

**Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc.**  
**Annual Report**  
**May 2024**



Prepared for Board of Education of Frederick County, Maryland

I. INTRODUCTION..... 3

II. CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY ..... 6

III. DATA AND INFORMATION ..... 9

IV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ..... 21

V. ENROLLMENT DATA AND FACILITY COMPLIANCE ..... 25

VI. GOVERNANCE AND FCCS, INC. MEMBERSHIP ..... 28

VII. REQUESTS ..... 33

VIII. CONCLUSION ..... 33

## I. Introduction

Frederick Classical Charter School (FCCS) educates 376 public school scholars in Frederick County, MD using a classical education instructional program. As a Maryland public charter school, it exists by contract between the authorizer, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), and the operator, Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc. (FCCS, Inc.). The school's current charter contract expires on June 30, 2025.

Frederick Classical Charter School educates children in Kindergarten through Grade 8, with 42 scholars in grades 1-8 and 40 scholars in Kindergarten. Since SY2018, the school has maintained 100% enrollment with a wait list for each grade. SY22-23 began with 45 employees composed of teachers, administrators, and support staff.

The long-term vision of the school is to be nationally recognized as a replicable model for providing a traditional, rigorous liberal arts education using well-researched instructional approaches. The classical education program at Frederick Classical Charter School has been well received by scholars, parents, teachers, and the community. Since its founding in 2013, the school has emphasized long-term learning goals through a classical approach.

Frederick Classical Charter School incorporates the learning and practice of core virtues into all aspects of the school. These virtues are reflected in the daily work of the school. Scholars, teachers, staff, administration, parents, volunteers, trustees and consultants demonstrate these virtues while engaged in activity of the school and beyond. The virtues include:

- ❖ **Love** - The bestowing of unconditional love and having a positive impact on the lives of others, showing a genuine concern for the good of others, with unselfish acts of kindness such as compassion, caring, thoughtfulness, service, and other humanitarian and noble actions.
- ❖ **Humility** - The quality or condition of being humble; modest opinion or estimate of one's importance, rank, etc.; never bragging or boastful (especially to make others feel poorly of themselves).
- ❖ **Courage** - Bravery in the face of fear or uncertainty, doing the right thing even when it is hard or scary, trying new things, and admitting mistakes.
- ❖ **Temperance** - The practice of moderation, self-control, and self-discipline in all things.
- ❖ **Constancy** - The state of being fixed, unchangeable, steadfast, stable, persevering, faithful; is staying power; not giving up, but keeping on.

- ❖ **Diligence** - Working hard and doing your absolute best; taking special care by doing things step by step.
- ❖ **Patience** – Waiting without complaint, ability to wait for something without getting angry or upset, enduring discomfort without complaint, taking turns without complaint.

Now in its eleventh year of operation, Frederick Classical Charter School has established itself as a solid program, and is working on growing and expanding, while staying true to the school's foundation and mission. As new materials, assessments, tools, and standards become available, any variance between the Charter Application and the practical delivery of the educational service model are identified and collaboratively addressed. It is the desire of the school to utilize research in decision-making and to implement best practices in teaching models and learning materials. External subject matter experts are engaged to support curriculum decisions and provide the highest quality professional development. Academic achievement and growth is strong. Frederick Classical Charter School is highly rated by Niche (Best Charter School in MD for both Elementary and Middle School and 34 Best Public Middle School in MD). The student population represents much of the diversity in Frederick County and continues to provide services to meet the various needs of the community. The school facility provides space for Grades K-8 classrooms, languages, art, physical education, music, special education, and cafeteria. The school's finances are well-managed and in good standing with the Board of Education. FCCS, Inc. has implemented changes to positively impact the long-term sustainability of the organization and partnered with outside organizations to ensure accountability and proper governance. This report includes evidence that demonstrates the school continues to successfully fulfill the terms of its contract and that FCCS is a sustainable educational option for children in Frederick County.

FCPS developed a format to be used to evaluate the performance of charter schools. Information is provided in this document using that format to assist the Board of Education (BOE) in its review and analysis of the school's performance in the areas of academic accountability, classical curriculum, organization effectiveness, financial stability, and facility management. Included in the response are references to supporting evidential data that these standards and criteria have been satisfactorily met by FCCS. The most recent data available has been reported in response to each requirement to demonstrate that FCCS meets the requirements outlined by BOE. Additionally, the report provides updated organization overview and governance highlights as well as opportunities for FCPS and FCCS, Inc. to collaborate to improve the charter school's ability to accomplish its mission. Other supporting evidence will be provided by FCCS, Inc. upon request.

FCCS continues its operations with great excitement and hope for all things to be learned and experienced. The school is focused on developing a culture that increases every child’s love of learning and instills a desire to live virtuously, thereby improving our community and our future. The Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge the Frederick County Board of Education and FCPS for providing the opportunity to operate this school and look forward to continuing to offer classical education to FCPS scholars. FCCS is vital to the community of Frederick County, as one of the many innovative educational opportunities offered by FCPS. Members of the Board of Education and other FCPS and local leaders are encouraged to visit the school and learn with its scholars.

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Standard/Criteria</b>	<b>Sources of Evidence</b>
Mission-Specific Accountability	Achievement of school/mission-specific goals	The school is achieving, or making significant progress towards achieving the school/mission-specific goals as defined in the school’s contract.	As defined in the school’s contract
Educational Program Implementation	Implementation of the mission	The school is implementing its mission as defined in the school’s contract.	Federal/State recognized requirements for internally developed assessments, onsite evaluation
	Implementation of curriculum and instructional techniques	The school is successfully implementing curriculum and instructional techniques as defined in the school’s contract	
	Implementation of specialized instruction for scholars, particularly of those below	The school implements demonstrably effective instructional techniques that support struggling scholars achieve grade level	

	grade level		
	Data-driven decision making	The school competently uses qualitative and quantitative data to inform and guide instructional planning and practice aligned with College and Career Readiness Standards	
	Implementation of exceptional education programs	The school provides quality services for exceptional scholars as defined in the school’s contract and as required by applicable law	

**II. Classical Philosophy**

**Overview**

Frederick Classical Charter School offers a classical approach as described in the Charter Application. The mission of the school is to provide a well-rounded, college-focused curriculum to scholars that is organized and cultivates virtue and wisdom in the minds of its learners. Classical education is divided into three stages, or “trivium”, that roughly correspond with a student’s development. The Grammar stage focuses on grades K-4 and provides fundamental knowledge and skills in all subjects. The Logic stage for grades 5-8 uses reasoning to more deeply understand previous learning, as well as acquire more knowledge in all subjects. The Rhetoric stage for grades 9-12 focuses on integrating the learning acquired in the Grammar and Logic stages to allow the scholar to effectively use knowledge and reason to express themselves and to persuade others. Currently, the rhetoric stage is not offered by FCCS since it is designed for scholars in grades 9-12. This liberal arts education emphasizes an integrated study to connect core ideas across subjects; subjects are equally balanced with narrower focus for greater mastery of specific concepts. At FCCS, history and literature are closely integrated, along with languages, the arts, and sciences. 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders study Ancient History and Biology. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders focus on the Middle Ages and Astronomy. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders study Renaissance and Chemistry, while 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders learn about Modern Times and Physics. In addition to best practices in literacy education, all grades incorporate literature of the historical time period and study Singapore math. The FCCS music and art programs

incorporate the subject matter described above into their lessons to reinforce the core subjects. This integration and repetition of subjects provides a well-rounded experience for FCCS scholars and helps them gain a greater appreciation of the world.

FCCS teaches Spanish to scholars in grades K-6 and, in the tradition of classical learning, Latin is also taught to scholars in grade 4-6. Grade 7-8 scholars choose a language of focus and are provided the opportunity to receive high school credit.

FCCS emphasizes the rigorous learning of rich material, avoiding fads, and relying on time-tested teaching approaches effective at developing knowledgeable, thinking, articulate scholars with virtuous character and exemplary citizenship. Teacher excellence, effective lesson planning, and structured environments are critical to engaging classical scholars in their learning.

FCCS, Inc. and Administration continually evaluate and add goals for each year to ensure the mission is implemented as part of continuous improvement.

### **Instructional Techniques**

FCCS teachers utilize the instructional techniques commonly used in classical education, such as direct instruction, scientifically-based reading instruction, song, chants and rhymes, and Socratic dialogue. The school continues to emphasize consistency across grade levels and focuses on academic growth of all scholars. Professional Learning Communities are successfully utilized to support a team approach and facilitate idea generation and consistent implementation.

