

# FALL CREEK ACADEMY

## 2010-2011 Performance Analysis

### Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?

2.1. Is the school in sound fiscal health?	
<b>STANDARD</b>	The school presents significant concerns in no more than <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) its state financial audits (e.g., presence of “significant findings”); b) its financial staffing and systems; c) its success in achieving a balanced budget over the past three years; d) the adequacy of its projections of revenues and expenses for the next three years; e) its fulfillment of financial reporting requirements under Sections 10 and 17 of the charter agreement. In addition, if the school presents significant concerns in one area, it has a credible plan for addressing the concern that has been approved by the Mayor’s Office.

#### 2010-11 Performance: **Approaching Standard**

In 2010-11, Fall Creek Academy has established adequate staffing and systems for managing the school’s finances.

The Mayor’s Office contracts with an independent accounting firm to complete annual financial performance reviews of each school. Based on a review of FCA’s finances for 2010-11, the Mayor’s Office found that the school successfully achieved a balanced budget but had to rely on temporary loans totaling \$200,000 in order to end the year on budget. Additionally, the school has not complied with Sections 10 and 17 of the charter, failing to submit required documentation to the Mayor’s Office in a timely fashion. Thus, the school is approaching standard for this indicator.

2.2. Are the school’s student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?	
<b>STANDARD</b>	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student attendance and retention rates are generally at or above the school’s agreed-upon target rates.

#### 2010-11 Performance: **Meets Standard**

Fall Creek Academy met enrollment targets set for 2010-11. The following chart displays the school’s target enrollment compared with its official fall enrollment, as reported by the IDOE.

Year	Target Enrollment	Fall Enrollment	Percent Below
2010-11	360	375	N/A

*Source: Official fall enrollment figures from the IDOE. Target enrollment is the maximum capacity from the school’s charter agreement with the Mayor’s Office, submitted by the school.*

The 2010-11 attendance rate at FCA was equal to that of the state and above the county.

	FCA	MC	IN
<b>2010-11 Attendance rate</b>	95.5%	94.89%	95.92%

No targets have been established for student retention rates for Fall Creek Academy.

Based on the 2010-11 performance, FCA meets the Mayor’s Office standard for this indicator because they were fully enrolled and had an attendance rate at or above that of both the county and the state.

<b>2.3. Is the school’s Board active and competent in its oversight?</b>	
<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>The Board’s membership collectively contributes a broad skill set and fair representation of the community; Board members are knowledgeable about the school; roles and responsibilities of the Board are clearly delineated; Board meetings reflect thoughtful discussion and progress in the consideration of issues; overall, the Board provides consistent and competent stewardship of the school.</b>

**2010-11 Performance: Does Not Meet Standard**

On June 16, 2011, the GEO Foundation, the school’s management organization, utilized a provision within the Board’s by-laws and removed 100% of the school’s Board of Directors. In July 2011, the GEO Foundation selected three members to serve as interim directors until a permanent Board was named.

While the Interim Board of Directors at Fall Creek Academy is reasonably well-balanced in areas of professional expertise, the board developments have caused serious concerns about the apparent lack of true autonomy the school’s board has in overseeing the management organization it has contracted with. To date, the roles and responsibilities of the school’s Board are unclear, given that the Board is under the authority of the management organization with whom it has a contract. It is also unclear what the timeline or process will be for appointing permanent members to the Board. Further-the Board has made no progress in addressing the issues previously cited as concerns of the Mayor’s Office.

The Mayor’s Office regularly attends board meetings and examines minutes of meetings held by the board. Board meeting minutes consistently do not provide thorough details of the discussions held during meetings nor do they always provide details of any public comment noted during meetings.

In summary, there is no evidence that the Board is fulfilling its obligation to monitor the performance of the school’s education service provider. Roles and responsibilities among the Board and its vendor, the GEO Foundation, remain unclear. This relationship leaves the board dependent upon the EMO, which the Board is tasked with overseeing. Based on the performance demonstrated in the 2010-11 academic year, the Board at FCA does not meet the Mayor’s Office standard for this indicator.

<b>2.4. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?</b>	
<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school.</b>

**2010-11 Performance: Approaching Standard**

In the spring of each year, researchers administer anonymous surveys to parents of students enrolled at Mayor-sponsored charter schools. In 2010-11, only 74% of FCA parents reported overall satisfaction with the school. According to the data, the school is approaching the Mayor’s Office standard for performance for this indicator for the 2010-11 academic year.

<b>2.5. Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?</b>	
<b>STANDARD</b>	<b>The school’s leadership a) has sufficient academic and/or business expertise; b) has been sufficiently stable over time; c) has clearly defined roles and responsibilities among leaders and between leaders and the Board; d) actively engages in a process of continuous improvement which has led to some mid-course corrections.</b>

**2010-11 Performance: Does Not Meet Standard**

During the 2010-11 school year at Fall Creek Academy, the school’s administration experienced high turnover. The school leader in place during the 2010-11 school year was unexpectedly placed on leave by the GEO Foundation. The principal was then replaced by an Interim Principal in the spring of 2011. The Interim Principal had previously handled disciplinary issues at FCA as the Assistant Principal and was promoted having no prior school administration experience or academic expertise.

During this transition period, the Mayor’s Office received numerous concerning phone calls from parents, teachers and staff at FCA indicating the school’s culture and climate were suffering tremendously. Disciplinary issues were reported including two students being taken away from FCA via ambulance for alleged drug abuse. During the summer of 2011, a permanent school leader was identified – the third school leader in just six months. The new principal is an experienced educator with considerable academic and organizational leadership. He holds a valid Indiana administrators license and was formally a teacher and elementary school principal.

The 2010-11 school year was a tumultuous time for the school in which the community saw their school leader of over two years resign upon the request of the management organization, the installment of an acting principal and leadership assistance provided by one of the management organization’s leadership team members. Further, there was a great deal of turnover in staff in 2010-11.

The hiring of the current principal and the retention of the assistant principal are signs the school is trying to move forward, but the changes in the past year, coupled with the unpredictability of the previous school leadership, have left FCA at risk for sliding back into the problems that are currently being addressed by the new leadership. Acknowledging that there will always be change in education leadership, FCA must develop as an educational institution that can flourish with any individual in the leadership position.

Because of the tremendous turnover in leadership and staff and the apparent damaging effects on the school, it does not meet standard for this indicator

<b>2.6. Is the school meeting its school-specific organizational and management performance goals?</b>	
<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>School has clearly met its school-specific organizational goal.</b>

**Not applicable.** Fall Creek Academy did not have school-specific organizational and management performance goals that were evaluated in 2010-11.