



Charter School Petition Application and Instructions

Conversion Charter School (Including High School Clusters)

“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**

Conversion Charter School Application Instructions

A. The Petition

Conversion charter petitions are for existing public schools that wish to convert to charter schools and should address the 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 school, 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 school complies with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures, whether the proposal will be viable in operation and whether the proposed charter school is in the public interest. Filing a petition for a charter school does not guarantee that a charter will be granted.

B. Deadline and Submission Procedures

All petitions for conversion charter schools must be received at the address below no later than **November 1** prior to the year in which the charter school intends to convert to charter status:

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. Petition Application Checklist

- **ALL APPLICANTS:** Submit an **ORIGINAL** and **TWO COPIES** of each of the materials listed below, unless otherwise indicated.
 - Completed Charter Petition Cover Pages (in the form attached below)**
 - Charter Petition and Appendices**
 - Charter Petition Cover Pages, Charter Petition and Appendices in Microsoft Word format (1 CD)**
 - Letter of Intent submitted to the local board(s) of education**

- **VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOL PETITIONERS:** In addition to the materials listed above, submit the **ORIGINAL** and **TWO COPIES** of the Addendum for Virtual Charter Schools checklist located at http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_charter.aspx.

Conversion Charter Petition Cover Pages

Part I. Charter School Information

Check one: New Petition Renewal Petition

Name of Petitioning Traditional Public School _____

Name of Proposed Charter School _____

Local School System _____

School address _____

School contact person _____

Name

Title

Address of school contact (if different from above) _____

Telephone number of school contact _____

Fax number of school contact _____

E-mail address of school contact _____

Part II. Assurances and Signatures

1. This petition has been agreed to, by secret ballot, by a majority of the faculty and instructional staff members at a meeting called with two weeks' advance notice during which time a complete petition draft was available for review.

Date of Vote _____

Total Number of Faculty and Instructional Staff _____

Number Approving _____ Percent Approving _____

Number Disapproving _____ Percent Disapproving _____

Principal's Signature Date

2. This petition has been agreed to, by secret ballot, by a majority of the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the school who were present at a meeting called for the purpose of deciding whether to submit the petition. Two weeks' advance notice of the meeting was published during which time a complete petition draft was available for review.

Date of Meeting _____

Total Number of Parents Attending Meeting _____

Number Approving _____ Percent Approving _____

Number Disapproving _____ Percent Disapproving _____

Principal's Signature Date

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

Superintendent

Date

Chair, Local Board of Education

Date

4. Petitioner(s) assure(s) that the proposed charter school programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with the terms of the Charter and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

Authorized Representative, Charter School

Date

Part III. Executive Summary

The executive summary should not exceed **2 pages** for new petitions and **4 pages** for renewals and should include the following information:

Basic Information

Charter School Name _____

Grade Levels Served _____ **Ages Served** _____

Proposed Opening/Renewal Date _____

Proposed Charter Term _____ (If the petition seeks a term greater than 5 years, explain the rationale for the requested term length.)

Enrollment Numbers - For each year of the proposed charter term, please indicate in the table below the number of pupils the 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														

NCLB

Is this school currently in, or has it ever been, in Needs Improvement status under NCLB?
 No Yes

If so, please state when. Schools currently in Needs Improvement must answer the additional questions found at the end of the application.

Mission

- State the charter school’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

- Strategies to increase student achievement
- Examples of academic innovation or flexibility

Organization

- Examples of organizational innovation or flexibility
- Operated by Education Management Organization?
- Evidence of community interest/need

For Renewal Petitions Only

- How did the school perform in meeting AYP and the performance-based goals and measurable objectives of the charter?
- How did the school perform in achieving financial and organizational stability?
- 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. Conversion Charter School Petition Requirements

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

DESCRIPTION OF AUTONOMY AND MATERIALLY DISTINGUISHABLE FACTORS

1. Page ____ Describe the autonomy that the conversion school shall have from the local school system, which may include, among other things, a description of how financial resources will be managed; how human resources will be managed and personnel evaluated; school governance and the extent to which parents, community members, and other stakeholders will participate in the governance of the school.
2. Page ____ Describe any innovations that will materially distinguish the conversion school from the school's pre-conversion model and that require the flexibility offered through the charter model.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

3. Page ____ Describe the focus of the curriculum.
4. Page ____ Describe the instructional methods to be used in the charter school, 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 ____ Describe how the charter school will meet the needs of students identified as gifted and talented.
7. Page ____ Describe any extracurricular or other auxiliary educational activities the charter school may offer.
8. Page ____ If this is a charter high school, 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

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

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

13. Page ____ Describe the charter school's assessment plan to obtain student performance data for each student, including the students' baseline achievement data, which will be

used in connection with the academic performance-based goals and measurable objectives stated in the petition.

14. Page ____ Describe how the charter school intends to use this assessment data to measure, monitor and improve achievement for students.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

15. Page ____ Describe the academic performance-based goals and related measurable objectives for the charter school. Academic goals must be related to state and federal assessment standards. For each goal, provide measurable objectives that address each grade and content area for each year of the charter term. Academic goals should be rigorous, yet realistic and attainable, and developed in connection with the students' baseline achievement levels. Describe how these academic goals and measurable objectives will comply with the Single Statewide Accountability System.
16. Page ____ Describe the organizational and management performance-based goals and measurable objectives for the charter school. Organizational and management goals and measurable objectives should describe and measure the effectiveness, viability and competency of the organization, which may include, for example, financial management and performance, operational management, and satisfaction of a range of stakeholders.