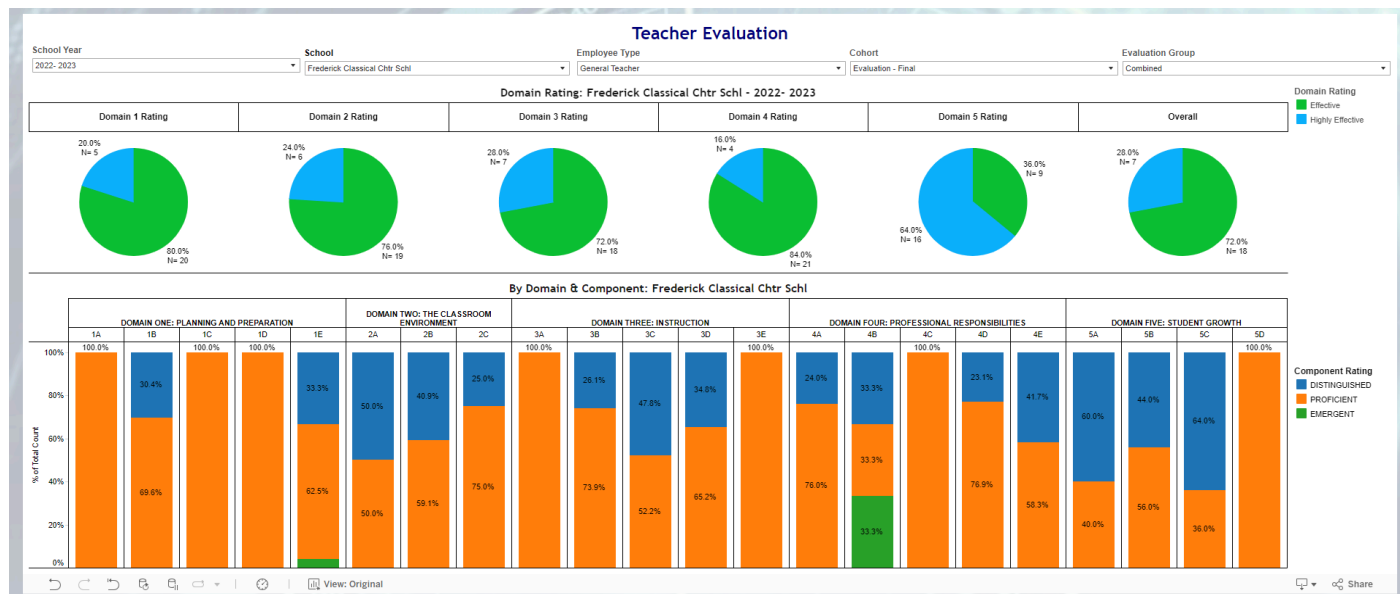
Teachers on each grade level team have common planning time, allowing them to meet and plan integrated lessons. The music teachers collaborate with grade level staff in order to create songs, chants and rhymes that are used in grades K-8. Art teachers commonly align projects with history lessons.

A comprehensive system for teaching writing skills is implemented in grades K-8. Teachers in all content areas follow the Teaching Writing: Structure and Style syllabus published by the Institute for Excellence in Writing.

### **Professional Development and Expertise**

At FCCS, staff retention is critical as scholars benefit from a stable culture and long-term relationships. It was the desire of the school's founders, and still remains a critical goal of school leadership, to invest in strong teachers and become a leader in teacher professional development. Retention is critical due to the

investment in training that prepares teachers to teach classically and supports them as they utilize the curriculum and approaches unique to FCCS. The school encourages staff to advance their professional skills and knowledge in areas aligned with FCCS. Comparisons of Teacher Evaluations from the 2021-2022 school year to the 2022-2023 school year show across-the-board increases in the number of teachers rated highly effective with no teachers rated less than effective. FCCS, Inc. will continue to prioritize professional development, allocating funds to provide staff with access to subject matter experts and professional development opportunities that have a direct impact on fulfilling the school’s mission.



FCCS, Inc. looks forward to continuing to increase the experience of staff members to develop on-site expertise through long-term investment in professional development opportunities and a rigorous hiring process. FCCS, Inc. has continued to provide advisors to the school with expertise in the key areas of the FCCS curriculum. The FCCS Head of School defines the Professional Development plan for each school year and collaborates with FCCS curriculum advisors as needed.

As a way to stay abreast and ensure that Frederick Classical Charter School curriculum is up to date, FCCS consults with content experts who collaborate with the administration to conduct textbook reviews and make recommendations for FCCS, Inc. to consider. In the summer of 2022, an ELA task force that included administration and staff was created to review and make recommendations for the 7th and 8th grade ELA textbooks. The task force recommended replacing the existing ELA materials. The recommendation to replace the existing ELA materials was submitted to FCCS, Inc. and approved for use in the 2022-2023 school year. These changes ensure that the scholars have access to the most up to date materials available and they align with the Next Generation ELA Standards. Dr. Carol Tolman remains the



literacy advisor for Frederick Classical Charter School, and we consult with her as needed.

FCCS Inc. consults with governance and leadership experts as needed to ensure that the governing body initiatives are based on evidence and best practices. Additionally, FCCS, Inc. leadership encourages school administration to utilize the resources and expertise available from FCPS.

### **Student Progress and Opportunities**

Individual student progress is reported to parents through the use of FCPS grading tools, report cards and progress reports. Also, reports on standard assessments are made available to parents. To highlight one of the proud accomplishments, FCCS was granted a chapter of the National Junior Honor Society in the Fall of 2019 and remains the only public school in Frederick County to have a chapter. Since 2019, FCCS has inducted over 70 scholars. The chapter was named in honor of Keziah Addoquaye, a member of the class of 2021 who passed away from Leukemia in March of 2021.

In SY2022-2023, FCCS offered the following extracurricular clubs and opportunities for scholars:

- ❖ Student Government
- ❖ National Junior Honor Society
- ❖ Destination Imagination
- ❖ Science Olympiad
- ❖ Mathcounts
- ❖ Chess Club
- ❖ Band
- ❖ Chorus
- ❖ Guitar
- ❖ Dance
- ❖ Basketball
- ❖ Science Fair

### III. Data and Information

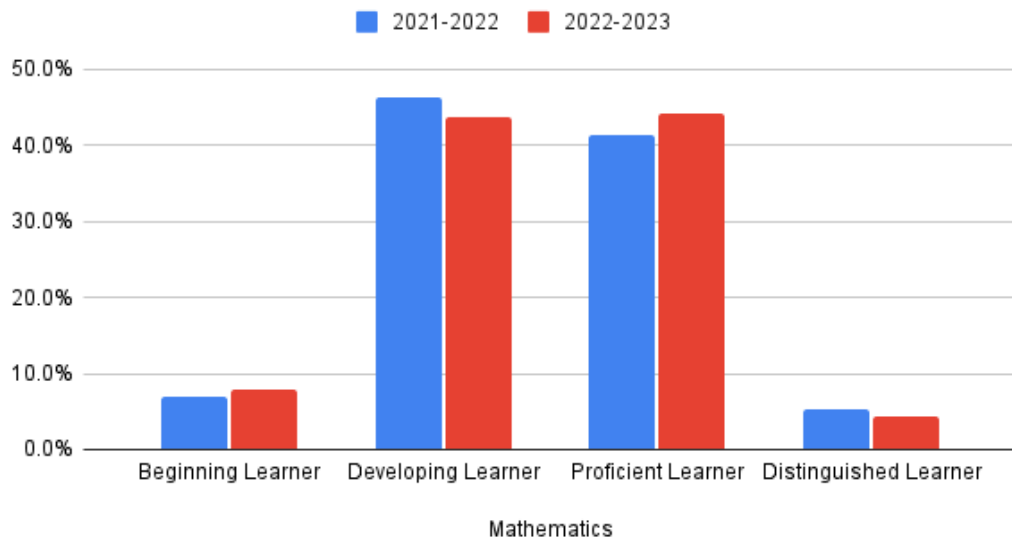
Focus Area	Indicator	Standard/Criteria	Sources of Evidence
Federal Accountability	Federal/State recognized performance level requirements	The school has not been identified as a school in need of improvement or as underperforming	Federal/State recognized performance level requirements
	AYP attainment	The school has met at least a Proficient performance level	
	Student group(s) attainment of AYP	The school has achieved its performance targets in identified student group(s)	
State & Local Accountability	Federal/State recognized achievement requirements	Students at the school demonstrate proficiency or progress towards meeting proficiency, in subjects tested (English/Language Arts, writing, mathematics and science)	Federal/State recognized data requirements
	Annual gains of scholars achieving in the bottom 25%	50% make one-year's worth of growth	
	% of scholars tested	The school is appropriately administering applicable state standardized tests to its scholars.	
	Relative performance	The school's performance meets or exceeds the performance of schools with	

