

**Fort Smith Global Innovation Academy
District Conversion Charter
CAP Action**

Recommendation and Motion Summary: Fort Smith Global Innovation Academy (District Conversion)

Fort Smith Global Innovation Academy is recommended for approval as a district conversion charter based on the Charter Authorizing Panel's approval with conditions, including required revisions to enrollment practices.

At its meeting, the Panel considered the district's conversion application and associated conditions. Mr. Phillip Baldwin moved to approve the district conversion for Fort Smith Global Innovation Academy. The motion included a condition prohibiting the use of the school's enrollment rubric as part of the admissions process. The motion was seconded by Dr. John Bacon and passed unanimously (6–0).

The Panel's approval includes the following:

1. **Charter Term and Enrollment Practices**
Approval of a **five-year charter term** for Fort Smith Global Innovation Academy
2. **Conditional Enrollment Requirement**
The school shall not use an enrollment rubric as a condition of acceptance or admission.

Rationale and School Summary

Global Innovation Academy (GIA) is proposed as a K–5 district conversion charter within Bonneville Elementary in Fort Smith Public Schools. The model is designed as a school-within-a-school and centers on a globally focused STEM program that includes Singapore Math, Mandarin language instruction, PITSCO Science, project-based learning, advisory structures, and a capstone experience. The proposal aligns to regional priorities, including the influence of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) mission and anticipated demand for globally oriented academic programming.

The academic model is clear and well-defined. It reflects a stronger level of intentionality than typical innovation proposals by identifying specific instructional pillars and connecting them to student outcomes and program identity. The literacy framework, emphasis on structured instructional practices, and integration of STEM and language components contribute to a cohesive design. However, the model remains partially conceptual due to the absence of a finalized master schedule, instructional minutes, assessment systems, and detailed implementation plans.

District capacity is a notable strength. Fort Smith Public Schools can provide facilities, operational systems, student services, and administrative infrastructure, significantly lowering startup risk. This support enhances feasibility and strengthens the school-within-a-school approach. At the same time, program-specific capacity remains less developed, particularly in specialized staffing areas such as Mandarin instruction and implementation of Singapore Math and PITSCO programming.

Several readiness concerns must be addressed prior to opening. Admissions policies currently include language that suggests screening practices, which must be fully aligned with public charter requirements

to ensure open access. Demand for the program is plausible but not sufficiently supported by documented enrollment intent. Staffing plans require further development, including confirmed personnel, specialized roles, and contingency strategies. Financial sustainability is promising but dependent on formal district commitments that must be documented through official action rather than narrative assurances.

Governance and accountability structures are developing but require clarification to ensure the program operates as a distinct charter with transparent oversight. Similarly, performance measures should be consolidated into a clear framework that separates implementation benchmarks from student outcome goals.

Bottom line: The proposal reflects a promising and strategically relevant model with strong district alignment and academic vision. However, it is not yet fully ready for implementation. Approval is appropriate only if tied to clearly defined pre-opening conditions and a formal readiness review to ensure the model can be executed with fidelity.