



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Public Charter School Renewal Application for Academic Center for Excellence

Deadline for Initial Submission: 5:00 PM on October 4, 2021



**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Charter School Office
Four Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.683.5313**

EVENT/DEADLINE	Renewal Applications
Initial Applications Due by 5:00 p.m. Submitted to ade.charterschools@ade.arkansas.gov	October 4, 2021
Application Reviews with DESE	October 15-31, 2021
Application Revision Window	November 1-15, 2021
Final Applications Due by 5:00 p.m. Submitted to ade.charterschools@ade.arkansas.gov	November 15, 2021
Charter Authorizing Panel Hearings	December 14-15, 2021
State Board of Education Meeting – Review of Charter Authorizing Panel Decisions	January 13, 2022

Charter Information

Name of Charter:	Academic Center for Excellence – Change to Cabot Panther Academy
LEA Number:	4304703
Authorization Date:	2017
Expiration Date:	2022
Enrollment Cap:	2,500
Grades Served:	5-12
Superintendent:	Dr. W. Tony Thurman
Superintendent Email:	Tony.thurman@cps.k12.ar.us
Charter Mailing Address:	21 Funtastic Dr. Cabot, AR 72023
Charter Physical Address:	21 Funtatstic Dr. Cabot, AR 72023
Contact for the Application:	Mrs. Carrie Lair
Contact Email:	Carrie.lair@cps.k12.ar.us
Contact Phone:	501-743-3520

Number of Years Requested for Renewal (1-5):

5

Section 1: Charter Data

Current Accreditation Status: Accredited
Level of Support: General

Enrollment (3 Quarter ADM)

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
255	275	273	245

Graduation Rates

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
4 Year	57.14	78.23	80.2	80.2
5 Year	72.44	64.37	78.0	78.0

Letter Grades

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

ESSA School Index

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Overall Index	57.7	50.83	N/A	60.87
Weighted Achievement	42.78	15.31	N/A	45.39
Growth	78.55	80.35	N/A	78.69
SQSS	39.29	42.07	N/A	36.84

Section 2: Charter Mission Statement

Previous mission statement:

The mission of ACE is to increase the achievement of every student by providing anywhere, anytime learning whether in a traditional or non-traditional educational setting.

If the mission statement for the charter will change, please provide the new mission:

Our mission at the Cabot Panther Academy is to reimagine education by building relationships, inspiring every student to reach their full potential, teaching them academics and life skills, guiding them to become successful, productive citizens, and helping them find their own strengths and unique abilities.

What type of educational model does the school follow?

- Alternative Learning Environment
- Traditional
- Virtual Only
- College Prep
- Credit Recovery
- Other Focus Area: _____

How is the selected educational model incorporated in the day-to-day operations of the school, curriculum, class offerings, etc.?

Throughout our school day we have students in a 1:15 ALE setting, who attend school five days per week from 7:50-3:20, we have students engaged in a completely virtual offering, and we have students in a hybrid setting who attend on-campus for a minimum of nine hours per week and then work asynchronously the rest of the week to progress through their courses. We have students who enroll with us after having failed one or more high school courses and work to recover those credits. We also have students who choose to accelerate through their educational careers by taking 8 or more courses per semester. The flexibility we have with teacher licensures as well as utilizing a digital CMS/LMS for content, has allowed our school to ensure students are able to get what they need to successfully complete their K-12 careers with us. Regardless of a students' individual or family circumstances, we work alongside them to get them where they need to be. Our full-time counselor also works with our staff to ensure the SEL needs of our students are being met while they are enrolled with us.

Section 3: Charter Goals

Please use the following space to evaluate the goals approved in the last charter application.

