

CHARTER FOR GEORGIA CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

This Charter for Georgia Connections Academy (“Charter”) is entered into by and between the Georgia Connections Academy Charter School, Inc. (“Petitioner”) and the State Board of Education (“State Board”) (collectively referred to as “the parties”).

WHEREAS, the Petitioner submitted a petition to the State Board proposing to establish a state charter special school pursuant O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2060 *et seq.*, the Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“Charter Schools Act”).

WHEREAS, the State Board finds that the petition complies with the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, the rules, regulations, policies and procedures promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2063 and further finds that the petition is in the public interest;

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2064.1, the State Board grants this Charter to permit Petitioner to operate Georgia Connections Academy (“the Charter School”) in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Charter.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, mutual agreements, and covenants contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. Definitions. The terms below will be interpreted in accordance with the following definitions, unless and until federal or state law, or the state accountability system, is amended otherwise:
 - a. Adequate Yearly Progress: Adequate Yearly Progress is a measurement based on a series of performance goals that every school, LEA, and state must achieve within specified timeframes in order to meet the 100% proficiency goal established by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).
 - b. Annual Measureable Objectives: In defining Adequate Yearly Progress, each state sets the minimum levels of improvement, based on student performance on state standardized tests, that school districts and schools must achieve within time frames specified in law in order to meet the 100% proficiency goal under No Child Left Behind. These levels of improvement are known as Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), and they ensure that all student groups, schools, school districts, and the State as a whole reach the 100% proficiency goal by 2013-2014.

- c. **Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT):** The Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests are state-required tests to measure student acquisition of the knowledge and skills set forth in the state curriculum. Georgia law requires that these tests be administered to students in grades one through eight in the content areas of reading, English/language arts, and mathematics, and in grades three through eight in science and social studies.
 - d. **Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE):** The Georgia Department of Education is the state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K – 12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education.
 - e. **No Child Left Behind of 2001 (NCLB):** No Child Left Behind is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 – the principal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. NCLB is designed to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps. States are required to develop challenging academic standards, to educate all students to 100 percent proficiency by 2014, and to create and implement a single, statewide accountability system.
 - f. **State Board of Education (SBOE):** The State Board of Education is the constitutional authority which defines education policy for public K – 12 education agencies in Georgia.
 - g. **Subgroup:** A Subgroup under No Child Left Behind is defined as one of the following subsets of students: race/ethnicity (American Indian/Alaskan native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, Multiracial, and White); disability; limited English proficiency (LEP); and socioeconomic status. To constitute a Subgroup in Georgia for a school’s Adequate Yearly Progress determination, the Subgroup must have at least 40 students or constitute 10% of the assessed student population, whichever is greater, but not to exceed a total number of 75 students. The assessed student population is the total number of children whose test results are used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress.
2. **Charter Term.** The State Board grants this Charter to Petitioner to operate the Charter School for a two-year term beginning on July 1, 2011 and expiring on June 30, 2013.
 3. **Grade Range.** The Charter School shall serve 900 students in grades K-8 during the first year of its charter term, and will expand to high school during the second year. Should

the Charter School wish to increase its enrollment beyond these figures, the Charter School must submit a request for consideration regarding its proposed increase in enrollment to the State Board prior to allowing additional students to register.

