



Charter System Application

DISTRICT NAME

Madison County School System

DISTRICT ADDRESS

800 Madison Street
P.O. Box 37
Danielsville, Georgia 30633

Dr. John D. Barge
State School Superintendent
OCTOBER 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 established a flexibility option for Georgia school districts that wish to become a Charter System. A Charter System is a local school district that operates under the terms of a charter between the State Board of Education and the local Board of Education. The system receives flexibility in the form of waivers of certain state laws, rules and guidelines in exchange for greater accountability for increased student performance and an emphasis on school-based leadership and decision making.

Your Charter System Application is a petition to the Georgia State Board of Education asking it to create or renew your charter system. The evaluation of your Application will be led by the Charter Schools Division of the Georgia Department of Education, in partnership with others within the Department (including the Finance and Budget Office, the Office of School Improvement, the Office of School Turnaround, and the Accountability Division) and with the independent Charter Advisory Committee (CAC) that was also established by the Charter Schools Act.

The evaluation of your Application will focus on whether implementing the charter system proposed in your Application will lead to the improved academic, organizational, and financial performance you are promising in exchange for freedom from much of Georgia's education law, rules and guidelines. It will also determine whether the proposed charter system would comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures (including 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 et. seq., and Department of Education Guidelines accompanying the Charter School Rules); whether the academic, organizational and financial plans are viable; and whether the charter system is in the public interest.

Please note that submitting a Charter System Application does not guarantee that a charter will be granted. It does guarantee, however, that the Georgia Department of Education will work closely with you to improve your chances of State Board of Education approval of your charter system contract.

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Your Charter System Application must be approved by your local Board of Education in accordance with the rules and regulations of your local board. After local submission, review and approval, charter system applications must be received at the address below by December 1 of the year prior to the start of the July-June fiscal year in which the charter system contract would go into effect:

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

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APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Your Charter System Application Package must comply with the following submission procedures.

- An Application Package includes an original and two copies of the following items:
- SYSTEM APPLICATION COVER SHEET** (Use the form on page 3; the form may not be altered in any way).
- CHARTER SYSTEM APPLICATION** (Your answers to the questions posed on pages 4-8).
- The Charter System Application is limited to 50 double-spaced pages using an 11-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins with a header showing the school system's name and a footer showing consecutive page numbers.
- The original must be signed in blue ink. Stamped signatures will not be accepted.
- ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET** (Use the Assurances Form and Signature Sheet below on pages 9-11; the Form and the Sheet may not be altered in any way).
- The original must be signed in blue ink; stamped signatures will not be accepted.
- EXHIBITS** (See list of required Exhibits below on page 12).
- Required Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible (no more than 5 pages per Exhibit). The only exceptions to this size limitation for Exhibits are your most recent annual audit and your most recent accreditation report.
- All Exhibits must be tabbed.
- Your Application Package must be bound by a binder clip; do not enclose your Application Package in a notebook, binder, or folder.
- Your Application Package must also include a single CD or USB drive that includes a:
 - Microsoft Word version of your Charter System Application Cover Sheet
 - Microsoft Word version of your Charter System Application
 - PDF Version of your signed Assurances Form
 - Microsoft Word version of your Exhibits (except for your annual audit and your accreditation report)
 - PDF version of your most recent annual audit
 - PDF version of your most recent accreditation report

Faxed or emailed copies will not be accepted. Only complete petitions that comply with these guidelines will be evaluated. Applications will not be returned; please keep a copy for your records.

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**CHARTER SYSTEM APPLICATION
COVER SHEET**

Please enter the requested information in the gray boxes following each question. Thank you!

Proposed Charter System Information			
Full Name of Proposed Charter System: Madison County School System			
Please indicate whether this is a: New Petition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a Renewal Petition		How many schools in total are you proposing to include in your charter system? 7	
How many of each of the following schools are you proposing to include in your charter system?			
Primary School(s)		Middle School(s)	1
Elementary School(s) 5		High school(s)	1
On July 1 of what year do you want your charter contract to be effective? 2012			
How many years are you proposing for the term of your charter contract? (Note that an initial charter cannot exceed five years) 5			
Charter System Street Address 800 Madison Street	City Danielsville	State Georgia	Zip 30633
Contact Person: Dr. Allen McCannon		Title: Superintendent	
Contact Street Address 800 Madison Street	City Danielsville	State Georgia	Zip 30633
Contact's telephone number 706.795.2191	Contact's fax number 706.795.5029	Contact's E-mail Address: amccannon@madison.k12.ga.us	

CHARTER SYSTEM APPLICATION

The Charter System Application includes eleven questions grouped into four sections. The first section is “The Case”, where you justify your schools system’s need for a charter. The final three sections focus on your Academic, Organizational, and Financial Objectives, Plans, and need for Waivers.

Please note that the italicized bullet points after each question are included to clarify the question being asked and to provide guidance regarding what we will be looking for in your answers. Please also note that you can include links to websites in your answer if you want to make optional additional information available to us as we review your application. If possible, we will access those additional optional resources – but we cannot guarantee we will, so please be sure to include your answers in the text of your Application (within the 50-page limit).

THE CASE

1. Why do you want a charter?

- *What is your school system’s motivation for applying to be a charter system?*
- *To what extent are you being driven by district or community leadership, community members, funding issues, the need for waivers, study of the issue and the realization that being a charter is best for your school district at this point in your history, and/or other factors?*
- *What will you be able to do with a charter that you can’t do without a charter?*
- *Thinking of the answer to this question as an Executive Summary of your Charter System Application may help.*

The Madison County School System have the support of our community and schools to operate under a common charter, with increased flexibility from the state, to develop a school system that will be more responsive to the needs of our students. Not only will the system enjoy the flexibility for developing programs that better meet the needs of students, but, the programs will now reflect what the local community wants for students. The projected areas of flexibility that will be used in the Madison County Charter include: programming, funding, seat time, credit by exam, course requirements, graduation requirements, teacher certification requirements, and more. As the School Governance Teams mature, and they better understand the potential of students and the schooling process, it is anticipated that more waiver areas will be requested. The greatest power of the charter is the accountability of the school system to the public. Accountability measures will be developed, articulated, and communicated. Accountability will reach beyond test scores and include job preparedness ratings and post-secondary measures. Indicators will include work ethic indicators and problem solving skills. The community is

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clear about what they want their graduates to look like. Programming will need to be developed to match these outcomes. The School Governance Teams will be a part of this planning process.