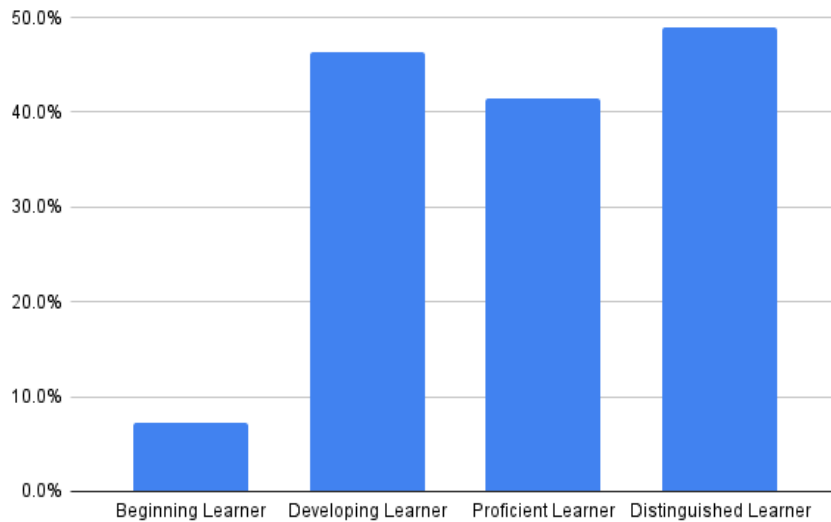
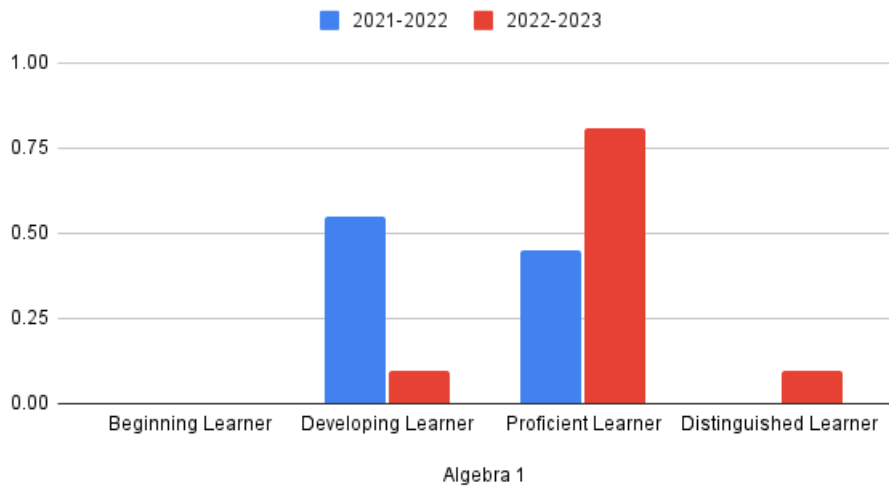
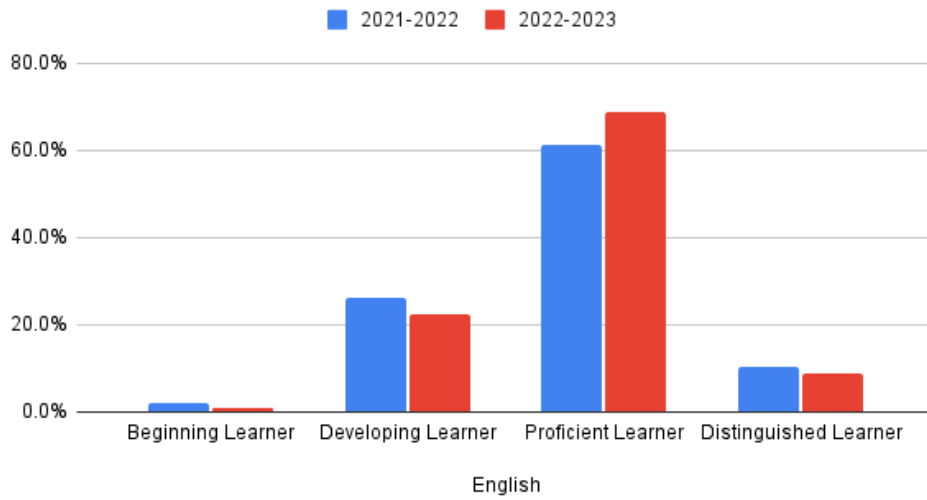
	Comparative performance	closely comparable student populations.	
	Other Charter Agreement Indicators		

**A school in good standing**

FCCS is in good standing and has not been formally identified as a school in need of improvement academically. FCCS meets or exceeds expectations in performance in most academic achievement areas.

**MCAP Performance Monitoring SY 2022-2023 (Compared to SY 2021-2022)**



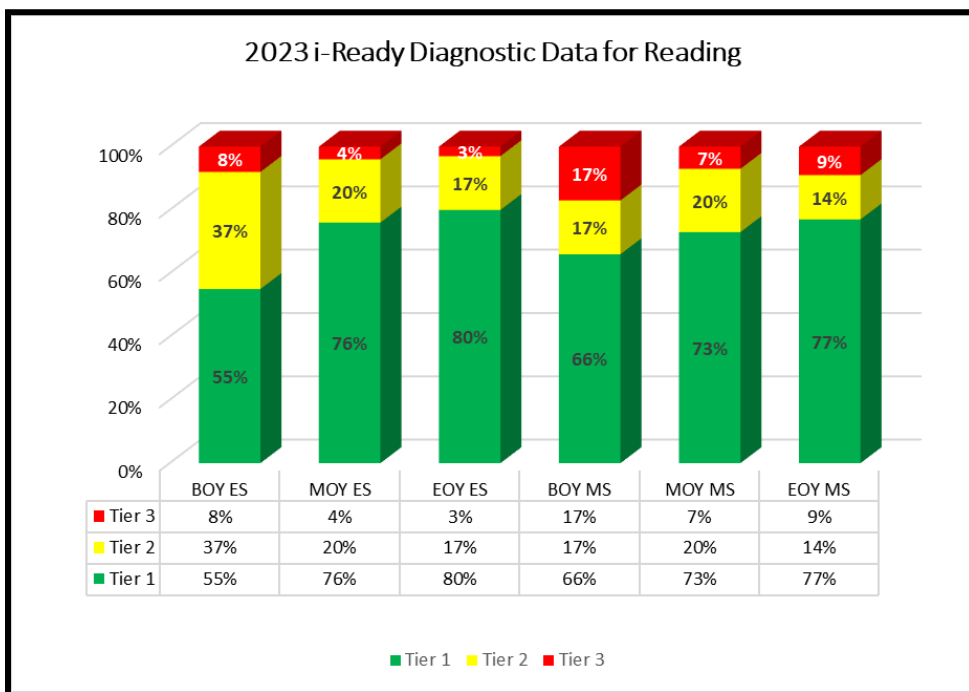


8th Grade Social Studies, SY22-23 (\*No SY21-22 data captured)