4. Mission Statement. Georgia Connections Academy's mission is to maximize academic achievement for students K-12 throughout the state of Georgia who need an alternative to the traditional classroom.
5. Essential Innovative Features. The Charter School shall offer a virtual K-12 curriculum aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards. The Charter School will deliver its curriculum through technology-enhanced learning methods that maximize student interest. Students will view Teachlets, short-length interactive tutorials that showcase the skills to be mastered prior to the lesson; interact with other groups of students over web-conferencing for studying; be assessed regularly and held accountable to a personal learning plan; guided daily by a designated learning coach; and rate lessons to provide feedback to their teachers on the instructional delivery.
6. Maximum Flexibility Allowed By Law. In exchange for the Charter School's agreement to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and measurable objectives set forth in Section 7 below, the State Board shall grant the maximum flexibility allowed by law to the Charter School. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(a), the Charter School shall be entitled to the maximum flexibility allowed by law from the provisions of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and from any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure established by a local board of education, the State Board of Education (State Board), or the Georgia Department of Education (Department). Notwithstanding this maximum flexibility, the Charter School shall comply with the terms of this Charter, the Charter Schools Act, including the provisions set forth in Section 15 below, and any rules, regulations, policies, or procedures established by the State Board consistent with the Charter Schools Act.
7. Performance-based Goals and Measurable Objectives. In exchange for the flexibility granted in Section 6 above, the Charter School agrees to meet or exceed the following performance-based goals and measurable objectives that are designed to result in improvement of student achievement:
 - a. Academic Goals. The State Board shall hold the Charter School accountable for the full performance of each of the academic goals listed below. The requirements of each goal are independent of and do not supersede the requirements of any other goal.

- i. Goal 1: The Charter School will make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by Georgia state requirements and No Child Left Behind. Students in all Subgroups will demonstrate proficiency and improvement over prior years' performance.
 - 1. Measure 1: During each year of its charter term, the Charter School will make Adequate Yearly Progress as demonstrated by meeting or exceeding the Annual Measurable Objectives for Math and Reading – English/Language Arts (combined) at the Elementary and Middle Schools levels and for Math and English/Language Arts at the High School level and all other requirements as established by the Department each year.

- ii. Goal 2: The Charter School will meet or exceed the statewide performance average on the Science and Social Studies portions of the CRCTs, and GHS GT and on all areas of the EOCT throughout the charter term.
 - 1. Measure 1: The Charter School will demonstrate at least 95% participation on the CRCTs, EOCTs, GHS GTs, and other required state tests each year of the charter term.

 - 2. Measure 2: In the first year of its charter term, the percentage of students scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards category on the Science and Social Studies portions of the CRCT will at least match the 2011-2012 state average. In each subsequent year, the percentage of students scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards category will match the state average in Science and Social Studies or exceed the 2011-2012 baselines for Science and Social Studies in each grade level by 3% per year - whichever measure is greater. When the percentage of students scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards category is at or above 90%, the Charter School will increase the total number of students scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards categories on the Science and Social Studies portions of the CRCT to match the state average or by 1% per year in each grade level for the remainder of the charter term – whichever measure is greater.

3. Measure 3: In the first year of the charter term, the Charter School will at least match the 2011-2012 state average performance of eleventh grade first-time test takers (spring administration) in the Basic Proficiency, Advanced Proficiency, and Honors categories of the Science and Social Studies portions of the GHSGT tests. In each subsequent year, the percentage of students scoring in the Basic Proficiency, Advanced Proficiency, and Honors categories of the Science and Social Studies portions of the GHGST will match the state average or exceed the 2011-2012 baselines for the Science and Social Studies portions of the GHGST by 3% per year – whichever measure is greater. When the percentage of students scoring in the Basic Proficiency, Advanced Proficiency, and Honors categories of the Science and Social Studies portions of the GHSGT is at 90%, the Charter School will increase the total number of students in these passing categories of the Science and Social Studies portions of the GHGST to match the state average or by 1% per year for the remainder of the charter term.
 4. Measure 4: In the first year of the charter term, the Charter School will at least match the 2011-2012 average performance of students in Georgia scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards categories on the Ninth Grade Literature & Composition, American Literature & Composition, Biology, Economics, Mathematics I, Mathematics II, Physical Science, and U.S. History EOCTs. In each subsequent year, the percentage of students scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards categories for each exam will match the state average or exceed the 2011-2012 baselines by 3% per year – whichever measure is greater. When the percentage of students scoring in the Meets and Exceeds Standards categories of each EOCT is at or above 90%, the Charter School will increase the total number of students scoring in these passing categories on each exam to match the state average or by 1% per year for the remainder of the charter term – whichever is greater.
- iii. Goal 3: Students will demonstrate academic growth on the CRCTs, EOCTs, and GHSGTs.
1. Measure: In the first year of the charter term, the percentage of students scoring in the Exceeds category on the CRCT and EOCT, and the percentage of students scoring in the Advanced