Madison County School System's motivation for applying to be a charter system is driven by community and district leadership. Madison County is looking for innovative ways to serve students who are falling behind and ways to serve students who needed more aggressive acceleration. Madison County's graduation rate is improving but it is still not at the targeted level (moved from 49% in 2002 to 79% in 2011). As students leave high school for careers or post-secondary schooling experiences they are not prepared. Madison County is a low wealth district with limited resources. Students need to be successful as they leave school so that they can be independent, productive contributing citizens. Something different is needed in the schooling process.

Madison County is a rural community of about 28,120 located in Northeast Georgia, just north of Athens. The county has six municipalities, with Danielsville serving as the county seat. Presently, 23% of the land is considered prime agricultural land. Agribusiness dominates the local economy, with poultry and egg production particularly important. The Madison County LEA is a low wealth district and receives equalization dollars based on its low tax digest and the number of students served. For the FY12 Equalization Rankings, Madison County is listed as 147 out of 180 school districts, making it one of the poorest districts in Georgia. Our needs are great. Madison County community members are below the state average both educationally and economically.

Demographically, community members are 87.6% White, 8.4% Black, 4.1% Hispanic, 1.2% two or more races, 0.6% Asian. High school graduates make up 72.7% (compared to 82.9% for the state of Georgia) of the population. Those holding a bachelor's degree or higher make up 12.9% (compared to 27.1% for the state of Georgia), and 18.3% (compared to 16.6% for the state of Georgia) live below the poverty level. Compared to the state of Georgia, Madison County community members are lacking both educationally and economically.

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The Madison County School System serves more than 4,700 students attending the elementary (5), middle (1) and high (1) schools. The population served consists roughly of 80% white, 10% black, 7% Hispanic students and 3% multiracial. More than 60% of the students are categorized as economically disadvantaged. Approximately 16% are categorized as students with disabilities. While all of the elementary schools met AYP in the 2010-11 school year, both the middle and high schools failed to do so. Specific groups failing to meet AYP at the middle school included Black, SWD, and Economically disadvantaged students.

In May 2010, the Madison County Board of Education submitted a letter of intent to the Georgia State Department of Education to become a charter system. The Madison County charter system development process started immediately and involved over 150 community members, staff, and students. The 18-month process included many hours of meetings, presentations to the community and staff, media coverage, and conversations with existing charter systems. During the charter system planning meetings, the community expressed concern that students are graduating from Madison County Schools lacking problem-solving, critical thinking, and basic technological skills that they need to be employed locally and to be competitive globally (the study process is chronicled and on the district web site: <http://www.madison.k12.ga.us/chartersystem/index.htm>).

After 18-months of study, the case for Madison County to become a charter system was established. The exact details of the plan are not in place, nor should they be. The school governance teams will work to develop a K-12 experience for students that will focus on the priority outcomes articulated by the Madison County community. These outcomes are to develop: 1. basic academic knowledge and skills 2. critical thinking and problem solving 3. social skills and work ethic 4. preparation for skilled employment. The community charter planning effort created a collective vision and focus for all students in Madison County.

To realize this vision there needs to be: greater flexibility in serving students,

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greater community and parent involvement with decision making, greater flexibility in using state and local resources, innovative solutions for students who may fall behind and for those who excel, ability to create a schooling process that supports the needs of the community, and greater accountability by the school system to the community.

Committees developed the petition, determined waivers that might be needed, defined the governance structure, and identified outcome areas for Madison County graduates. A broad flexibility waiver will be sought so that as needs emerge additional waivers will not be needed. Sample waivers that would be needed to realize this vision include: creating a new high school graduation requirement where students will have to demonstrate outcome skills as part of a community service project; expand the options of delivering gifted program services; redefine remedial program qualifications; require performance-based measures; allow personal technology in the classroom; allow credit by exam in the high school; redefine seat time and the school day; allow credit for academic application of skills and knowledge; create high school course work that prepares students for work or post-secondary school; smaller class sizes; flexibility with spending state dollars; teacher certification; align all resources to needs of students; and provide support for students outside the funding formula guidelines.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

2. What are your school system's student performance objectives for the proposed charter term?

System student performance objectives should:

- *Show the system's student performance during the past five years*
- *Reflect where the system envisions itself academically at the end of the proposed charter term*
- *Indicate the expected rate of student performance growth in each year of the proposed charter term*
- *Exceed the rate of growth mandated by the State*
- *Demonstrate compliance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and State Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and their successors.*
- *You are welcome – but not required – to include all or some of the components of the current draft of the Georgia Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI).*
- *You are urged to include cohort measures that show the progress over time of a single cohort of students.*
- *You are also urged to include national norm-referenced test results among your performance measures.*
- *Be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART).*

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- *Present graphs that show the past five years performance with the system student performance objectives for the each year of the proposed charter term plotted out to demonstrate graphically what the charter system is striving to achieve with its new innovations (see example below).*
- *Please feel free to present any additional graphs you desire to show a more nuanced picture of your charter system's academic goals and targets.*

The Madison County School System has moved to a Report of Progress to publically monitor progress, using SMART goals, in the areas of student achievement and school operations. The achievement goals represent compliance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and State Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). The district achievement goals and the status is shown below. The operational goals are found in the ORGANIZATIONAL and FINANCIAL sections of this application. For the purpose of this petition, goals are extended for 5 years and performance is shown for the previous five years in the charter application graph. The complete system report of progress and each individual school's report of progress is available on the district's web site (<http://www.madison.k12.ga.us/curriculum-instruction/documents/reportofprogress2.pdf>).

One challenge facing Madison County, and the rest of the state, is finding out what new factors will be used to determine AYP for 2012. Once new factors are determined, the Madison County School System will establish benchmarks and move forward. The Georgia Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) indicators align perfectly with the intent of the Madison County charter system proposal. For the year 2012, all districts will be held harmless as baseline data for all of these indicators are established. Once Madison County's baseline indicators are established in Spring 2012 appropriate growth anticipated measures will be established and measured for five years. The community wants Madison County students to be independent and productive for their next steps in life after high school. It should be noted that, in some areas, our current achievement levels are high. It would not be reasonable to project great gains in future years. For example, CRCT performance in the area of Reading for grades 3-8 for the 2011 school -year indicates that 96% of students are meeting and exceeding expectations. In this area, we are seeking to maintain high achievement. In other areas, however, the SMART goals reflect the need to increase achievement as indicated on the

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graphs. For example, CRCT performance in the area of Math for grades 3-8 for the 2011 school -year indicates that 85% of students are meeting and exceeding expectations. Thus, we are projecting a faster rate of improvement in this area when provided with greater flexibility under the Charter System.

