

**RUTHERFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING AGENDA**

**2240 Southpark Drive  
Murfreesboro, TN 37128**

**April 25, 2023  
5:30 P.M.**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- 4. AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY-RUTHERFORD APPLICATION  
CONSIDERATION (TAB 1)**
- 5. ADJOURNMENT**



# Charter Application Review

**Initial Recommendation for  
American Classical Academy Rutherford**



**AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD**

---

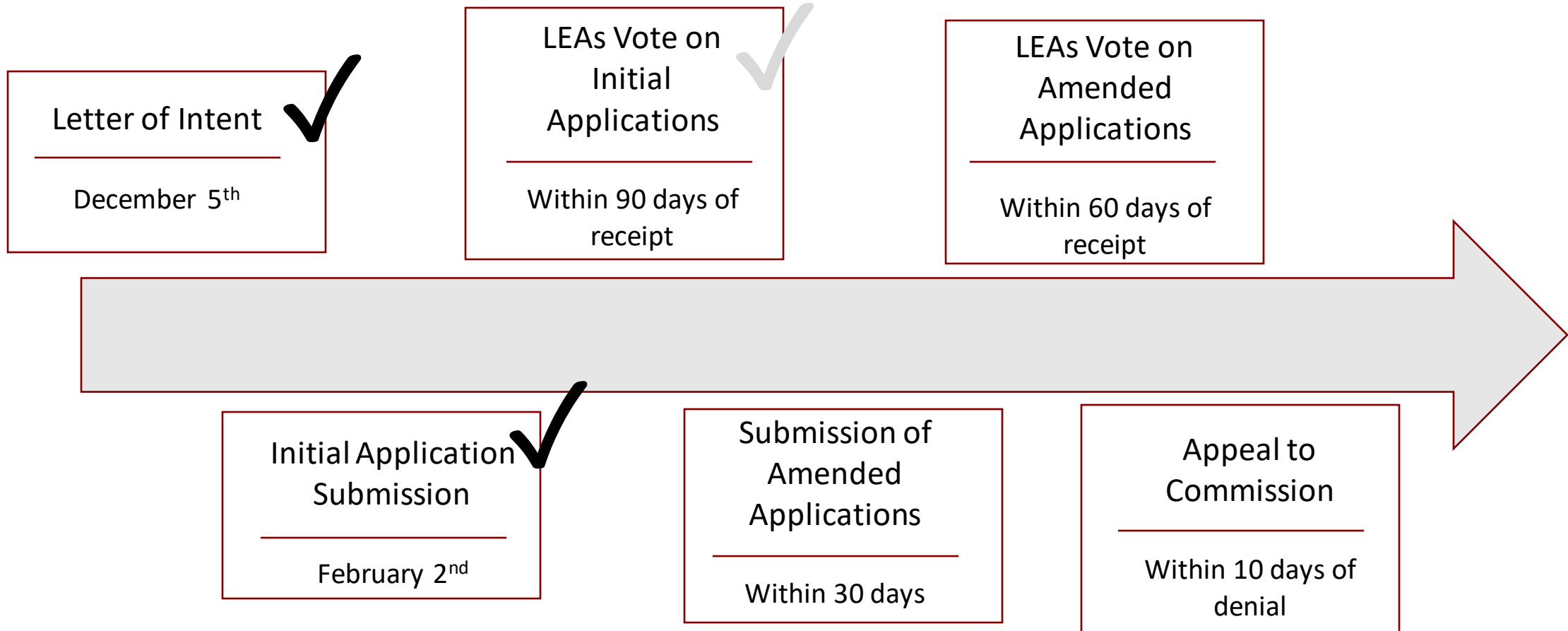
# Purposes of Charter Schools

## Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-102

---

1. Improve learning for all students and close the achievement gap between high and low students;
2. Provide options for parents to meet educational needs of students;
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and provide greater decision-making authority to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance;
4. Measure performance of pupils and faculty, and ensure that children have the opportunity to reach proficiency on state academic assessments;
5. Create new professional opportunities for teachers; and
6. Afford parents substantial meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children

