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*Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*  
*"Educating Georgia's Future"*

February 21, 2018

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL & U.S. MAIL**

Elizabeth W. Gay  
Governing Board Chair  
Wesley International Academy  
211 Memorial Drive SE  
Atlanta, GA 30312

**RE: Wesley International Academy Charter Renewal Petition**

Dear Ms. Gay:

Thank you for submitting a charter renewal petition on behalf of Wesley International Academy (hereinafter "WIA"). The District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division of the Georgia Department of Education (hereinafter "the Department") completed its review of your application materials, including the 2017 annual report and the information presented by you and your colleagues during the panel interview at our offices on February 9, 2018. Although your petition satisfied most of the requisite criteria, we identified some areas that require clarification and/or supplemental information before we may present it to the State Board of Education with a recommendation for charter contract renewal approval.

In reviewing the disciplinary data provided by WIA, the Department is concerned that Black/African American students received out-of-school suspensions at a rate significantly higher than any other racial subgroup. WIA's application referenced the Positive Behavior Support Model (hereinafter "PBS") as part of WIA's behavior management philosophy and strategies. During the panel interview, WIA discussed implementing the restorative justice model, utilizing Second Step, initiating in-school suspensions and providing teachers and staff with training on classroom management as strategies to address the racial disproportionality of out-of-school suspensions. WIA also described how at least some members of the governing board were unaware of the school's suspension data until they began completing the charter renewal application. We request that WIA provide the Department with a written supplemental statement to the renewal application by no later than **Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 5pm** with the following:

1. Explanation of how WIA has used and how WIA will use PBS in conjunction with a restorative justice model to inform WIA's disciplinary program.
  - a. Include timeline for implementation of PBS and restorative justice.

2. Explanation of how the governing board will stay informed of the school's disciplinary data and practices going forward.
3. Explanation of how the governing board will hold the staff and administration accountability for implementing the strategies described above to address the racial disparity in out-of-school suspensions.
  - a. Include any corrective actions the governing board will take as a part of the accountability process.
  - b. Include a timeline for each corrective action.

As the Department stated during the panel interview, we are concerned that the number of low-income students at WIA does not reflect that of the attendance zone WIA serves at large. The Department understands that WIA intends to use a weighted lottery and has set a goal of increasing the percentage of low-income students comprising WIA's student body to 65%. We request that WIA provide the Department with a written supplemental statement to the renewal application by no later than **Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 5pm** with the following:

4. Date when goal of 65% low-income student body is set to be achieved.
5. Recruitment plan of action to increase the low-income student population of WIA while maintaining WIA's high student retention rate over the next five years.
  - a. Includes dates when each action of the plan will be completed and who will be responsible for implementing each action.
  - b. Include how the governing board of WIA will oversee the action plan and hold WIA staff and administration accountable for adhering to it.

For WIA's petition to be presented at the March 21-22, 2018 State Board of Education (hereinafter "SBOE") meetings with a recommendation for approval, the Department must receive the requested information by the above-stated dates. If you need more time to respond, please let us know by **Wednesday, March 7, 2018, at 5pm**. Please note that a response time extension is fine, but that SBOE consideration of your new charter contract would be moved to the May 2018 meetings because there is no SBOE meeting during the month of April 2018.

Please also note that if you elect not to comply with the requests for clarification and supplemental information included in this letter, you may withdraw your petition from consideration or the petition will be presented by the Department to the State Board of Education with a recommendation for denial. If you do not wish to provide the requested information and withdraw the petition, please also let us know in writing by **Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 5pm**.

Elizabeth Gay  
Wesley International Academy  
February 13, 2018  
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Feel free to contact me at [fblack@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:fblack@doe.k12.ga.us) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

  
Francesca Black  
Division Attorney

Cc: Gayle Burnett, Executive Director of Innovation, Atlanta Public Schools  
Jason Marshall, Executive Director, Wesley International Academy  
Louis Erste, Associate Superintendent, Policy, Charter Schools, District Flexibility and Governmental Affairs  
Allen Mueller, Director Charter School's Division