Proficiency and Honors categories of the GHSGT will at least match the 2011-2012 state average for each grade and subject tested. In each subsequent year, the percentage of students scoring in the Exceeds category on the CRCT and the EOCT, and the percentage of students scoring in the Advanced Proficiency and Honors categories on the GHSGT will match the state average or exceed the 2011-2012 baseline in each grade and subject tested by an additional 2% per year – whichever measure is greater. When the percentage of students scoring in the Exceeds category on the CRCT and EOCT and in the Advanced Proficiency and Honors categories on the GHSGT is at or above 50%, the Charter School will increase the number of students scoring in these performance levels on each portion of each exam to match the state average or by 1% per year for the remainder of the charter term – whichever is greater.

- iv. Goal 4: Students will demonstrate mastery of key concepts and academic Standards across core academic subjects. Student performance is measured on internal assessments, including quizzes, tests, and portfolios, graded by the teacher and reported in real time through the Learning Management System (LMS). The Performance metric is tracked and aggregated in the LMS for each student based on performance on assessments.
1. Measure 1: The school-wide Performance rate will demonstrate mastery across all content areas. The school-wide Performance rate averaged across all reported months within the school year will be:
 - a. Year 1: 75% or higher
 - b. Year 2: 77% or higher
 - c. Year 3: 79% or higher
 - d. Year 4: 81% or higher
 - e. Year 5: 83% or higher
 2. Measure 2: Students beginning the year in the bottom quartile will show improvement on the Performance rate over the course of the year. The aggregate improvement in Performance by the end of the school year for students beginning the year in the bottom quartile will be:

- a. Year 1: at least 3%
 - b. Year 2: at least 5%
 - c. Year 3: at least 7%
 - d. Year 4: at least 9%
 - e. Year 5: at least 10%

- v. Goal 5: Students will demonstrate a year of academic growth for a year in school. The Charter School will administer its Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress (LEAP) assessment at the beginning and end of each year.
 - 1. Measure 1: Students will increasingly demonstrate academic growth in Reading and/or Math from the beginning of the school year to the end. Percentage of students demonstrating academic growth will be:
 - a. Year 1: at least 75%
 - b. Year 2: at least 77%
 - c. Year 3: at least 79%
 - d. Year 4: at least 81%
 - e. Year 5: at least 83%

 - 2. Measure 2: Students who begin the year in the bottom academic quartile will demonstrate academic gains in Reading and/or Math from the beginning of the school year to the end. Percentage of bottom-quartile students demonstrating academic growth will be:
 - a. Year 1: at least 75%
 - b. Year 2: at least 77%
 - c. Year 3: at least 79%
 - d. Year 4: at least 81%
 - e. Year 5: at least 83%

- b. Organizational Goals. The fulfillment of the following organizational goals will be reported annually by the Charter School in addition to their Annual Report.
 - i. Goal 6: The Charter School will provide its students with high-quality teaching focused on the needs of each learner.

