Poll

• In the chat box, type your name and school district or organization.
• Has your district received charter schools applications in the past?
• Do you currently have charter schools in your district?
• How many applications has your district received in the past?
  – A. 0
  – B. 1-5
  – C. 6-10
  – D. More than 10
• How many charter schools does your district have currently authorized?
  – A. 0
  – B. 1-5
  – C. 6-10
  – D. More than 10
• How many charter applications have you/do you expect to receive for the current petition cycle?
  – A. 1
  – B. 2-5
  – C. 6-10
  – D. More than 10
Agenda

Charter Schools 101

Authorizers and their Responsibilities

Petition Process

Evaluation Process
  - Internal Review
  - External Review

Elements of a Strong Application

Education Management Organizations (EMOs) and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs)

Part I

Part II
Definitions

**Charter School**
- A public school of choice that operates under the terms of a charter, or contract, with an authorizer. Charter Schools receive flexibility from certain state and local rules and laws in exchange for a higher degree of accountability.

**Letter of Intent**
- A letter submitted by a petitioning group to the local school board and to the State Department of Education, declaring their intent to submit a charter school petition.

**Petition**
- An application for approval to open a charter school, submitted to an authorizer(s).

**Authorizer**
- An entity that has the authority to create charter schools (a local school board, the State Board of Education, or the Georgia Charter Schools Commission).
What are Charter Schools?

They are public schools of choice.

They are publically 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.
Federal Definition of a Charter School

GaDOE’s objective: All charter schools meet this definition

1. Exempt from significant State or local rules
2. Created as a public school, publicly supervised and directed
3. Pursues a specific set of educational objectives
4. Elementary, secondary, or both
5. Nonsectarian and not affiliated with sectarian school or religious institution
6. No tuition
7. Complies with Federal mandates
8. School of choice with enrollment lottery if necessary
9. Complies with Federal and State audit requirements
10. Meets all health and safety requirements
11. Operates in accordance with State law
12. Written performance contract with authorizer with student performance measures
What is a Charter?

A performance-based, legal contract between non-profit governing organization and its authorizer(s)

It sets forth the legal obligations under which the charter school is governed

Charter schools are held accountable by their authorizer for upholding the stipulations in their charter
The Basic Bargain

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

Students outperform local districts/Georgia
Increased accountability measures
Increased academic expectations
Flexibility to innovate
Waivers from state laws and rules
Autonomy from local control
Must Show the Following Links

- Innovations
- Flexibility/waivers
- Student performance
Types of Charter Schools

- Conversion Charter School
- Start-up Charter School
- LEA-Sponsored Start-Up: Ex: Career Academy
- State-Chartered Special School
- Charter System
- Commission Charter School
**Locally Approved 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

**Funding**
- Local per-pupil allotment
- State QBE allotment
- Must pay for own transportation, rent, facility upkeep
- Commission Charter Schools are funded differently
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

Funding

- Retains existing funding structure
- LEA continues to provide transportation, facility and other services
Charter School Benefits to the District

- Provide parents with choices
- Increased academic accountability
- Turn around failing schools
- Increased flexibility can lead to innovative teaching and educational opportunities
## What is an authorizer?

An authorizer is an entity that has the authority to create charter schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contracts</th>
<th>Decision making</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| • Enters into two- or three-party contracts with a non-profit charter petitioning group | • Determines if a petition to start and operate a charter school should be approved  
• Determines if existing charter schools should be renewed | • Conducts ongoing oversight of charter schools to evaluate performance, monitor compliance and enforce contract terms  
• Ensures that charter schools practice open enrollment and conduct fair and open enrollment lotteries |
The Many Pathways to become a Charter School

School applies to State Board of Education
- Approved
- Denied

School may apply to Georgia Charter Schools Commission
- Approved or applies simultaneously
- Denied

School has a 5 county or more attendance zone.

Receives Charter

No Charter

State board may overrule

State Board may overrule

State board may overrule

State Board may overrule
Authorizer Legal Responsibilities

- Must act on a charter petition within 60 days of receiving it
- Must provide oversight and management of schools authorized by the district
- Must provide equitable per pupil funding to charter schools authorized by the district
- Must ensure that charter schools authorized by the district receive federal funds to which they are entitled
Local School Board Roles and Responsibilities

- Review and act on local charter school petitions
- Enforce compliance with performance goals set forth in charters
- Ensure that charter schools comply with state and federal accountability provisions/other nonwaivable rules/laws
- Provide federal, state and local funds to local charter schools on the same basis that it provides funds to other local schools
Review and act on local charter school petitions and state-chartered special school petitions

Technical assistance to local school systems

Technical assistance to petitioners
  • Charter petitions
  • Petition renewal applications

Strategic plan and policy for the state’s charter schools program

Management of federal grants

Annual report to the General Assembly
**Current State Board of Education Petition Timeline**

*(Under Revision)*

### Start-up Charter School Petitioners

- **February 1**
  - Letter of Intent
- **August 1**
  - Petition Deadline

### Conversion Charter School Petitioners

- **May 1**
  - Letter of Intent
- **November 1**
  - Petition Deadline
State Board of Education Petition Process for Locally Approved Charter Schools