Student Performance Goal 1: The percentage of 3rd – 8th grade students meeting or exceeding state standards on each component of the CRCT (Reading, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) will increase to 95% or better by the 2015-2016 school year. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 1 graphs.

Student Performance Goal 2: The percentage of 3rd-8th grade students exceeding state standards on each component of the CRCT (Reading, ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) will increase to 45% or better by the 2015-2016 school year. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 2 graphs.

Student Performance Goal 3: The percentage of high school students meeting or exceeding state standards on each EOCT (9th Lit, Am. Lit, Math I, Math II, Physical Science, Biology, US History, Econ) will increase to 85% or better by the 2015- 2016 school year. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 3 graphs.

Student Performance Goal 4: The percentage of high school students exceeding state standards on each EOCT (9th Lit, Am. Lit, Math I, Math II, Physical Science, Biology, US History, Econ) will increase to 38% or better by the 2015- 2016 school year. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 4 graphs.

Student Performance Goal 5: The percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the 5th grade, 8th grade and 11th grade Writing Tests will increase to 95% or better by the 2015-2016 school year. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 5 graphs.

Student Performance Goal 6: The percentage of students exceeding standards on the 5th grade, 8th grade and 11th grade Writing Tests will increase to 30% or better by the 2015-2016 school year. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 6 graphs.

Student Performance Goal 7: The Madison County graduation rate will increase from 79% in 2011 to 95% or better in 2016. See Exhibit 12 for Student Performance Goal 7 graphs.

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The performance of a sub group of students, students with disabilities, has been and continues to be an area of concern in Madison County Schools. The performance of this group of students will be followed in the areas of reading, English language arts, and mathematics. A graph indicating performance in the past five years and projections for the next five years is included. Using Georgia Department Education's Students Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), cohorts of students will be followed over time to get a true measure of student performance over the charter petition period. Results will be posted.

3. What specific actions will the system take to achieve the student performance objectives during the proposed charter term?

- *Describe the educational innovations that will be implemented.*
- *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase student achievement.*
- *Describe the anticipated timeline for implementation of the innovations*
- *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique system*

Listed below are examples of the educational innovations that will be implemented under the Madison County Charter System petition. Some of these innovations have started (data teams, waiver for innovative gifted services, STEM projects). Some of the innovations are in the beginning discussion stages (change in graduation requirements, Bring Your Own Technology, changes in coursework at the high school). None of the innovations, however, will be implemented until a plan is in place, resources are identified, waivers granted at the school level, if needed, and most importantly, an evaluation system is in place to measure the impact and effectiveness of the innovation. The time line will be driven by the needs of the students and the readiness of the school(s) to implement the plan. The school-level governance team will lend a voice to the planning and implementation process including the timeline.

1. Establish and maintain data teams in each school. Data teams will continually focus on student work and instructional strategies. Teacher-led, school-level data teams meet at least twice a month to monitor student progress. Standards will be identified, measured, and monitored throughout the year to ensure that all students are accounted for and supported when and where needed.

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Madison County teachers formally began the training process for data teams in January 2011. Training continued in summer 2011 and into fall 2011. The data team cycle has now been established and is in operation. As the data team process matures a tighter focus on student progress and the impact of instructional strategies will be examined.

Madison County staff plan on making full use of the Georgia DOE's new State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). This long awaited tool has the potential to totally change the landscape of teaching in Georgia. Madison County staff will be trained on how to access data and more importantly use data to impact student learning. The SLDS tool has been redelivered to staff but we will work again with the DOE staff to make sure that the tool is integrated into each teacher's classroom so that they are using the remarkable resources that are available and those that will soon be available – longitudinal data, standards, lessons to support standards, interventions for struggling students and advanced students, and more. No more waiting for months to get student records from across the state. Information is now available to teachers in an instant. Once the power of this tool is realized by staff and school governance teams, it is anticipated that many alternative waivers will be requested.

2. Applied interventions for students will be based on student need. Interventions will be systematically targeted, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on student progress. The artificial boundaries of the classroom, materials, and seat time will be ignored. Student progress and mastery will be the criteria for credit or exemption of course work. More aggressive support will be implemented for struggling and advanced students.

3. The gifted program will extend the walls of rigorous instruction access by continuing the implementation of the approved (March 2011) Madison County DOE waiver, which allows for the implementation of the advanced content gifted model in grades 3-5 in reading and mathematics. In 2011, 60 teachers started the process of acquiring gifted endorsement (48 elementary, 10 middle school, and 10 high school). Now all core subject middle school teachers have their endorsement or are in the process of completing their program of study. All elementary schools have at least one teacher per grade level with

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gifted endorsement. Each program area at the high school level has at least one teacher with gifted endorsement.

Madison County Schools supports student engagement in the learning process including creating opportunities for students to explore the application of higher order thinking skills and investigating new approaches to applied learning experiences. Schools will work to develop units of study that apply these skills to real world problems and situations which impact Madison County.

4. Course work will be established for high school students that will prepare them for admission requirements to technical schools and colleges. The business community will lend staff to the high school to help guide and instruct high school staff on areas where students need stronger preparation for the work force. Students will receive instruction on these identified areas of need. Staff from Athens Area Technical College and the University of Georgia will work with Madison County Schools to help develop course work and interventions that not only prepare students for entry into post-secondary options but will help ease the transition into the work place. An initial conversation is in place with Jackson EMC to provide instruction for high school students on the requirements of entry level jobs and hiring standards. Students will learn from those who are in the field practicing what they want to learn.

5. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) skill development will continue at the middle and high school and will be extended to the elementary level. Currently, Madison County is serving as the 10th congressional district STEM system. A two-year \$785,000 grant supports the integration of technology into science and mathematics classrooms and the application of knowledge to real world community projects (i.e., soil sampling, water sampling, tree planting, compost testing). Under the charter system petition, the walls of the classroom will be expanded into the rural farms of Madison County where students can see and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways.

Madison County applied for the governor's Innovative Race to the Top funds (results due January 2012) to extend this STEM innovation in the elementary schools. Madison County has an impressive technology inventory but the capacity of staff to integrate and use technology in mathematics, science,

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and other subject areas is limited. The intention of the grant would be to support elementary teachers not only as they develop greater mastery of the content (elementary science and mathematics endorsements programs will be offered to qualifying teachers) but greater confidence and competence as teachers develop 21st century literacy skills. Students at all levels will have the opportunity to demonstrate application knowledge in rural Madison County. The hope is that the transfer of skills will strengthen middle school and later high school performance in science mathematics instruction.