SMART Goal 1	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Increase school's average ACT Composite scores	School's average ACT composite score of 20 or higher.	Unfortunately, our school did not meet this goal. Indeed as the average composite scores for both our state and our district decreased over the past five years, it is not unique for our school's average to drop. In addition, neither the average of students in our state nor the district was 20.0. With that in mind, the goal of 20 as an average for students in an at-risk school may have been too lofty a goal to set. We would like to continue to use the ACT Composite score in the future, but an overall average of 20 may be too high a goal to set given the trend over the past five years.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Students tested	80	105	68	97
Composite Score Mean	16.7	17.5	18	15.9
District Average	20.2	19.9	19.9	18.9

State Average	19.4	19.3	19	18.2
National Average	20.8	20.7	20.6	20.7

SMART Goal 2	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
ACE will improve our school's student proficiency percentage in math an average of 10% each year over the baseline established from the 2016 ACT Aspire administration.	Average of a 50% increase over the contractual period. Starting at 5% in '17. Goal of 45% in 20-21	Unfortunately, our school did not meet this goal. As an ALE, we don't typically have the same core group of students from grades 7-12 and it is difficult to effectively evaluate student progress from one year to the next. In addition, it is difficult to compare groups of students when we have such a discrepancy in the number of students per grade and total students assessed from one year to the next. In the chart below we've tracked not only the percentage of students who demonstrate readiness in Math on the ACT Aspire, but also the number of students tested in each grade level. With our low total number of students as well as their respective at-risk situations, we anticipate there always being a high level of volatility in assessment percentages. For those reasons, as well as our desire to best prepare our students for post-secondary success, we will be modifying this goal for the future.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
7th Grade	33%*	67% (15)	14%* (7)	N/A	50%* (2)
8th Grade	13%	32% (16)	28% (18)	N/A	23% (18)
9th Grade	30%	6% (32)	17% (29)	N/A	27% (26)
10th Grade	9%	25% (61)	17% (77)	N/A	13% (53)
Total	15% (96)	25% (124)	18% (131)	N/A	20% (103)

*Less than 10 students tested

SMART Goal 3	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
ACE will improve our school's student proficiency percentage in literacy by an average of 5% each year over the baseline established from the 2016 ACT Aspire administration.	Increase our literacy percentage by 25 points. Started with 40% in '17. Goal of 60% in 20-21.	Unfortunately, our school did not meet the goal of 60% readiness by 2021. As an ALE, we don't typically have the same core group of students from grades 7-12 and it is difficult to effectively evaluate student progress from one year to the next. In addition, it is difficult to compare groups of students when we have such a discrepancy in the number of students per grade and total students assessed from one year to the next. In the chart below we've tracked not only the percentage of students who demonstrate readiness in Literacy on the ACT Aspire, but also the number of students tested in each grade level. With our low total number of students as well as their respective at-risk situations, we anticipate there always being a high level of volatility in assessment percentages. For those reasons, as well as our desire to best prepare our students for post-secondary success, we will be modifying this goal for the future.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
7th Grade	100* (3)	50 (15)	* (7)	N/A	50* (2)
8th Grade	100* (8)	38.46 (16)	26.67 (18)	N/A	35 (17)
9th Grade	50 (27)	15.63 (32)	22.22 (30)	N/A	31 (26)
10th Grade	37.5 (59)	31.67 (61)	24.68 (79)	N/A	36 (53)
Total	47.4 (97)	29.8 (124)	24.4 (134)	N/A	34.7 (98)

*Less than 10 students tested

SMART Goal 4	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
ACE will improve our school's student proficiency percentage in science an average of 5% each year over the baseline established from the 2016 ACT Aspire administration.	Average of a 25% increase over the contractual period. Started with 8th - 20%, 9th - 5%, and 10th - 15%. Goal of 8th - 40%, 9th - 25%, and 10th - 35% in 20-21.	Unfortunately, our school did not meet the goal in Science readiness by 2021 for any of our grades. As an ALE, we don't typically have the same core group of students from grades 7-12 and it is difficult to effectively evaluate student progress from one year to the next. In addition, it is difficult to compare groups of students when we have such a discrepancy in the number of students per grade and total students assessed from one year to the next. In the chart below we've tracked not only the percentage of students who demonstrate readiness in Science on the ACT Aspire, but also the number of students tested in each grade level. With our low total number of students as well as their respective at-risk situations, we anticipate there always being a high level of volatility in assessment percentages. For those reasons, as well as our desire to best prepare our students for post-secondary success, we will be modifying this goal for the future.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
7th Grade	33%* (3)	40% (15)	29%* (7)	N/A	50%* (2)
8th Grade	24%* (8)	32% (16)	34% (18)	N/A	33% (18)
9th Grade	37% (27)	9% (32)	20% (30)	N/A	25% (26)
10th Grade	13% (58)	19% (61)	18% (78)	N/A	28% (53)

