Marietta City Schools

<div align="center">**Charter System Application**</div>

The Case

1. Why Marietta City Schools Wishes to Continue as a Charter System

Marietta City Schools (MCS) has operated as a charter system since 2008. During that time, academic achievement has shown steady gains in most grades and subjects for most student populations. School Governance Teams have operated effectively at each school. The community embraces the school system and is proud of its accomplishments and its status as an innovative charter system.

This charter system application coincides with an extensive strategic planning process undertaken by the board and superintendent, as well as preparation for upcoming district accreditation through AdvancEd. As part of this process, MCS conducted 31 interviews and six focus groups, engaging 81 individuals during the process. Information and insight was gathered from board members, principals, teachers, classified staff, parents and community partners. Focus groups were conducted with struggling students and their parents in order to obtain their input on barriers to success and effective interventions. In addition, parent, teacher and student perceptions were gathered through confidential AdvancED surveys. Three main priorities have been identified through this strategic planning process: academic excellence, cultural excellence and workforce excellence. These themes will be evident throughout this charter system application, which is directly related to achieving the desired outcomes within these priority areas.

Outcomes within each priority area are as follows:

Academic Excellence

- o Graduation rates increased
- o Assessment scores increased
- o Higher quality teaching and learning through alternative education methods

Culture of Excellence

- o Parental engagement increased
- o Culture creates an environment where learning is valued

Workforce Excellence

- o Highest return on investment attained on recruitment and retention of quality staff

Participants in this process were unanimous in their praise of Dr. Emily Lembeck and district personnel. Dr. Lembeck's leadership is viewed as an overarching strength, and the school board, principals and administrators exhibit leadership and support for the superintendent and the school system. The small size of the district is viewed as an advantage to acting quickly and proactively, and the system enjoys the strong support of the community. Marietta City Schools' history with the community and its legacy of positive change brings broad community support. Support varies from the passing of a bond referendum to the free lease on a car for the Teacher of the Year. Community engagement stems partly from the long history the school system has had in the community. In addition, many spoke of the tradition, pride and presence of many alumni as key factors aiding community involvement. Other strengths include being a system that offers choices for children and families and one that focuses on the use of technology in all aspects of education.

This climate positions MCS well for the successful implementation of a next-generation charter system. The processes, attitudes and supports are in place for even greater innovation and improvement.

Like many charter systems approved in Georgia, much of the previous innovation and execution of waivers from state law in MCS has been generated at the system level. There is tremendous opportunity for additional innovation at the level of individual schools. We believe this charter system application creates a framework for such innovation to emerge.

We have many challenges to address, as will be detailed in the following sections. While we have been academically successful overall, we know that there are areas where other charter schools and innovative school systems surpass our performance. Our challenges generally revolve around our students with disabilities and students who are performing below grade level. Approximately 20% of our 8th graders are over-age. We have a significant enrollment bulge in 9th grade, largely due to 9th grade failure.

Our cohort graduation rate is 56%. Clearly, previous approaches to remediation and retention are not sufficiently effective.

We have a high mobility rate, which means that a number of students come to us in the midst of their academic journey. Many of these students enter our system performing below their age-based grade level. We cannot rely solely on improving our own K-12 continuum as a means of preparation for academic success. We need creative ways to remediate at all grade levels.

Marietta City Schools is proud to be one of the few International Baccalaureate World School districts in the nation. Our pass rates on IB assessments have continued to improve over time. We can also do more for our students who perform at the highest levels. Our norm-referenced scores at middle grades, AP pass rate, SAT and ACT scores are flat or declining. While we awarded 38 International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas in 2012, representing approximately 11% of graduating seniors, this number has been relatively flat over time. Students earning an IB certificate have also been relatively flat over time.

We have reviewed practices of other, demographically similar schools as well as literature on schools that serve populations similar to ours. We have identified research-based, instructional innovations that we are prepared to implement to improve achievement. Many of these will require waivers from current state laws and regulations. The key themes of our charter system application are *time* and *place*. Simply put, many of our students need more time to catch up and to excel. As Joseph Murphy states in his evidence-based publication, *The Educators Handbook for Understanding and Closing Achievement Gaps,* "The bulk of evidence indicates these students do not need different types of interventions, but require much more intensive support and more of the quality education factors that promote higher levels of achievement in general." By thinking differently about place, as in where students learn and with what resources, we can modify instruction to free up resources for such innovations as extending time for certain subjects during the school day and extending the school day

and/or school year to meet student needs. By allowing students to master some areas of the curriculum outside of school, or to learn in non-traditional ways while in school, we can generate resources to extend time for focused-instruction aligned to student needs. Murphy also cites research supporting that schools need to find ways to **add** instructional time which supplements, not supplants, current instructional resources. The current pull-out and push-in models required for students with diverse needs do not accomplish this, therefore we propose to use such resources differently.

Effective use of time implies an effective teacher and instructional support for every student. We plan to implement incentives to keep our best teachers in the classroom and to explore alternatives to certification for teachers of some subjects.

We are poised to move to a deeper level of effective innovation, building on the strength of our success as one of the initial charter systems in the state and the strong support of all stakeholders in our community.

Academic Objectives, Plan and Waivers

Marietta City Schools (MCS) currently excels in Reading and in Math in elementary grades. The percentage meeting and exceeding has increased or remained steady over the past five years. This percentage is comparable or better than the state average and of most demographically comparable school systems. This is an impressive accomplishment when the following demographic comparisons are considered:

Student Group	Georgia %	Marietta City %
Black	37	46
Hispanic	12	30
White	44	19
Students with Disabilities	10	10

Limited English	6	17
Free/Reduced Meals	57	66
Source: 2010-11 State Report Card		

Marietta City Schools also has a high rate of mobility. The October 2010 FTE was 8011 with actual enrollment at that time of 8056. However, the total number of students enrolled at any point in 2010-11 was 9538. Of these 9538 students, 3036, or 32%, entered or left during the school year.

In order to target this charter system application to our greatest opportunities for improvement, we have carefully analyzed our past performance. The graphs in Appendix A highlight our performance trends. We have chosen to focus on other Georgia systems with comparable demographics and to examine the students exceeding standards. With the advent of the Common Core Curriculum, we know that exceeding current standards will be an indicator of success on the pending, more rigorous assessments.

- At grade 3, more MCS students are exceeding in every subject than the students in comparable Georgia systems. This is also true for Black and ED subgroups. MCS Hispanic 3rd graders exceed at slightly lower rates than Hispanic students in only one of the comparable systems.

- At grade 5, MCS has more students exceeding in Reading and ELA than comparable districts in most subject areas and subgroups. Math shows a lower percentage exceeding in Marietta than the state and comparable systems, particularly for Hispanic and ED subgroups.

- Marietta excels in Science at elementary grades. The percentage of students exceeding surpasses or equals the state and comparable districts in 5th grade for all subgroups.

End of Course Tests (EOCT) scores are in line with or above state averages. Scores in Math 1 are considerably higher than the state (77% passing versus 65%) and Math 2 scores are dramatically higher (78% passing versus 54%.)

Despite these comparably high results on state assessments at elementary and high school, math scores decline in 8th grade, with a 2012 meets/exceeds percentage of 72% and exceeds at 17% (compared
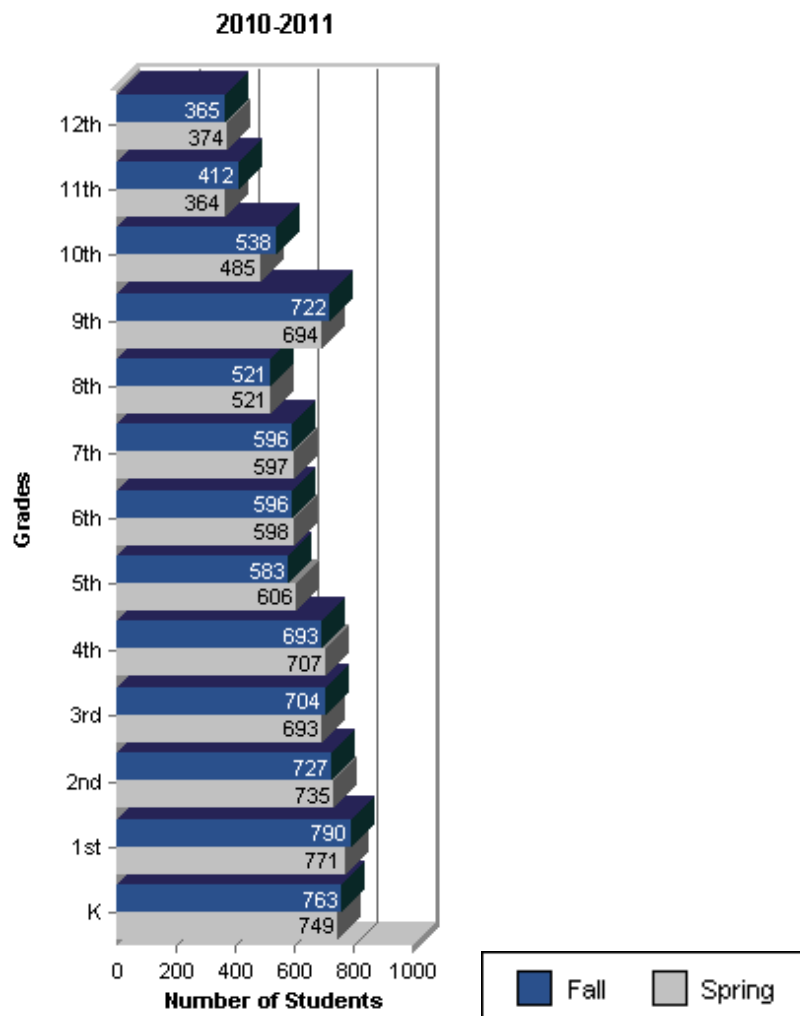
with 94 and 35 respectively in 7th grade.)   The percentage of MCS students exceeding in 8th grade Math