This STEM innovation supports the wishes of the Madison County community. Students will gain greater knowledge. Knowledge will be measured through hands-on experiences. Students will apply critical thinking and problem solving skills to their work. The walls of the classroom will be moved outdoors as days and times for learning will be redefined through the charter system process. As students perform their tasks, work ethic skills (as defined by our community and business partners) will be taught and measured. Waivers will be needed as this process matures to accommodate the exciting new classroom experiences.

6. The definition of graduation will be redefined. The state's definition of graduation does not endorse what Madison County citizens feel is important for graduating seniors. Madison County citizens want to see evidence that students are ready for the work force and/or post-secondary school. They want evidence that students can apply their knowledge to real life settings. The school governance teams will be involved, along with the business community, in redefining the requirements of graduation from Madison County High School. Different courses will be developed, such as a pre-9th grade summer course, which will better prepare students for their high school experience. They will get Carnegie unit credit for their work. High school students will get help when they need it—not at the end of a course (after they have failed). Successful models of instructional support will be developed that focuses on the student, not the structure or rules of a program or remedial model. Another potential example of matching courses to the needs of students is offering credit by exemption in the high school (seat time). Many times students are forced to sit through course work that they have already mastered. Students will have

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the opportunity to exempt select courses by taking an exam. There will need to be work with the Board of Regents to ensure that there is no penalty for awarding credit for those students who exempt courses.

7. Community identified goal area priorities based on Georgia's Visioning Project will be developed. During the petition preparation phase in 2010-2011 a survey was administered to all staff, the business community, and parents asking what the outcome priority areas should be for Madison County students. The survey used the 8 identified goal areas of Georgia's Visioning Project to develop the survey. All stakeholder groups selected the same priority areas listed below:

- i. Basic academic knowledge and skills
- ii. Critical thinking and problem solving
- iii. Social skills and work ethic
- iv. Preparation for skilled employment

Each school governance team will focus on ways to monitor and ensure the school's focus on these four priority areas. Waivers will be granted to individual schools as needed to promote these focus areas. The task of the school governance team is to identify these goal areas, find solutions, identify barriers (which may include the need for waivers), implement the solution, and most importantly, measure the impact of the solution and then plan again. This planning cycle will be a critical training area for all school governance teams. It is consistent with the district school improvement cycle and helps to ensure that all innovations are explored and monitored to ensure a positive impact on students.

The business community will be involved by clearly articulating the desired entry level skills. They will be instructors to students and staff. They will communicate the strengths and weakness of the Madison County graduates workforce. Benchmarks of skill achievement will be developed and applied in the high school setting.

Examples of educational innovation in progress: The Freshman Academy (grade 9 students) teachers for Math I, Physical Science, Agriculture and Computer Applications met during post-planning in May 2011 to plan an interdisciplinary soil testing project to be implemented in the upcoming school year. This

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project sprung out of an earlier meeting of the STEM Grant Governance Board, where representatives from UGA Science Education and the Athens Technical College Bioscience Department meet regularly with high school teachers and local farmers to plan STEM projects. During this project, agriculture students spread compost from our cafeteria waste onto a field that is divided into a grid. They periodically collect soil samples from locations in the field for testing by physical science students. Science students use probeware devices to measure the pH, soil moisture, and conductivity of the soil. They give this real-world data to math students to use in their unit on statistical analysis. The math students produce a soil analysis report that will be turned into a business presentation by computer applications students. The reports and presentations produced by our students will be competitively judged by a partnering agricultural consulting firm, which will help our students to see how science and math are utilized by working people in the real world.

In 2011-2012, all of our 9th grade students will participate in this activity through their required math and science courses, and most will also experience this activity in agriculture, computer applications, or both. A similar project on water quality that involves students using probeware to measure water samples from city water sources, student-collected well water samples, and field trips to local streams (with help from our partners at the Broad River Watershed Association). These kinds of activities engage students in the kinds of technology and inquiry-based learning advocated in the National Science Education Standards (including vital science process skills), and by groups like the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Science Teachers Association.

There are unlimited possibilities on the many ways that learning experiences can be extended for our students. As the classroom doors expand to the many farms and land in Madison County, students will have the opportunity to learn the skills that they want and need to learn. Learning experiences can turn into authentic learning applications as students test water and soil samples for the community. There will be increased opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery in real-life, community-based settings. The curriculum will match the needs of the

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students rather than the needs of the students being forced to match a curriculum determined by others far away from the learning environment in Madison County.

4. Which of the specific actions in the academic plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

- *Although you will be granted a broad flexibility waiver if you are granted a charter, please numerate specific actions, the required waivers, and provide examples of how they will be implemented.*

Listed below are several areas of potential waiver requests from Madison County based on the charter system preparation process. We are quite certain that there will be more requests as Madison County matures as a charter system. The request in the charter petition will be for a broad flexibility waiver so that additional individual requests will not have to be made to the Georgia DOE. There will be a process, however, established where school governance teams will propose waivers through the district governance team to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws. There will have to be assurance that the waiver request will not negatively impact district or school operations or student achievement. There will also have to be an assurance that the waiver does not impact the operation of other schools in the system.

Required Waivers and Potential Impact on Student Achievement:

1. Graduation Requirements - The Madison County community would like to for there to be graduation requirements beyond test scores. Students will be required to demonstrate their knowledge in a project-based format. Students will need to demonstrate proficiency in work skills and post-secondary entry skills that are necessary for success. Courses will have to be developed to match the desired outcomes of the Madison County community. Course discussed are: personal finance, pre-9th grade course, job preparedness, preparing for success in post-secondary schools (study skills), expansion of the work-based learning concept to include paid internships on farms (have classroom instruction match the skill base that is needed in real life).

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2. Gifted Program Requirements - The Madison County School system was granted a waiver for three years beginning in FY12 to implement the advanced content model in grades 3-5. This and other waivers will be established as school work to find the most effective models for serving the high achieving population.

3. Seat time Waiver - There are many students entering high school who must sit a required numbers of hours in order to receive credit for course work. Madison County will implement an exemption rule where students can receive course credit if they are able to demonstrate competency in specific course. This waiver will not be used, however, until clear measures of competence are determined and validated. There will also be students who can demonstrate learning and learn in a classroom found on the farms of Madison County. Alternative classroom locations will be sought.

