



Charter School Petition Application and Instructions

Charter System

“The mission of the Georgia Public Charter Schools Program is to increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation by encouraging local school districts to utilize the flexibility offered by chartering.”

**Charter Schools Division
2053 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
404-657-0515 (phone)
404-657-6978 (fax)
http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_charter.aspx**

Georgia Charter System Petition Instructions

A. The Petition

Charter systems are existing public school systems that wish to convert all schools in the system with a single charter petition. Charter system petitions should address the applicable requirements contained in the Charter Schools Act of 1998, as amended (O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-2060 through 20-2-2071), State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.04 CHARTER SCHOOLS, Department of Education Guidance to Accompany the Charter Schools Rule, and any applicable local school system rules and regulations.

The petition is a proposal for a charter system, which will be evaluated by the Charter Schools Division of the Department of Education in conjunction with other measures used by the Department to determine whether the proposed charter complies with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures, whether the proposal will be viable in operation and whether the proposed charter system is in the public interest. Filing a petition for a charter system does not guarantee that a charter will be granted.

B. Deadline and Submission Procedures

A Letter of Intent must be submitted to the Department no later than **May 1**. Charter system petitions must first be approved by the local board and must be received at the address below no later than **November 1** prior to the year in which the charter school intends to begin operations:

Georgia Department of Education
Charter Schools Division
2053 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

All petitions must comply with the following submission procedures:

- Consecutively number each page (including appendices).
- Tab and paginate all appendices.
- Do not enclose the petition in a notebook, binder, or folder.
- The original must be signed in blue ink. Stamped signatures will not be accepted.
- Petitions must not exceed 100 pages, exclusive of appendices. Petitioners are encouraged to be clear and concise in addressing the petition requirements.

Faxed or e-mailed copies will not be accepted. Only complete petitions that comply with these guidelines will be considered for approval. Petitions will not be returned. Please keep a copy for your records.

C. Application Checklist

ALL PETITIONERS: Submit the **ORIGINAL** and **TWO COPIES** of the materials listed below, unless otherwise indicated.

- Letter of Intent submitted to the local board of education and State Board Of Education.**
- Completed Charter Petition Cover Pages (in the form attached below)**
- Charter Petition and Appendices**
- Charter Petition and Appendices in Microsoft Word format (1 CD)**

System Charter Petition Cover Pages

Part I. Charter System Information

Check one:

New Petition

Renewal Petition

School System Applicant _____

Address _____

Petition contact person _____

Name

Title

Address of petition contact _____

Telephone number of petition contact _____

Fax number of petition contact _____

E-mail address of petition contact _____

Proposed Opening/Renewal Date _____

Proposed Charter Term _____

Please complete this form for each school that will be converted to a charter system school.

Name of Proposed Charter System School _____

School contact person _____

Name

Title

Address of school _____

Telephone number of school _____

Fax number of school _____

E-mail address of school contact _____

Is this school:

- An existing charter school?
- A magnet school?
- In Needs Improvement?
- Another type of special/alternative school?
- A newly created charter system school?

Grade Levels Served _____

Ages Served _____

For each year of the proposed charter system term, please indicate in the table below the number of pupils the system charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Yr 1														
Yr 2														
Yr 3														
Yr 4														
Yr 5														
Yr 6														
Yr 7														
Yr 8														
Yr 9														
Yr 10														

Part II. Assurances and Signatures

1. This charter system petition was approved by the _____
Board of Education on _____.
Date

2. If a Charter is granted, all Petitioners assure that the proposed charter system will operate in accordance with the terms of the Charter and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

Superintendent Date

Chair, Local Board of Education Date

Part III. Executive Summary

The executive summary should be no more than **five pages** in length. The executive summary for a renewal charter system petition should be no longer than eight pages.

Basic Information

Charter system name: _____

Number of charter system schools: _____

School year in which system will convert to a charter system: _____

Approved by the _____ Board of Education on _____.

Mission

- State the charter system’s mission and describe how it promotes the legislative intent to “increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation.” O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2061.