is below the state and comparable districts. Students exceeding in Science also drops below the state

level in 8th grade. These declines are also supported by nationally norm-referenced data. Reading and

Math ITBS scores show a gradual decline from 4th to 8th grade.

While the highest performing 30% of 9th graders are enrolled in Physics rather than Physical

Science, Physical Science is the one EOCT where MCS students lag behind the state and comparable

districts. This is also true of most EOCT tests for Hispanic students in the 9th grade.

Fewer than 50% of Students With Disabilities pass EOCTs and the pass rates have generally

declined over the past two years, with the exception of American Literature.

MCS has a high rate of students who are retained or placed below grade level. In the 2012-13

class of 8th graders, one in five (22%) were 15 years or older prior to September 1st. Enrollment numbers

during transition grades show a significant 9th grade "bulge". Marietta historically has substantially more

(38%) students starting 9th grade in the fall than are in the 8th grade class. This compares to a 9th grade

"bulge" of 17% for the state overall. This is not cohort data. These figures compare grade level sizes

within the same year, yet they indicate shifts that are not likely explained solely by shifts in enrollment at

these particular grade levels. A substantial number of students are retained in 9th grade. This is supported

by the fact that the number enrolled in 10th grade drops substantially compared with the number enrolled

in 9th grade in the spring, a drop of 22.5%. The state drop between these grades is 11%. This information

is highlighted on the following chart showing 2010-11 enrollment. This pattern has been consistent over
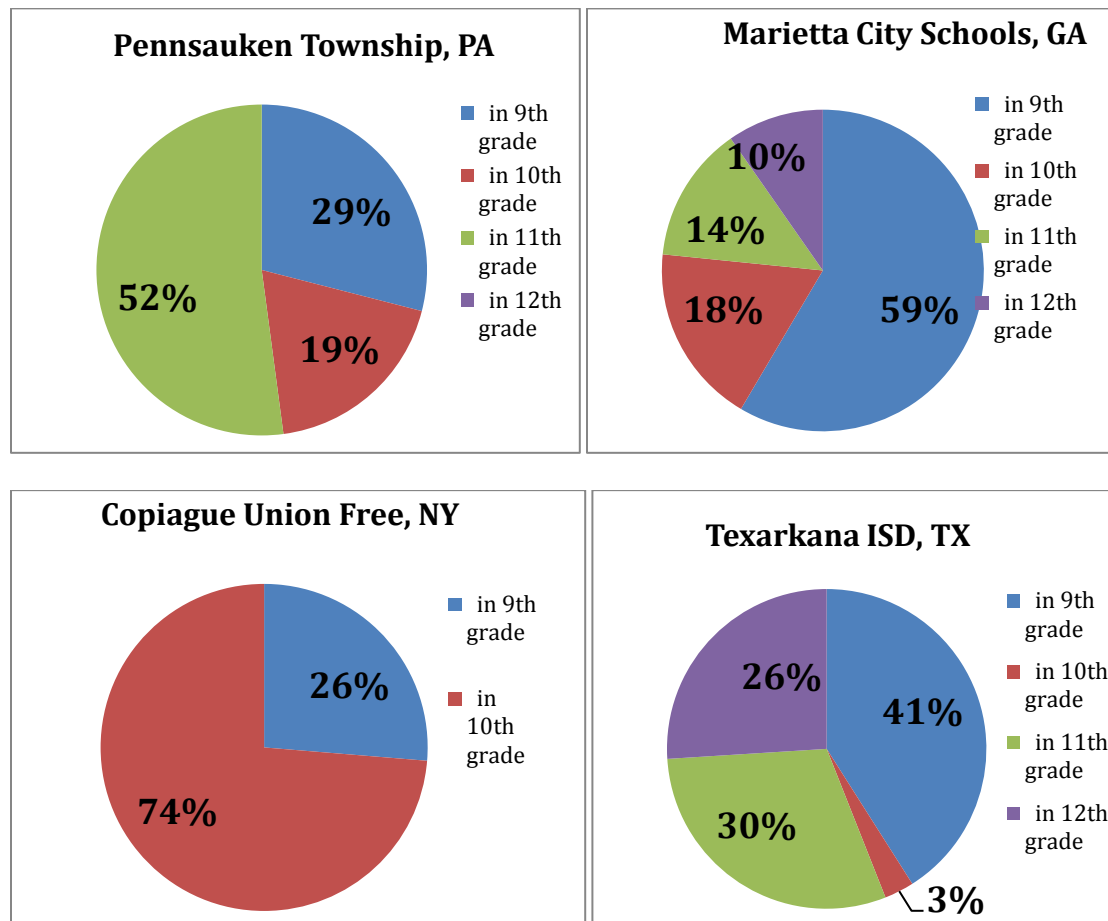
time.

Marietta City Schools

2010-2011

Grade	Fall	Spring
12th	365	374
11th	412	364
10th	538	485
9th	722	694
8th	521	521
7th	596	597
6th	596	598
5th	583	606
4th	693	707
3rd	704	693
2nd	727	735
1st	790	771
K	763	749

Number of Students

Grades

Fall   Spring

Marietta City Schools

Marietta's cohort graduation rate for 2011, at 56%, is lower than the state overall, which is 67.5%. It is also lower than most comparable Georgia districts, although this may be explained by reporting differences. MCS also saw the greatest drop from the previous calculation to the new calculation, demonstrating the difficulty in documenting transitions among a highly mobile high school student population.

MCS is engaged in a study to examine practices in similar national districts with higher cohort graduation rates. This study uses 2008 cohort graduation data. The comparison reveals a substantial

difference in the percentage of students who drop out in the 9th grade. This is also supported by the grade level enrollment figures above. The Fall to Spring number of 9th graders drops, as does the number between 9th and 10th grade.

Pennsauken Township, PA

- in 9th grade
- in 10th grade
- in 11th grade
- in 12th grade

29%
19%
52%

Marietta City Schools, GA

- in 9th grade
- in 10th grade
- in 11th grade
- in 12th grade

10%
14%
18%
59%

Copiague Union Free, NY

- in 9th grade
- in 10th grade

26%
74%

Texarkana ISD, TX

- in 9th grade
- in 10th grade
- in 11th grade
- in 12th grade

26%
41%
30%
3%

For those students graduating from Marietta High School, approximately 10% earn an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and an additional 10% earn IB certificates. There is opportunity to increase the percentage of students receiving diplomas and to greatly increase the percentage receiving certificates, which requires less effort and can be aligned to student strengths and interests.

Advanced Placement course enrollment has increased since 2008-9 from 445 enrollees to 495 enrollees. However, there is opportunity for more students to participate. Additionally, a considerable

percentage of enrolled students do not attempt to take the AP exam. Of those who enroll in an AP course in 2010-11, only 60% took the exam. Of all AP exams taken in 2010-11, 36% were scored with a 3 or above, the general requirement for college credit.

There is also an opportunity for additional students to complete a career pathway. Of high school seniors, only 12.6%, or 44 students, received a certificate for completing a career pathway.

2. Academic Performance Objectives

Based upon these performance results, MCS has identified the following Academic Objectives for this charter system application. We are basing several of these on current CRCT data. We are aware that these assessments will be replaced prior to 2018 with different assessments, which may have dramatically different content, structures and performance scales. We are setting targets presuming comparable assessments to the current CRCT. If such assessments are not available, an amendment to our charter contract may be required to set appropriate targets aligned to the content and structure of new assessments.