4. Early Intervention Program (EIP) Eligibility (and other remedial courses) - At the elementary level there will be a waiver request to serve students who may have exited the state EIP program yet still need support to prevent failure. There are also elementary students who move to the middle school that do not get the bridge of support they need with the EIP program. A waiver will be requested to serve these students at the middle school level. High school students are also left without remedial help when they need it. Currently students have to wait until they fail a course before they can be pulled for interventions. Or worse, by example, some of the most fragile students have to stay in mathematics classes most of their school day, missing opportunities for electives which often keep students in school, to take more and still more mathematics, more of the same. This is not a good plan. As students hit a trouble spot they need the intervention immediately without penalty or threat of lost credit. At the elementary level support is fluid and accessible. At the middle and high school, that level of support just does not exist, nor is it supported by state course work or programming or funding.

5. Personal Technology - Currently students are not permitted to bring their phone to the classroom. There is power in having all students with access to the internet, social networks, and other sources

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available only found on the internet. Many students use these resources outside of the classroom settings. The boundaries of the classroom will be expanded not only to the farms of Madison County but to states and countries beyond our schools and classrooms. The possibilities are endless. There is a committee in place in Madison County right now studying the implications of this waiver and how we could use this flexibility to impact instruction.

6. Grading procedures - Currently there is a state rule which requires that students in grades 4 and 5 receive a numerical grade on their report card whether it matches instructional practices or not. This waiver would release teachers from that grading requirement as we work to develop grading procedures that truly communicate student learning and mastery.

ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

5. What are the system's organizational performance objectives for the term of the charter contract?

System organizational performance objectives should:

- *Indicate the system's organizational performance over the past five years*
- *Reflect where the system envisions itself organizationally at the end of the charter term.*
- *Indicate the anticipated organizational targets in each year*
- *Include objectives related to items such as stakeholder satisfaction, teacher and/or student retention, professional development and technology.*
- *Be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART).*

Base line measures will need to be developed to in order to assess the impact of the charter system flexibility on these important operational goals. Research will need to take place to identify practical and effective measures. The School governance teams will be charged to be part of the design team to complete this important task. The new Career and College Readiness Index (CCRPI) has promise to provide much more information that we have had in the past. This missing information, however, is important. We must learn to measure impact of schooling beyond graduation.

Organization Goal 1: The number of Madison County graduates who meet employer satisfaction of the skill level will increase. A baseline will be established and SMART goals developed.

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Organization Goal 2: The number of Madison County graduates who need remediation course work at the college level will decrease as measured on the CCRPI. A baseline will be established and SMART goals developed.

Organization Goal 3: The number of Madison County graduates who complete college will increase. A baseline will be established and SMART goals developed.

6. What specific actions will the system take to achieve the organizational performance objectives?

- *Describe the organizational innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.*
- *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase organizational effectiveness.*
- *Describe the anticipated timeline for implementation of the innovations*
- *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique system*

1. Develop an Evaluation Process - Develop and implement a student/parent/community survey indicating preparedness satisfaction for the work place and post-secondary school. Systematically follow students as they exit high school to determine their success and modify high school programs based on results. Do not keep doing the same thing if it is not working. There is a discussion of possibility developing credentials that support specific desired workplace skills where students can earn a special seal (similar to Georgia's Work Ready Initiative) but it will be tailored to the desired skills defined by the Madison County community. If a student graduates from Madison County High School with a work-ready seal, then Madison County employers will place greater credence on that candidate for hire.

2. Interventions – Strengthen the process for selecting and using and evaluating interventions with students who are struggling. Currently, the Georgia Department of Education's remedial programs that are supported by FTE are very limited and restrictive on how schools can serve children. Options are progressively limited as students move to middle and high school. Intervention structures must be in place that can help students when they need it, not when it is convenient and when it fits a formula.

3. Increased Parent/Community Input – Increase opportunities for two-way communication with parents and the community to make sure that the schooling process is meeting the needs of the community and students. The school and district level governance teams will provide a formal structure

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for gathering and using input to make decisions impacting the schooling process. Not only will input be solicited but community expertise will be solicited. There are many Madison County farmers and others who are practicing and applying the very skills that we are teaching in school. Students need to see how their school work connects to the real world.

4. Professional Development - Provide teachers and staff with information on how to use technology not only for instruction but for school operations. There are many tools not in use. A needs assessment will be administered on a regular basis to determine needs. The professional learning strategies will be tailored so that not only does the content match what the adult learner needs, but it will be delivered in a way that is meaningful and useful in the work setting—the classroom, the front office, business operations, at home. Whatever, regardless of the location, the skill set is needed, training will be delivered. Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) is being explored for Madison County Schools for students and staff. As staff become more comfortable using technology as a solution to instructional issues the more effective the schooling process will be for everyone.

5. Training for governance teams – as training for the governance team is delivered on topics such as school operations, budget, maintenance, and safety more people will become aware and involved in supporting school operations. The community will develop a stronger commitment to school success.

7. Which of the specific actions in the organizational plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

- *Enumerate the specific action, the required waivers, and provide examples of how they will be implemented.*

There are three areas in the organization that require a waiver. There may be more areas identified as the chartering process matures.

1. **State required staffing and certification rules** – there are many untapped professionals in the Madison County community and the near-by institutes of higher education (Athens Technical College, the University of Georgia, and Piedmont College by example) who could serve as excellent teachers for Madison County students. A poultry farmer working daily on a poultry farm has more background

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information about applied science, technology, and mathematics than any textbook could offer. If a student works on that poultry farm half a day with this farmer, he would earn the science credit he may need to graduate. The farmer would not need a teaching certificate.

2. Grade reporting procedures- currently teachers in grades 4 and 5 must post numerical grades on the report card. This practice does not match standards-based instruction grading practices. This practice would be eliminated.

GOVERNANCE

A key characteristic of charter systems is their decentralized decision-making structure. It is imperative that local school governing councils demonstrate autonomy and decision-making authority.

8. What is the system's plan to maximize School governance?

- *Highlight the differences between the current local school governance structure and the new structure the system will implement.*
- *Address the formation of the local school governing councils, including how members are selected, the terms of members, and how and why members may be removed.*
- *Describe the general responsibilities for the principal at each charter system school, the local school governing council at each charter system school, the system governing council (if applicable), and the local board of education in the areas of budget, resource allocation, personnel decisions (primarily principal selection, evaluation, and termination), establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, curriculum and school operations.*
 - *Presenting this responsibility description in the form of a chart or a grid would be helpful to both you to ensure you've captured everything – and to us as we review your Application.*
- *Provide a timeline for governance training to be provided to principals and members of the local school governing councils in order to build the capacity needed to make decisions in the above-mentioned areas*

Madison County's Current Governance Structure

There are five elected BOE members who serve four-year staggered terms. Three BOE member's terms end in December 2012, the other two BOE members end in December 2014 to allow for continuity for potential changes of BOE membership due to election results. The chairperson is elected by the BOE members. In Fall 2011 all Board of Education members in Georgia are required to participate in governance training outlined by the Georgia Department of Education.

