



Charter Review Committee Recommendation

CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM


The Defining Difference

Charter School Review

T.C.A. 49-13-102

The purpose of the law

- (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.

Charter School Review

Quality Authorizing Principles

- Principle 1 – Maintain High Standards
 - Ensure high standards for approving charter applications
 - Maintain high standards for operation of charter schools
- Principle 2 – Uphold School Autonomy
 - Preserve core autonomy that is crucial for school success
 - Hold schools accountable for outcomes, rather than processes
- Principle 3 – Protect Student and Public Interests
 - Keeps the well-being of students at the center
 - Hold schools accountable for fulfilling obligations to the public

Charter School Review Quality Authorizing Standards

A quality authorizer...

- Considers diverse educational philosophies and approaches
- Requires applicants to demonstrate capacity to serve students with diverse needs...
- Implements a charter application process that is open, well-publicized, and transparent, and is organized around clear, realistic timelines.

Charter Schools

According to state law, nonprofit organizations with the intent to open a charter school in a Tennessee school district must apply through the local School Board for that district for authorization. The CMCSS Charter Review Committee thoroughly reviews applications and makes recommendations to the School Board. The School Board approves or denies applications. For more information about the charter application review policies and procedures in CMCSS, click the links below:

[Charter School Policy](#)

[Charter Schools Procedure](#)

2022-2023 School Year

CMCSS received one application this school year. See below for the application materials and a link to a form to provide your feedback on the application.

American Classical Academy Montgomery

- [Application](#)
- [Attachment N – Budget Worksheet](#)
- [Capacity Interview \(March 15\) Audio Recording](#)

Please [click here](#) to provide your feedback on this charter school application.

The CMCSS Charter Review Committee will provide their recommendation to the School Board at a Special Called Session on Tuesday, April 18 at 6 p.m. The School Board will vote to approve or deny the application at the Formal Session on Tuesday, April 25 at 6 p.m.

Charter School Review

Quality Authorizing Standards

A quality authorizer...

- Considers diverse educational philosophies and approaches
- Requires applicants to demonstrate capacity to serve students with diverse needs...
- Implements a charter application process that is open, well-publicized, and transparent, and is organized around clear, realistic timelines.
- Requires all applicants to present
 - a clear and compelling mission;
 - a quality educational program;
 - a demonstration of community support;
 - a solvent and sustainable budget and contingency financial plans;
 - a clear demonstration of effectiveness of the model for the target student population;
 - effective governance and management structures and systems;
 - founding team members demonstrating diverse and necessary capabilities in all phases of the school's development, and;
 - clear evidence of the applicant's capacity

Charter School Review

Quality Authorizing Standards

A quality authorizer...

- Grants charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in all aspects of their particular school model
- Rigorously evaluates each application...
- Engages highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators with relevant educational, organizational (governance and management) financial, and legal expertise, as well as thorough understanding of the essential principles of charter school autonomy and accountability

Charter School Review Application Review Process

December

- Propose and compile review committee membership

January

- Board review and approval of review committee memberships

February

- February 6 – Review Committee training
- February 23 – Review Committee meeting and discussion
- February 23-March 13 – Individual Review

March

- March 13 – Review Committee touchpoint – Individual Review
- March 15 – Capacity interview with applicant
- March 15-April 3 – Individual Review

April

- April 3 – Review Committee final meeting and recommendation
- April 18 – Presentation to Board of Education

Charter School Review Application Review Process

April

- **April 25 – Board of Education vote**
 - If the vote is to APPROVE, the authorization process will begin for the school to open in the 2024-2025 school year.
 - If the vote is to DENY, the applicant has the opportunity to submit an amended application based on the feedback from the review committee and the Board within 30 days for another review.
 - The review committee would have 60 days to review the amended application.
- The amended application review, if initiated, will take place in June and July.