1. Measure 1: In each year of the charter term, 100% of the teachers will be Highly Qualified as defined under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
 2. Measure 2: At least 90% of parents each year will express satisfaction with their children’s teachers as measured by the Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey conducted by an independent market research firm, whose results will be reported to the Governing Board and all stakeholders annually.
- ii. Goal 7: The Charter School will create a measurable sense of community within the virtual school environment.
1. Measure 1: By the end of Year 1, the Charter School will have at least three (3) Community Coordinators in place to facilitate face-to-face activities in various regions of the state.
 2. Measure 2: Families will have the opportunity to participate in at least one (1) field trip per month during each school year.
 3. Measure 3: On the Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey, respondents will rate the school events at least a 3.0 on a 4 point scale.
- iii. Goal 8: Students’ families will rate the Charter School highly and be satisfied with the students’ school experience.
1. Measure 1: The Charter School will measure at least 3.0 in overall program satisfaction on a 4 point scale as measured by the Annual Parent Satisfaction Survey conducted by an independent market research firm, whose results will be reported to the Governing Board and all stakeholders annually.
8. Assessment and Accountability. Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 7 above, the Charter School is subject to all accountability and assessment requirements set forth within Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and any corresponding State Board Rules, including but not limited to the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-14-30 through 41. The Charter School is further subject to all federal accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

9. Annual Report. The Charter School shall submit an annual report by October 1 of each year to the Georgia Department of Education that complies with all requirements set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2067.1(c), including but not limited to an indication of the Charter School's progress towards the goals and objectives stated in Section 7 above and all state-mandated assessment and accountability scores from the previous year.

10. Open Enrollment and Admissions. The Charter School shall comply with the open enrollment and admissions provisions set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066. Enrollment shall be open to any student in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. Attendance Zone. Enrollment shall be open to any student who resides within the State of Georgia.

 - b. Application. To be eligible for enrollment at the Charter School, students residing in the attendance zone must submit a timely application to the Charter School in accordance with the deadline set by the Charter School. The Charter School may not use the admissions criteria or applications that would not otherwise be used at a traditional public school, including requests for letters of recommendation, essays, resumes, or information regarding a student's school or community activities, grades, test scores, attendance record, or disciplinary history. The Charter School may use applications for the purpose of verifying the student's residence within the school's attendance zone and grade level. The Charter School may gather other relevant information from students after enrollment is determined.

 - c. Random Lottery. If the number of timely applications received by the Charter School exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, the Charter School shall ensure that such applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A) .

 - d. Statutory Enrollment Priorities. In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A), the Charter School may give enrollment priority to the following categories of applicants and in the following priority:
 - i. A sibling of a student enrolled in the Charter School; and

- ii. Students whose parent or guardian is a member of the Governing Board of the Charter School or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the Charter School.

- 11. Withdrawal without Penalty. The Charter School shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(d) for withdrawing students. The Charter School agrees that a student may withdraw without penalty from the Charter School at any time and enroll in another public school in the local school system in which such student resides.

- 12. State and Federally Mandated Educational Services.
 - a. Students with Disabilities. The Charter School shall comply with all federal special education laws and regulations, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

 - b. English Language Learners. The Charter School shall comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations relating to the provision of educational services to English Language Learners.

 - c. Supplemental Education. The Charter School shall provide supplemental education services in required cases pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-5-.03 and No Child Left Behind.

 - d. Remediation. The Charter School shall provide remediation in required cases pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-5-.01 and No Child Left Behind.

- 13. Governance Structure.
 - a. Governing Board. The Charter School shall utilize an autonomous governing body in the form of a Governing Board, which shall operate in accordance with its bylaws and which shall be responsible for complying with and carrying out the provisions of this Charter, including compliance with all applicable law. The Governing Board shall exercise substantive control over such areas as personnel decisions, financial decisions, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations, which are listed by way of example and not by limitation.