*Less than 10 students tested

Section 4: New Goals

Select performance goals for the period of time requested for renewal that are related to the specific mission of the charter. Please include how the goals will be monitored.

SMART Goals
The Cabot Panther Academy (CPA) will increase the 4 year graduation rate of students participating in our program. We will review graduation rates each October to monitor the progress towards our goal and adjust accordingly.
CPA will increase the school's average ACT composite score. We will review testing data when it is released each year to monitor the progress towards our goal and adjust accordingly.
CPA will increase the percentage of juniors and seniors taking CTE courses who participate in the ACT WorkKeys assessment. We will review course enrollment data compared to testing data to monitor our progress towards our goal and adjust accordingly.
The CPA will increase the number of students participating in a SEL school-provided program each semester. We will review enrollment data in the first and third quarter to monitor our progress towards our goal and adjust accordingly.
CPA will increase our enrollment in order to provide further support for at-risk students. We will review enrollment data in October to monitor our progress towards our goal and adjust accordingly.

Section 5: Waivers

Existing Waivers

Please list every waiver the charter school currently holds. Please check either “rescind” or “continue waiver” in the top-right box. If you plan to continue the waiver, please provide thorough answers to the questions provided.

Waiver #1 Topic	Statutes/Standards/Rules	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Adopt School Calendar	A.C.A §§ 6-10-106. Standard: 1-A.4.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>In the past five years, this waiver has not been utilized. However, we want to continue to have flexibility with regards to summer offerings or an early start to the school year depending upon the needs of our students and stakeholders. Having an earlier start date or later end date would allow us to tailor our schedule to best meet student and community needs. With that in mind, we would like to continue to have this waiver available to us if programming choices would demand it.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #2 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Class Size and Teaching Load	DESE Rule: Class Size and Teaching Load. Standard: 1-A.5.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>As we are offering a purely digital option for our students, this waiver has allowed us to continue to provide quality teachers at an efficient and comfortable level. We will continue to hold ourselves to a maximum of 200 students per teacher outside of the ALE setting, in order to not overwhelm any of our staff members.</p>		

If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.
N/A

Waiver #3 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Class Size and Teaching Load - Compensation	A.C.A §§ 6-17-812	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.
As we are offering a purely digital option for our students, this waiver has allowed us to continue to provide quality teachers at an efficient and comfortable level. We will continue to hold ourselves to a maximum of 200 students per teacher outside of the ALE setting, in order to not overwhelm any of our staff members. Teachers would need to agree to this as a part of teaching at this school.
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.
N/A

Waiver #4 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Library Media Services	A.C.A §§ 6-25-103, 6-25-104. Standards: 4-F.1, and 4-F.2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

As our school offers flexible hours and attendance, there is not a need for a complete media center or media specialist. As resources and space are not needed specifically for this service, we can allocate those funds towards additional programs and staff to better support our students.

If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.

Students at our charter school have the opportunity and are encouraged to take classes or utilize services on-campus at our other secondary schools. With that in mind, students are able to utilize district-provided or personal transportation to these other campuses. To that point, students are able to make use of library media services at another campus with little trouble. In addition, students will receive instruction in our library media standards through embedded lessons in their language arts classes.