Charter School Review Application Review Process

- 90 days to review, make a recommendation, and ultimately vote on application
- Individual reviews with group consensus
- [Tennessee Department of Education Rubric](#)
 - Meets or Exceeds the Standard ← All summary ratings must be here
 - Partially Meets the Standard
 - Does Not Meet the Standard

Application Summary Sections

- **Section 1 – Academic Design and Capacity**
 - School Mission and Vision
 - Enrollment Summary
 - Academic Focus and Plan
 - Academic Performance Standards
 - High School Graduation and Postsecondary Readiness
 - Assessments
 - School Calendar and Schedule
 - Special Populations and At-Risk Students
 - School Culture and Discipline
 - Recruitment and Enrollment
 - Parent and Community Engagement and Support

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Section 1 – Academic Plan Design and Capacity

- Partially Meets the Standard

Strengths:

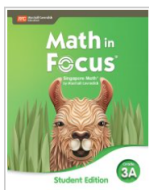
- There is a focus on a small school environment.
- Their mission is aligned with some of the central purposes for forming a charter school as outlined in state law.
- The applicant is very grounded in their mission and philosophy.
- There are more diverse materials presented that the applicant is using for its marketing campaigns, such as materials in different languages.

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Deficiencies:

- Lack of alignment between their curricular materials and state standards with no clear plan for ensuring alignment of those materials.
 - “Ongoing conversations, with an expectation that adults in the building will be aware of expectations and can ensure that alignment.”
 - Administrator will most likely not be local to Tennessee



2020
Math in Focus: Singapore Math

PUBLISHER
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

SUBJECT	GRADES	REPORT RELEASE
Math	K-8	10/25/2021

ALIGNMENT ⓘ

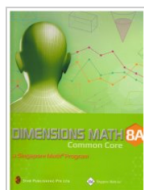
Does Not Meet

USABILITY ⓘ

Not Rated

[View Full Report →](#)

[Quick Glance ↻](#)



2013-2015
Singapore Math: Dimensions Math

PUBLISHER
Star Publishing Pte Ltd

SUBJECT	GRADES	REPORT RELEASE
Math	7-8	11/12/2018

ALIGNMENT ⓘ

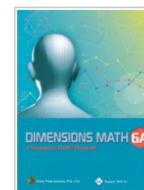
Does Not Meet

USABILITY ⓘ

Not Rated

[View Full Report →](#)

[Quick Glance ↻](#)



2016-2017
Singapore Math: Dimensions Math

PUBLISHER
Singapore Math Inc., Star Publishing Pte Ltd

SUBJECT	GRADES	REPORT RELEASE
Math	6	11/12/2018

ALIGNMENT ⓘ

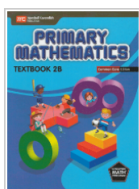
Partially Meets

USABILITY ⓘ

Not Rated

[View Full Report →](#)

[Quick Glance ↻](#)



2014-2017
Singapore Math: Primary Mathematics Common Core Edition

PUBLISHER
Marshall Cavendish Education Pte Ltd

SUBJECT	GRADES	REPORT RELEASE
Math	1-5	11/12/2018

ALIGNMENT ⓘ

Does Not Meet

USABILITY ⓘ

Not Rated

[View Full Report →](#)

[Quick Glance ↻](#)



2014
Singapore Math: Earlybird Kindergarten Mathematics Common Core Edition

PUBLISHER
Marshall Cavendish Education Pte Ltd

SUBJECT	GRADES	REPORT RELEASE
Math	K	11/12/2018

ALIGNMENT ⓘ

Does Not Meet

USABILITY ⓘ

Not Rated

[View Full Report →](#)

[Quick Glance ↻](#)

www.edreports.org

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Deficiencies:

- Lack of alignment between their curricular materials and state standards with no clear plan for ensuring alignment of those materials.
 - “Ongoing conversations, with an expectation that adults in the building will be aware of expectations and can ensure that alignment.”
- Their plans for providing RTI supports are not in alignment with state standards.
 - Math block is not long enough for state expectations (Pg. 48).
- Concerns with verbiage in their student handbook.
 - Approach to unexcused absences and that they do not intend for students to receive credit for homework and assignments they miss during those times (Pg. 12, Student Handbook Attachment B).
 - Approach to outstanding fee balances preventing students from registering for the next school year may not be legal (Pg. 29).
 - Student decorum – “clean and tasteful,” “hair styled traditionally,” “boys’ hair not being lower than the top of the shirt collar in the back,” “religious purposes,” “reasonable uniform alterations,” (Pages 14 and 15, Student Handbook Attachment B)
 - Many terms that are not clear to ensure that the environment would be inclusive to students in what is a very diverse community.
 - This concern has been highlighted by community members specifically in both our survey and on social media, which is significant to the review committee.
- Unclear what the level of parent support is in the community and the level of demand in the community for their model.
 - Survey they highlighted only appears to have gotten response from 25-27 families with children, which does not represent significant demand (Pg 110).