# Application Timeline



---

# Overview of Evaluation Process

---

- Review and Scoring Criteria Training - February 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Independent Review of Application(s) - February 3<sup>rd</sup>- March 1<sup>st</sup>
- Development of Questions - March 3<sup>rd</sup>- March 13<sup>th</sup>
- Public Survey/Comment - March 1<sup>st</sup>- April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Capacity Interview: March 16<sup>th</sup>
- Review and Consensus Judgement

---

# American Classical Academy - Rutherford

---

## RCS Review Team

---

Name	Title
Caitlin Bullard	School Choice/Charter Coordinator, Rutherford County Schools
Bri Cole	Rutherford County Community Member/ Parent
Cedric Dukes	Rutherford County Community Member
Alexandria Jackson	Principal, Roy Waldron Elementary School, Rutherford County Schools
Kay Martin	Secondary Education Coordinator, Rutherford County Schools
Grayson Maxwell	Communications Specialist, Rutherford County Schools
Devolla Moorman	Special Education Compliance Supervisor, Rutherford County Schools
Caleb Tidwell	School Board Vice Chair, Rutherford County Schools



---

# Summary of the Application

---



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

School Name: American Classical Academy Rutherford (ACAR)

Sponsor: American Classical Education (ACE)

Proposed Location of School: Location has not been determined

Mission:<sup>1</sup> The mission of American Classical Academy Rutherford ("ACAR") is to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue.

Number of Schools Currently in Operation by Sponsor: The sponsor has no schools operating or authorized in Tennessee. However, Barney Classical School Initiative ("BCSI") an outreach program of Hillsdale College, is referenced throughout the application and currently supports over 20 member schools through curriculum, governance, and organizational structure.

---

<sup>1</sup> American Classical Academy – Rutherford Application, pg. 10.



# Summary of the Application

AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

Proposed Enrollment:<sup>2</sup>

Grade Levels	Year 1 2023-24	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26	Year 4 2026-27	Year 5 2027-28	At Capacity 2033-34
K	60	60	60	60	60	60
1	60	60	60	60	60	60
2	60	60	60	60	60	60
3	60	60	60	60	60	60
4	50	50	50	50	50	50
5	50	50	50	50	50	50
6		50	50	50	50	50
7			50	50	50	50
8				50	50	50
9					50	50
10						50
11						50
12						50
Totals	340	390	440	490	540	690

<sup>2</sup> ACAR Application, page 42.

---

# Brief Description of Application

---

- Proposing new K-12 charter school in Rutherford County. No location identified.
- Applying as a new-start and is currently pursuing authorization in five TN counties: Jackson-Madison, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson\*, and Rutherford.
- ACAR's classical model is grounded in the Hillsdale College K-12 curriculum, and ACAR plans to collaborate with BCSI in its design and execution of the educational program and professional development for educators.
- American Classical Education's governing board will oversee all five schools seeking authorization if they are all approved.

---

# Summary of Evaluation

---

The review committee recommends denial of the amended application for ACAR because the application failed to meet or exceed the criteria of the rubric in all three areas: academic plan, operations plan, and financial plan.

Sections	Ratings
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard

*The ratings for all three sections should be "Meets or Exceeds Standards" in order to be recommended for approval.*

