

GEORGIA CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM
MISSION AND GOALS

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Mission Statement

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.

Vision Statement

Georgia will support high-quality charter schools that:

- Utilize innovative approaches to learning that have proven successful,
- Attain their measurable performance objectives, including student achievement goals,
- Systematically assess their operations,
- Operate a balanced budget,
- Maintain a policy-making governing board,
- Employ qualified staff,
- Conduct mission-driven professional development, and
- Display a high level of parent satisfaction and community involvement.

Goals for 2004-2009

- I. Create and disseminate clear information to all stakeholders on expectations and processes for Georgia charter schools.
- II. Promote charter schools as a choice option for school districts (local education agencies) not making Adequate Yearly Progress under Georgia's statewide academic accountability system.
- III. Assist school districts in developing charter school policies and procedures that foster progress toward the state's mission and vision for charter schools.
- IV. Foster an understanding of charter schools by the public through the provision of pertinent academic and evaluative information on the charter schools program.
- V. Utilize ongoing external evaluations and self-assessments to assist charter schools in improving their academic and operational performance and to disseminate to other public schools how the innovative approaches are working.

2004-2005 Objectives to Meet Goals

Objective 1: Create and implement a transparent, stream-lined process for submission and review of charter school petitions, amendments, grants, renewals, and terminations. (Goals I and III)

Strategy 1: Revise existing State Board Rule utilizing nationwide best practices, external consultants, and statewide stakeholders to address and clarify gaps and vagueness in the current rule. Best practices are those being used in other states to generate academically high-achieving and organizationally sound charter schools.

Strategy 2: Provide technical assistance and guidance to charter operators, petitioners, and authorizers on the implementation of the new process and best practices.

Outcome Measures:

(note: for all workshops and materials, we will ask for user/attendee evaluations and expect at least a grade of "above average")

1. An adopted state board rule, supported by the Department and key external stakeholders, that addresses and clarifies specific issues, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Termination process
 - b. The SEA and LEA roles in authorizing and supporting charters
 - c. Charter grant application processes
 - d. Petition requirements
 - e. Petition submission process
2. Written guidance, available in print and on the web, on the:
 - a. Charter petition process (including role of the Charter Petition Review Committee)
 - b. Charter petition review rubric
 - c. Charter amendment process
 - d. Charter school grant process and grant review rubrics
 - e. Charter renewal process and renewal review rubrics
 - f. Charter termination process and termination review rubric
3. At least two regional workshops for charter petitioners, operators and charter authorizers on the new processes.

Objective 2: Increase the level of local school district knowledge on the benefits of charter schools. (Goals II, III, and IV)

Strategy 1: Provide increased opportunities for dissemination of charter school information to local school districts through regional charter petition workshops and collaboration with existing education association conferences.

Strategy 2: Research and assess the funding issues local school districts face when authorizing a charter school.

Strategy 3: Provide increased technical assistance to local school districts on charter authorizing through the provision of a DOE staff member dedicated to helping local school districts with chartering.

Strategy 4: Conduct and disseminate research on charter school academic achievement and methods used to reach that achievement.

Strategy 5: Collaborate with the School Improvement Division to ensure that schools in restructuring understand the charter school option.

Strategy 6: Implement collaborations with successful charter schools and other DOE Programs to disseminate best practices.

Strategy 7: Provide opportunities for GDOE staff to learn about charter schools so that they may assist authorizers in their particular area of expertise.

Strategy 8: Conduct a dissemination grant competition through the use of federal Public Charter School Program funds in order to disseminate the best practices and innovations utilized by charter schools. The dissemination will focus on teaching local school districts how the implementation of innovative programs through waivers contained in the charter helped to increase student achievement.

Outcome Measures:

1. Sponsorship of a charter authorizing workshop in conjunction with the GAEL Winter Conference.
2. The hire of a Program Specialist to assist local school districts in understanding the benefits of charter schools and the best practices for charter authorizing.
3. Completed research on charter school academic achievement to include standardized test scores and charter performance goals disseminated to all local school districts and other key stakeholders.

4. Presentations and publications with the School Improvement Division to schools in Needs Improvement status to inform them of the chartering option.
5. At least 10% of schools in restructuring choose chartering as an option.
6. Partnerships between Walton High School in Cobb County and the DOE AP/SAT Program, and Central Educational Center in Coweta County and the DOE Career/Tech Division to disseminate best practices.
7. Dissemination grants awarded by the state board to charter schools and dissemination grant project goals completed by charter school recipients.
8. Production of a white paper on the funding issues faced by local school districts when authorizing charter schools. This paper will include the cost of oversight and monitoring as well as the cost of redirected QBE funds.

