 8 | | |
| Large Buffet 12 | | |
| Large Take-out 10 | | |
| Pony Buffet Dessert 10 | | |
| Med Buffet Dessert 12 | | |
| Med Take-out Dessert 12 | | |
| Large Buffet Dessert 14 | | |
| Full Buffet = 11 Pizzas | | |

Timetable for Service

Greeting customers at the buffet = 1 minute
 Serving a requested pizza = 7 minutes
 Taking a pizza request from a customer = 1 minute

4 Steps—Stevi B's Founding Principles

STEP ONE: Greet the customer with a warm and sincere attitude.

STEP TWO: Suggest or offer specialty pizzas, requests, and drink refills.

STEP THREE: Exceed customer expectations with great customer service.

STEP FOUR: Thank the customer for visiting and invite them to come back again.

Manager's Top Ten

1. Pizza Buffet = full/fresh
2. Salad / Pasta Bar = full/fresh
3. Dessert Station
4. Drink Station
5. Pizza Buffet and Kitchen Cleanliness
6. Dining Room Cleanliness
7. Restrooms
8. Personal Service
9. Guest Dining Equipment
10. Prep/Dish/Storage Area

LSM Complementary Audiences Chart

| Retail Stores | Offer retail and service industry workers discounts during their lunchtimes, typically 2 p.m.—4 p.m. Create cross-promotional opportunities with retailers in your center or in close proximity to your location. Meet the large retail managers in your area and let them know about your catering opportunities. |
|------------------|--|
| Small Businesses | Deliver a sample tray at lunch. Invite them in with Be Our Guest cards and pre-punched frequency cards. |
| Large Businesses | Get contact information from your business card collection. Get your hot in the door by taking your contacts free catering and bring menus and coupons. Try to get in touch with HR departments to cater training sessions and meetings. Offer employee incentive coupons. |
| | Place these groups come for fundraising opportunities. Give back to the community with money, food or space. Know what matters to donors. Support local places of worship and charities. |
| | Get for employees in the areas of suggestive selling/upselling service. Send email or social media messages to frequent "members only" specialists. If applicable, surprise regulars with local schools and kids' activities. Know the PTA/PTO officers. Give school administrators free them food. Offer to hold fundraisers at your teams and coaches. Advertise in programs at your restaurant. Create packages for team guest cards to coaches and league staff. |

Schlotzsky's
Creating Your LSM Plan **better**

Background Check

We treat each client's products as the proprietary and copyrighted work that they are, which means we don't really show full manuals to potential clients. But any of these people would be happy to speak to you about our work.

Darin Kraetsch, CEO

Flip Flop Shops

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From copy editing to
creating franchise
manuals,
we make sense.

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Scope of Work

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School

Project Components

Policy and Procedure Library

Scope of Work

- ◆ Review and revise existing policies and procedures.
- ◆ Identify and create any missing or undeveloped content.
- ◆ Create an updated structure and comprehensive table of contents incorporating existing materials and new content.
- ◆ Provide review cycles of documentation, to include the following:
 - Table of Contents and preliminary organization of materials.
 - Sections sent individually as text files, with ANCS addressing any issues or questions.
 - Complete document with only minor tweaks remaining.
- ◆ Provide deliverable options such as printed materials, HTML-based content, integration into ANCS content delivery system.

Project Costs and Timeline

We'll keep your budget top of mind.

Billing Rate

For this project we are pleased to offer our non-profit blended hourly rate of \$60/hour. This estimate is based upon our understanding of the overall project and the various pieces that dovetail together to form the whole.

The breakdown:

| Project | Start Date | Completion Date | Hours Estimated/Notes |
|---|------------|-----------------|---|
| Phase 1: Project Set Up | | | This phase is already complete. |
| Phase 2: Definition and Discovery Deliverable: Comprehensive Table of Contents for the entire library. | 10/01/14 | 11/01/14 | 5 hours. Note: This phase is mostly complete with the exception of final review and signoff. |
| Phase 3: Content Development Deliverable: PDF files broken into various sections suitable for subject matter expert review. | 11/01/14 | 02/01/15 | 85 hours. |
| Phase 4: Review and Edit Deliverable: PDF file with all edits incorporated from Phase 3. Complete professional proofreading. | 02/15/15 | 03/15/14 | 10 hours. |
| Phase 5: Implementation Deliverable: Files suitable for publishing on the ANCS website with requirements to be determined in conjunction with ANCS. | 04/15/15 | 05/15/15 | 10 hours. Hours = 110 Project Total = \$6,600 |

Project Costs and Timeline (cont.)