All policies are introduced at public BOE meetings, put on the table for public input and consideration for 30 days, the superintendent gathers input from stakeholders and communicates that

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input to the BOE. The policy is then voted upon and adopted at public BOE meetings. All policies are accessible to the public on-line in a web based program called E-board. All procedures are transparent and available to the public. The district's legal counsel, Harbin, Hartley, and Hawkins, LLP, review all proposed policies prior to presentation to the public to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws. In addition, Harbin, Hartley, and Hawkins provide advance notice to the superintendent for all future policies needed to maintain compliance with new local, state, and federal laws. GSBA also provides strong policy support to the Madison County School System.

As new policies are proposed for adoption, the superintendent brings the policies to monthly administrative staff meetings for review. Staff members are, in turn, expected to review the policies with their faculties and/or departments. Policies that are required to be distributed to parents are included in each school's student and staff handbook. Policies that must be distributed annually to parents include: safe and drug free schools, code of student conduct, internet use, highly qualified staff notification, anti-bullying, and parent involvement. Staff must sign an acknowledgement that they have received and read the policies.

Each staff member has a personnel handbook with procedures and policies that reflect the procedures and practices of the Madison County BOE. Policies and procedures that are necessary for substitutes to know are distributed at the new substitute training sessions. In addition, each principal/director is required to review district policies and procedures with their staff each year.

Procedures for implementing the adopted policies are created by staff and supervised by the superintendent. The policy area determines the staff involved in creating the procedures to support adopted policies. By example, media specialists and technology support staff helped to revise the internet protocol and procedures. The Response to Intervention (RTI) Coordinator proposed a draft to the new bullying policy. The Lead Nurse helped to write the new EpiPen policy. The teacher forum (teacher representative committee that meets with the superintendent once a month) reviewed and helped write the revised teacher evaluation procedures. Policy drafts are presented to the administrative staff for

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consideration and reviewed prior to BOE approval and implementation. As procedures are implemented that support the BOE adopted policies, there is constant review for effectiveness. The superintendent oversees possible changes in procedures or even policy to ensure the continued effective operation of the school district. The district's policies, procedures, and organizational structure ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation for all schools.

Each school in Madison County has a School Council. The membership of each School Council is: four parents (two must represent a business in Madison County), two teachers, and the principal. The parent representatives are nominated and elected by parents. The teacher representatives are nominated and elected by teachers. At the School Council meetings new policies are presented. The councils meet a minimum of four times a year. All School Council members participate in the required orientation and training. The required training is facilitated by the human resources director.

As Madison County Schools converts into the Charter System structure in 2012, the School Councils will be replaced with Governance Teams at each school. The Governance Teams will have increased opportunities for a voice in policy decisions and procedures.

Madison County's School System's Plan for Maximizing the Governance Structure

The shift in the Madison County School system's governance structure will be slow and deliberate. Participants will be clear about their roles and will be provided training in order to perform their duties as school governance team members. The beginning structure will be the existing School Councils with a few additional members (described below). By-laws will be drafted and approved. Training topics will be identified and scheduled. Everything will be transparent and available for the public to review (sunshine law). Meetings will be posted on eBoard just like the regular school board meetings.

The purpose of the school governance team will be to support schools so that they have a greater opportunity to positively impact student achievement. There will be review process put in place with a rubric developed by staff so that all school governance teams can monitor their own performance to

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ensure effectiveness. This will not be busy work but a standards-based rubric to help guide the work of the governance team.

School Governance Team Structure

Members of the 2011-2012 School council will be invited to continue and serve on the new School Governance Teams. Teams will meet once a month at each school. Training topics and support will be provided. Meetings dates and times will be determined by each school. Meetings are not intended to last more than one hour. Principals are having conversations with their school council in 2011-2012 to determine interest in remaining as the new school governance teams are put in place.

Each team will:

- Have 7-11 members voted to serve on staggered 4-5 year terms
- Have the principal will be the chairperson for the first two years
- Have teachers (2-4) who will be elected by teachers (principal may appoint 1 teacher)
- Have parents (2-4) who will be elected by parents
- Have students (1-2) who will be selected by the school-based leadership team (middle and high only)
- Have community/business people (2-3) selected by the school-based governance team, these representatives do not have to have students in the system
- Have the option to train as a substitute for the school

Responsibilities – Board of Education, Superintendent, Principal, School Governance Teams

The Madison County Board of Education will still be in place with their current rights and responsibilities. The superintendent will still be in place in place with the same responsibilities. Principals will still be in place with the same responsibilities. Teachers and other staff will still be in place with the same responsibilities.

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School Councils will have new authority.

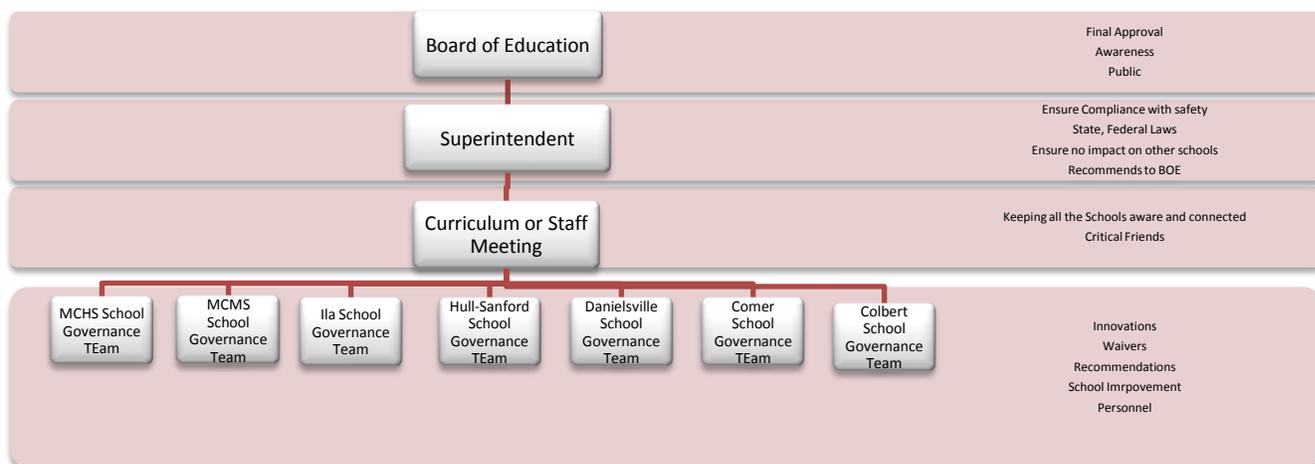
School councils will become the School Governance Team. Below are the responsibilities and authority. As the team matures additional areas of authority may emerge. A by-laws template will be created for each team to establish their operations. After a year of work, modifications can be made.