1. Increase the percentage of students exceeding in Math in 5th through 8th grade from 2012 results as follows,

   from 33% to 45% in Grade 5 by 2018

   from 25% to 39% in Grade 6 by 2018

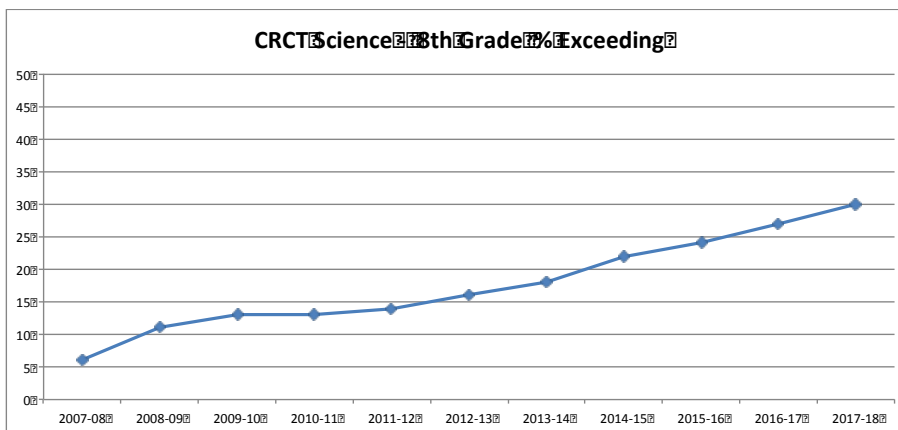   from 35% to 48% in Grade 7 by 2018

   from 17% to 35% in Grade 8 by 2018.

Marietta City Schools

CRCT Mathematics - % Exceeding
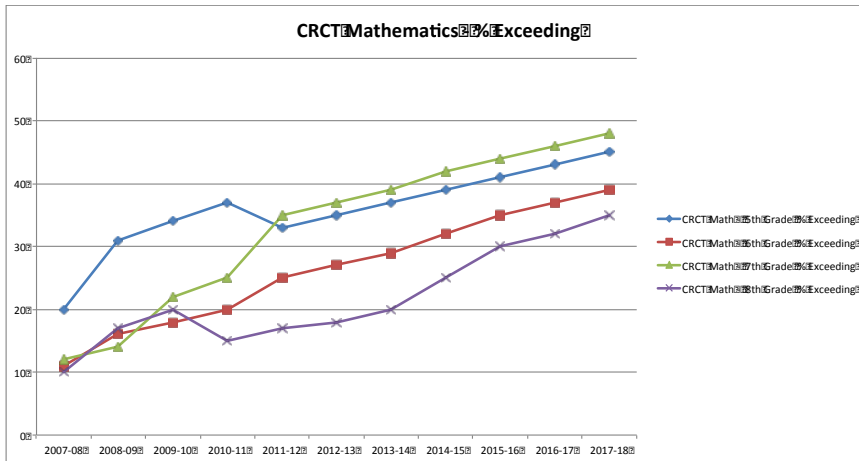
2. Increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding in Math in 8th grade from 74% to 90% by 2018.

CRCT Math - 8th Grade % Meeting & Exceeding
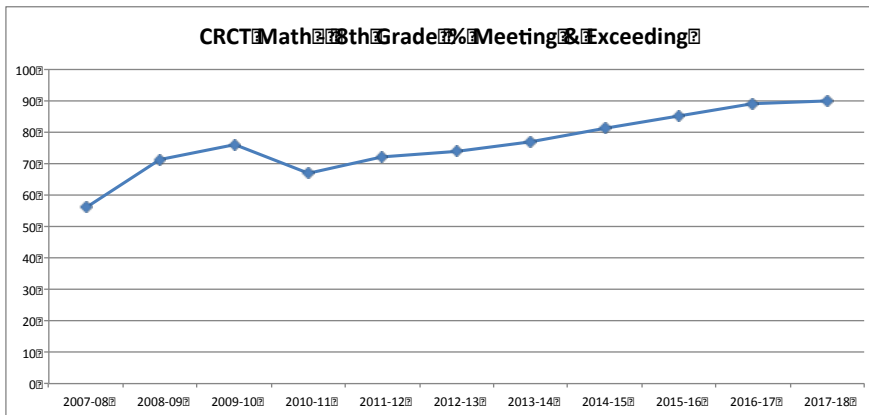
3. Increase the percentage of students exceeding in Science in 8th grade from 14% to 30% by 2018.

CRCT Science - 8th Grade % Exceeding

4. Increase the percentage of Students with Disabilities meeting and exceeding standards in all

    grades in Reading as follows,

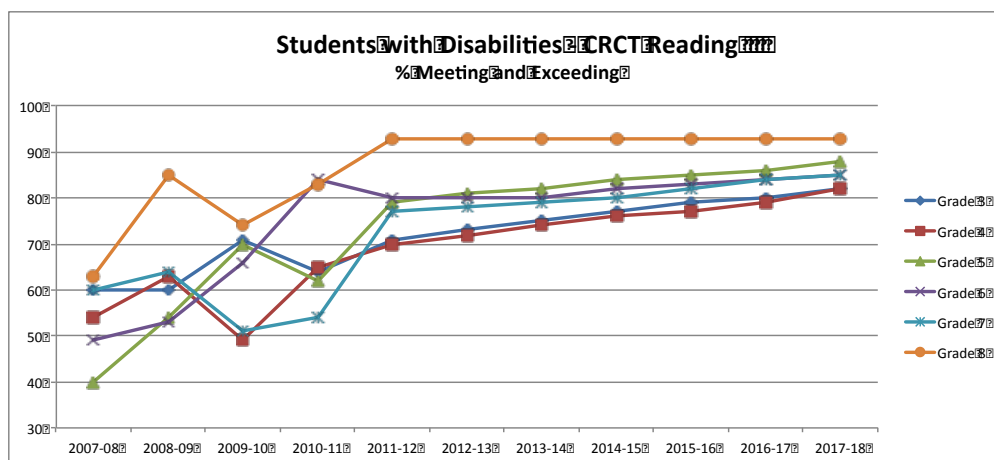   from 71% to 82% in grade 3 by 2018

    from 70% to 82% in grade 4 by 2018

    from 79% to 88% in grade 5 by 2018

    from 80% to 85% in grade 6 by 2018

    from 77% to 85% in grade 7 by 2018

    maintain 93% in grade 8 by 2018.

5. Increase the percentage of Students with Disabilities meeting and exceeding standards in all

    grades in Math as follows,
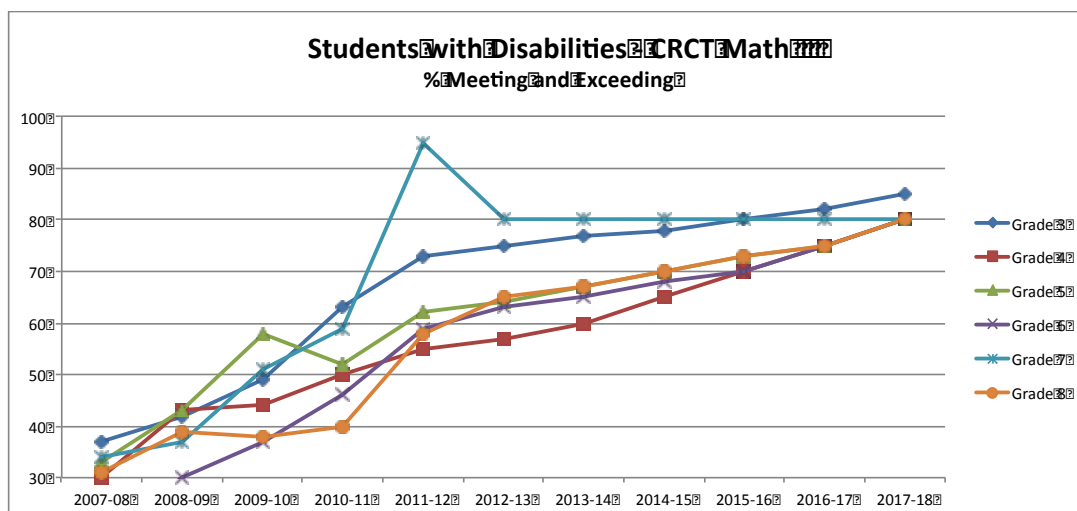
from 73% to 85% in grade 3 by 2018

from 55% to 80% in grade 4 by 2018

from 62% to 80% in grade 5 by 2018

from 59% to 80% in grade 6 by 2018

from 95% to 80% in grade 7 by 2018

from 58% to 80% in grade 8 by 2018.

**Students with Disabilities - CRCT Math**
% Meeting and Exceeding

6. Achieve or exceed state targets for all subgroups of students in all grades and subjects.

7. Increase average percentile scores in Reading on the IOWA in grades 2, 4 and 7 as follows,

   from the 57th to the 66th percentile in grade 2 by 2018

   from the 47th to the 65th percentile in grade 4 by 2018

   from the 43rd to the 60th percentile in grade 7 by 2018.