Should ANCS honor us with this work, we commit to the following:

- ◆ We don't ever bill for hours we do not work.
- ◆ We will work within your resources and treat your budget as if it's our own.
- ◆ We enjoy the creative challenge of making something useful within the confines of a budget.

Invoicing

We invoice the last day of each month for the hours worked during the preceding month. Invoices are payable within 15 days, however, we are happy to work out terms with your billing department as needed. All invoices are itemized with work completed, the overall project, and the applicable sub-project. We are happy to invoice multiple departments and gear our invoices to department budgets as needed.

From copy editing to
creating franchise
manuals,
we make sense.

The Manual Makers, LLC

1298 Metropolitan Ave

Atlanta, GA 30316

404-228-0875

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www.themanualmakers.com

Total investments held by ANCS

9/30/14

| <u>Institution</u> | <u>Investment</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Bank of North Georgia | Money Market | 300,213.55 |
| Bank of North Georgia | Operating accounts | <u>168,343.13</u> |
| | | 468,556.68 |
| Edward Jones | CD | 225,000.00 2 year - matures Nov 2015 |
| Self-Help Credit Union | CD | 228,151.21 2 year - matures Oct 2015 |
| SunTrust Bank | CD | <u>206,300.81</u> 1 year - renews automatically |
| Total invested funds (not at BoNG) | | 659,452.02 |
| Grand total ANCS funds | | 1,128,008.70 |

ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD CHARTER SCHOOL
Budget to Actual FY2015
YTD September 2014

Period Ended 09/30/2014

| | YTD Actual | YTD Budget | YTD \$Variance | Annual Budget |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Income | | | | |
| Local/State Funding | \$1,347,746 | \$1,381,876 | (\$34,130) | \$6,909,382 |
| Grants | \$435,541 | \$0 | \$435,541 | \$0 |
| Contributions & Fundraising | \$19,866 | \$58,750 | (\$38,884) | \$235,000 |
| Program Income | \$163,519 | \$115,375 | \$48,144 | \$461,500 |
| Other Income | \$1,477 | \$16,250 | (\$14,773) | \$65,000 |
| Total Income | \$ 1,968,148 | \$ 1,572,251 | \$ 395,897 | \$ 7,670,882 |

Expenditures

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries and Benefits | \$1,620,854 | \$ 1,528,417 | \$ (92,437) | \$ 6,113,666 |
| Professional Development | \$64,610 | \$ 14,625 | \$ (49,985) | \$ 58,500 |
| Curriculum & Classroom Expenses | \$50,385 | \$ 22,081 | \$ (28,304) | \$ 88,323 |
| Program Expenses | \$21,748 | \$ 76,166 | \$ 54,419 | \$ 304,665 |
| Building & Grounds | \$163,076 | \$ 120,672 | \$ (42,403) | \$ 482,689 |
| Fixed Asset Expenditures | \$305,692 | \$ 36,734 | \$ (268,958) | \$ 146,934 |
| Professional Services | \$5,185 | \$ 7,500 | \$ 2,315 | \$ 30,000 |
| Gen&Admin/Insurance/Interest Expense | \$79,392 | \$ 30,020 | \$ (49,372) | \$ 120,080 |
| Nutrition Program Purchases | \$34,440 | \$ 46,700 | \$ 12,260 | \$ 186,800 |
| Equipment Rental (Copiers) | \$10,500 | \$ 8,250 | \$ (2,250) | \$ 33,000 |
| Fundraising Expenses | \$715 | \$ 24,625 | \$ 23,910 | \$ 98,500 |
| Total Expenditures | \$2,356,595 | \$ 1,915,789 | \$ (440,806) | \$ 7,663,157 |
| Operating Income/Loss | \$ (388,447) | \$ (343,538) | \$ (44,909) | \$ 7,725 |