Waiver #5 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Balance of print, non-print, and electronic media.	Standard: 2-D.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

As we are utilizing a web-based program, Edmentum, as the primary method of content delivery; we will continue to lean more heavily upon electronic media. We have added a number of print copies of literature, textbooks, and supplemental resources over the past five years. However, we will continue to utilize digital media more so than print media for the foreseeable future. This option allows students to make the most of the flexible hours and access materials off-campus with greater ease.

If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		
Waiver #6 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies Committee	A.C.A §§ 6-17-203	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
N/A		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #7 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act	A.C.A §§ 6-17-1701 et seq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
N/A		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

N/A		
Waiver #8 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies - Teacher Fair Dismissal Act	A.C.A §§ 6-17-1501 et seq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
N/A		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #9 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Salaries - Teacher Definition	A.C.A §§ 6-17-902	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
N/A		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #10 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Salaries - Warrants Void Without Valid License and Contract	A.C.A §§ 6-17-919	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		

N/A
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.
N/A

Waiver #11 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Counselor Licensure	Standard: 4-E.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
N/A		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #12 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Day - Instructional Time & Six Hour Instructional Day	A.C.A §§ 6-16-102, 1-A.4.2, 1-A.4.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
As our school will continue to provide flexible learning opportunities for students in a variety of circumstances, flexible school hours allow us to maximize learning whenever students are able to participate. Furthermore, we would like to investigate additional after-school learning opportunities in the future. This waiver allows us to utilize that time towards meeting the needed instructional hours.		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #13 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Student Teacher Interaction Days - 178	1-A.4.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>In the past five years, this waiver has not been utilized. However, we want to continue to have flexibility with regards to summer offerings or an early start to the school year depending upon the needs of our students and stakeholders. It's possible that we may not meet with each student 178 days exactly as we strive for flexibility for individual students. With that in mind, we would like to continue to have this waiver available to us if needed.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #14 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Superintendent Licensure	4-B.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>As our Charter School is part of an accredited public school district in Arkansas, this waiver isn't needed.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
N/A		

Waiver #15 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Teacher Licensure & Teacher Licensure Requirements	A.C.A §§ 6-17-401, 6-17-418, 6-15-1004, 6-17-309, 6-17-902, 6-17-908, and 6-17-919. Standards: 4-D.1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Since the inception of this school, we have worked to be as flexible and efficient as possible in providing a quality yet adaptive learning environment for our students. With that in mind, we need to have flexibility to provide students exactly the courses or services they need regardless of the licensure of the available staff member. For example, we have a teacher who is certified in four subject areas for grades 4-8. However, she has studied math for many years. We are able to utilize that staff member to teach several secondary math courses for credit thanks to this waiver. Without this waiver in place, we would be forced to ask another staff member, who holds the secondary math license, to teach more students. We have far more students in grades 9-12 than we do in grades 5-8. This licensure flexibility allows us to efficiently assign course assignments so that no teacher is overwhelmed and staff is able to grow in ways they may not otherwise be able to do.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		
<p>N/A</p>		

New Waivers

Please list any waivers the charter wishes to add to its charter. For each waiver topic, please be sure to add the appropriate statute, Standard for Accreditation, and DESE Rule related to the waiver topic. For each topic the school must provide a detailed rationale explaining: (1) why the waiver is necessary to allow the charter to achieve its stated goals and mission, (2) how the waiver will be used, and (3) if related to a student service (ex: nursing, counseling, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) how the school will meet the needs of students and how the student service is being provided in an alternative way.

Waiver Topic	Statutes/Standards/Rules	Rationale

Section 7: Amendment Requests

List any non-waiver amendment requests and provide a rationale for each (i.e., changes to grade levels, enrollment cap, location, addition of campus).

	Topic	Rationale
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Section 8: Desegregation Analysis

*Required only if the charter intends to add a campus, add grades, increase enrollment cap, or change location.

Describe the impact, both current and potential, of the public charter school on the efforts of affected public school district(s) to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

N/A