IOWA Reading - National Percentile Rank
**Note: scores prior to 2011-12 are ITBS**
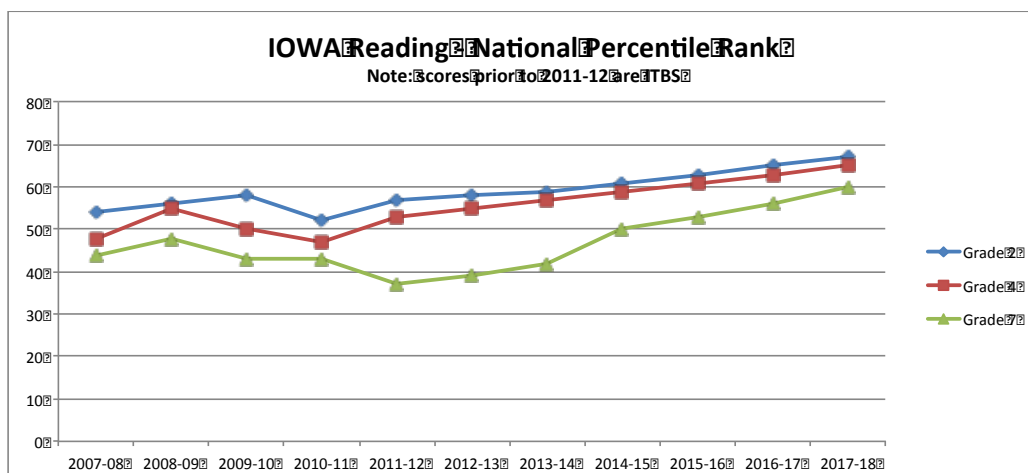
8. Increase average percentile scores in Math on the IOWA in grades 2, 4 and 7 as follows,

   from the 72nd to the 80th percentile in grade 2 by 2018

   from the 61st to the 73rd percentile in grade 4 by 2018

   from the 44th to the 65th percentile in grade 7 by 2018.

Marietta City Schools

ITBS Math - National Percentile Rank

Grade 2
Grade 4
Grade 7
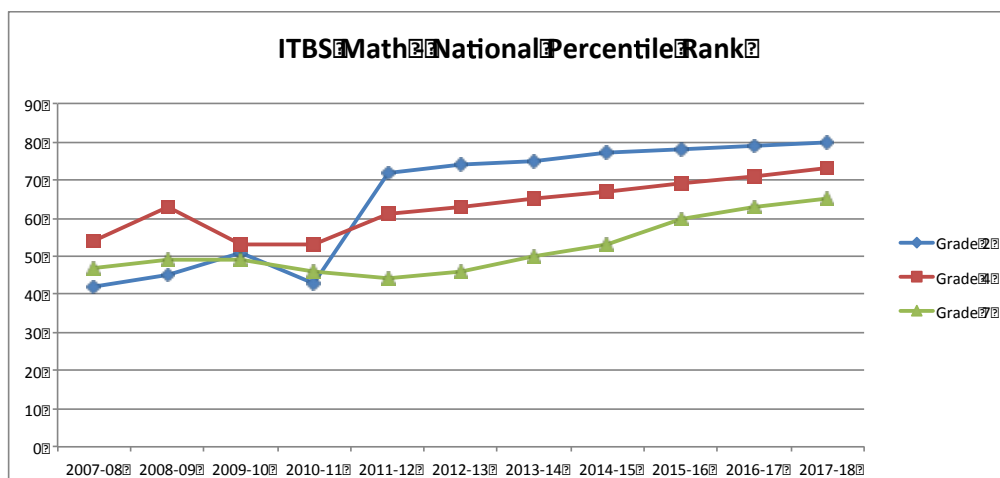
9. Reduce the number of students retained by at least 5% each year

10. Reduce the number of students dropping out during or after 9th grade by at least 5% each year

11. Increase the cohort graduation rate from 56% to 80% by 2018.

Previous Graduation Rate   **Cohort Graduation Rate**
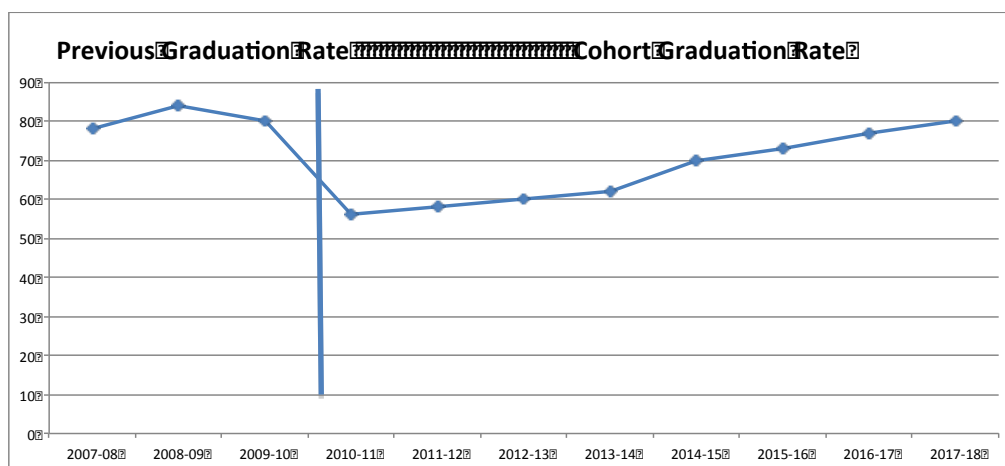
12. All demographic subgroups will meet or exceed the state cohort graduation rate for that subgroup by 2018.

13. Increase the percentage of high school seniors completing a Career Pathway from 12.6% to 20% by 2018

14. Increase the percentage of high school seniors earning an International Baccalaureate certificate in one or more areas from 10% in 2012 to 18% in 2018.

Marietta City Schools

% of High School Completers Receiving IB Certificate
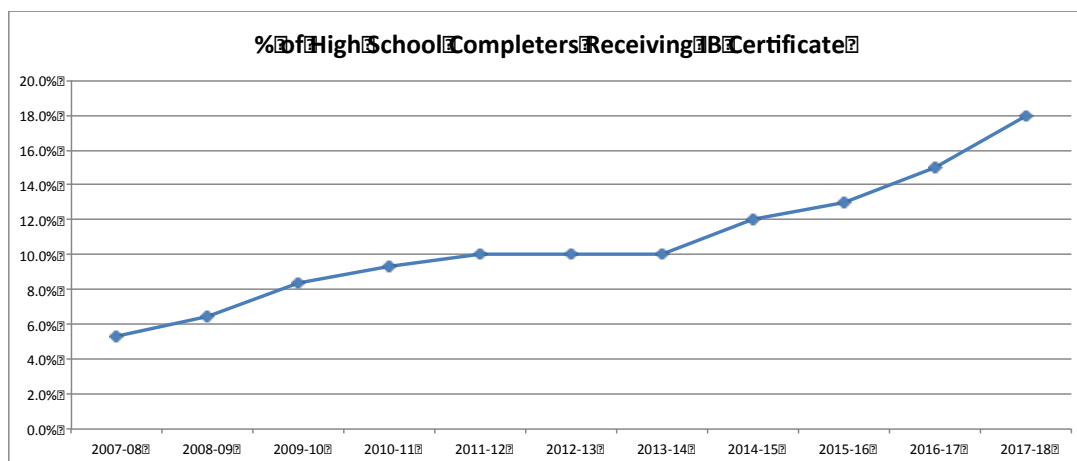
15. Increase the percentage of high school completers earning an International Baccalaureate diploma from 11% in 2012 to 16% in 2018.

% of High School Completers Receiving IB Diploma
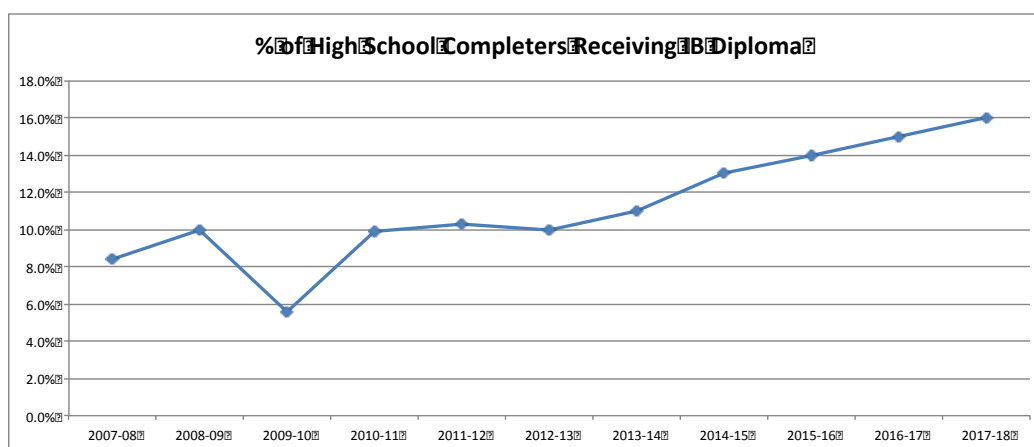
16. Increase participation in AP courses from 495 enrollees in AP courses in 2011-12 to 600 by 2018, while increasing the percentage of enrolled students taking the AP exam from 60% to 70%.