Area of Responsibility	School Governance Team	Principal	Superintendent	Board of Education
Budget	Approve Title I budget Approve Fund Raiser Budget Member of budget committee Create and Approve budget for charter QBE funds	Recommend to Superintendent	Recommend to BOE	Approve
Resource Allocation	Recommend school level resources based on school plan	Recommend to Superintendent	Recommend to BOE	Approve
Personnel	Recommend principal finalists to superintendent	Recommend to Superintendent	Recommend to BOE	Approve
School Improvement Plan	Member of planning team (review data, plan, results)	Recommend to Superintendent	Recommend to BOE	Approve
Curriculum	Member of planning team Recommend waiver needs	Recommend to Superintendent	Recommend to BOE	Approve

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Other School Operations	Approve field trips Member of safety committee	Recommend to Superintendent	Recommend to BOE	Approve
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The school improvement plan will send action that requires a waiver to the system staff committee or the system curriculum committee, depending upon the nature of the request. The committee will review the request and make a recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent, in turn, will make a recommendation to the Board of Education. This structure provides a public vetting process, allows the district to work as a school system rather than a system of schools. The minutes of these meetings are available to the public. The communication flow is shown below.



School Governance Team Training

Training for the School Governance Team will be held monthly. There will be a common training template prepared by central office staff for all 7 teams. Principals will be charged with redelivering the information and making additions specific to their school. Topics will be fully developed before governance teams are charged with making decisions. The proposed schedule and outline of topics is below:

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August 2012 – Purpose, meeting etiquette, sunshine laws, and effective meetings

(Pre-preplanning, 2 hours, all 7 School governance teams; childcare provided by ECE high school students)

September 2012 – School Improvement Plan and SACS recommendations

October 2012 – Report of Progress

November 2012 – By-Laws

December 2012 – Effective Decision Making

January 2013 – Budgeting Process

February 2013 – Technology in the Classroom

March 2013 – Best Hiring Practices

April 2013 – Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

May 2013 – Strategic Planning

June 2013 – Common Core GPS

Year Two Topics:

Assessment, Special Education Law, Personnel Issues, Effective Schools, Report of Progress, Strategic Planning, School Improvement Plan, Budgeting Process, Federal Programs

Year Three Topics:

Based on Needs-Survey of School-Based Governance Teams

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FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

What are the system's financial performance objectives for the term of the contract?

System financial performance objectives should:

- *Describe the system's financial performance during the past five years.*
- *Reflect where the system envisions itself financially at the end of the charter term.*
- *Indicate the anticipated financial targets in each year.*
- *Include objectives related to fiscal feasibility required for implementation and sustainability of system organizational and academic plans.*
- *Be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART).*

Madison County employs a system of continuous improvement and review of program effectiveness to ensure that maximum resources are generated, that the most efficient use of resources are employed, and that the most effective practices are in place to support student learning. This continual effort to study and review practice is the heart of Madison County's work. The financial goals and status are part of Madison County's Annual Report of Progress. These goals are included the Operations section of the document. For purposes of the charter petition financial performance for the past five years and projections for the next five years are shown in the graphs below. All results are found on the district web site: (<http://www.madison.k12.ga.us/curriculum-instruction/documents/reportofprogress2.pdf>)

The financial performance goals for the charter system petition are:

Financial Performance Goal 1: To maintain a minimum of 75% of budget expenditures for instructional activities. See Exhibit 12 for Performance Goal 1 graph.

Financial Performance Goal 2: To maintain yearly favorable audit statuses with no material findings. See Exhibit 12 for Performance Goal 2 chart.

The charter system status will allow Madison County to extend this flexibility even more. Currently all funds generated are done so within the guidelines of the QBE and state programs. As new programs are developed the guidelines will no longer fit and new definitions will be needed. The goal is to target resources where needed regardless of the program generating the funds.

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Current Practice: Each school gets an annual budget based on their projected student count. The allocations are the same, per student, for the five elementary schools. Each month all class sizes are monitored. If any class reaches the maximum class size then additional resources are allocated so that staff may be hired. Class size is monitored at the middle and high schools. Again, if any class reaches the maximum class size and modifications cannot be made to the schedule, then additional resources are allocated from the reserve fund balance. Madison County's class sizes are below the maximum level.

Public support is built as sufficient resources are secured for the effective operation of the district and school. By example, there is a fund balance for FY12 of \$5.6 million despite the current economic times. The reduction in force (RIF) policy did not have to be implemented for FY12 due to budget review and expenditure controls put in place. Madison County has a solid financial history. The district has never operated in a fiscal deficit plan. There has been a fund balance maintained at 10%. There has not been an increase in the mileage ate for 5 years. The current rate is 16.99%. The Moody's rate for 2011 is AAA+. SPLOST was passed in March 2011 with close to a 90% approval rate.

To ensure that Madison County's resources target the most critical areas of instruction the budgeting process was revised in FY11 which allowed many conversations with administration and staff. Each principal, with input from their staff, met with the central office team to present their goals for the next school year. The resources that were necessary for achieving the school goals were articulated. The focus in each conversation was to shield the classroom from the negative impact of reduced local and state funding. The process was open and accessible to everyone. The superintendent publishes a newsletter "From the Superintendent's Desk" which is disseminated to all staff and the community explaining the budgeting process.

Efforts are made to keep the budgeting process as transparent as possible so that everyone knows where the allocation originated. The charter system school governance team will have a level of involvement in the budgeting process that has not been exercised before. They will ultimately need to have to complete understanding of the educational goals and program needs. There will have to be an

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understanding of fiscal limitations and those that can be addressed through the waiver process, and then there needs to be process for budgeting and monitoring finances to ensure that resources are being used in the most efficient and effect way possible.