---

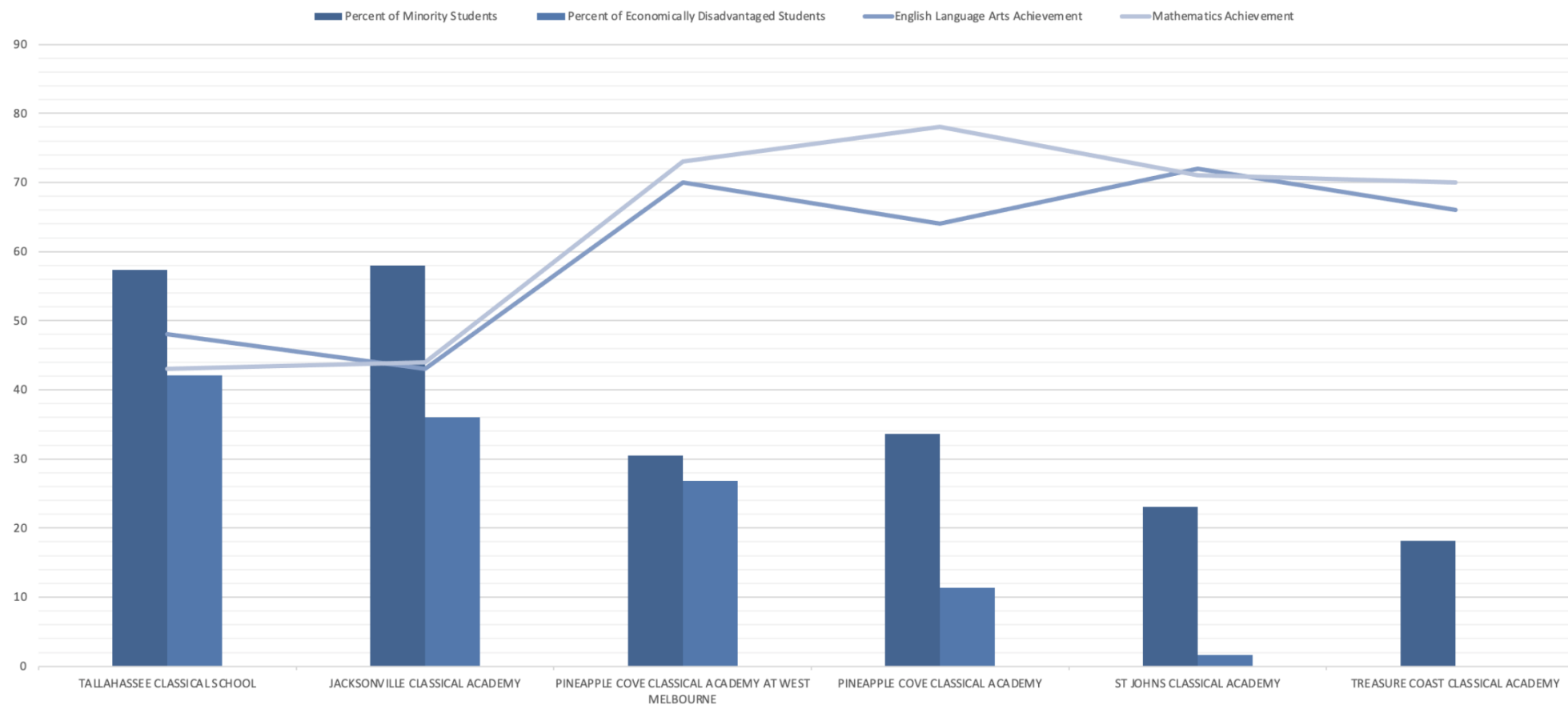
# Academic Plan Design and Capacity

---

## Concerns/Weaknesses

- Curriculum & assessments are not aligned to **TN State Standards**
- No plan for early post-secondary opportunities in 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> (e.g., CTE opportunities, dual enrollment, dual credit, industry credentials)
- No community input in application, lack of overall **community engagement**. *No parents in attendance at engagement event.*
- Unclear aspects of **discipline** and dress code, statement that **policies** may not be followed

## Relationship between Achievement & Subgroups, Florida BCSI Schools



There is a direct correlation between a higher percentage of ED/ minority students and lower achievement in both mathematics and English Language Arts.