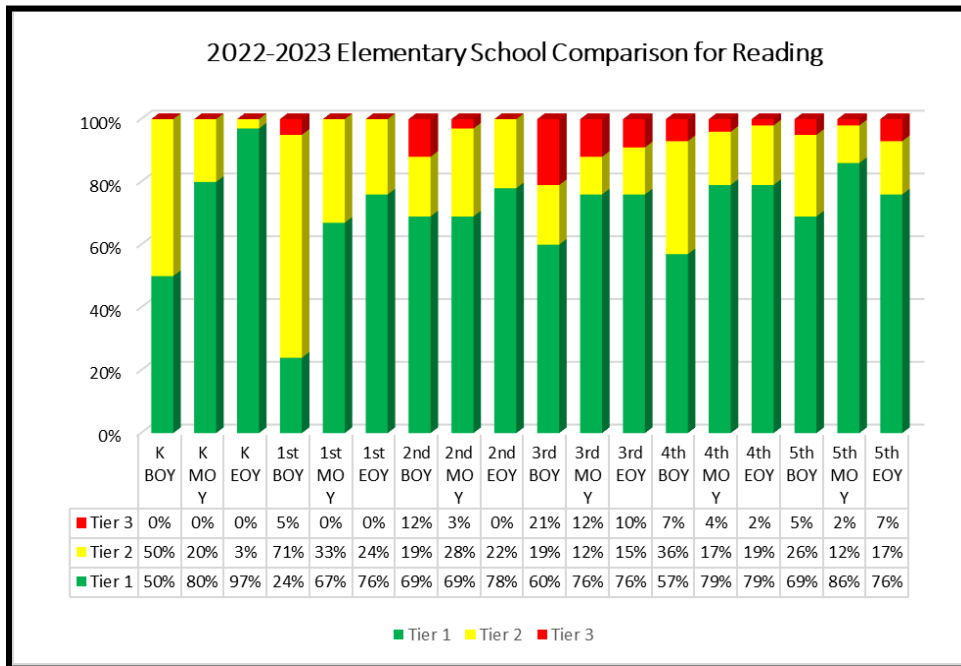
## i-Ready Performance Monitoring SY 2022-2023

FCCS administrators Curriculum Associates’ iReady Diagnostic Assessments. Scholars ranging from Grades K-8 complete this computer-based assessment to determine their level of performance. As a common core-aligned instrument, the i-Ready Diagnostic Assessment gives teachers and administrators the data necessary to make informed instructional decisions for FCCS scholars. Coupled with the intervention/enrichment block schedule and materials of instruction purchased to strengthen the effectiveness of the block, scholars are able to develop mastery of common core standards.

*2022-2023 i-Ready Reading Overall Data Chart*

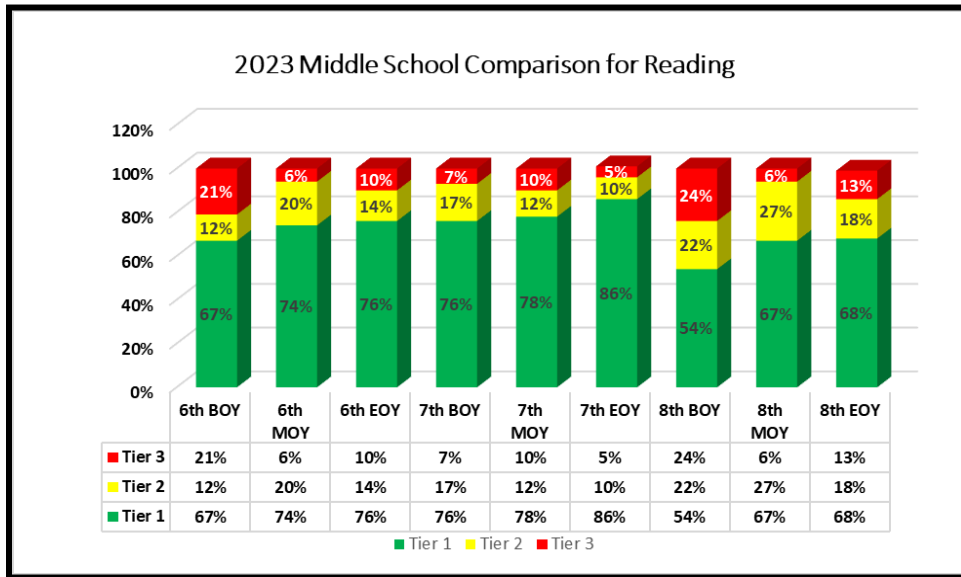


## 2022-2023 Elementary i-Ready Reading Results per Grade Level



In the area of Reading, 97% of our youngest scholars completed their diagnostic on or above grade-level. First Grade saw a reduction in Tier 3 performance and 52% increase in Tier 1. Second Grade saw a 12% total decrease in Tier 3. Third Grade saw a 16% increase in Tier 1 and an 11% decrease in Tier 3. Fourth Grade saw a 22% increase in Tier 1 and a 17% decrease in Tier 2. Fifth Grade saw some fluctuations; however, they reduced Tier 2 performance by 9%. Overall consistent gains were made at the elementary level. Once again, the largest gains were made in the early grammar stages.

**2022-2023 Middle School Reading Results per Grade Level**

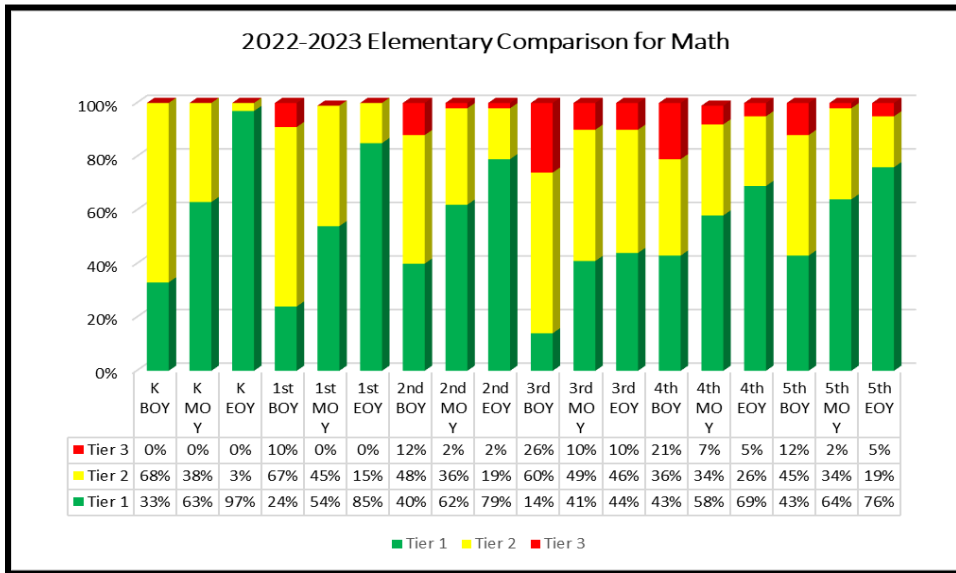


During the 2022-2023 school year, sixth grade saw a 9% gain in Tier 1 performance by the end of the year. There was a significant decrease in the number of sixth-grade scholars in Tier 3, which in turn should set the stage for the 2023-2024 school year. Eighth-grade scores showed an 11% decrease in Tier 3 and a 14% increase in the number of scholars performing in the Tier 1 band.

**2022-2023 i-Ready Math Overall**

Overall, results with Elementary Math showed an increase in Tier 1 performance by 42% with a reduction in Tier 3 by 13%. Middle School worked to move scholars out of Tier 3. A strong push was made from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year with a 16% increase in scholars performing on or above grade level. End of the year data shows scholars holding steady.

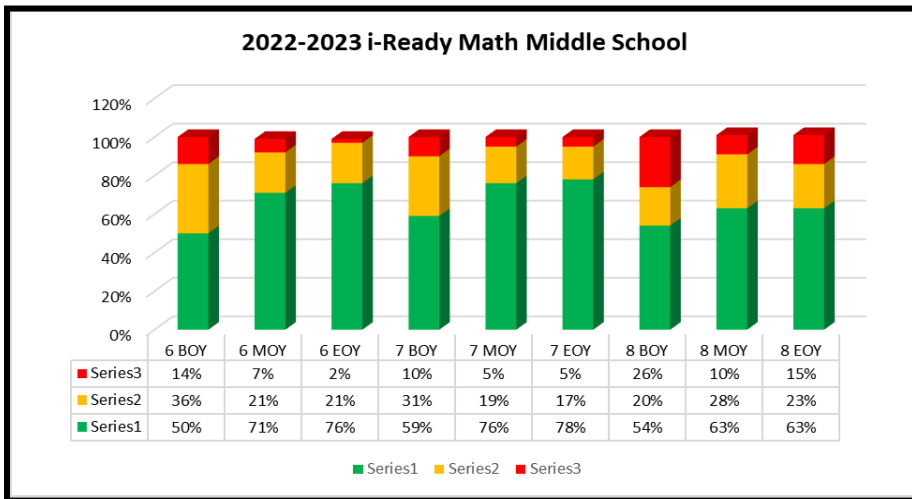
**2022-2023 i-Ready Math Elementary School Results per Grade**



In the area of math, 97% of our Kindergarten scholars ended the year performing on or above grade level. There was considerable improvement in moving scholars out of Tier 2 performance bands into Tier 1. First grade saw a significant decrease in Tier 2, by 52% and a complete decrease in Tier 3 by 10%. Second grade saw a decrease in Tier 3 by 10% while increasing Tier 1 achievement by 39%. Again, the data trends indicated that a majority of scholars made growth moving through the performance bands. Third grade saw a 14% decrease in Tier 2 while experiencing a 20% increase in Tier 1. Fourth grade math diagnostic results indicate a 26% increase in Tier 1 performance and a 16% decrease with Tier 3 performance while fifth grade results indicate a 33% increase in Tier 1 performance and a 26% reduction with Tier 2.