Business Operations Dashboard

| Finance “Big Rocks” | Operations “Big Rocks” |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Refinancing for MC <input type="checkbox"/> Produce 2015–2016 Annual Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Financial Audit Report / Firm Selection (March 2015) <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed Asset Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Support for Charter Renewal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement “in-house” food service <input type="checkbox"/> Approve Technology Plan (Oct. 2014) <input type="checkbox"/> Phase One MC projects <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term facilities plan |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completed <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Not Started </div> | |
| Operating Cash (Checking + MMA) (as of 9/11/14) | \$467k (Bank of North Georgia) |
| Investments (CDs) (as of 9/11/14) | \$659K (Edward Jones + Self-Help + SunTrust) |
| Line of Credit (as of 9/11/14) | \$0K |
| # Students (as of 9/11/14) | 667 |
| YTD Operation Income or (Loss) (as of 9/11/14) | \$(388,447) |

Notes on Financials

- “Will create revised budget for December mtg
 - After we receive November allocations
 - Add items that emerged after budget approved
 - Will adjust for “lumpiness” (timing) issues
- “Known “lumpiness” (timing) issues:
 - Professional development, auction, curriculum & classroom, nursing & transportation reimbursement
- “Known income variances:
 - Grants (GTG, Title I, NTRP)
- “Known expense variances:
 - Salaries (one new hire, 2 more expensive replacements), building & grounds, fixed assets (GTG), Gen & Admin

Technology Plan

“Proposed based on recommendation from Technology Committee

- Covers 2014–2017

“Socialized with parents and faculty

- PTCA meeting September 2014

- Faculty meetings October 2014

“Ready for a Board vote:

- See final version included in Board packet

October 21, 2014

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School
Technology Plan: July 2014 – June 2016

Technology Committee

The technology committee was formed by the Governing Board of Directors as an ad-hoc sub-committee of the business and operations committee of the Board in January of 2014. Its charge was to develop a multiyear technology plan for the school in support of the school's mission and vision. The committee met approximately eight times over three months to inventory the current state of our technology and develop specific recommendations. The current technology committee is comprised of the following members:

- Cheryll Booth, EC technology specialist
- Mike Boardman, MC technology specialist
- Erik Droutman, parent
- Jill Hanson, EC library media specialist
- Jim Draughn, parent
- Kari Lovell, Director of Business Operations
- Lindy Settevendemie, MC teacher
- Mitch White, governing board member and committee chair

In addition, the chair of the of the business and operations committee (Gabe Damiani), the executive director (Matt Underwood), and the president of the PTCA (Rebecca Hudson) have been regularly copied on all committee correspondence and activity.

In order to ensure execution of this plan and continuity with its conclusions, the current technology committee recommends that the committee become a standing committee, with regular meetings scheduled monthly or quarterly starting in the 2014-2015 school year. The committee should regularly update the Governing Board at least twice a year.

Technology Vision – a teacher and student-driven approach

As a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, ANCS is committed to personalized instruction based on individual needs and interests as well as the performance of authentic tasks. As a hands-on, constructivist community, we view technology as *one tool* to promote personalization, project-based learning, and authentic assessment. Teachers and students are empowered to explore creative and varied methods of instruction and learning, some of which will include technology, some of which will not. It is the goal of the school to provide reliable, easy-to-use technology tools to its teachers and students to support their learning goals. Teachers and students are the primary drivers of how technology will be used in a certain learning activity; the vision of the school is to make technology *available* and to provide the appropriate professional development and training to make the use of that

technology effective. Lessons and indeed classrooms will vary greatly in how often and how deeply technology is used, and that variance is consistent with the mission of the school. Our goal vis-à-vis technology is to make sure teachers and students have it available to use at their discretion.