## Demographic Trends- All Schools

School	District	ED	ELL	SWD	Minority
Brevard- District	Brevard	47	4.4	17.9	41.6
Pineapple Cove- West	Brevard	31.3	2.8	11.7	30.9
Pineapple Cove	Brevard	22.4	2.9	14.7	33.7
Clay- District	Clay	58.8	2.8	20.8	42.3
St. Johns Classical	Clay	0.9	0.5	12.9	23.4
Duval- District	Duval	51	6.7	16.2	78.7
Jacksonville Classical	Duval	38.4	1.2	11.1	44.9
Leon- District	Leon	44.1	3.3	16.6	72.6
Tallahassee Classical	Leon	44.6	11	13.9	57.9
Martin- District	Martin	47.6	12.2	15.8	46.1
Treasure Coast Classical	Martin	21.2	0.9	13.7	19.7
Higher than district					
Lower than district					

---

# Academic Plan Design and Capacity

---

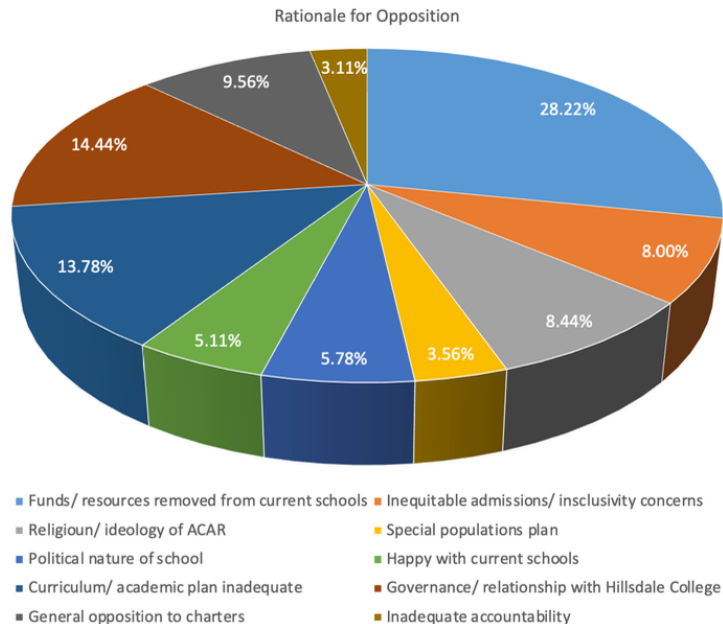
## Concerns/Weaknesses

- Significant gaps in **special education plan** (e.g., procedures to identify students and deliver services)
- Lack of detail related to knowledge and plans for implementation of **RTI<sup>2</sup>** framework
- Gaps in plan to deliver and differentiate instruction to various levels of **English language learners**

A survey conducted by Rutherford County Schools from February- April 2023 revealed that, across all groups of stakeholders, including parents, educators and community members, there is an overall opposition to the authorization of American Classical Academy Rutherford. Of the 1,003 responses received, 721 were opposed (72%) and 281 were in favor (28%.) The majority of respondents (793) were parents or guardians of RCS students. The primary reasons for opposition and support are identified below.

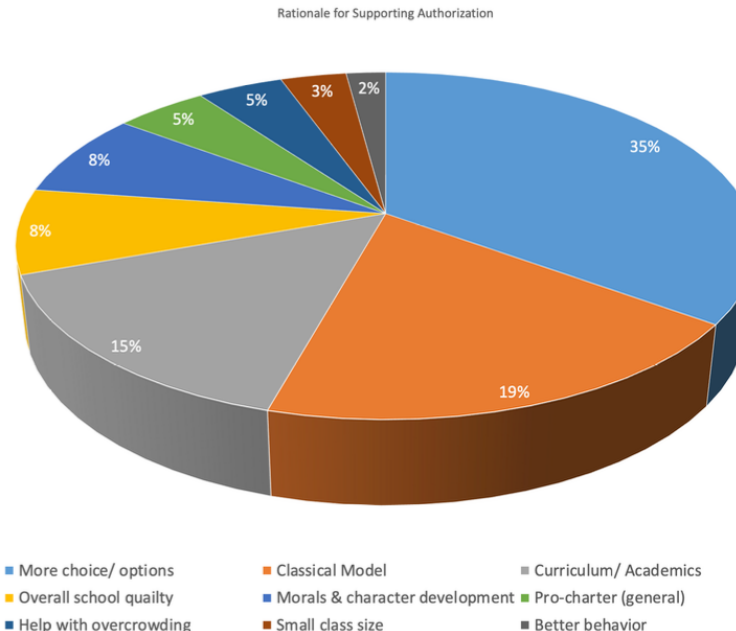
## Do Not Support- 72% of respondents

There were a range of reasons for opposing authorization, but the most common were concerns about allocating resources to charter schools, concerns with curriculum and the academic plan, and opposition to the governance structure and relationship with Hillsdale College.