Academic Program

- Describe why becoming a charter system is necessary and how this charter supports the district’s priorities and long term goals.
- Describe academic innovations currently in use **and** examples of proposed academic innovations that would not otherwise be possible without the full flexibility of chartering (e.g., innovative programs, curriculum/ instructional methods used).

Organization

- Describe organizational innovation currently in use **and** examples of proposed organizational innovations that would not otherwise be possible without the full flexibility of chartering (e.g., governing board restructuring, changes in hiring practices)
- Describe how the district intends to fulfill the statutory requirement to maximize school level governance
- Provide evidence of community interest.
- Provide a charter system implementation plan with expected annual benchmarks (e.g., governing council training, implementation timeline for academic and organizational innovations).

For Renewal Petitions Only

- How did the charter system **and** each charter system school perform in meeting performance-based goals and measurable objectives listed in their charter?
- Summarize the proposed changes to the charter upon renewal.
- Were termination proceedings initiated during the current charter term? If so, what is the status of those proceedings?

Part IV. Charter System Petition Requirements

Address the following requirements and insert the appropriate page number(s) of the petition.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

1. Page ____ Summarize any and all policies, procedures, and practices that will materially distinguish the charter system and individual charter system schools from the system's pre-conversion model. Such practices/policies might include, *e.g.*, open enrollment policies or differential pay within the charter system.
2. Page ____ Describe fully any and all system and/or school level organizational innovations proposed that would not otherwise be possible without the flexibility of chartering (*e.g.*, governing board, personnel, leadership).
3. Page ____ Describe fully any and all system and/or school level academic innovations proposed that would not otherwise be possible without the flexibility of chartering (*e.g.*, innovative programs, curriculum/ instructional methods used).
4. Page ____ Describe the instructional methods to be used in the charter system, including any distinctive or unique instructional techniques or educational programs.
5. Page ____ Describe the anticipated teacher-to-student ratio and the rationale for maintaining this ratio.
6. Page ____ Specify how the charter system will meet the needs of students identified as gifted and talented.
7. Page ____ For high schools within the charter system, describe how the charter high school will determine that a student has satisfied the requirements for high school graduation, including the credits or units to be earned and the completion credentials to be awarded.

STATE AND FEDERALLY MANDATED SERVICES

8. Page ____ For students with disabilities, describe any changes in how the charter system will provide state and federally mandated services.
9. Page ____ For English Language Learners (ESOL), describe any changes in how the charter system will provide state and federally mandated services.
10. Page ____ Describe any changes in how the charter system will provide supplemental educational services in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03 and NCLB.
11. Page ____ Describe any changes in how the charter system will provide remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01 and NCLB.

PERFORMANCE-BASED GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

12. Page ____ List the charter system's annual performance-based goals and measurable objectives.
13. Page ____ List the annual performance-based goals and measurable objectives for each charter system school.

14. Page _____ Highlight the differences between the system's current goals and those described above. Describe whether, and to what extent, these charter system goals are more rigorous.
15. Page _____ Describe any organizational performance-based goals and measurable objectives for the charter system. Organizational goals could describe and measure the effectiveness and competency of the system, which may include, for example, financial management and operational management, and/or satisfaction of a range of stakeholders.
16. Page _____ Identify any schools within the charter system that are currently in Needs Improvement status, and explain how this charter system petition will enable these schools to make Adequate Yearly Progress. Describe any practices, policies and procedures that will materially distinguish the charter system school from the pre-conversion model. Such practices/policies might include, *e.g.*, a change in leadership, differentiated and targeted professional development, replacement and/or recruitment of new school staff.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

17. Page _____ Describe how the charter system will measure student improvement and its connection to the academic and organizational performance-based goals and measurable objectives stated above.
18. Page _____ Describe how the charter system will use this assessment data to monitor and improve student achievement.

WAIVERS

19. Page _____ State whether the charter system will utilize the broad flexibility from law, rule, and regulation permitted by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(a), and if so, include illustrative examples of how the charter system will implement the flexibility to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and increase student achievement.
20. Page _____ If the system will not utilize this flexibility, list the specific waivers requested and the rationale for each. Describe further how each waiver will help the system meet or exceed the performance-based goals and increase student achievement.