Objective 3: Strengthen the business management foundation and fiscal stability of new and existing charter schools. (Goal V)

Strategy 1: Increase the quality of charter school governance through technical assistance on board governance and fiscal responsibility

Strategy 2: Review charter school funding formulas and work with other government agencies (Governor's Office, OPB, QBE Commission) to revise if necessary and feasible.

Strategy 3: Provide guidance to charter petitioners and authorizers on contracting with Education Management Organizations (EMOs) through written guidance and workshop sessions.

Outcome Measures:

1. A revised charter school rule, adopted by the state board, which includes a petition requirement that there be demonstrated business management expertise, as defined by the revised charter school state board rule, among the founding group and on the future staff.
2. Reduce number of charter schools closing due to fiscal issues to zero.
3. Reduce number of charter schools closing due to mismanagement issues to zero.
4. Regional charter school workshops on governance and fiscal responsibility.
5. Policy adoption or revision by each charter school, according to best practices, on the role of the governing board and fiscal management.
6. An independent audit, as defined by the revised charter school state board rule, for each charter school with no significant findings.

Objective 4: Conduct program evaluation focused on the types of students entering Georgia charter schools. This will include demographic and academic information. (Goal IV)

Outcome Measures:

1. A completed independent evaluation of the student population in Georgia's charter schools.
2. A set of recommendations stemming from the evaluation findings on how to further open charter schools to all Georgia students.

2005-2006 Objectives to Meet Goals

Objective 1: Continue implementation of new petition processes. (Goals I and III)

Strategy 1: Convene small group representing various charter school stakeholders to gather feedback and suggestions on implementation of new process.

Strategy 2: Review, revise, and create additional guidance, if necessary, on new petition process.

Outcome Measures: TBD

Objective 2: Increase the level of local school district knowledge on best practices in charter school authorizing through adherence to NACSA's Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing. (Goals II, III, and IV)

Strategy 1: Provide increased opportunities for dissemination of charter school information to local school districts through regional charter petition workshops and collaboration with existing education association conferences.

Strategy 2: Provide technical assistance to local school districts on charter authorizing through the continued provision of a DOE staff member dedicated to helping local school districts with chartering.

Strategy 3: Conduct and disseminate research (statewide and national) on charter school academic achievement and methods used to reach that achievement.

Outcome Measures: TBD

Objective 3: Increase knowledge of charter schools in targeted areas that might be conducive to the development of a charter school. (Goals I, II, and IV)

Strategy 1: Focus dissemination of information about charter schools in areas that have few or no charter schools (i.e. rural areas, southern metropolitan areas, northern metropolitan areas)

Strategy 2: Focus dissemination of information about charter schools in areas with several “Needs Improvement” schools.

Strategy 3: Create print materials that can be distributed to mailing list of interested persons in targeted areas.

Strategy 4: Hold Charter School 101 and 201 workshops (petition planning and writing) in targeted areas.

Strategy 5: Collaborate with the School Improvement Division to include charter school information in presentations to schools in restructuring.

Strategy 6: Inform the general public about charter schools through the development of a Public Service Announcement for radio, television, and/or newspapers.

Outcome Measures: *TBD*

Objective 4: Continue strengthening the foundation and stability of new and existing charter schools. (Goal V)

Strategy 1: Continue the provision of governance training.

Strategy 2: Provide training on writing, meeting, and assessing measurable performance objectives

Strategy 3: Provide training on special education regulations and instructional models.

Outcome Measures: *TBD*

Objective 5: Conduct program evaluation comparing student achievement in Georgia’s charter school with similar students in traditional public schools. (Goal IV)

Outcome Measure: A completed independent evaluation of Georgia’s charter school student achievement.

2006-2007 Objectives to Meet Goals

Objective 1: Increase the number of high-quality charter schools in Georgia with the creation of 10 new charter schools. (Goals I and II)

Strategy 1: Target local school districts that have not chartered a school to determine if more information on charter schools is needed

Outcome Measures: *TBD*

Objective 2: Continue to strengthen the foundation of new and existing charter schools. (Goals I and V)

Strategy 1: Continue successful technical assistance programs begun in the previous two years and create a long-term plan for the efficient and economical provision of technical assistance to charter schools. Plan will include what types of technical assistance will be provided by the Department and what types of technical assistance would be prudent for other organizations to provide.

Strategy 2: Identify areas of need for technical assistance.

Outcome Measures: *TBD*

Objective 3: Conduct program evaluation of Georgia's Public Charter Schools Program to include whether the structure of the state program is meeting its goals and objectives. (Goal IV)

Outcome Measure: A completed independent evaluation of Georgia's Public Charter Schools Program.

2007-2008 Objectives to Meet Goals: TBD

2008-2009 Objectives to Meet Goals: TBD