17. Increase scores of 3 or higher on AP exams from 36% of tested students to 55% by 2018.

18. Increase SAT scores from a 2012 composite score of 1459 to 1520 by 2018.

Marietta City Schools

SAT Avg. Composite Score
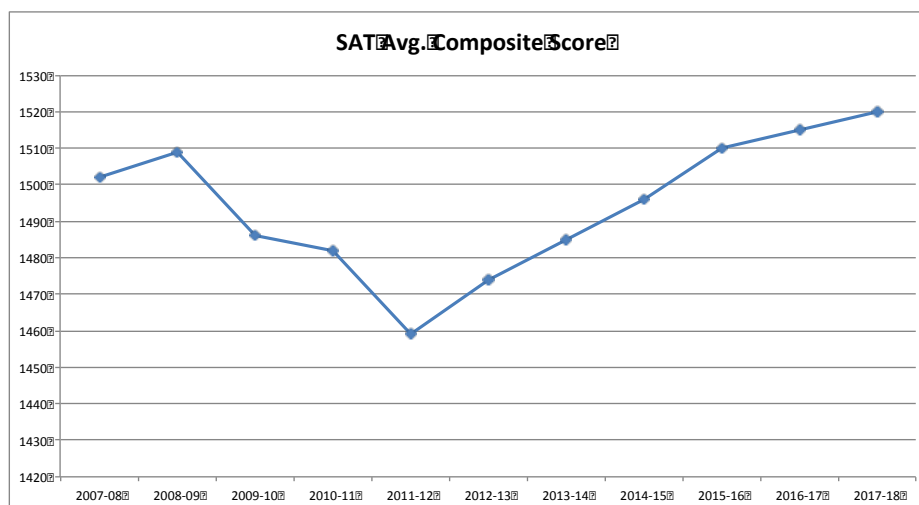
6. Specific Actions to Achieve Academic Performance Objectives

We propose to create alternatives to retention for students who have not mastered the grade-level standards by the end of the traditional grading period. This would include remediation sessions after school or during the summer. This may also involve additional courses or class work during the school year. Through flexible use of our EIP and Remedial funding and seat time waivers, we will staff differently so that these alternatives can be provided. We also propose to adjust traditional grading practices, to allow failing students to have an extended grading period when more time is needed. Our own experience as well as outside research shows that retention is a predictor of students' dropping out of school. Our data shows that a substantial number of our students are turning 16, the age of legal withdrawal from school, before they enter 9th grade. However, we also know that certain requisite skills must be in place for students to succeed in a rigorous high school curriculum. Therefore, our plan is to make moving students forward in the curriculum a priority, while ensuring they master the standards. In a study of eight high-performing charter high schools serving at-risk students, USDOE researchers found that such schools teach for mastery. Students are given remediation, acceleration and more time on task to learn and master key academic standards. At these schools, if learning requires more time, more time is provided. All have developed longer school days or school years and some have added summer and weekend academics. (*Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap,* WestEd for U.S. Department of Education, 2006.)

To allow all students to succeed, we plan to implement alternative schedules and calendars for students with differing needs. At all grade levels, we have students entering our school system who are not on-track. This is particularly true for our students who are Hispanic or African American, and our students with disabilities at all grade levels. For all student groups, this gap in preparation becomes particularly evident at the middle grades. In his book, *The Educators Handbook for Understanding and Closing Achievement Gaps,* Joseph Murphy quotes Entwisel, Alexander and Olson (2000) as finding, "The increasing gap in test scores between children and families of high and low socioeconomic status over the elementary-school period thus accrued entirely from the differential gains they made when school was closed: that is, during the summer months." By flexibility with our EIP and remedial funds we propose to provide FTE-earning support for these students before school begins each year and also during the school year. Research has also shown that summer programs must be related to academic curricula and specifically designed to close cognitive achievement gaps. Therefore, utilizing FTE funding for certified teachers familiar with the students' needs is an essential part of such initiatives.

We also propose a class size waiver, so that we can creatively group our students in ways that serve a larger group of students in innovative instructional approaches. An example of this would be to use self-guided technology or student-led group projects, that are managed by a certified teacher who is supported by community instructors or para-professionals. This type of grouping would allow remaining students to be served in very small groups with the remaining certified teachers, including those earned through Gifted, EIP and ESOL funding. Such an approach, cycled throughout the week, would allow all students the focused instruction they need to remediate or accelerate.

We also propose the variation of time for certain subjects, providing the most time and focus on those that our data suggest require the most attention. This may mean integrating the social studies curriculum into the reading/language arts curriculum, or integrating the arts and music curriculum into other subjects, such as reading, social studies or math. This is promising for elementary as well as for middle grades, where mastery of fundamental skills and knowledge must be the emphasis in preparation for a rigorous high school curriculum.

For our middle and high school students, we propose similar flexibility with class size and seat time. Students should be able to make greater use of online course material to supplement in-class learning as well as to learn independently so that more school-time can be freed up for essential subjects. This is a strategy for remediation, allowing areas where students show strengths to be addressed independently for credit, while in-school time is focused on those areas requiring instructional support. Greater use of online learning is also a strategy for acceleration, so that students who wish to pursue an advanced curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma, Advanced Placement courses or a complete career pathway can fit such courses into their schedule by taking more basic courses online. We also believe more in-class time for individualized support in IB and AP subjects will increase our pass rates.

By allowing online resources to be used during school hours for a portion of instruction in some subjects, we can utilize earned FTE to provide more teachers in areas such as math and science, which require more direct instruction and support. This would require a class size waiver, so that those engaged in an online environment may have larger class sizes.

We understand that we need to work with our community to ensure equitable access to online material for all students. We are confident that such resources can be made available.

We also propose to allow middle and high school students to complete independent or group projects in lieu of class participation to gain credit for required courses, particularly electives. This is also a best practice cited in the USDOE publication, *Charter High Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap.* The FTE earned for these students could then be utilized to create smaller class sizes in other, critical subjects. This approach also encourages mastery of important life skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, time management, project planning and communication.

We think that many of our middle and high school students lose interest in the traditional curriculum because it is not relevant to their interests. Many of our students will need to work upon graduation and do not see the importance of purely academic subjects. In order to bring more relevance to our curriculum, while maintaining rigor, we propose to offer additional courses in middle school and high

school that incorporate curriculum standards while integrating real-world relevance. These will take time to develop, but we see an opportunity for integration of hands-on principles into our math and science classes, as well as non-fiction reading and research into our language arts courses, that have a career focus – perhaps specifically aligned with a career pathway.

Toward this same end, we propose to utilize a seat time waiver to allow greater opportunities for credit-bearing internships and apprenticeships in the high school grades. We have the advantage of a small, close-knit community with a number of corporate and community partners dedicated to our students' success. Through partnerships with companies in the aerospace, bio-medical, construction and financial fields, internships and apprenticeships could be greatly expanded. Combined with a better-integrated alignment with technical and community college joint-enrollment, we can assist our students in seeing the relevance of finishing high school while preparing them with skills to either enter the workforce with a certification to work in a high-demand field, or with sufficient credit to complete a 2- or 4-year degree in a realistic timeframe. This is not simply a mechanism to increase the graduation rate, it is also a strategy for life success. In Harvard College of Education's publication *Pathways to Prosperity*, the authors cite the following, "The Georgetown Center projects that 14 million job openings—nearly half of those that will be filled by workers with post-secondary education—will go to people with an associate's degree or occupational certificate. Many of these will be in "middle-skill" occupations such as electrician, and construction manager, dental hygienist, paralegal and police officer. While these jobs may not be as prestigious as those filled by B.A. holders, they pay a significant premium over many jobs open to those with just a high school degree. More surprisingly, they pay more than many of the jobs held by those with a bachelor's degree. In fact, 27 percent of people with post-secondary licenses or certificates—credentials short of an associate's degree—earn more than the average bachelor's degree recipient."