Please review the application for American Classical Academy - Montgomery, linked below. <https://www.cmcss.net/school-board/charter-schools/> Using the space provided below, please provide any feedback you have about the application for the American Classical Academy - Montgomery Charter School.

Answered: 93 Skipped: 0

RESPONSES (93)

WORD CLOUD

TAGS (0)

Sentiments: ON



How people feel:



46%



53%



Positive: 46%



Neutral: 1%



Negative: 53%



Undetected: 0%



Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Deficiencies:

- Concerns with the approach the applicant has to meeting the needs of diverse learners:
 - "Individual needs," (1.9), "all students' needs," (2.5)
 - There are portions where they have language that indicates pre-determination or decisions that would be made outside of the IEP process.
 - Setting a limit of pull-out time at 21% of a student's day (Pg. 91).
 - Most of the language around pull out services is geared toward ELA and Math classes, but there may be many other instances that require pull out services, such as behavior supports.
 - Co-teaching ELL students as they describe will not be feasible with the staffing ratios outlined in the application (pg. 95).

Summary Scores American Classical Academy

- Not convinced based on evidence provided that the applicant’s educational model would improve student achievement or close achievement gaps (Attachment H).
- Models they cite as additional examples are not BCSI-affiliated schools
- Data do not provide enough evidence

What’s Missing?

- Student subgroup performance
- Growth data
- Demographic information for the school compared to the district and state as a whole
- Information about the equivalence of a Level 3-5 in Florida to Tennessee’s “on track” or “mastered.”

Year	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2020-21	
Grade Level	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above
03-Third	5,600	59.70%	5,623	65.00%	5,273	63.50%	5,291	64.10%	5,102	59.60%
04-Fourth	5,064	56.70%	5,476	58.20%	5,571	56.90%	5,376	61.20%	4,997	58.50%
05-Fifth	5,160	55.80%	5,177	59.30%	5,511	54.10%	5,613	59.50%	4,988	58.60%
06-Sixth	5,196	62.60%	5,250	63.90%	5,252	62.70%	5,621	60.40%	5,196	62.00%
07-Seventh	5,016	55.50%	5,214	59.10%	5,301	55.60%	5,284	57.60%	5,283	51.70%
08-Eighth	5,209	63.00%	5,046	62.20%	5,210	64.50%	5,262	62.50%	5,243	54.00%
09-Ninth	5,422	58.00%	5,462	60.70%	5,347	60.20%	5,447	62.20%	5,115	54.70%
10-Tenth	5,276	58.30%	5,234	58.40%	5,250	61.40%	5,166	59.40%	4,994	53.90%

Year	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2020-21	
Grade Level	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above	# of Students	% of Students Level 3 & Above
3	54	77.80%	69	84.10%	87	77.00%	88	80.70%	70	77.10%
4	38	65.80%	58	74.10%	63	77.80%	69	68.10%	84	76.20%
5	40	57.50%	40	70.00%	64	65.60%	65	78.50%	86	82.60%
6	42	85.70%	42	71.40%	44	72.70%	55	52.70%	99	76.80%
7	.	.	58	70.70%	55	67.30%	49	65.30%	89	68.50%
8	.	.	.	.	56	80.40%	53	60.40%	94	63.80%
9	.	.	.	.	.	.	29	62.10%	68	75.00%
10	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	33	66.70%

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Florida Proficiency Scale

Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Satisfactory: <u>May need additional support for the next grade</u>	Proficient: Likely to excel in the next grade	Mastery: Highly likely to excel in the next grade

Application Summary Sections

- **Section 2 – Operations Plan and Capacity**
 - Governance
 - Start-Up Plan
 - Facilities
 - Personnel and Human Capital
 - Professional Development
 - Insurance
 - Transportation
 - Food Service
 - Additional Operations
 - Waivers

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Section 2 – Operations Plan and Capacity

- Does Not Meet the Standard

Strengths:

- They do have a much more "local" board overall.
- They have insurance assurances that are required by the application.
- There are plans to use Tennessee evaluation systems for teachers and administrators.
- Key central staff for ACE have been retained from last year.