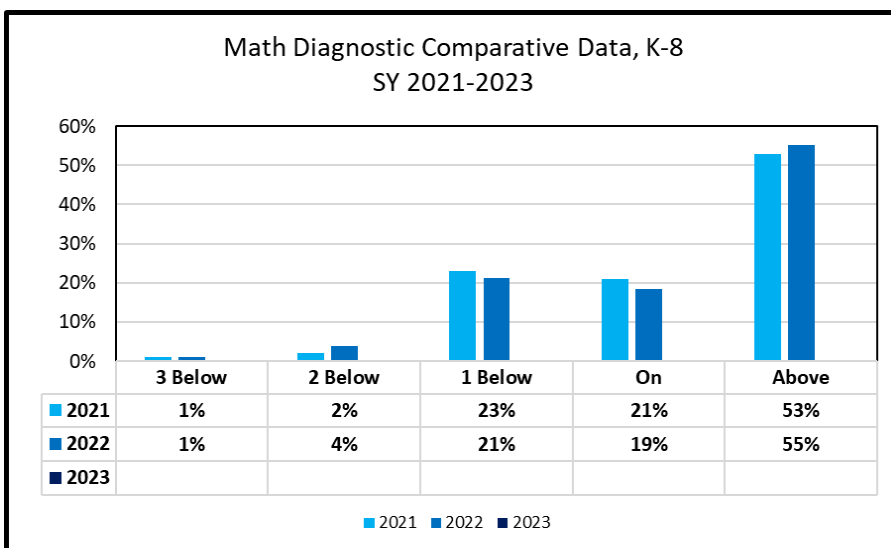


**2022-2023 i-Ready Math Middle School Results per Grade**

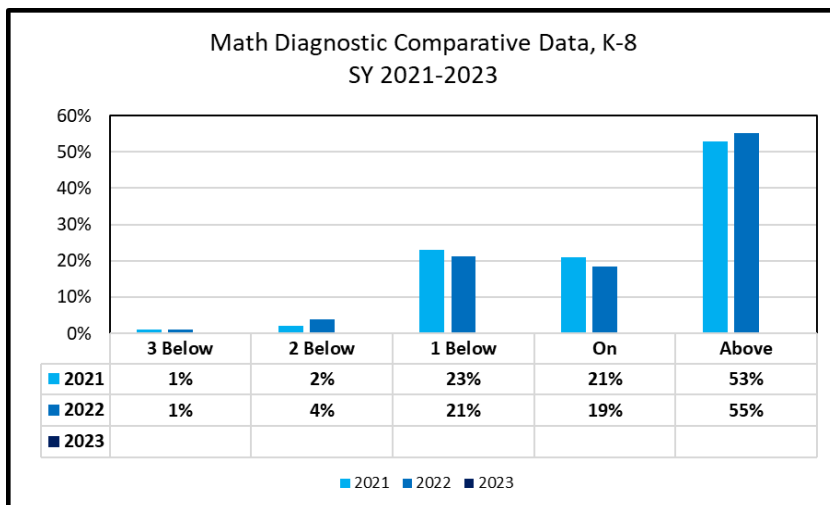


Sixth grade completed the i-Ready Math diagnostic with results showing a 26% increase in Tier 1 and a reduction of Tier 3 performance by 12%. Seventh grade, by the end of the year, saw a reduction in Tier 3 by half and saw an increase in the number of scholars at Tier 1 performance. Eighth grade made a reduction in Tier 3 performance by 11% and an increase in Tier 1 performance by 9%. As stated previously, our middle schoolers were just completing their rounds of state assessments.

***i-Ready Math Comparative Data for years 2021-2022 to 2022-2023***



2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Math diagnostic scores were consistent with a slight increase in the number of scholars performing Mid to Above grade level by the end of the 2022-2023 school year. For this comparison, the i-Ready 5-point performance spread was used to break down the data into more discrete performance bands. This representation of data separates Tier 3 into 3 grade levels below and 2 grade levels below; Tier 2 is considered one grade level below; and Tier 1 is separated out to reflect on and above grade level.



State testing occurs each spring for scholars in grades 3-8. There are multiple components of the MCAP testing suite. The data reported here shows summative proficiency levels for all scholars tested within that component. Here is a comparison for the school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. [MCAP Comparative Data](#)

**The overall gains that the school has made in ELA and Math is attributed to the following practices:**

- ❖ Implementation of a master schedule that includes a dedicated 30-minute daily enrichment/intervention block for all grades.
- ❖ Integration of the Common Core Standards with the FCCS classical curriculum
- ❖ Strategic vertical planning among grade bands (K-1, 2-4, 5-6, 7-8)
- ❖ Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) program that includes:
  - Comprehensive use of the i-Ready program
  - i-Ready diagnostic tool
  - i-Ready Individualized Reading & Math online student instructional paths and teacher toolkits

- ❖ Flexible, skill-based supplemental instruction practices in all grades
- ❖ Targeted intervention and/or enrichment groups
- ❖ Daily exposure to critical content vocabulary and close reading strategies across content
- ❖ Singapore Math curriculum aligned to the Common Core Standards
- ❖ Use of the ALEKS program for scholars in math classes, grades 7-8
- ❖ Preservation of Classical tools including handwritten products in core subjects
- ❖ Professional development opportunities offered to the staff through the year:
  - Classical Education
  - Neurodiversity
  - Research-based instructional strategies

### **Standardized Testing Participation and Results**

State standardized tests are administered at FCCS each school year. FCCS student standardized test scores have been consistently above the FCPS average. The FCPS average is utilized as the standard; FCCS draws scholars from all of Frederick County and enrolls scholars of a wide demographic set.

### **DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) Next**

DIBELS Next is a set of short fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of foundational literacy skills at FCCS. It is an assessment tool that evaluates the likelihood that a student will need intervention in order to access his/her general reading curriculum/core reading program. Benchmark testing generally occurs three times a year with grade level materials.

### **Other benchmarks**

Singapore Math benchmarks are administered to evaluate and monitor student performance on Singapore standards that have been taught. Teachers administer the assessment to determine overall performance levels of FCCS scholars and give teachers an overall snapshot of performance on Singapore standards.

History and Science Benchmarks are utilized to assess student progress in those core subjects. Teachers utilize Unit pre-assessment and post-assessment exams and reteach when necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

Algebra - FCCS' math course offerings split tracks in 7th grade, with Pre-Algebra offered to scholars demonstrating readiness. In 8th grade, Algebra I is offered for high school credit.

Foreign Language - FCCS scholars begin learning Spanish in Kindergarten and Latin in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. 7th and 8th grade scholars are offered high school level courses for credit for Spanish I, Spanish II, Latin I and Latin II.

### **RTI Instruction and Data-Driven Decision Making**

FCCS successfully implemented a successful Response to Intervention program using both intervention and enrichment materials from Curriculum Associates. These tools provide scholars an opportunity to receive a comprehensive diagnostic assessment that allows the staff to specifically address the priority standards.

The master schedule includes a daily 30-minute intervention/enrichment block for all grades to allow scholars the opportunity to work on mastering critical content. i-Ready diagnostic data is used to determine the appropriate level of comprehension for all scholars. Material and assignments are differentiated during this block to give practice and support to scholars in need as well as stretch and enrich high performing scholars. FCCS, Inc has guided enrichment offerings and will further collaborate with staff to ensure consistent instructional methods are maintained.

iReady online instruction has been used to support priority standards for scholars who were performing below grade level. These tools assisted in driving the trajectory of learning upward.