WAIVERS

17. Page ____ State whether the charter school 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 school will implement the flexibility to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and to increase student achievement.
18. Page ____ If the school will not utilize this flexibility, list the specific waivers requested and the rationale for each. Describe further how each waiver will help the school meet or exceed the performance-based goals and to increase student achievement.

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS

19. Page ____ Describe the attendance zone for the charter school.
20. Page ____ Describe the rules and procedures that will govern the student admission, including whether the charter school will use any enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(B).
21. Page ____ Describe the steps that will be taken to reach students representative of the racial and socioeconomic diversity in the school system.
22. Page ____ Describe the rules and procedures concerning student discipline and student dismissal (including code of conduct and student due process procedures).
23. Page ____ Describe the rules and procedures concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints from students, parents, and teachers, including the role the governing board will play in resolving such grievances and complaints.
24. Page ____ Generally describe the charter school's employment procedures and policies.
25. Page ____ Describe how and by whom the principal's performance will be appraised.

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 school will use the state salary schedule, and if another schedule will be used, provide that schedule.
28. Page _____ Describe the charter school's procedures to ensure that staff members are subject to fingerprinting and background checks.
29. Page _____ Describe whether transportation services will be provided and, if so, briefly describe the transportation program for the school. If transportation services are not provided, describe how this will not be a barrier to eligible students to attend school.
30. Page _____ Describe whether the charter school will provide food services (including participation in federal school meals programs), and if so, briefly describe the proposed food services programs.
31. Page _____ Describe the school facility and if any alterations are expected to be made.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

32. Page _____ Describe how parents, community members, and other interested parties were involved in developing the petition and will be involved in the school, including involvement with the governing body of the school.

DEMONSTRATION OF FISCAL FEASIBILITY AND CONTROLS

33. Page _____ Describe the level of autonomy the charter school will have over budgets and expenditures.
34. Page _____ Describe the plans, if any, for securing other sources of funding, including funding from corporations, individuals, foundations, philanthropic groups, or any other source.

DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

35. Page _____ Describe the governing board's plan to comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et. seq.* and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et. seq.*
36. Page _____ Describe the governing board's function, duties, and role, including the board's role as it relates to the charter school's mission.
37. Page _____ Describe the composition of the governing board, how and when governing board members will be selected, how long each governing board member will serve, and how governing board members may be removed from office.
38. Page _____ Describe any proposed business arrangements or partnerships with other entities, educational programs, businesses, or nonprofit organizations and disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
39. Page _____ Disclose any potential conflicts of interest of the governing board members, and describe how the governing board will ensure that current and future board members avoid conflicts of interest.

40. Page ____ Describe how the governing board will ensure effective organizational planning and financial stability.
41. Page ____ Describe the method that the local board and the charter school plan to utilize for resolving conflicts.
42. Page ____ State if the charter school intends to contract, or has contracted for, the services of a for-profit entity or any other educational management agency. If so, describe how the contract will be in the best educational and financial interests of the charter school.

HIGH SCHOOL CLUSTER CHARTER PETITION – Required only if the petition seeks to create a cluster charter pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2063(b).

43. Page ____ Describe the rationale for petitioning as a high school cluster.
44. Page ____ Describe how each school shall be held accountable for performance goals stated in the charter including Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
45. Page ____ Describe how the high school cluster as a whole shall be held accountable for performance goals stated in the charter.

SCHOOL IN NEEDS IMPROVEMENT- Required only if the petition seeks to convert a school in Needs Improvement to a charter school. Chartering can be a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that can produce significant gains in student achievement within the charter term. Please use this section of the petition to explain how you intend to accomplish this goal. The overarching theme of this and other responses should be to demonstrate where the school is pre-charter, what steps the school will take post-charter that would not otherwise be possible without the flexibility offered by chartering and how this will increase student achievement.

46. Page ____ Explain why the school is in Needs Improvement. If the school has been in Needs Improvement for three years or more, please discuss the steps the school has taken to make AYP and any progress the school has made.
47. Page ____ Describe the proposed changes to the learning environment (e.g. changes in the school culture, creation of school-based rituals, development for mentor, advisor, and teacher relationships) and how these changes will enable the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.
48. Page ____ Describe the proposed changes to the teaching environment (e.g. changes to the curriculum including remediation and accelerated learning programs, professional development innovations including teacher evaluations, changes in staffing and recruitment, merit based pay, longer school day/year) and how these changes will enable the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.
49. Page ____ Describe the proposed changes to school level decision making (e.g. change in school leadership, ability of the principal to select and assign staff positions without regard to seniority, more decision making authority for teachers and parents, increased community involvement) and how these changes will enable the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.
50. Describe any other changes that will result if your school uses chartering as a school improvement strategy.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

- App. _____ Attach the charter school’s proposed annual calendar and a draft of the charter school’s daily school schedule.
- App. _____ Attach a copy of any admissions application the charter school seeks to use.
- App. _____ Attach a copy of any intended contracts for the provision of educational management services or the provision of supplemental educational services and remediation. Such contracts shall describe the specific services for which the contracting organization is responsible. In the case of a management organization, such contracts shall clearly delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of the management organization and the governing board in the management and operation of the charter school.