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Deficiencies:

- Concerns with governance structure:
 - No representation in the form of a Montgomery County resident. We are one of the only counties of the 5 the applicant intends to serve that does not have a resident on the board (Pg. 123).
 - We are not convinced that there will be sufficient transparency and local influence with a statewide Board to the degree that parents can have their concerns heard (pages 130-131).
 - There is not sufficient K-12 representation on their Board (Pg. 123).
- Concerns with facilities plans:
 - The applicant has only highlighted land at this point, and did not provide locations for any contingency facilities if they are not able to secure land soon enough to start construction. We are also unsure of any facilities locally that are approved for educational occupancy, which we would want to ensure we could review (Pg. 149).
 - They have only allotted a few months for construction, unless that is a misunderstanding of their start-up plan (Pg. 137).
 - The architectural rendering provided in their application – we estimate– will be much more expensive than what they allot in their budget. There is also no logo or other identifying information for an architect for the rendering provided (Pg. 144).
 - The applicant highlights four possible locations for their school, all of which are located within the same Census tract. Based on enrollment projections the applicant includes in their application, this portion of the county would not be the ideal location for them to ensure that all students can access their school.


Tract Demographics

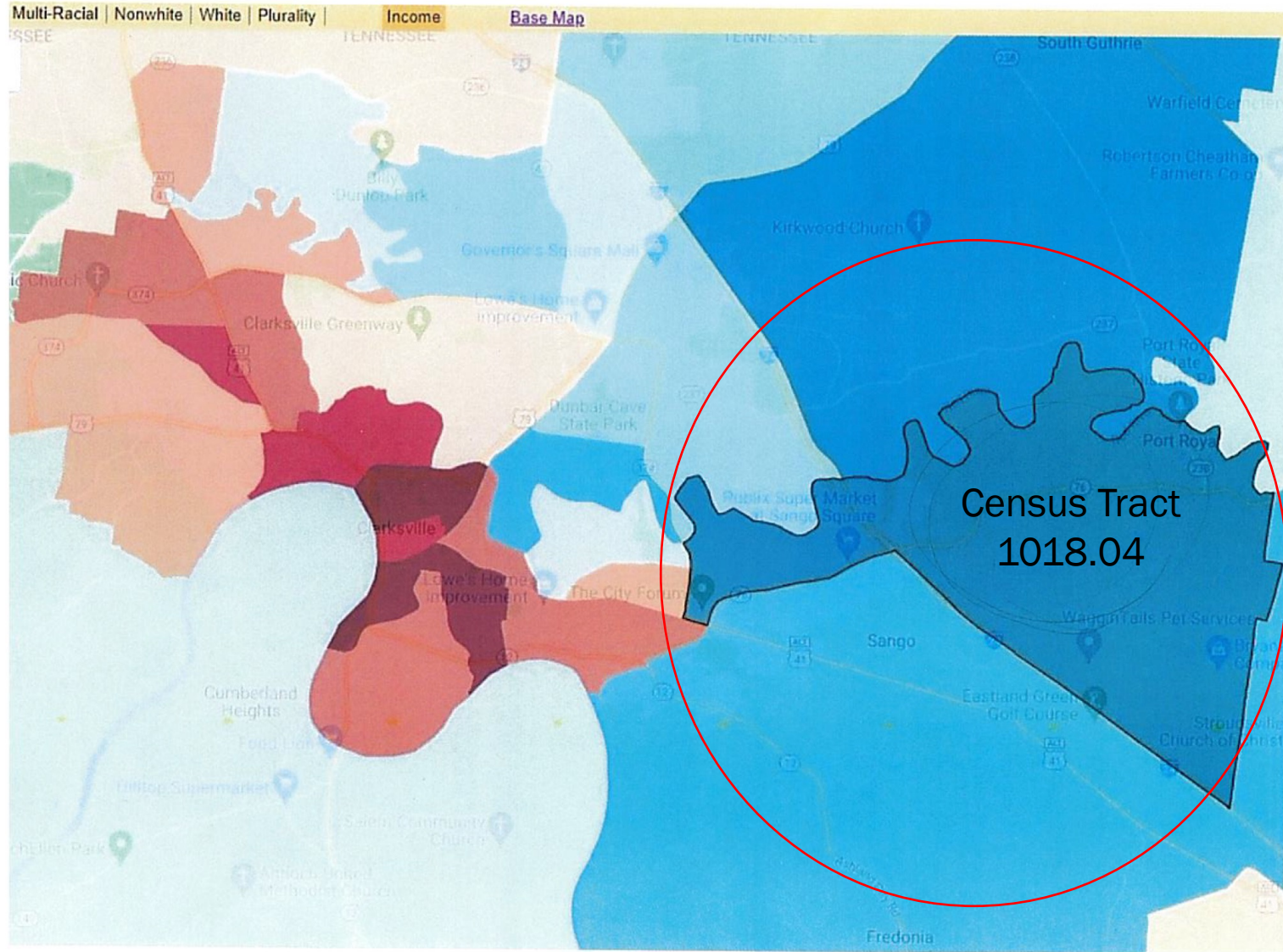
ACAM Projected Enrollment

Demo.	%
White	85%
People of Color	15%

Demo.	%
Students of Color	40%
Low SES	50%
SWD	15%

Median Income	Tract Income
\$32,133	\$90,442

181% 



Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

- Human Capital
 - At-will employment (Pg. 158)
 - Current salary structure is not clear enough to assess whether the applicant will offer competitive salary structures (Pg. 158)
 - They indicate plans to budget for \$50,000 per year for salary, and but also indicate they will have a school-wide average salary of \$50,000 per year. That would mean some teachers are making below \$50,000 per year.
 - Plans for evaluating and holding school leaders accountable are not clear enough:
 - The application indicates there will be a corrective action process involved when an administrator is found to not be meeting expectations (Pg. 155), but there are aspects of that process that remain unclear (Pg. 157).

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Deficiencies:

- Transportation
 - While not a requirement, given the applicant's enrollment projections and the locations that we have to evaluate in the application, we believe that they will not be able to meet their enrollment requirements to be viable.
- Additional Operations
 - While the applicant indicates they will have a safety plan forthcoming, the review committee feels a more detailed plan is necessary, especially in light of recent events and legislative actions around school safety (Pg. 180).

Application Summary Sections

Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity

- Charter School Financing

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