9. What specific actions will the system take to achieve the financial performance objectives?

- *Describe the financial innovations that will be implemented.*
- *Provide a clear explanation of how the innovations will increase financial performance.*
- *Describe the anticipated timeline for implementation of the innovations*
- *Describe why the innovations are appropriate for this unique system*

The district will continue to receive local, state, and federal funds based on student enrollment and program participation. Schools will continue to receive funds based on student enrollment and program participation. The district and schools, however, will have broad flexibility in spending. The flexibility, however, will be restricted to supporting school and district instructional and operational goals. The parameters of the school governance team in budgeting and resource allocation will be further refined once training on fiscal matters is complete (Spring 2013). The governance team will participate in school budget design and approval, Title I budget approval, field trip approval, fund raiser budget approval, and budget for charter system funds from the Georgia Department of Education. Business operations will continue to have oversight of all fiscal matters and responsibilities such as audits, ordering, payroll, accounts receivable, and billing. The superintendent and the board of education will continue to have budget approval responsibilities.

1. School Governance Teams - School governance teams will be trained on financial topics such as revenues, FTE, state and federal funding, local funding; spending restrictions, alignment of resources to need. Once the foundation knowledge is set then parameters for financial recommendations and decisions will be made.

2. School Improvement Efforts – as schools identify areas of school improvement needs there will be an examination of resources which might call for a redistribution of existing resources. There will be a review of current expenditures and strategies developed to identify alternative spending practices.

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3. Current Practice – current spending practices will be examined to determine the impact of dollars on student achievement and operational goals. Adjustments will be made where appropriate. An evaluation system will be developed to identify the value of expenditures against outcomes to tie expenditures back to specific school and district smart goals.

4. Communication and Accountability - create a financial report card for the public for school and system expenditures.

10. Which of the specific actions in the financial plan require a waiver of state law, rule, or guidelines?

- *Enumerate the specific action, the required waivers, and provide examples of how they will be implemented.*

1. Funding Waiver – There will be a request for flexibility in spending. Currently there are some waivers in place for flexibility in spending of state funds. Madison County will request broad flexibility so that the needs of the students in front of us drive funding allocation, not those from three FTE counts back nor those who do not need support. Expenditure controls, defined by the state, will be waived. QBE state reporting requirements will be waived if expenditures are waived.

2. Facility Requirements – There are many restrictions on facility use that obligate state and local funds. The facility requirements that do not support the district’s instructional and operational goals will be waived. This waiver will require some additional research to determine what is a federal requirement and what is a state requirement and what is the purpose. At the moment, however, there appears to be facilities requirements that do not support the goals of the school district.

ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET

The law requires your school district to provide assurances that it will do certain things and comply with certain laws. This Assurance Form enumerates all of these requirements and, when you submit this signed Signature Sheet with this Assurance Form as part of your Charter System Application Package, you are providing the legal assurance that your charter system understands and will do these things. This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the school system.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for the Madison County School System located in Madison County is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that if awarded a charter the school system:

1. Shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations;
2. Shall not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, national origin, gender, disability or age;
3. Shall be subject to all federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of school students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions; and the prevention of unlawful conduct;
4. Shall be subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050 requiring a brief period of quiet reflection;
5. Shall ensure that the system and the system charter school's governance boards are subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq. and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.;
6. Shall ensure that the system charter school governance board members may only receive compensation for their reasonable and actual expenses incurred in connection with performance of their duties;
7. Shall ensure that all teachers will be certified or highly qualified in compliance with No Child Left Behind;
8. Shall comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements, and participate in statewide assessments;

9. Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as applicable;
10. Shall provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners, as applicable;
11. Shall provide for supplemental educational services as required by federal law and pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03, and for remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01;
12. Shall notify the state of any intent to contract with a for-profit entity for education management services;

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13. Shall be subject to the requirement that it shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized by local boards by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133;
14. Shall comply with federal due process procedures regarding student discipline and dismissal;
15. Shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school;
16. Shall have a written grievance procedure to resolve student, parent, and teacher complaints;
17. Shall have a written procedure for resolving conflicts between the system charter schools and the local board of education;
18. Shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20 -2-211.1 relating to fingerprinting and criminal background checks;
19. Shall remit payments to TRS on behalf of employees;
20. Shall ensure that if transportation is provided for its students, the system shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
21. Shall ensure that if the charter system participates in federal school meals programs, then each participating system charter school shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
22. Shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 and submit and obtain approval from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency;
23. Shall comply with the state facility requirements regarding site codes, facility codes, the submission of architectural plans for any new facility that the system may build or occupy during the charter term and all other facility requirements as established by the Department;
24. Shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160, subsection (e) of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-320, and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-740;
25. Shall be subject to an annual financial audit conducted by the state auditor or, if specified in the charter, by an independent certified public accountant licensed in this state;
26. Shall acknowledge that all criteria used to calculate QBE funding may not be waived; and
27. Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter system.

This Charter System Application, Assurance Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Madison County Board of Education on the _____ day of _____, 2011.

Superintendent

Date

Chair, Local Board of Education

Date

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If a Charter is granted, all Petitioners assure that the proposed charter system 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.

Superintendent

Date

Chair, Local Board of Education

Date

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EXHIBITS

The following Exhibits are required to complete your Charter System Application Package. Please tab the Exhibits to match the item numbers below. Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible (no more than 5 pages per Exhibit). The only exceptions to this size limitation for Exhibits are your most recent annual audit and your most recent accreditation report.

1. Signed local Board of Education resolution approving the creation of the charter system.
2. Notice that was sent to each principal within the proposed charter system regarding required hearings on the charter system application.
3. Description of how stakeholders, including parents and community members, were involved in the development of the Charter System Application.
 - *This is where you can describe the process you used to develop your Application.*
4. A list of all schools to be included in the charter system, including new schools or college and career academies that will be formed throughout the life of the charter, with an indication of which existing schools are currently in Needs Improvement status.
5. A brief description of the charter system that includes the name, the mission, grades served, the focus of the curriculum, instructional methods to be used, including any distinctive or unique instructional techniques or educational programs to be employed, and other pertinent information.
 - *Your description will be used by the Department to provide information to the public about applicants and new charter systems.*
6. Local school governance training timeline including training topics.
7. Conflict of interest policy for local school governing councils.
8. A list of business arrangements or partnerships with existing schools, educational programs, businesses and non-profits and the nature of the services provided, including disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest.
9. A brief description of the system's fiscal history and whether the system is or has ever operated under a fiscal deficit.
10. Copy of the school system's most recent annual audit.
11. Copy of the school system's most recent accreditation report.
12. Graphs to support Madison County School System SMART Goals