- b. Function. It shall be the function of the Governing Board to uphold the Charter School's mission and vision, to set policy for the Charter School, to work collaboratively with school officials to ensure the Charter School complies with the performance goals enumerated in Section 7 above, to ensure effective organizational planning, and to ensure financial stability of the Charter School.
- c. Public Meetings. The Governing Board is subject to and shall comply with the Open and Public Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.* The Governing Board shall conduct regular meetings consistent with principles of transparency and avoidance of actual or apparent conflicts of interest in the governance of the Charter School.
- d. Public Records. The Governing Board is subject to and shall comply with the Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et seq.* The Governing Board shall maintain its adopted policies, budgets, meeting agendas, and minutes, and shall make such documents available for public inspection.
- e. Conflicts of Interest. The Governing Board shall establish a formal policy to prevent and disclose conflicts of interest. Members of the Governing Board and all individuals employed at the Charter School shall abide by such conflicts of interest policy.
- f. Public Status. Petitioner assures that the Charter School shall be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, nonprofit school organized and operated under the laws of the State of Georgia. Petitioner further assures that the Charter School shall not be home based.
- g. Director Compensation. By virtue of their service on the governing board, directors may only receive compensation for their reasonable and actual expenses incurred in connection with performance of their duties.
- h. Contractual Interference. No party to this Charter may interfere with the legal right(s) and/or obligation(s) of another party to execute the provisions of this Charter.

14. Fiscal Control.

- a. Financial Reporting Requirements. The Charter School shall follow the financial requirements of the Charter Schools Section of the Department's Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration Manual. The Charter School shall submit all information required by the State Accounting Office for inclusion in the State of Georgia Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
 - b. Annual Audit. The Charter School shall have an annual financial audit conducted by an independent certified public accountant licensed in the State of Georgia. The Charter School will submit their annual financial audit to the State of Georgia by October 1st each year.
 - c. Chief Financial Officer. The Charter School shall designate a Chief Financial Officer, who shall possess the following minimum qualifications:
 - i. A baccalaureate or higher degree in business, accounting, or finance from an accredited college or university and a minimum of four (4) years experience in a field related to business or finance; or
 - ii. Documented experience of ten (10) or more years in the field of business and financial management.
 - d. Federal Monitoring Requirements. The Charter School shall comply with all federal monitoring requirements related to the receipt of federal funds.
 - e. Charter School Program Eligibility. In the event the Charter School seeks grant funds under the Federal Charter School Program, the Charter School must satisfy all federal eligibility requirements as a prerequisite to applying for and receiving such funds.
 - f. Insurance. Prior to opening, the Charter School shall secure adequate insurance coverage, and the Charter School shall maintain such coverage throughout the Charter term in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia.
15. Compliance with Other Laws, Rules, and Regulations. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with the United States Constitution, the Constitution of the State of Georgia, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws that may not be waived pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065, including the following, which are listed by way of example and not by way of limitation.

- a. Civil Rights, Insurance, Health, Safety, and Conflicting Interests. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions and the prevention of unlawful conduct.
- b. Unlawful Conduct. The Charter School shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school.
- c. Student Conduct and Discipline. The Charter School shall maintain and implement a written policy regarding student discipline, which policy shall be consistent with due process.
- d. State Board Rules. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with all State Board Rules promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-240 during the term herein that are not subject to any waiver granted in Section 6 above.
- e. Prohibition on Discrimination. The Charter School shall not discriminate against students on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, the need for special educational services, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law.
- f. Reporting Requirements. The Charter School shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-160, 20-2-161(e), 20-2-320, and 20-2-740.
- g. Tuition. The Charter School shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized for local boards pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133.
- h. Brief Period of Quiet Reflection. The Charter School shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050, which requires a brief period of quiet reflection.
- i. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The Charter School is subject to all provisions of the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. In the event the Charter School closes, it shall transmit all official student records in the manner prescribed by the State Board.
- j. QBE Formula Earnings. The Charter School acknowledges that criteria used to calculate Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding may not be waived.