## Support- 28% of respondents

The majority of individuals who supported authorization value having additional choice options within the district and/ or are in favor of components of the classical model of education.





---

# Academic Plan Design and Capacity

---

## Strengths

- Clear and consistent mission and vision
- Focus on relationships and character-building
- Emphasis on language, phonics, and complex text
- Priority on parent involvement for enrolled students

---

# Operations Plan and Capacity

---



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

## Concerns/ Weaknesses

- **Safety** and capacity for **crisis** planning
- Insufficient plan for **student health** services
- Lack of identified **location** or facility, missed deadlines in start-up plan
- **Transportation** plan as barrier to equitable access

---

# Operations Plan and Capacity

---



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

## Concerns/ Weaknesses

- **BCSI relationship** still pending and unclear
- Governing board's inexperience with **K-12/ public education**
- Ambiguous relationship between governing board and **local advisory committee**
- **Capacity** of network start-up team

---

# Operations Plan and Capacity

---



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

## Strengths

- Organizational chart with qualifications for each position
- Clear ACE Board Policies
- Commitment to TN charter school governing body training

---

# Financial Plan and Capacity

---



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

## Concerns/Weaknesses

- **Contingencies** for funding are inadequate
- Lack of transparency with proposed **funding source**, American Classical Education Foundation
- Failure to disclose **private funding** as required by T.C.A. 49-13-107
- Insufficient budget for **ESL-certified** staff and contracted services for **special populations**

### The American Classical Education Foundation

300 D Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002

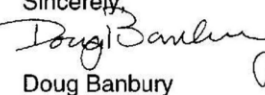
January 3, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am pleased to notify you that the American Classical Education Foundation is willing to provide a no-interest loan in the amount of \$750,000 to American Classical Academy Rutherford (ACAR) upon authorization of its charter by the Rutherford County Board of Education. The Foundation is offering this start-up financial support to ensure the Academy's long-term success.

We know the Academy expects to operate largely on public funding once it reaches full enrollment. However, before reaching full enrollment and securing a long-term facility, resources for financial contingencies like this are necessary. This loan will be available only if ACAR is unable to secure grant funds through the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP). However, the American Classical Education Foundation is also willing to offer an additional no-interest revolving line of credit of up to \$1 million if the funds provided by the CSP grant or no interest loan are insufficient to meet start-up needs. This line of credit will be available to ACAR from authorization through the first five years of school operation.

The American Classical Education Foundation is pleased to support ACAR's mission to provide a strong, publicly-funded classical education model to the families of Rutherford County. Following authorization, we will enter a formal agreement for the line of credit with the Academy.

Sincerely,  
  
Doug Banbury

Secretary, The American Classical Education Foundation Board

---

# Financial Plan and Capacity

---



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

## Strengths

- Possible access to loan (\$750k) and line of credit (\$1 million)
- Reasonable assumptions for some services based on other BCSI schools (e.g., IT, office supplies, and testing)

---

# Summary of Evaluation

---

The review committee recommends denial of the amended application for ACAR because the application failed to meet or exceed the criteria of the rubric in all three areas: academic plan, operations plan, and financial plan.