Technology goals for 2014-2017 include:

- Standardizing around Google as our **cloud-based storage, backup and email system** for faculty and staff, and providing professional development for best practices in using the system.
 - Introducing student-managed accounts in the 5th grade (without email) allowing student storage, ownership and management of school work as directed by teachers.
 - Allowing and supporting management of student school accounts to personal accounts at the end of 8th grade as students graduate.
- Installing a robust, **centrally managed wireless network** ensuring reliable access throughout both campuses and capable of supporting several hundred devices connected simultaneously.
- Implementing a **three-year purchase cycle for teacher laptops** so at a minimum all lead teachers receive a new MacBook every three years.
- Maintaining **laptop carts** sufficient to support use during three classes on each campus simultaneously, and support all online standardized testing.
- Implementing a **flexible content-filtering system** that protects our students while giving teachers and staff maximum flexibility to use creative and appropriate websites.
- Implementing a standard, **school-wide anti-virus program** that protects all devices and programs from current known threats based (Potential vendor TBD)
- **Reducing printing and copying** costs while allowing teachers and staff to control what they print via a **print management system** and awareness campaign.
- Implement a **standard student gradebook system across both campuses** when gradebook committee has finalized its requirements.
- Maintain the use of the **current website** to support all public-facing communication needs including teacher websites, blogs, calendars, and other parent, student, and community communication.
- Continue to support the current **Destiny library inventory and management system**
- Continue to support the business office and its accounting system.
 - Ensure routine backup of business office files and programs
- Continue to support having **permanently installed projectors** for use in every classroom
- Continue to support having document cameras available as needed
- Evaluate and support the Student Information System and systems for Development / Advancement / Fundraising as needed
- Explore the **addition of a third, full-time technology employee** in addition to technology specialists on both campuses. Two full-time people currently support the technology needs of 669 students and 93 employees.
 - A primary goal of adding this employee is to **increase the amount and quality of professional development** we can provide our teachers.

Technology Budget:

Various line items on past budgets have corresponded to technology-related items, including telephones, copiers, Internet service, staffing for two full time technology specialists, and miscellaneous equipment and computers. During the past three to four years when state and local revenues were cut to the lowest level in school history, there was no budget for replacement of teacher laptops and many maintenance functions went unaddressed. The technology committee has requested an increase in the annual budget of \$45,000 starting in 2014-2015 to create a three-year cycle of laptop replacement (for teachers), routine maintenance, the implementation of content-filtering and anti-virus programs, and related items. We also incurred a one-time \$24,900 expense in FY2014 to upgrade the wireless network.

| Line Item | Category | Description | 2014-2015 Budget** |
|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2.3 | Telephone and Utilities | Internet Service | \$8,820 |
| 2.3 | Telephone and Utilities | Telephone | \$4,500 |
| 2.5 | Gen/Admin | Copiers | \$30,000 |
| 2.7 | Books/Equip./Furn. | Tech: Service, Training, & Supplies | \$7,500 |
| 2.7 | Books/Equip./Furn. | Computers: Software/Other | \$7,334 |
| 2.7 | Books/Equip./Furn. | Computers: Hardware | \$100,500* |
| Total | | | \$158,654 |

*Includes purchase of two new laptop carts and \$45,000 for teacher laptops, anti-virus program, content filtering, and a replacement reserve.

** Excludes personnel costs. Technology staffing for 2014-2015 includes two FTEs; expenses not included above. Third technology FTE may be added in 2015-2016 depending on budget.

Fund Development Report

“September 2014 total received:\$9298.00

“Year to date received:\$18,108.00.

“Recent activities: The first Fund Development social for K and 1st Families was held at Dakota Blue on October 5. Several families attended, received information about the annual campaign and auction, and made payments. A campaign table will be set up for GP Special Friends Day/Fall Festival (Oct 17/18). We plan to host socials for other grades throughout the year.

“New yard signs for the front of each building will be ready this week and up at both campuses. Courier “Why I give” section will be set up this month and continue each week.

“Annual campaign mailer design is in progress and materials will be ready for mailing by the end of this month.

“Annual Campaign Updates:

- “We are creating a new theme for the campaign with design that we can keep in place for the next 2–3 years instead of recreating new logos and designs every year.
- “This year we will create a brochure to be mailed with a letter from Matt Underwood. Next year we can create a postcard/follow up letters/other material.
- “We are mapping out both annual and three year goals (\$200,000 goal for this year and \$700,000 for three years) for a longer term plan.
- “We are planning a “Penny Drive” for students to begin in January, a campaign week for later in the spring, and other events to build participation.

Other Fund Development News/Plans:

“Auction update: We have three confirmed co-chairs for this year. Last year’s committee co-chairs (Latha Erickson, Narin Hassan, and Renae Parent) announced the three new chairs, Terri Herod, Shannon McCaffrey, and Joanna Mevers, at EC morning meeting on 10/14. We will also announce on facebook and courier.