16. Compliance with the Rules, Practices, Policies, and Procedures of the Department. The Charter School shall operate in accordance with the rules, practices, policies, and procedures established by the Department under the authority granted by O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2063 *et seq.*
17. Employment Matters. Individuals employed at the Charter School shall not be considered employees of the State Board or the Department.
 - a. Background Checks. The Charter School shall adopt background check procedures and shall ensure that all prospective staff members undergo a fingerprinting and background check prior to beginning work at the Charter School.
 - b. Teachers' Retirement System. All qualified teachers at the Charter School shall be members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia ("TRS") and subject to its requirements, unless otherwise provided by law. The Charter School is responsible for making arrangements with TRS and making monthly contributions for its teachers in accordance with state requirements.
18. Record Inspection. Subject to state and federal laws, the State Board, the Department and their agents, and the State Auditor's office shall have the right to examine and copy all records, reports, documents, and files relating to any activity, program, or student of the Charter School.
19. Facilities.
 - a. Prior to opening the Charter School and prior to students occupying any proposed facility, the Charter School shall obtain and submit the following documents to the Department:
 - i. Documentation of Ownership or Lease Agreement. The Charter School shall obtain documentation of ownership or the lease agreement for the facility that will house the Charter School.
 - ii. Certificate of Occupancy. The Charter School shall obtain a Certificate of Occupancy for the facility in which the Charter School shall be located.

- iii. Emergency Safety Plan. The Charter School shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185, which plan shall be submitted to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency.
 - b. The Charter School must secure the following from the Department for each site and/or facility in which students will be housed throughout the duration of the Charter:
 - i. A site code;
 - ii. A facility code; and
 - iii. A school code.
- 20. Transportation. To the extent the Charter School offers a transportation program for its students, the Charter School shall ensure that the program complies with all applicable laws governing transportation of students.
- 21. Food Services. To the extent the Charter School offers a food service program, the Charter School shall ensure that the program complies with all applicable laws governing food service for students.
- 22. Termination of Charter.
 - a. Termination Procedures. The parties acknowledge and agree that this Charter may be terminated following the procedures set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068 and the accompanying State Board Rule.
 - b. Requests for Termination. The termination of this Charter may be requested by a majority of the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the Charter School, a majority of the faculty and instructional staff employed at the Charter School or the State Board following the procedures identified in Section 22(a).
 - c. Termination Grounds. In accordance with Sections 22(a) and (b), the Charter School may be terminated based on any of the following grounds:
 - i. Breach of Charter. In the event the Charter School fails to comply with any material provision set forth in this Charter, they shall be notified by certified mail and be given thirty (30) days from notice to cure the breach.

The nature and outcome of the breach shall be recorded in a memo and placed in the Charter School's file;

- ii. The Charter School's failure to comply with any recommendation or direction of the State Board with respect to O.C.G.A. § 20-14-41;
 - iii. The Charter School's failure to adhere to any material term of this Charter, including but not limited to the performance goals set forth in Section 7 above;
 - iv. The Charter School's failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
 - v. The Charter School's violation of applicable federal, state, or local laws, or court orders;
 - vi. The existence of competent substantial evidence that the continued operation of the Charter School would be contrary to the best interests of the students or the community;
 - vii. The Charter School's failure to comply with any provision of the Charter Schools Act; or
 - viii. The existence of conditions that place the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff of the Charter School in danger.
- d. Distribution of Funds and Assets. In the event the Charter School ceases operation for any reason, the Charter School and its Governing Board will be responsible for concluding the business and affairs of the Charter School and will cooperate with the Local Board and State Board to the extent necessary to provide an orderly return of the students to their local school. Any public surplus remaining at the time the Charter School ceases operation shall be remitted to the Local Board and/or State Board, whichever is appropriate, within 30 days of ceasing operations. Any furniture and equipment purchased with public funds shall be delivered to the Local Board and/or State Board, whichever is appropriate, within 30 days of ceasing operations. Neither the Local Board nor the State Board shall be responsible for the Charter School's unpaid debts in the event the Charter School does not have sufficient funds to pay all of its debts at the time it ceases operation.

