

Georgia Charter Schools Authorizer Training

Petition Review Process (Part II)
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Agenda

Part I Review Quiz

Elements of a Strong Application

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

Quiz Review

A “letter of intent” is submitted by

- A petitioning group to the local and state board of education.

The letter of intent is due

- 6 months before the SBOE’s petition deadline

Which of the following is NOT a type of charter school in Georgia?

- Magnet school

The local authorizer must act on a charter petition

- Within 60 days of receiving it

Local authorizers are responsible for...

- All of the above

A high-quality authorizer does which of the following?

- All of the above

If an authorizer wants petitions to be reviewed by charter school experts, ...

- An external review process

If an authorizer needs reviewers to be intimately familiar with the goals of the district...

- An internal review process

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).

Education/Charter Management Organization

- A private organization or company that provides educational or operational services for public schools.

Four Key Elements of a Strong Application

Strong, Autonomous Governing board

Sound Educational Plan

Viable Organizational Structure

Financial Capacity

Governing board



Continuum of Governing Board Autonomy

Reliance on
authorizer
or
EMO/CMO



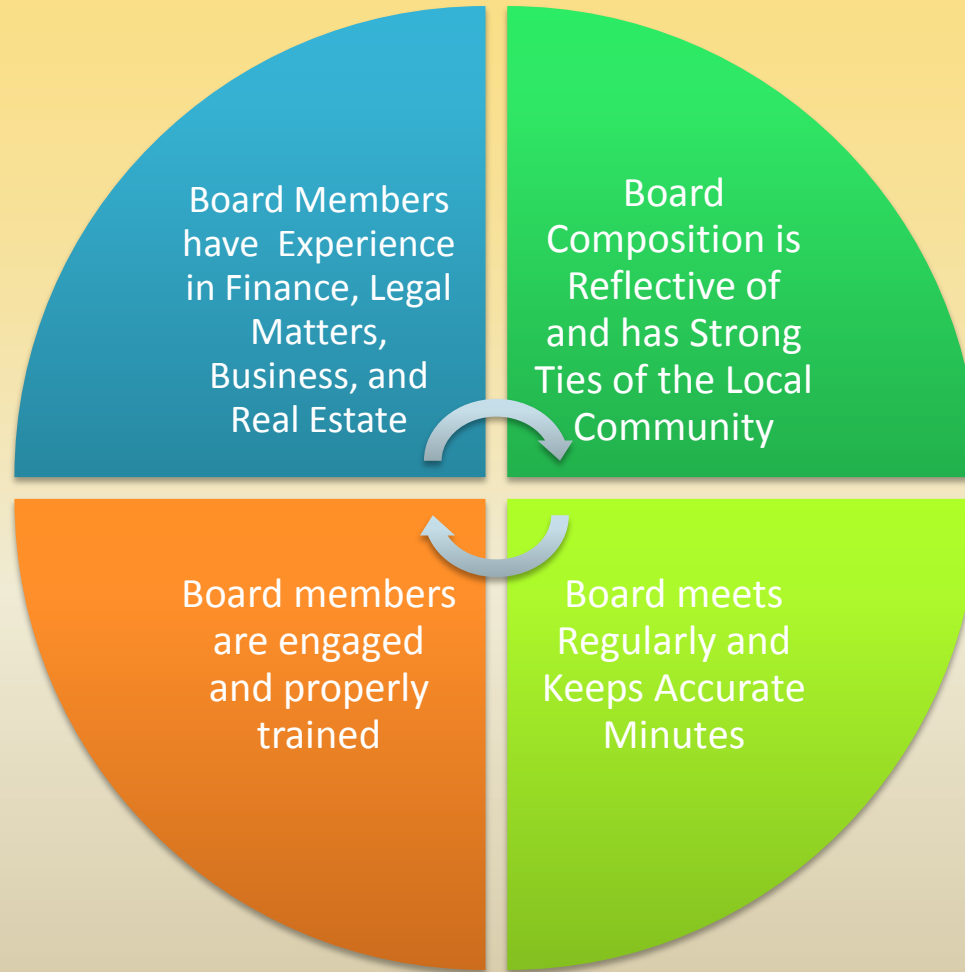
Independence
from authorizer
or EMO/CMO

Indicators of Autonomy

- Ability to set own budget
- Ability to make personnel decisions
- Contracts for services provided by the district
- Members selected/recruited without EMO assistance
- Independent audit firm and attorney