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

**Petition Reviewed**
- Legal review to ensure eligibility
- Substance review

**Response to deficiency letter**
- Core focus
- Compliance

**Staff Recommendations**

**Interview**

**SBOE receives Items for Information**

**SBOE receives Action Item**

**Execution of the Contract**
Role of a Quality Authorizer
(NACSA Principles and Standards)

1. Maintain and set high standards
2. Uphold school autonomy
3. Protect student and public interest

1. Maintain and set high standards

Set high standards for approval (use GaDOE as a guide)

Maintain high standards in oversight

Effectively cultivate quality charter schools that meet identified educational needs

Oversee schools that meet performance standards set forth in the charter on a range of measures and metrics

Close schools that fail to meet standards set forth in law and by contract

- Academic performance
- Financial irregularities
- Organizational issues/legal concerns

2. Uphold school autonomy

Honor and preserve core autonomies crucial to school success

- Governing board independence
- Personnel
- School vision and culture
- Instructional programming, design, and use of time
- Budgeting

Assume responsibility for holding schools accountable for their performance

Minimize administrative and compliance burdens on schools

Focus on holding schools accountable for outcomes rather than on processes

3. Protect Student and Public Interest
(Student)

Make the well-being and interests of students the fundamental value informing all actions and decisions.

Hold schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental public education obligations to all students, including providing:

- Nonselective, nondiscriminatory access
- Fair treatment in admissions and disciplinary actions
- Appropriate services for all students in accordance with law

Support parents and students in being well-informed about the quality of education provided by charter schools.

3. Protect Student and Public Interest (Public Interest)

Hold schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental public obligations, including providing:

- Sound governance, management, and stewardship of public funds
- Public information and operational transparency in accordance with law

Ensure in the authorizer’s own work

- Ethical conduct
- Focus on the mission of chartering high-quality schools
- Clarity, consistency, and public transparency in authorizing policies, practices, and decisions
- Effective and efficient public stewardship
- Compliance with applicable laws and regulations

Petition Process
(NACSA Principles and Standards)

Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance

Fair, Transparent, Quality-focused Procedures

Rigorous Approval Criteria

Rigorous Decision Making

Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance

Issue a charter application information packet or RFP that:

- States authorizers chartering priorities
- Articulates comprehensive application questions to elicit the information needed for rigorous evaluation of applicants’ plans and capacities
- Provides clear guidance and requirements regarding application content and format

Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance

Welcome proposals from first-time charter applicants as well as existing school operators/replicators.

Encourage expansion and replication of charter schools demonstrating success and capacity for growth.

Be open to considering diverse educational philosophies and approaches.

Fair, Transparent, Quality-focused Procedures

Open, well-publicized charter application process

Clear, realistic time lines

Sufficient time for each stage of the application and school pre-opening process

Explain how each stage of the application process is conducted and evaluated

Communicate chartering opportunities, processes, approval criteria, and decisions to the public

Rigorous Approval Criteria

Require all applicants to present:

- Clear and compelling mission
- Quality educational program
- Solid business plan
- Effective governance and management structures and systems
- Founding team members with diverse and necessary capabilities
- Clear evidence of capacity to execute plan successfully

Rigorous Approval Criteria

Establish distinct requirements and criteria for applicants who are existing school operators or replicators.

Establish distinct requirements and criteria for applicants proposing to contract with education service or management providers.

Establish distinct requirements and criteria for applicants proposing to operate virtual or online schools.

Rigorous Decision Making

Grant charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in all aspects of the school consistent with State approval criteria.

Rigorously evaluate each application through:

- Thorough review of written proposal
- Substantive in-person interview with applicant group
- Other due diligence to examine the applicant’s experience and capacity

Rigorous Decision Making

Engage highly competent teams of internal or external evaluators

Provide orientation and training to application evaluators to ensure

- Consistent evaluation standards and practices
- Observance of essential protocols
- Fair treatment of applicants

Ensure a process free of conflicts of interest

### Evaluation Process

#### Internal Review
- Solicit volunteer subject matter experts from within district
  - Special Education
  - Curriculum experts
  - Legal
  - Fulton County uses this process
- Interview petitioners

#### External Review
- Use charter experts, reviewers with varied areas of expertise
- Balance of local and out-of-state reviewers
- APS uses this process, but also uses internal reviewers
- All reviewers interview petitioners
External Review Process

External Review Timeline
• Approach reviewers for teams at least three months before interviews
• Send applications to reviewers electronically three weeks before interview
• Conference call with reviewers two weeks before interviews to answer any questions.

External Review Facts
• Names for external reviewers can be obtained from NACSA, NAPCS
• Stipend can be provided, but is not always necessary.
• Maximum of 4 applications per reviewer (3 is better)
• With applications, provide reviewers with RFP, rubrics, background information.
Summary

1. Charter Schools 101
2. Strong Authorizing
3. Authorizer Responsibilities
4. Comprehensive Petition Process
5. Rigorous Evaluation Process
6. Elements of a Strong Application
7. EMOs and CMOs
Questions
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Save the Date!

Part II
May 23, 2011
9:00 am

*Please complete the online evaluation that will open when you exit from Elluminate.