23. Pre-Opening Suspension. In the event the Charter School fails to comply with any provision set forth in this Charter that requires compliance prior to the opening of the Charter School, the opening may be suspended until a time after all requirements have been fulfilled by the Charter School and as determined by the Department. Suspension shall not result in an extension of the Charter term set forth above in Section 2.
24. Renewal, Non-Renewal, and Probationary Term.
- a. Renewal. The Charter may be renewed by agreement of the parties following the procedures set forth in the Charter Schools Act and accompanying State Board Rule.
 - b. Non-Renewal. Any grounds for termination stated in Section 22(c) above also may be grounds for non-renewal. In addition, the State Board may elect not to renew the Charter if the petition for renewal does not comply with the Charter Schools Act and the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures promulgated in accordance with the Charter Schools Act or if the State Board deems that the Charter School has not sufficiently increased student achievement or is no longer in the public interest.
 - c. Probationary Term. In the event the State Board determines that the Charter School has failed to comply with any provision of this Charter, the State Board may elect to grant a renewal for a probationary term, within which term the Charter School must come into compliance satisfactory to the State Board.
25. Temporary Extension. At the discretion of the Department, a Charter may be extended for a grace period not exceeding sixty (60) days.
26. Amendments to the Charter. Any material term of this Charter, to be determined by the Department, may be amended in writing upon the approval of the State Board and a majority of the Governing Board of the Charter School. Any proposed amendment shall be made in accordance with State Board Rule 160-4-9-.04 *et seq.*
27. Administrative Clarifications. Any clarification to a non-material term of this Charter, to be determined by the Department, shall be submitted in writing to the Department for review. Any non-material term of this Charter may be clarified upon written approval of the Department.

28. Indemnification. The Charter School shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the State Board, and the Department, their employees, officers, directors, subcontractors, and agents against any and all claims, demands, suits, costs, judgments, or other forms of liability to third parties, actual or claimed, including reasonable attorney fees, and related expenses, on account of injury, damage, or loss to property or persons (including but not limited to violations of civil rights), occurring or allegedly occurring in connection with the operation of the Charter School, from acts or omissions of the Charter School, its officers, directors, subcontractors, or agents, or from any debt or contractual obligation incurred by the Charter School.
29. Non-Agency. The parties expressly acknowledge and agree that the Charter School is not acting as the agent of the State Board, or the Department except as required by law or this Charter. The Charter School acknowledges that it is without authority to, and will not, extend the faith and credit of the State Board, or the Department to any third party.
30. Delegation. The parties acknowledge and agree that the functions and powers of each party may be exercised only by each party and may not be delegated to a third party without written agreement by the parties.
31. Application of Amended Law. This Charter is subject to applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations and shall be deemed amended to reflect applicable changes to those laws upon the effective date of any such change.
32. Non-Waiver. No waiver of any breach of this Charter shall be held as waiver of any other or subsequent breach.
33. Severability. If any provision of this Charter is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the Charter shall remain in full force and effect.
34. Contradicting or Conflicting Provisions. If any provision of the Charter is determined to contradict or conflict with any other provision of the Charter, the contradiction or conflict shall be resolved in favor of the broad flexibility guaranteed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065 *et seq.*
35. Governing Law and Venue. This Charter shall be governed by, subject to, and construed under the laws of the State of Georgia. This Charter shall be interpreted in accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2060 *et seq.* and §§ 20-2-2080 *et seq.*, as amended within the

term of this Charter. Any action brought by one party to this Charter against another party shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton County.

36. Entire Agreement. This Charter sets forth the entire agreement between the Petitioner, and the State Board with respect to the subject matter of this Charter. All prior contracts, representations, statements, negotiations, understandings, and undertakings between the Petitioner and the State Board are superseded by this Charter. The petition submitted to the State Board serves only as the formal application for the Charter School and does not constitute a contract between the State Board and the Petitioner. This Charter supersedes and overrides any provisions contained in the petition that conflict with this Charter.

Chairperson,

(Date)

GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Chairperson,

(Date)

GEORGIA CONNECTIONS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL, INC.