“Matt, Kari, and Narin met with the new co-chairs to go over the venue contract, ways the school can support the team, and setting up a plan for this year.

“The auction theme will remain the same (Wonder Ball) but with a slightly updated logo and new interpretations of the theme for the event.

“The auction committee is in the process of reviewing/signing the contract for March 7, Georgia Freight Depot.

Other Fund Development News/Plans:

“External Funding/Grant Updates: ANCS is applying in partnership with Toomer Elementary School, Wesley International Academy, and Georgia State University for an implementation grant through the Governor's Office of Student Achievement's Innovation Fund. If awarded, the grant (a maximum of just over \$1 million to be used from January 2015 to January 2017) would support shared learning and collaboration between all three schools in support of new teacher induction and development.

ANCS Annual Campaign Monthly Report

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Month of Receipt | Sep-14 |
| Received this Month | \$9,298.00 |
| Total Received To Date | \$18,108.00 |
| Count Of Donations | 112 |
| Thank You Letters Sent | 0 |

| | Method of Payment | | | | TOTAL | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|------------------|--------|----------------------|------------------|
| | Direct Mail | Online | Direct Debit ACH | Other | Received In Sep 2014 | Received To Date |
| Parents and Guardians | \$125.00 | \$0.00 | \$2,380.00 | \$0.00 | \$2,505.00 | \$7,960.00 |
| Grandparents and Special Friends | \$370.00 | \$200.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$570.00 | \$3,025.00 |
| ANCS Faculty and Staff | \$50.00 | \$30.00 | \$120.00 | \$0.00 | \$200.00 | \$600.00 |
| Other | \$5,923.00 | \$100.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$6,023.00 | \$6,523.00 |
| Total | \$6,468.00 | \$330.00 | \$2,500.00 | \$0.00 | \$9,298.00 | \$18,108.00 |

**Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School
Employee Hires and Losses Report – October 2014**

New Hires

| Name | Position | Education | Certification Status | Years of Experience |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Samantha Struttman | Associate Teacher (EC) | B.S., Georgia State University (New Teacher Residency Project) | Georgia certification | 2 |

Losses

| Name | Position | Reason | Effective Date |
|-----------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Carita Reynolds | Associate Teacher (EC) | Resignation – employed by other school | 9/30/14 |

Personnel Committee Report

- ▶ Personnel changes are described in the attached report provided by Matt Underwood
- ▶ Lia Santos, Personnel Committee Chair, met with Kari Lovell and Matt Underwood on Thursday, October 2nd. A summary of meeting notes/that discussion is provided below. There are no further details, decisions, or votes required at this time. This is an FYI on meeting items and discussions to-date:
 - **Contract terms:** Is there something we might be able to include before the contracts are provided next year to deter mid-year voluntary termination? This is very disruptive to the entire ANCS Community. Given the contracts are in one-year terms, it seems there is something we might want to include to encourage completing the entire one-year term

Personnel Committee Report

Salary Budget and Distribution:

- We all know that salaries are a large budget item that is not likely to experience significant fluctuations from year to year. ANCS has historically distributed this budget using guidelines from APS. Last year, the merit increase percentages varied based on tenure at ANCS. The objective was to recognize team members who've been with ANCS for multiple years and who we know did not receive a merit increase for 5 years.
- Given the budget, there are a variety of ways that it can be distributed. As a Community we want to make sure we are distributing it commensurate with the expectations/"what matters most" at ANCS. This is a big question that is difficult to answer so at this point these are just conversations and discussions to be had. There are no decisions, recommendations, etc. to propose or vote on at this time. We will continue these discussions and continue to keep everyone updated on progress.

Personnel Committee Report

Food Program Salaries:

- We discussed the potential of annualizing hourly employee's salaries, given the long breaks and summer. If not annualized during these breaks, the staff would have no income unless they have another job.
- Given the uniqueness of our food program, this staff is very valuable. It takes quite a while to get individuals up-to-speed on food preparation, communication with staff/students, education on health/food, etc. We want to make sure we are doing everything possible to retain these team members.
- One last item we are looking into are hourly rates for this type of position. We are researching this and will ensure that our hourly rates are inline with market compensation levels for similar roles.