DESCRIPTION OF CHARTER SYSTEM OPERATIONS

21. Page _____ Describe how students will be assigned to schools in the charter system (*e.g.*, will the charter system be open enrollment, use existing attendance zones, create new attendance zones/policies).
22. Page _____ Describe whether any charter system schools will use enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1).
23. Page _____ Describe any changes to the rules and procedures concerning student discipline and student dismissal (including code of conduct and student due process procedures).
24. Page _____ Describe any changes to the rules and procedures concerning how the charter system will address grievances and complaints from students, parents, and teachers.
25. Page _____ Describe any changes to the charter system's employment procedures and policies.

26. Page ____ State whether certification by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission will be required, and if not, describe the training and experience that will be required and the procedure for determining whether a teacher has demonstrated competency in the subject area(s) in which he/she will teach as required by NCLB.
27. Page ____ Describe whether the charter system will use the state salary schedule, and if another schedule will be used, provide that schedule.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

28. Page ____ Describe how parents, community members, and other interested parties were involved in developing the petition and will be involved in the charter system, including involvement with the school level governing body.

DEMONSTRATION OF FISCAL FEASIBILITY AND CONTROLS

29. Page ____ Describe how federal, state, and local funds will be distributed to each charter system school in order to maximize spending and governance at the school level.
30. Page ____ Describe the fiscal history of the system, including whether the system is currently operating, or has ever operated, under a fiscal deficit plan over the previous five year period, and if so, state the system's plan to correct the fiscal deficit.

DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

**Charter system petitions must provide a detailed explanation of the system's governance structure and school-level governance that highlights the differences between the current structure of the system and the proposed charter system.*

31. Page ____ Describe the organizational structure of the charter system, including the general areas of responsibility for the principal of each charter system school, the governing council of each charter system school, and the local board of education.
32. Page ____ Describe the composition of each school's governing council, including how and when members will be selected, how long they will serve, how they can be removed from office, and how they will avoid conflicts of interest.

In the next three questions, provide specific examples of how decisions will be made in each of the following areas:

- (I) Personnel decisions, including hiring school principals and teachers;
 - (II) Financial decisions, including autonomy of budget and expenditures;
 - (III) Curriculum and instruction;
 - (IV) Resource allocation at the school level;
 - (V) Establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals; and
 - (VI) Other school operations.
33. Page ____ Describe in detail the decision-making authority of the principal at each charter system school.
 34. Page ____ Describe in detail the decision-making authority of the governing council at each charter system school.

35. Page ____ Describe in detail the decision-making authority of the local board of education.
36. Page ____ Describe in detail any other elements of the system charter that meet the objective of maximizing school-level governance and school choice, including but not limited to, open enrollment policies within the charter system or any distinguishing features to be implemented through the use of waivers.
37. Page ____ Describe the training that will be provided for principals and for members of the governing councils that will allow them to implement the school-level decision-making. This description shall include training timelines and topics to be covered.
38. Page ____ Describe in detail how the parents, teachers and community members, outside of each school's governing council, will be involved in implementing the school-level decision-making described in this paragraph.
39. Page ____ List any proposed business arrangements or partnerships with existing schools, educational programs, businesses, or nonprofit organizations and disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
40. Page ____ Describe the method that the local board and the system charter school and or school level governing council plan to utilize for resolving conflicts.
41. Page ____ State if the charter system intends to contract, or has contracted for, the services of a for-profit entity or any other educational management agency.
42. Page ____ List the criteria, if any, by which the charter system's charter may be revoked, in addition to those provided for in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065.

FACILITIES

43. Page ____ Describe any changes in school facilities.

REQUIRED APPENDICES

44. App. ____ Attach the charter system's proposed annual calendar.
45. App. ____ Attach a copy of any intended contracts for the provision of educational management services.
46. App. ____ Attach a copy of the notice sent to principals within the proposed charter system regarding hearings on the charter system petition before local board approval.
47. App. ____ Attach a copy of the local board resolution approving the proposed charter system petition.