FCPS provides Special Education staff to FCCS. Based on the FCPS, staffing formula and complexity guidelines, the SY2022-2023 staffing model included:

- ❖ 2 FTE Special Education Teacher
- ❖ 1 FTE Special Education Program Assistant
- ❖ 3 FTE Special Education Instructional Assistants

Teachers meet regularly to discuss student progress and review data during their Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. Assessments are reviewed by all, aligning teachers to monitor growth and determine next instructional steps. Teachers create their own qualitative and quantitative data as well as utilize assessment data to drive instruction. They reteach as necessary or enrich and challenge those who acquire the skill more quickly. Teachers also use flexible grouping based on i-Ready data, writing samples,

and reading fluency/comprehension to best meet student needs.

ELL services are provided by FCPS and FCCS is not aware of any specific issues or concerns.

Administration worked directly with FCPS staff to support ELL services for a small number of scholars (fewer than 10).

**Attendance**

FCCS has maintained excellent or satisfactory attendance rates based on Maryland School Performance Ratings. In SY 2022-2023, FCCS achieved a 94.6% attendance rate. FCCS staff work closely with the PPW to support the small percentage of scholars identified with chronic absenteeism.

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Standard/Criteria</b>	<b>Sources of Evidence</b>
Educational Program Implementation	Implementation of ELL program	The school provides quality services for English Language Learner scholars as defined in the school’s contract and as required by applicable law	

**IV. Financial Management**

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Sources of Evidence</b>
Financial Management	Demonstration of professional competence and sound systems in managing the schools financial operations	The school implements an effective system of internal controls over revenues, expenses, and fixed assets, and exercises good business practices	Annual budgets, monthly and quarterly financial reports, audited annual financial statements, financial corrective action plans, onsite evaluation,

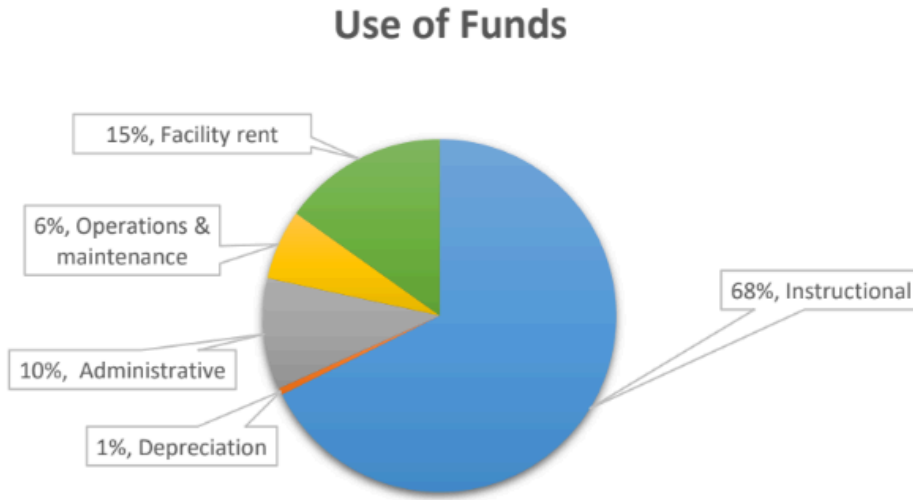
	Adherence to generally accepted accounting principles	The school adheres to generally accepted accounting principles	segregation of duty payment controls
	Financial reporting requirements	The school submits timely and accurate financial information adhering to its financial reporting requirements as defined in the school's contract	
Financial Viability	Budgeting	The school maintains balanced budgets and a positive cash flow	Annual budgets, monthly and quarterly financial reports, audited annual financial statements, onsite evaluation
	Financial obligations	The school's financial obligations are in good standing	
	Long-term financial performance	The school has a sound and sustainable long-term financial plan	

**An organization in good standing**

FCCS, Inc. has received unmodified audit opinions, or “clean” audit reports, for all years of operations from K.L. Hoffman and Company. The results were presented to FCPS and to the FCCS community. FCCS, Inc. also publishes all relevant financial information to its website including the audited annual financial report report, monthly and quarterly financial statements, line item annual budget, and IRS Form 990s.

FCCS, Inc. ended FY 2023 with a net surplus of \$215,883 and a total net asset balance of \$2,196,984. These funds are intended to be utilized for future facility needs and as an operating reserve. FCCS currently has no debt and has paid its annual rent and all other bills in a timely fashion. FCCS achieved 100% enrollment in 5 of its 10 years of operations, with 99.7% achieved in FY 2023. The school currently maintains a strong prospective student waitlist inclusive of all grade levels.

Use of funds by category for FY 2023 as well as a comparison to prior years is illustrated below:



<b><u>Use of Funds Historical</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2020</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2021</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2022</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2023</u></b>
Instructional	68%	64%	66%	68%
Facility rent & development	16%	17%	15%	15%
Administrative	10%	12%	13%	10%
Operations & maintenance	5%	5%	5%	6%
Depreciation	2%	2%	2%	1%

**Internal audit of Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc.**

Clifton Larson Allen was engaged by the Frederick County Interagency Internal Audit Authority to review FCCS, Inc.’s compliance with FCPS regulations for the period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021. The five year lookback concluded that the books were “complete and well maintained”. Two findings were documented; incomplete history of signed Conflict of Interest statements from Board of Trustee members and incomplete history of Board meeting minutes. Neither finding was deemed excessive in nature and management responses and corrective action were taken to remediate risk and prevent future control deficiencies.

**Future facility planning presents financial challenges**

The FCPS Per Pupil Allocation is the source of funding for FCCS, Inc. facility. The school pays facility

costs (including rent, utilities, insurance, grounds keeping, maintenance, snow removal and custodian services) from funds that would otherwise go directly to support instruction. Facilities expenditures currently represent 15% of FCCS annual budget for fiscal year 2023.

Fiscal year 2019 marked the first year that the corporation's surplus was sufficient to consider planning for a facility purchase, either pre-existing or ground-up construction. The corporation continues to hold funds to pursue facility ownership rather than develop a short-term transportation model for the leased premises.

Obstacles to a successful purchase and/or construction project include:

1. Financing Hurdle:

Financing is limited to the traditional commercial bond market. FCCS, Inc. does not receive support from the state in capital budgeting or the ability to participate in favorable debt pricing available to traditional public schools. It also does not qualify for any need-based financing available to some charter schools based upon the demographic they serve.

FCCS, Inc. must demonstrate its ability to service its debt. Commercial lenders generally require a debt service coverage ratio of 1.2 or better, measuring the percentage of a corporation's net operating income in excess of its required annual payments. As such, debt issuance in the bond market would only be viable if the corporation continues to retain an annual surplus position that demonstrates its ability to repay.

FCCS, Inc. has not formally obligated any portion of its PPA budget to a capital reserve and instead focuses on educational needs without capital budgeting constraints. The corporation remains mindful of its strategic plan and supports conservatism in spending when possible.

2. Lack of Viable Properties:

Options for viable properties in Frederick County to meet the unique needs of educational institutions continue to be a challenge compounded by the estimated 31% increase in property values over the last few years within the county that has been primarily driven by the heightened demand for residential housing. This surge in property prices exacerbates the constraints faced by schools operating within a conservative budget framework such as FCCS. Additionally, properties under consideration must not only meet the unique needs of



educational facilities but also comply with strict land-use zoning regulations, further restricting choices.

Moreover, the process of acquiring land for construction purposes is also impacted by the prerequisite that zoning qualifications must already be in place or undergo annual approval by the Frederick County government. This requirement becomes a barrier to securing necessary financing, amplifying the difficulty of establishing sufficient infrastructure for the school.

Furthermore, available facilities often come with shorter term leases that inconvenience and impose time constraints on finding suitable longer term solutions. These limited leases not only hinder the feasibility of securing proper permits and zoning but also impede the realistic timelines required for the construction of a new educational facility. Property prices continue to soar and outpace conservative school budgets.

### 3. Current Market Conditions:

The school contracted with St. John’s Properties to extend its current leasing arrangement through June 30, 2028. In the interim, the school will continue to evaluate new opportunities while maintaining and growing capital through various FDIC insured investments with terms not to exceed one year.