Sections	Ratings
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard

*The ratings for all three sections should be "Meets or Exceeds Standards" in order to be recommended for approval.*



**AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD**  
ACAR



# SUMMARY OF ACAR COMMUNITY SURVEY

April 2023

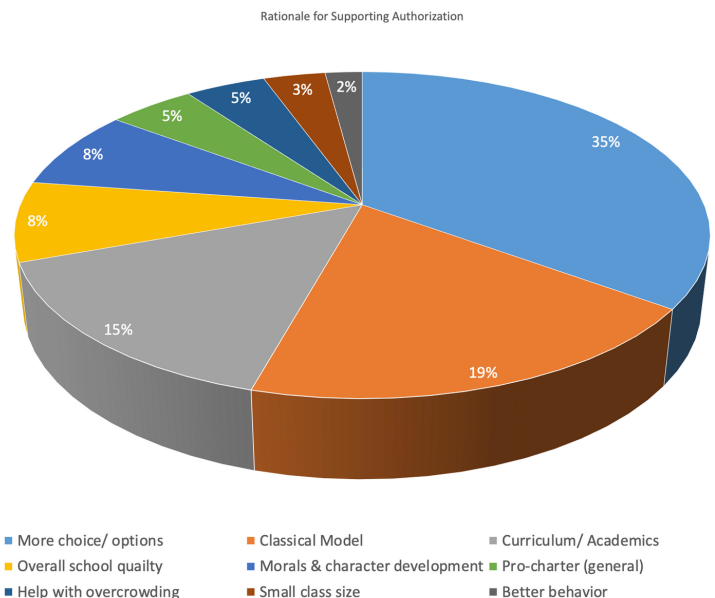
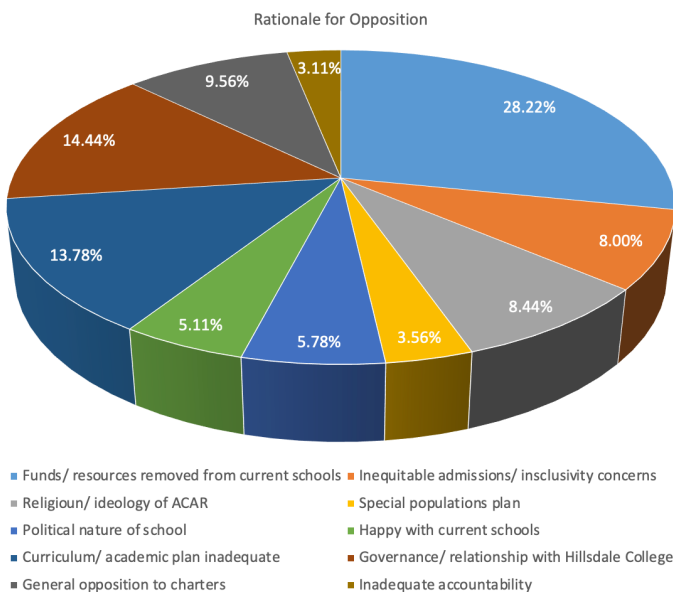
A survey conducted by Rutherford County Schools from February- April 2023 revealed that, across all groups of stakeholders, including parents, educators and community members, there is an overall opposition to the authorization of American Classical Academy Rutherford. Of the 1,003 responses received, 721 were opposed (72%) and 281 were in favor (28%.) The majority of respondents (793) were parents or guardians of RCS students. The primary reasons for opposition and support are identified below.

## Do Not Support- 72% of respondents

There were a range of reasons for opposing authorization, but the most common were concerns about allocating resources to charter schools, concerns with curriculum and the academic plan, and opposition to the governance structure and relationship with Hillsdale College.

## Support- 28% of respondents

The majority of individuals who supported authorization value having additional choice options within the district and/ or are in favor of components of the classical model of education.



"Hillsdale affiliated schools have many concerning aspects including their English language arts curriculum, a lack of research..., shortage of special education opportunities, outdated materials, poor growth in other states where they operate schools, lack of a school site and insufficient ability to open a K-12 school." - RCS Parent

"I think there are big promises made with little outline of how these promises will be achieved." - Community stakeholder

"Diversity in schooling options will greatly benefit the diverse learning needs of our community. We don't all learn the same way and charter school greatly benefit the kids that don't 'fit into the box.'" - RCS Parent

"I know we personally appreciate the classical model of learning and right now the only way to give our children a classical education is to homeschool them." - Local homeschool parent