Pathways to Chartering:
Using School Improvement Grant Strategies to become a Georgia Charter School

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“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
Outline

Charter School Basics

Types and Variations of Charter Schools

Three SIG Pathways to Chartering

Petition Process & Deadlines, Evaluation Criteria

“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
Challenge traditional public schools on market share.

Implement best practices leading to superior student performance.

Students flock to charter schools.

Traditional school systems create high-performing schools.

Traditional schools respond to win back students.

All students end up in high-performing schools.

“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
Still the goal of charter schools

All students are in high-performing schools

“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
What are charter schools?

They are public schools of choice

They are publicly funded, but organized and governed by a private group of individuals, a private organization, or state and local public entities

They are free from many of the regulations that govern traditional public schools

They involve partnerships with local communities and businesses

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“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”

Components of a High Quality Charter School

High student performance
- 100% proficiency before NCLB deadline
- Zero students in “does not meet”
- Annual growth in % of students in “exceeds”

High parent satisfaction

High student retention

High compliance
THE CHARTERING DEAL FOR SIG CHARTERS

Accountability

- Students outperform local districts/Georgia
- Increased accountability measures
- Increased academic expectations

Autonomy

- Flexibility to innovate
- Waivers from state laws and rules
- Autonomy from local control

School Improvement Specialists
Charter Schools Division
Must show the following links

- Innovations
- Autonomy from the district and waivers
- Student performance
Why charter schools?

- Freedom from many state and district regulations inspires creativity, innovation, and new best practices

- Choices for parents and students
  - Alternatives to failing schools
  - Specific focus or model that provides a better fit for some students

- Provide market competition to district public schools as an incentive for improving schools

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Charter schools are public schools

- They are publicly funded
- They must have fair and open enrollment
- They cannot charge tuition
- They must be secular
- They must serve all populations (e.g. English language learners)

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What is a charter?

A performance-based contract between a charter school board and its authorizer(s)

It sets forth the agreement under which the charter school is governed

Charter schools are held accountable by the state and local boards of education for upholding the stipulations in their charter

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**What is an authorizer?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contracts</th>
<th>• An authorizer enters into two- or three-party contracts with a charter school petitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>• Determines if a petition to start and operate a charter school should be approved</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determines if existing charter schools should be renewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>• Conducts ongoing oversight of charter schools to evaluate performance, monitor compliance and enforce contract terms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensures that charter schools practice open enrollment and conduct fair and open enrollment lotteries</td>
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“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
Local School Board Chartering Roles and Responsibilities

- Review and act on local charter school petitions
- Enforce clear expectations for performance goals set forth in charters
- Ensure that charter schools comply with state and federal accountability provisions
- Provide funds to local charter schools on the same basis that it provides funds to other local schools

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“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”
Types of charter schools

SIG Types of Charter Schools

Conversion Charter School
LEA Sponsored Start-up Charter School

Start-up Charter School
State-Chartered Special School

Charter System
Commission Charter School

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Conversion Charter School

**Definition**
- Traditional public school that becomes a charter school
- Gains additional flexibility in exchange for higher levels of accountability

**Facts & Features**
- 32 conversion charter schools in Georgia
- Strategy for turning around low performing schools

**Relative Advantages:**
- Student population, building, and operational systems and structures are already in place

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We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.

Start-up Charter School

Definition
• Started by private individuals, private organizations, or state and local public entities

Facts & Features
• Did not exist prior to the petition
• Most common type of charter school in Georgia

Relative Advantages
• Opportunity to build school culture from the ground up

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How can your school benefit from converting to a charter school?

- Increased flexibility can lead to innovative teaching and educational opportunities
- Increased academic accountability
- Turn your school around by changing its culture and operation
- Provide parents with choices

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Chartering Allows Flexibility

Title 20 waived

State Board Rules waived

Local District Policies waived

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Three SIG Pathways to Chartering

Transformation → Charter
Turnaround → Charter
Restart → Charter

One SIG Pathway:

School Closure

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Transformation

Minimum Requirements

- Replace school leader
- Develop rewards for teacher and leader effectiveness
- Implement comprehensive instruction programs
- Extend time for students and staff
- Offer community-oriented services
- Operational flexibility

How Charter Complements

- Full flexibility waiver can allow schools to take advantage of greater operational flexibility
  - Seat time waiver
  - School calendars
  - Programmatic waivers (EIP, Gift ed, ESOL)
  - Certification waivers
- Charter = Community Support

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**Minimum Requirements**

- New leadership
- 50% new staff
- New or revised instructional strategies
- Extended school day
- Social services
- Recruit, place, and develop highly effective teachers

**How Charter Complements**

- Flexibility in scheduling
  - More professional development
- Flexibility with school day
  - Extended school day and/or year

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“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”

Minimum Requirements

• New Leadership
• 50% new staff
• LEA converts the school
• LEA closes and reopens a school under a Charter School Operator
  – Charter Management Organization (CMO)
  – Education Management Organization (EMO)
• LEA holds CMO/EMO accountable to terms of contract

How Charter Complements

• Successful Charter School Operators
• Charter schools are held accountable to terms of their charter
• Flexibility
Background

- Philadelphia charter organization
- ‘No Excuses’ CMO
- Manages 4 schools
- Only converts existing schools

Success Story

- Pickett Middle School, Philadelphia PA
  - Staff and students signed contracts
  - Student performance improved after one year
    - 45 percent increase in Reading
    - 21 percent increase in Math
  - Violent incidents down 85%

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Petition Process and Deadlines

Deadlines
- Aug 1 for start-ups
- Nov 1 for conversions, renewals, charter systems

Petition Reviewed
- Legal review to ensure eligibility and substance review

Interview Panel
- Deficiency Letter

Response to deficiency letter
- Core focus and compliance

Staff Recommendations

SBOE
- Item for Information
- Action Item

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Questions?

“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”