## V. Enrollment Data and Facility Compliance

Focus Area	Indicator	Standard	Sources of Evidence
Student Enrollment and Conduct	Student enrollment trends	The school’s actual enrollment is consistent with its projections	Student enrollment reports, onsite evaluation
	Racial/ethnic composition of the student body	The racial/ethnic composition of the school’s student body is reflective of the community it serves and other public schools in Frederick County	

	Enrollment Procedures	The school implements enrollment procedures as defined in the school’s contract and in compliance with applicable law	
	School Environment	The school maintains a safe and secure environment	Discipline reporting; onsite evaluation
	Health and Safety	The school complies with applicable health and safety laws	Fire and health inspections, fire drill reports, evacuation plans, onsite evaluation
Facilities	Facility Compliance	The school’s facilities comply with applicable laws and codes	Occupancy permits, health, safety and fire reports, onsite evaluation

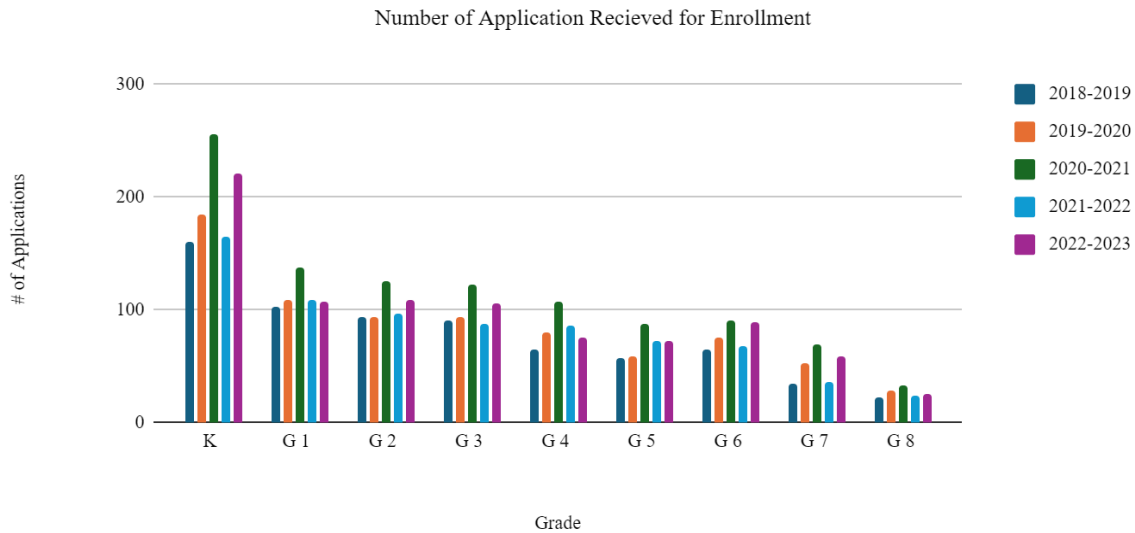
**Community Engagement for Annual Lottery**

Frederick Classical Charter School continues to maintain success in the school’s recruitment process. The Admissions Committee plans and coordinates family information sessions. They assist in the lottery process alongside administration and collaborate with the Communications Sub-Committee and FCPS to communicate lottery details to prospective families. Committee members also represent the school, hosting various events like family informational sessions, student orientation, and school tours annually. FCCS uses Lotterease for the online FCCS Lottery System. It not only allows for secure management of the data and random selection of applicants, but that it also meets the functional expectations for assessment and data reporting. Management of the registration process and lottery system has fully transitioned to FCCS staff.

**Applications and Enrollment**

The number of new student applications increased in SY2023. FCCS, Inc. anticipates that lottery applicants will continue to increase and support full enrollment with an active waitlist.

**Table 8: Number of Applications for Enrollment by Grade, SY2022-SY2023**



Grade Level	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
<b>2018-2019</b>	160	102	93	90	65	57	65	35	22	689
<b>2019-2020</b>	184	108	94	93	80	59	76	53	28	775
<b>2020-2021</b>	255	137	125	122	107	87	90	69	33	1025
<b>2021-2022</b>	165	109	96	87	86	72	68	36	24	743
<b>2022-2023</b>	220	107	109	106	75	73	89	58	25	862

The demographics of enrolled scholars continues to reflect the diversity of Frederick County. From SY 2021-22 to SY2022-23, enrollment of scholars with special services increased by 12%. The data is trending toward balanced enrollment at FCCS, with future emphasis to continue to be placed on practices that will continue to attract and retain scholars and provide equitable access to FCCS’ classical education.

**Table 9: Demographics by Race/Ethnicity - All grades**

Data reported for September 30 enrollment.

	SY2020	SY2021	SY2022	SY2023
American Indian/Alaskan	.4%	.5%	0.5%	0.3%
Asian	8.5%	8.0%	8.0%	11.0%
Black/African American	33%	31.1%	31.1%	34.5%
Hispanic/Latino	9.8%	12.5%	12.5%	12.0%
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Is.	.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
White	42.0%	41.2%	41.2%	35.0%
2+ Races	5.9%	6.1	6.1%	7.5%

**Table 10: Demographics by Special Services - All grades**

Data reported for September 30 enrollment.

	SY2020	SY2021	SY2022	SY2023
Free/Reduced Price Meals	16.8%	16.0%	16.0%	26.0%
English Language Learners	2.7%	2.4%	2.4%	2.0%
Special Education	6.3%	7.2%	6.6%	6.0%

## **Discipline**

FCCS implements a school-wide disciplinary program. During SY 2022-2023, there were a total of 30 referrals and three out-of-school short-term ed (i.e. suspensions), in addition to appropriate in-school consequences for referred behaviors. FCCS emphasizes the school's virtues when helping scholars in a disciplinary setting and taking corrective action.

School Year: 2022-2023 | School Name: Frederick Classical Charter | Student Group: All Students | Grade(s): (All) | Action Type: (Multiple values) | Location: (All) | Reported By: (All)

**Referrals - By Offense Type**  
 Action Type(s): Non-Suspensions & Suspensions off school property, At Recess and 22 more | Grade(s): PK, K, 01 and 13 more | Location(s): . At a school-sponsored activity  
 Reported By: . Weaver, Lindsey, 0 and 4609 more

Offense Description	Frederick Classical Charter	
	N	% of Referrals
Attack on Student	4	13.3%
Destruction of Property	1	3.3%
Disrespect	8	26.7%
Disruption	5	16.7%
Fighting	8	26.7%
Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics	1	3.3%
Theft	2	6.7%
Threat to Student	1	3.3%
Grand Total	30	100.0%

**Action Taken Summary: All Students**  
 Action Type(s): Non-Suspensions & Suspensions off school property, At Recess and 22 more | Grade(s): PK, K, 01 and 13 more | Location(s): . At a school-sponsored activity  
 Reported By: . Weaver, Lindsey, 0 and 4609 more

Type	Frederick Classical Charter	
	N	% of Referrals
Administrator - Student Conference	17	56.7%
Computer Privileges Revoked	1	3.3%
Detention After School	4	13.3%
In School Intervention	1	3.3%
In School Suspension	1	3.3%
Lunch Detention	7	23.3%
Other	3	10.0%
Out of School Short-Term Ed Serv Provided	3	10.0%
Parent - Admin Conference	11	36.7%
Parent - Teacher - Student - Admin Conference	1	3.3%

## Safety and Compliance

FCCS staff maintain records and compliance drills on a regular basis and can provide the specific Local School Emergency Plan details, including official Chain of Command, list of SEMT assigned Staff, detailed building diagrams, Emergency utility and equipment, list of Off-Site Evacuation Areas, Off-Campus Bus Loading Areas, and other mandated reports. FCCS performs expected drills in Shelter In Place, Reverse Evacuation, Lockdown; Drop, Cover, and Hold, and Severe Weather, and Fire. FCCS obtains all necessary permits for both its original facility and its expanded section. All safety and fire reports have been completed. FCCS maintains the required permits and related documentation that will be provided for review as requested. Additionally, the FCCS custodian team is trained to follow FCPS cleaning guidelines.

## Facility

The lease on the Spires Way building will expire in June 2028. As part of facility improvements, in SY 2022-2023, climbing equipment and a full net cover were installed on the playground. Projectors and flooring were also upgraded in classrooms where needed. Additionally, outdoor street sweeper equipment was purchased to improve safety. Finally, discussions have begun regarding expansion into warehouse space on site to allow for additional classrooms. While continuing to improve our current facility, FCCS Inc. also continues to evaluate future facility options for growth and expansion.