Section 3: Financial Plan and Capacity

- Does Not Meet the Standard

Strengths:

- The applicant was able to communicate their access to additional sources of revenue through the interview, which was helpful to the review committee.
- The applicant provided MOUs for the services they can obtain at some of their quoted prices.

Summary Scores

American Classical Academy Montgomery

- The applicant does not provide estimates for critical expenditures that could affect their liquidity:
 - Substitute costs
 - Custodial costs
 - Furniture in year 0
- The applicant overestimates their revenue, especially from the state level:
 - Their revenue assumes full enrollment at the demographic estimates they have provided, and we are skeptical they can achieve those estimates given some of their other operations plans (facilities location and transportation).
- We are concerned about their financial viability and plans, given their desire to waive TN Fiscal Accounting Standards in section 2.11.
 - In our review of other charter applications in previous years, this is not a waiver that charter applicants appear to request along with other standard waivers.

Closing

- “The Board, its executive director, director of school development, and principal will address many challenges in preparation for the school’s opening, including:
 1. Hiring the best school leader and teachers possible;
 2. Securing an optimal facility with opportunity for growth; and,
 3. Achieve student recruitment/enrollment goals.”

Closing

- Hiring the best school leader and teachers possible:
 - At-will employment
 - Current salary structure is not clear enough to assess whether the applicant will offer competitive salary structures (Pg. 158)
 - They indicate plans to budget for \$50,000 per year for salary, and but also indicate they will have a school-wide average salary of \$50,000 per year. That would mean some teachers are making below \$50,000 per year.
 - Plans for evaluating and holding school leaders accountable are not clear enough:
 - The application indicates there will be a corrective action process involved when an administrator is found to not be meeting expectations (page 155), but there are aspects of that process that remain unclear.
- Not planning to require licensure for the administrator of the school

Closing

- Securing an optimal facility with opportunity for growth
 - The applicant has only highlighted land at this point, and did not provide locations for any contingency facilities if they are not able to secure land soon enough to start construction. We are also unsure of any facilities locally that are approved for educational occupancy, which we would want to ensure we could review.
 - The applicant highlights four possible locations for their school, all of which are located within the same Census tract. Based on enrollment projections the applicant includes in their application, this portion of the county would not be the ideal location for them to ensure that all students can access their school.

Closing

- Achieving student recruitment/enrollment goals
 - Unclear what the level of parent support is in the community and the level of demand in the community for their model.
 - Survey they highlighted only appears to have gotten response from 25-27 families with children, which does not represent significant demand.