The school should
be here

Governing Board Capacity



Sound Educational Plan

SMART Academic Performance Goals and Objectives

- Schools should at MINIMUM agree to meet district's performance.
- Schools are required to include multiple measures: absolute and comparative
- High performing districts/schools should focus on increasing the % of students exceeding standards or closing achievement gaps

High Quality Instructional Program

- Research based curriculum aligned with the CCGPS
- Recruitment and development of highly-qualified instructional staff

Legal Compliance

- Federal Programs
- Accountability Requirements
- Title III/ESOL
- Special Education

Viabile Organizational Structure

Governance

- Who is governing the school?
- Who is managing the daily operations of the school?

EMO/CMO Relationship

- How was the EMO/CMO selected?
- How can the school terminate its contract with the EMO/CMO?
- What is the percentage of the school's revenue that the EMO/CMO is charging for their services?

Personnel Issues

- Who is in charge of the hiring and firing of school personnel?
- Who employs the teachers?

Community Support

- What is the level of parental and community involvement?
- How much community support can the school demonstrate?
- What type of partnerships has the school developed?

Financial Capacity

Sound budget

- Does the school plan on creating a reserve fund?
- Does the school have a positive cash balance at the end of year 5?
- Does the school rely on loans or unsecured grant funds?
- Are the revenue projections realistic?

System of Internal Controls

- Are there any internal control deficiencies?
- Does the proposed CFO meet Georgia requirements?
- Does the school have a plan to create a strong system of internal controls and segregation of duties?

Determining if a Petition is Approvable

Local Districts can work with strong petitioners who need minor revisions

- Minor revision- making academic goals 'SMART'
- Major revision- aligning curriculum to the CCGPS
- What are some other examples that you've seen in your petition review?

Approvable petitions are seldom perfect but always built on a strong foundation

Education Management Organizations

What is an Education Management Organization (EMO)?

A for-profit company that contracts with schools to provide various services

Services might include all or any of the following:

- Providing/designing a curriculum
- Staffing and human resources management
- Professional development
- Financial and operational management
- Student assessments

Charter Management Organizations

What is an Charter Management Organization (CMO)?

A non-profit company that manages a network of charter schools

Typically different from EMO's in that

- Most do not provide a curriculum
- They utilize a signature instructional or organizational model

EMOs/CMOs in Georgia

EMO

- Imagine
- National Heritage Academies
- EdisonLearning
- SABIS
- Mosaica
- Charter Schools USA
- Connections Academy
- K12

CMOs

- Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)

How to Evaluate the Quality of EMO/CMOs?

Financial Issues

- Does the EMO/CMO have strong financial records?
- Does the EMO require a sweep contract?
- Does the EMO provide a facility?
 - If school terminates their agreement with the EMO, can the school continue to use the facility?
 - What are the terms of the lease agreement?
- Does the EMO employ the staff?

Organizational Capacity

- Does the EMO have the ability to provide support in the areas needed by the school?
- Does the EMO have a regional office?
- Does the EMO have dedicated staff devoted to the school?

Track Record

- Does the EMO/CMO have a strong portfolio of high-achieving schools?
- Does the EMO/CMO have experience dealing with student demographics similar to their projected demographics of the new school?

Signs that the school has limited autonomy from the EMO/CMO

What is the relationship between the governing board and the EMO/CMO?

The EMO/CMO drives school development and selects governing board members

- EMO/CMO can remove board members
- EMO/CMO staff members are voting members of the governing board

EMO/CMO Contract Terms

- Decision making authority is turned over to the EMO/CMO
- Remaining revenue is turned over to the EMO/CMO
- EMO/CMO fees are excessive

The EMO/CMO own the building and rents it to the school

- The school must maintain its relationship with the EMO/CMO to continue to occupy the building
- Facility lease agreement is above market value

EMO/CMO Resources

Resources to Evaluate an EMO's or CMO's Credentials

Georgia Department of
Education website

Georgia Charter
Schools Association

CSRQ Center Guide:
Choosing an Education
Contractor (link on
GaDOE website)

Academic performance
in Georgia or other
states

Internet

Summary



Questions



Upcoming Authorizer Training

Financial
Oversight

Oversight and
Accountability

Be on the lookout for
announcements via email and
our calendar

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