## VI. Governance and FCCS Membership

Focus Area	Indicator	Standard	Sources of Evidence
Governance, Staff, and Parents	Governance Structure	The school implements the governance structure as defined in the school's contract	Governing board meeting agendas and minutes, onsite evaluation
	Compliance with Maryland and federal laws	The school complies with relevant Maryland and federal laws	
	Qualifications of Instructional Staff	The school employs instructional staff that meet Maryland state and federal qualifications	Staffing reports, onsite evaluation
	Parental Involvement	The school is effectively involving parents in its programs as defined in the school's contract	Onsite evaluation, parental surveys

### Governance

Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc. maintains an organizational structure defined in the charter contract and application. FCCS, Inc. follows non-profit organizational bylaws and is operated by a Board of Trustees. As the school's governing body, the Board of Trustees is legally responsible for the academic, financial, facility, and operational quality of the charter school. Currently, FCCS, Inc. includes three officers and five trustees.

### Committees

FCCS, Inc. oversees a group of volunteer committees, with each committee assigned an FCCS, Inc. Liaison. Parents, staff, and community members are invited to participate. These committees are similar to those described in the application. The following committees and subcommittees are active and valuable contributors to the implementation of the school's mission: Academic, Admissions, Nominating, Advocacy, Communications, Facility, Finance, Parent Teacher, Social, Library, Staffing, Volunteer,

Fundraising and Grants, and Yearbook. In particular, the Parent Teacher Committee enhances school community initiatives and provides further opportunity for parent and teacher collaboration. The Fundraising and Grants committees were outsourced to a third party vendor to increase funding opportunities for FCCS, Inc. The fundraising and grants committees have been outsourced to third-party sources to enhance success rates and secure more substantial funding, as well as to extend our reach within the community.

### **School Improvement**

FCCS has a leadership team that prepares the FCPS Continuous School Improvement Plan and follows similar practices to other FCPS schools.

Adhering to the current research around the importance of building teacher capacity, FCCS dedicated 4 hours monthly of Professional Learning time to the staff for the following:

- ❖ Curriculum Training
- ❖ Classical Education Update and Strategies
- ❖ Effective Practices in Special Education x3
- ❖ Cultural Proficiency x 3
- ❖ Collaborative cross curricular time
- ❖ Socratic Seminar Review
- ❖ Learning Targets and Success Criteria
- ❖ SIP Review
- ❖ Content Training
- ❖ Intervention Planning
- ❖ Department Meetings

### **Transparency and Communication**

FCCS, Inc. maintains oversight of external contracts, facility, and financial decisions as well as involvement in school operating decisions such as hiring and curriculum. FCCS, Inc. is committed to the founding principles of the school and the practices outlined in the charter application. It insists on the delivery of a high-quality classical education for scholars and operation of a strong school through effective communication and decision-making. All financial documentation is available on the school website.

The leadership of FCCS, Inc. strives to implement the vision of the founders to create a transparent process and open culture of the school. FCCS, Inc. operates monthly meetings and public work sessions, as needed. Finally, FCCS, Inc. publishes meeting highlights, approved meeting minutes, agendas and reports to its website and through FCCS' official communication channel, *The Griffin Gazette*, which is a collaborative weekly newsletter between FCCS, Inc., school administrators, committees and members.

The annual membership meetings are held no later than May 31st with the intent to inform the teachers and parents about the school and its progress towards its goals, as well as provide space for the conducting of official business, such as FCCS, Inc. elections and by-law revisions. FCCS, Inc. engages a professional parliamentarian, Mr. Thomas Balch, to preside over the annual membership meetings. He is also consulted for advice on an as needed basis.

The Staff Board liaison position was created in 2016 to serve as a conduit between staff and FCCS, Inc..

### **Employment and Certification**

In SY22-23, FCCS had 41 staff members. For the SY23, it incurred an 11% staff loss: 1 position lost to budget loss; 1 position lost to FCPS internal transfer; 2 positions lost due to part-time; 1 position lost due to leaving FCPS. FCCS was also able to fund 1.0 FTE reading interventionist position through the ESSER grant in SY2023.

FCCS staff members have met all legal requirements for employment and all recommended hires were approved by the FCPS HR department and FCCS, Inc. FCCS, Inc. strives to hire highly qualified teachers with required and relevant certifications and experience. The hiring policy clarifies the interface between FCCS, Inc. and FCPS for hiring new team members. The FCCS Head of School follows HR guidelines and practices for teacher observations and evaluations. Detailed data is available from FCCS Administration upon request.

### **Parent Education and Family Involvement**

The Admissions Committee, Administration, and FCCS, Inc. have collaborated to create presentations and learning opportunities that build upon one another with a goal of building a solid foundation and understanding of classical education, the school, and FCCS, Inc.:

- ❖ Prospective Family Information Presentation
  - Basic overview of classical education
  - History and start of FCCS



- Lottery Process
- Tour of School
- ❖ Orientation for New Families
  - Enrollment Packet
  - Introduction to School & value of classical education
  - How to stay connected – Communications
  - Membership and expectations for volunteering
  - Tour of School
- ❖ Ongoing Member FCCS, Inc. Meetings
  - Monthly board meetings held virtually 1st Monday of the month
  - Annual Membership Meeting
  - Classical Meet-ups - varying topics related to FCCS educational practices
  - Monthly committee meetings

FCCS strongly believes in its Griffin Triangle and relies on parents to contribute their time, talent and treasure to strengthen the school community. FCCS parents regularly volunteer by serving on the Board of Trustees, FCCS, Inc. , committees, planning events, operating the library, supervising lunch shifts and carlines, as well as volunteering to provide classroom and field trip support.

FCCS strives to prepare families for the rigor and unique experience that scholars enjoy at FCCS. The school hosts Prospective Family Information Sessions for prospective families, future scholars, and community members. Once enrolled, the school provides educational opportunities and extended involvement for parents and families. Special emphasis is placed on bringing subject matter experts to parents as well as teachers. This creates more consistency between teacher and parent interactions with scholars about their studies. When it is a topic of general interest, the FCPS community is invited, via FindOutFirst. In SY2023, FCCS held the following learning events:

- ❖ Book fairs
- ❖ Back to School Night– Curriculum Expectations for Parents
- ❖ Classical Meet-ups
- ❖ Membership meetings

Families enjoy many opportunities to engage with their FCCS scholars. FCCS is proud of its traditions that blend educational excellence with other goals. An active Social Committee plans enjoyable and well-attended events every month that engage families in the school community, including picnics, skating, international day, dances, grade-specific events, and dine-around town. Additionally, FCCS’

Student Council plans activities to enrich the experience of FCCS scholars. The school staff collaborate with the Volunteer Committee to plan in school assemblies and celebrations to extend learning and add fun. This is a sample of the events that are typically held each school year at FCCS:

- ❖ School assemblies
- ❖ Veterans Day
- ❖ Grandparents Day
- ❖ Living Wax Museum
- ❖ Science Fair
- ❖ International Day
- ❖ Curriculum-aligned field trips
- ❖ Community picnics
- ❖ Middle school dances
- ❖ Talent Show
- ❖ Elementary school movie nights and social activities
- ❖ Trunk or Treat
- ❖ Piesgiving
- ❖ Staff Appreciation luncheons
- ❖ Thanksgiving Food Drive
- ❖ Spirit weeks
- ❖ Music curriculum showcases
- ❖ National Junior Honor Society ceremony
- ❖ 8th grade promotion ceremony

**VII. Requests**

FCCS, Inc. requests consideration by the Board of Education of Frederick County for the following:

Increase in Partnership	FCCS, Inc. requests that FCPS increase its collaboration in key decision making processes.
Charter School inclusiveness	FCCS, Inc. requests that FCPS intentionally takes into consideration the uniqueness of our Charter operations when it makes decisions and

	policy changes.
Consistency in executing charter contract with fidelity	FCCS requests that FCPS consider the charter contract/agreement when making decisions that impact staffing and curriculum.

**VIII. Conclusion**

Frederick Classical Charter School is a successful educational institution that offers Frederick County families and teachers a desirable choice for alternate curriculum and school culture. Scholars continue to excel in learning as the school prepares scholars to become college-ready. Classical education provides a rich curriculum, brings core virtues to the classroom, and develops a desire in scholars to grow in learning, perform their best work, and become outstanding citizens and community members. The focus on teacher quality and student growth helps each FCCS scholar be prepared for learning in the future. Demand for the learning environment at FCCS and its pursuit of educational excellence continues to increase.

FCCS, Inc. is on the path to excellence and returning to an organization in good standing for operating Frederick Classical Charter School. By focusing on improved governance, sustaining a financially sound and stable organization, and providing a student and teacher focused mindset, FCCS Inc. provides the necessary oversight to help the school thrive and flourish.