A more recent study, also by the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown, was recently reported in the New York Times (August 16, 2012.) The study, based on data collected by the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, divided the nation's work force of 140 million people into

three groups: those who did not go to college, those with some college education or an associate degree and those with at least a bachelor's degree. From late 2007, when the recession began, to early 2012, the number of people with jobs in the least-educated group fell by more than 5.8 million, or 10 percent. In the middle group, recession losses were not as steep and were almost completely reversed by early this year. And in the best-educated group, in which there was no net loss during the recession, the number of people with jobs climbed by 2.2 million, or 5 percent.

By preparing our students for a career, through appropriate coursework and world experience that leads to certification, we provide a path to self-sufficiency for those who may not have interest in a four-year college degree immediately after graduation. We will also increase support for those seeking to complete courses for college credit and complete a rigorous, college-preparation curriculum.

We are in the midst of designing our strategic plan for the next five years. Therefore, while these innovations will be included in our strategic plan, the specific action plans and timelines have yet to be developed. Appendix B includes the anticipated timeline for implementation of all of our charter system innovations.

4. Requested waivers

Marietta City Schools will request the broad flexibility from state law as permitted by O.C.G.A. 20-2-2065(a). However, the specific waivers we anticipate requiring for our Academic Innovations may include the following:

Innovation	Waiver	SBOE Provision(s)	OCGA
Grade retention alternatives	Seat time, K-12 Alternative courses to meet graduation requirements, 8-12 Flexibility with EIP funding and delivery models, K-5	160-4-2-.01 The Quality Core Curriculum and Student Competencies Required by the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act 160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program	§ 20-2-140.1. Online learning § 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level

| | Flexibility with remedial funding and delivery models, 6-12

Flexibility with ESOL funding and delivery models, K-12 | Criteria

160-4-2-.11 Promotion, Placement, and Retention

160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education

160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

160-4-2-.06 High School Graduation Requirements

160-4-2-.30 High School Graduation Requirements

160-4-2-.36 High School Graduation Requirements

160-4-2-.46 High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 1997-98 School Year and Subsequent Years

160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP) | § 20-2-154. Remedial education program

§ 20-2-159.4. Policies and guidelines for awarding units of high school credit based on demonstrated proficiency

§ 20-2-282-285. Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy |
| Alternative schedules and calendars for students with differing needs | Seat time, K-12

Class size, K-12

Alternative courses to meet graduation requirements, 8-12

Flexibility with EIP funding and delivery models, K-5 | 160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees

160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria

160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education | § 20-2-140.1. Online learning

§ 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level

§ 20-2-168. |

Marietta City Schools

			Distribution of federal funds; combined purchase of supplies and equipment; minimum school year; summer school programs; year-round operation
	Flexibility with remedial funding and delivery models, 6-12 Flexibility with gifted funding and delivery models, K-12 Flexibility with ESOL funding and delivery models, K-12	160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students 160-4-2-.06 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.30 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.36 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.46 High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 1997-98 School Year and Subsequent Years 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP) 160-5-1-.08 Class Size	§ 20-2-182. Class size § 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule
Integrated courses covering curriculum standards for multiple subjects	Seat time, K-12 Class size, K-12 Alternative courses to meet graduation requirements, 8-12 Flexibility with EIP funding and delivery models, K-5 Flexibility with	160-4-2-.01 The Quality Core Curriculum and Student Competencies Required by the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act 160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria 160-4-5-.01 Remedial	§ 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level § 20-2-154. Remedial education program § 20-2-182. Class size § 20-2-290.

| | remedial funding and delivery models, 6-12

Flexibility with gifted funding and delivery models, K-12 | Education

160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students

160-4-2-.06 High School Graduation Requirements

160-4-2-.30 High School Graduation Requirements

160-4-2-.36 High School Graduation Requirements

160-4-2-.46 High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 1997-98 School Year and Subsequent Years

160-5-1-.08 Class Size

160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP) | Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule |
| Additional courses in middle school and high school, incorporating curriculum standards while integrating real-world relevance | Seat time, K-12

Class size, K-12

Alternative courses to meet graduation requirements, 8-12

Flexibility with remedial funding and delivery models, 6-12

Flexibility with gifted funding and delivery models, K-12 | 160-4-2-.01 The Quality Core Curriculum and Student Competencies Required by the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act

160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria

160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education

160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students | § 20-2-154. Remedial education program

§ 20-2-182. Class size

§ 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule |

		160-4-2-.06 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.30 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.36 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.46 High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 1997-98 School Year and Subsequent Years 160-5-1-.08 Class Size	
Expanded use of blended learning, with FTE awarded for time spent in a virtual learning environment outside of the classroom	Seat time, K-12 Class size, K-12 Alternative courses to meet graduation requirements, 8-12 Flexibility with EIP funding and delivery models, K-5 Flexibility with remedial funding and delivery models, 6-12 Flexibility with gifted funding and delivery models, K-12 Flexibility with ESOL funding and delivery models, K-12	160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees 160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria 160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education 160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students 160-5-1-.08 Class Size 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP)	§ 20-2-140.1. Online learning § 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level § 20-2-154. Remedial education program § 20-2-182. Class size § 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule § 20-2-319.4. Virtual instruction programs; notice of opportunities; mechanisms for compliance; approved providers; approval status; curriculum plan

Marietta City Schools

Opportunities for credit-bearing internships and apprenticeships (9-12)	Seat time, K-12 Alternative courses to meet graduation requirements, 8-12 Flexibility with gifted funding and delivery models, K-12	160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees 160-4-3-.14 Work-Based Learning Programs 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students	
Mastery of standards in lieu of seat time as a basis for credit (9-12)	Seat time, K-12	160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees 160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students 160-4-2-.06 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.30 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.36 High School Graduation Requirements 160-4-2-.46 High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade for the First Time in the 1997-98 School Year and Subsequent Years 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP)	§ 20-2-159.4. Policies and guidelines for awarding units of high school credit based on demonstrated proficiency § 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule

Utilizing blended learning to allow some students to learn independently while teachers work with other students in small, differentiated groups	Seat time	160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria 160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP)	§ 20-2-140.1. Online learning § 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule § 20-2-319.4. Virtual instruction programs; notice of opportunities; mechanisms for compliance; approved providers; approval status; curriculum plan
Varying class time, to allow more time for subjects where student learning needs are greater	Seat time	160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP)	§ 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule

Organizational Objectives, Plans and Waivers

Marietta City Schools has maintained a 100% highly qualified, certified staff for the past three years.
Teachers also perceive that high standards are expected. On a recent teacher survey, 90% agreed that
MCS teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.

Marietta parents show overall satisfaction with the school system. Among elementary school parents,
less than 5% express concern about their school's performance in the five areas of AdvancEd standards:

- Purpose and Direction

- Governance and Leadership

- Teaching and Assessing for Learning

- Resources and Support Systems

- Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Less than 10% of middle and high school parents express concern about performance in these areas, with the exception of Teaching and Assessing for Learning.

Among middle and high school students, less than 10% express concern about their schools' performance in Purpose and Direction, Teaching and Assessing for Learning and Using Results for Continuous Improvement.

Staff members are also satisfied overall with their school and school system. Fewer than 10% express concern about performance in any area. In fact all areas, except Teaching and Assessing for Learning, have rates of disagreement below 5%.

Immediately prior to development of this application, MCS conducted an extensive series of interviews and focus groups with stakeholders. The following strengths were common themes among community leaders, parents and staff:

- Leadership/district personnel

- District size

- Choice among schools

- Community engagement

- Use of technology

As one of the first charter systems to gain approval, MCS has functional School Governance Teams at every school. In a 2012 survey through the Teacher Quality Project, only 4% of teachers disagree that the School Governance Team operates effectively at their school.

Teachers, with the exception of school level administration, give relatively low ratings to opportunities for advancement within the teaching profession available to them. Teachers also spend a considerable number of days out of the classroom each year. In 2012, teachers had an average of 8.8 sick days and 2.4 professional learning days, for an overall average of 11.2 days out of the classroom. This is an increase from the prior year.

Teachers express dissatisfaction with the amount of peer coaching that occurs. On a recent mentor survey of new teachers, the lowest rated area was "observing and giving feedback on teaching", with 71% of new teachers rating this a 3 on a 5-point scale. Similarly, on the recent AdvancEd teacher survey, one of the lowest levels of agreement was with the statement, "In our school, staff members provide peer coaching to teachers."

Use of technology is also an opportunity for improvement. While stakeholders mention this as a strength for MCS, they also mention it consistently as a future opportunity. Marietta 8th graders score below global averages in all areas of the 21st Century Technology Skills Assessment. Teachers also rate this as an area of improvement, with low levels of agreement with the statement "technology to support operational needs" and "trained in evaluation, interpretation and use of data."