Tract Demographics

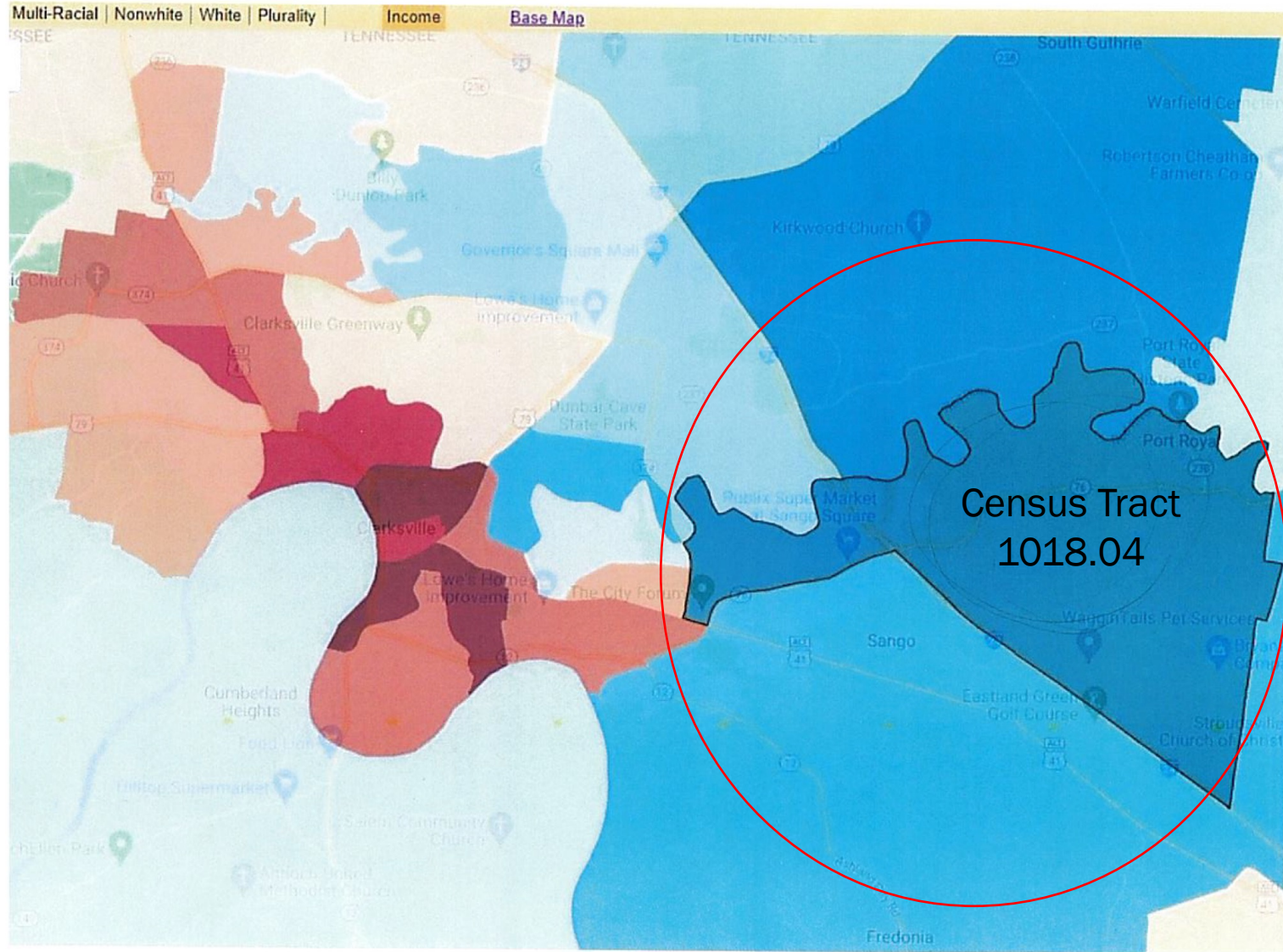
Demo.	%
White	85%
People of Color	15%

ACAM Projected Enrollment

Demo.	%
Students of Color	40%
Low SES	50%
SWD	15%

Median Income	Tract Income
\$32,133	\$90,442

181% 



Summary Ratings and Recommendation

- American Classical Academy Montgomery - Deny
 - Section 1: Partially Meets the Standard
 - Section 2: Does Not Meet the Standard
 - Section 3: Does Not Meet the Standard

Next Steps

- Board vote on the recommendations – Tuesday, April 25
- If the vote is to approve, CMCSS will become the authorizer for any approved schools.
- If the vote is to deny, the applicant has the opportunity to submit an amended application.
 - Applicant has 30 days to submit amended application
 - Review team has 60 days to review and consider the amended application