

HISTORY OF WESLEY INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY



Wesley International Academy (WIA) started with the dream of Rebecca Gray, who is currently a parent with children at WIA. In 2003, she pulled together a 9-person team who helped her formulate the plan for WIA, including location, curriculum, and financial need. The final vision was for a public charter school, teaching an International Baccalaureate curriculum with daily instruction of Chinese in a single gender setting. The charter application was approved by Atlanta Public Schools in December 2006. In March 2007, the charter was officially approved by a unanimous vote by the State Board of Education.

The School was originally managed by Imagine Schools Non-Profit, Inc. until July 2010 when WIA created its own non-profit corporation and began to manage the school through elected board of directors.

The School has been approved for a charter three (3) times. The first charter was granted in December 2006 for the 2007-2012 school years. A one-year charter was granted for the 2012-2013 school year to transition management from Imagine Schools to the new non-profit school board. The last charter was granted for 2013-2018, our current charter.



Here is the History Section from our latest charter application:

WIA was founded as Imagine Wesley International Academy (IWIA) in 2006 and opened in 2007. All of the faculty and staff were employees of Imagine Schools, and the governing board of the school was originally established as an LLC subsidiary of Imagine Schools - populated, in part, by Imagine staff. Funding from APS went directly to Imagine Schools and the company adjudicated the allocation of public funds at their discretion. In sum, the IWIA charter was approved as a school wholly operated by the management company with no local independent oversight.

In 2008, the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) enforced its policy that all charter schools must be governed by fully independent, Georgia non-profit governing boards. The most important structural change to IWIA during its first 6 years has been to comply with that policy by establishing an independent, autonomous, non-profit board. This process instigated the removal of Imagine not just as a for-profit management entity, but from any role in the governance, management, or operation of the school.

As of July 1, 2012, WIA was reorganized as an independent non-profit with a new, autonomous board comprised of local professionals with no ties to Imagine Schools. As of July 1, 2012, all staff members are employed by this independent entity, Wesley International Academy, Inc. The board has undertaken significant work to stabilize the governance of the school, the school leaders that were placed by Imagine have been replaced by experts who participated in a rigorous vetting process by the independent board. In addition, the governing board has made important changes to the leadership model to bolster the expertise and support of instructional staff, and key structures are being phased in to facilitate instructional and organizational excellence across all sub-groups, grade levels, and content areas.

With a commitment to the elements of the school that have made it successful, as well as changes that promise even better student performance and mission realization, the board and new leadership have positioned the school to transition from satisfactory performance to excellence in the next charter term.

June 2014