The ability to support diverse student needs is frequently mentioned by stakeholders as a weakness in recent interviews and focus groups. One of the highest areas of disagreement among students is "teachers change learning to meet my needs." Two of the lowest rated areas among teachers are, "teachers have class sizes which afford time to meet the educational needs of all students" and "teachers have student loads which allow them time to meet the educational needs of all students." Additionally, middle and high school parents are least likely to agree with the statement "all my child's teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction."

Focus group and interview participants identify parental engagement as a weakness. School Governance Teams express a desire for some type of parental engagement requirements and see strategies to address parent involvement as one of their most significant roles. While there is a perception that parental involvement is greatest at the elementary levels, a recent survey of students in grades K-2 reveals that only 70% answered "yes" to the item, "My family likes to come to my school", which was the lowest rated item.

5. Organizational Performance Objectives

Based upon this review of our past performance, we have set the following objectives for our future charter system implementation.

Marietta City Schools

1. Reduce teacher absenteeism due to sick leave from 8 to 6 by 2018.

Average Number of Sick Leave Days Taken per Teacher per Year
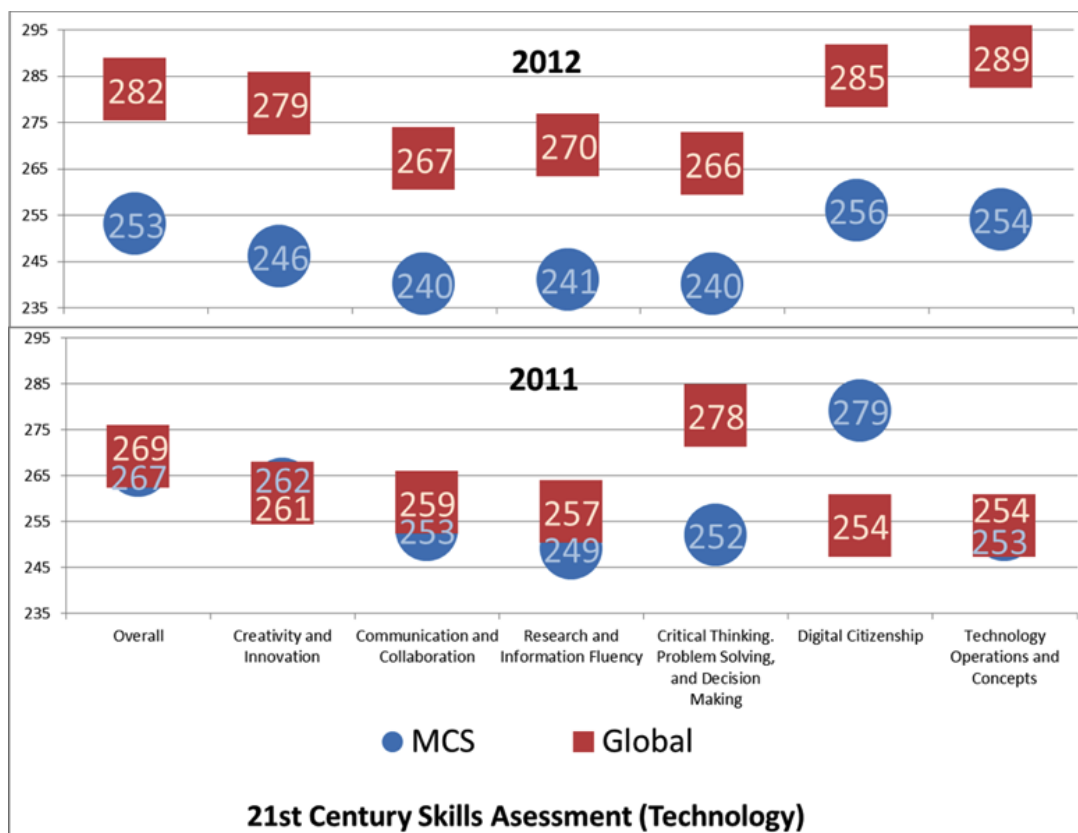
Year	Value
2009-10	8.25
2010-11	8.75
2011-12	8
2012-13	8
2013-14	7.75
2014-15	7.5
2015-16	7
2016-17	6.5
2017-18	6

a.
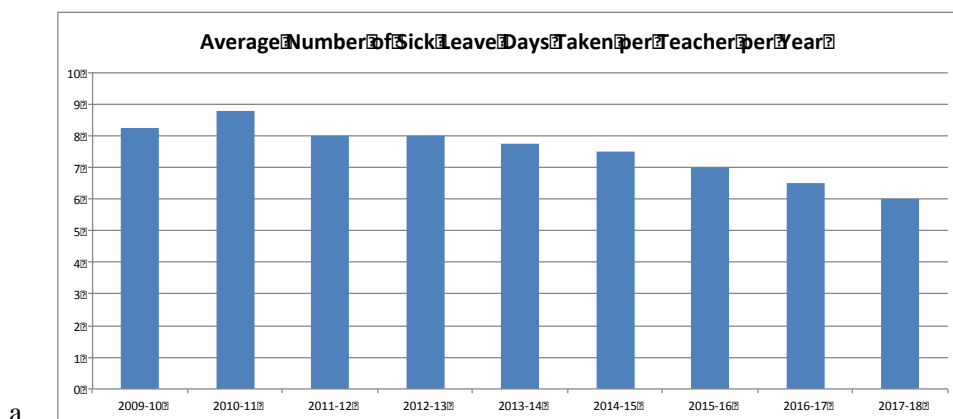
2. Increase teacher perceptions that staff provide peer coaching from 61% to 90% by 2018

3. Increase teacher perceptions of in-career opportunities for advancement from 54% to 75% by 2018

4. Increase teacher perceptions that class sizes afford them time to meet student needs from 55% to 75% by 2018

5. Increase teacher perceptions that student loads afford them time to meet student needs from 51% to 75% by 2018

6. Increase student perceptions that teachers change their teaching to meet student needs from 43% to 75% by 2018

7. Increase parent perceptions that teachers individualize instruction to meet student needs from 58% to 75% by 2018

8. Increase innovations and waivers aligned with student needs proposed through School Governance Teams, such that by 2018, 75% of recommendations represent instructional innovations, rather than operational innovations.

9. Improve results on the 8th grade technology assessment so that MCS students exceeds global averages in all areas by 2018.

Marietta City Schools

2012

	Overall	Creativity and Innovation	Communication and Collaboration	Research and Information Fluency	Critical Thinking. Problem Solving, and Decision Making	Digital Citizenship	Technology Operations and Concepts
Global	282	279	267	270	266	285	289
MCS	253	246	240	241	240	256	254

2011

	Overall	Creativity and Innovation	Communication and Collaboration	Research and Information Fluency	Critical Thinking. Problem Solving, and Decision Making	Digital Citizenship	Technology Operations and Concepts
Global	269	262	259	257	278	254	254
MCS	267	261	253	249	252	279	253

● MCS   ■ Global

21st Century Skills Asessment (Technology)

6. Specific Actions to Achieve Organizational Performance Objectives

Joseph Murphy cites several research studies in concluding that, "at the heart of the instructional program are teachers." In order to retain our effective teachers in the classroom, we will consider alternative methods of teacher compensation such as a teacher career ladder, incentives for peer coaching as a master teacher and incentives for innovation and improvement aligned with student achievement. We will also re-examine our personnel policies, in the way that we allocate leave time and structure professional learning, to see if we are inadvertently creating incentives for teachers to be out of the classroom. We want to ensure our personnel resources are maximized through highly effective, experienced teachers working in the most critical subject areas. In some cases, it may be possible to hire quality instructors in specific subject areas who have alternative teaching qualifications, particularly in elective fields. By using career professionals in elective and pathway courses, we can infuse real-world application to learning. We may also reduce costs by hiring part-time and contract instructors rather than

full-time certified teachers with full benefits. This would allow reallocation of resources to hire more experienced, certified teachers in high-need areas as defined by our student achievement results.

Increased time for teacher coaching and feedback is also critical to improve teacher effectiveness and has been identified by our teachers as a weakness. John Hattie, in his book *Visible Learning,* cites "micro-teaching", a specific form of teacher observation and feedback, as being highly correlated with student achievement (ranked 4th among 138 practices studied.) In addition to creating an opportunity for career advancement for a master teacher who provides peer coaching, we will flex class sizes on given days to allow greater times for peer observation and feedback.

Differentiation is a demonstrated approach to improving student learning, yet our perception survey results tells us that teachers, students and parents are dissatisfied with its extent and effectiveness. Therefore, we will also flex class sizes throughout the day and week to allow times for greater differentiation of instruction in small groups. We will also provide more opportunity for differentiation by utilizing teachers earned through targeted programs such as EIP, Remedial, Gifted and ESOL to teach outside of their funded areas during segments of the day in order to create small, flexible student groups by performance levels. We will utilize blended learning to allow some students to learn independently while teachers work with other students in small, differentiated groups. Finally, by varying class time, we will allow more time for subjects where student learning needs are greater. Our work with Education Resource Strategies (ERS) will assist us in identifying other opportunities to group students and assign teachers more effectively to improve achievement outcomes.

Parental engagement agreements, outlining expectations to support student achievement, will respond to community interests as well as research on creating highly effective schools. The USDOE study on effective charter high schools, Joseph Murphy's research on closing achievement gaps and Robert Marzano's work on effective schools all highlight a strong home-school connection as an essential element to academic achievement.

While the school system's support of technology is widely viewed as a strength, there are also opportunities for improvement. We intend to increase our use of virtual and blended learning, as

referenced earlier. We also intend to integrate the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) technology standards throughout the K-8 curriculum. In this manner we expect our 8th grade technology assessment results to improve and our students to be equipped to successfully navigate learning independently in an online environment by the time they reach high school.

Through the extensive use of interim assessments as well as student learning portfolios, we plan to increase use of data by teachers and students to guide instruction, both for acceleration and remediation. The integration of such formative assessments and review of data in our IB and AP courses will allow more students to pass the tests in these rigorous subjects. In his book, *Visible Learning,* which reviews a myriad of meta-analyses on correlates to student achievement, John Hattie sites formative evaluation as the third most important correlated teaching strategy to improve student achievement.

The overview presented at the beginning of this section documents the organizational areas for improvement in our school system. These innovations clearly align with these areas for improvements, as well as those cited in our Academic overview. Specifically, we are addressing the following unique organizational requirements of our school system:

- Opportunity for increased classroom instruction by our teachers, as evidenced by growing absenteeism rates
- The need for meaningful peer feedback as a means of continuous improvement among teachers, as evidenced by teacher perceptions
- The need for differentiation, as evidenced by perceptions of teachers, parents and middle and high school students
- The need for meaningful, appropriate parent involvement as reflected by student surveys, School Governance Team input and stakeholder focus groups and interviews.

We are in the midst of designing our strategic plan for the next three years. Therefore, while these innovations will be included in our strategic plan, the specific action plans and timelines have yet to be

Marietta City Schools

developed. Appendix B includes the anticipated timeline for implementation of all of our charter system

innovations.

7. Requested Waivers

Marietta City Schools will request the broad flexibility from state law as permitted by O.C.G.A. 20-2-

2065(a). However, the specific waivers we anticipate requiring for our Organizational Innovations may

include the following:

Innovation	Waiver	SBOE Provision(s)	OCGA
Flexing class sizes throughout the day and week to allow greater times for peer observation and feedback	Class size	160-5-1-.08 Class Size	§ 20-2-182. Class size
Flexing class sizes throughout the day and week to allow times for greater differentiation of instruction in small groups	Class size Seat time	160-5-1-.08 Class Size	§ 20-2-182. Class size
Alternative methods of teacher compensation such as a teacher career ladder, incentives for peer coaching, and incentives for innovation and improvement aligned with student achievement	Compensation guidelines	160-5-2-.23 Financial Administration for Georgia Local Units of Administration 160-5-2-.05 Experience for Salary Purposes	§ 20-2-167. Funding for direct instructional, media center, and staff development costs; computerized uniform budget and accounting system; submission of local budget to state board; provision of certain information by local boards; waiver of expenditure controls § 20-2-212. Salary schedules § 20-2-213.1. Pay-for-performance for rewarding group activity

Governance

8. Plan to Maximize School Level Governance

Marietta has had School Governance Teams (SGTs) in place through a Charter System contract since 2008. As currently structured, the SGT consists of a minimum of seven members, as follows:

- One principal, who serves as co-chair of the SGT

- Two parents/guardians of a student in the school who are elected by the parents/guardians of the school; the exception being a parent member from Marietta Sixth Grade Academy (MSGA) who by virtue of receiving the most votes in the parent election automatically qualifies as a parent member of the Marietta Middle School SGT in his/her second year of office

- One community member appointed by the Principal and approved by the SGT who is a non-staff member and who lives, works or has a substantial connection in the City of Marietta

- Two full-time certified teachers who teach core academic subjects and work the entire day at the school elected by members of the certified staff assigned to the school for at least 4 of 6 segments of the day

- One certified staff member at the school, appointed by the Principal and approved by the SGT; The membership of the SGT can be expanded to as many as eleven members, provided the ratio between community members and certified staff members remains balanced. Additional membership beyond the minimum seven-person membership will be through recommendation of the Principal and approved by majority vote of the SGT. Secondary student representation can be appointed and approved by the SGT to serve on ad hoc committees as deemed appropriate.

The term of office of all SGT members begins on August 15 and ends on August 14. Members of the SGT serve for a term of two years; the exception being the term of office for parent members of the Marietta Sixth Grade Academy (MSGA) SGT. After providing public notice at least two weeks before the meeting of each electing body, the principal of each school calls a meeting of electing bodies during the month of August each year (or at such other time as is deemed practical) for the purpose of selecting

members of the SGT. Nominations are to be accepted by the principal from members within the electing body prior to the actual voting meeting. Teacher and parent election meetings use the plurality method of election. One vote is taken with the highest vote recipients being elected to serve on the SGT. Where individuals tie with the highest number of votes, as many will serve on the SGT as there are positions open. If the number of vacancies on the SGT is fewer than the number of candidates tied for the opening, then subsequent votes are required until a winner can be determined. Teachers/Parents must be present and qualified to vote (proxies are not allowed). A person does not have to be present at the time of the vote to be elected to the SGT.

The office of SGT member is automatically vacated if a) a member resigns, b) if the person holding the office is removed as a member by an action of the SGT or c) if a member no longer meets the qualifications specified in the bylaws. All SGT members must sign the Code of Ethics. Violation of this code is grounds for removal by action of the SGT. In the event of a vacancy on the SGT, an election, if required, will be held within 30 school days to fill the vacant seat or a replacement will be appointed (as is required according to the position vacated) to fill the remainder of the term of office in accordance with the procedures set forth herein, unless there are 90 calendar days or less remaining in the term, in which case the vacancy remains unfilled.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the School Governance Teams, MCS proposes three significant changes. The principal, as co-chair, currently serves as a voting member. In order to maximize local school governance, MCS proposes that under this new charter system application principals would no longer have a vote on the SGT. The principal will, however, continue to serve as co-chair to ensure continuity. Given the high rate of mobility within MCS schools, allowing the principal to serve as co-chair ensures coherence in the work of the SGT during and between school years.

Second, School Governance Teams will be encouraged to propose more significant innovations aligned with student achievement. Like most existing charter systems, significant innovations and

waivers have been established at the district level rather than individual schools. Recent feedback from SGT members demonstrates that they perceive their role as similar to a Local School Council. When recently asked to select the roles SGT should fulfill in supporting innovation to support student achievement, the two most frequently identified were "participate in the development of school improvement plans" and "identify strategies to increase parent involvement."   On parent surveys, one of the areas of lowest agreement was with the statement, "governing body does not interfere with operations or leadership of the school." This implies some confusion about the role of the SGT versus the principal. School principals express a desire for the work of the SGT to be more aligned with data on student needs.

Third, we will implement term limits for SGT members so that members may only serve two, consecutive terms to increase the number and perspectives of representatives over time. After serving two, consecutive terms a member must rotate off for at least one term before being nominated for re-election to the SGT.

Additional training for SGTs will focus on options for innovation aligned to student achievement. This will include training in the Educational Resource Strategies analysis of school resource allocation and strategies for effective reallocation. A formal process will be developed for SGTs to request instructional innovations and waivers. In order to ensure these are in the best interest of all students and are supported by sound research, such requests for waivers to state law will require approval of the superintendent or designee. In addition, the requests of one school cannot negatively or financially impact operations at another school or the system overall.

SGTs will continue to have a significant role in the hiring of the principal, except in the case of an internal transfer. They will continue to approve School Improvement Plans and annual budgets.

The Board of Education, acting upon recommendations of the superintendent, will maintain responsibility for final hiring decisions, compensation structures, facility improvements and allocation of district funds among, but not within, the schools.

Principals provided input on areas that should be managed at the district level versus being authorized at the school level. They want assurance that the Board of Education would equitably allocate

resources among schools (including technology) and manage general personnel practices such as hiring, compensation and benefits. They support school-level decisions on instructional innovations and individual employee incentives provided equitable practices were established. We also asked our SGTs to provide feedback on their future roles under an enhanced charter system. While "participating in school improvement plans" and "increasing parent involvement" were the top responses, approximately one third also identified "making recommendations on the use of existing resources", "addressing issues related to school culture" and "reviewing and recommending programs to improve student achievement." This input was considered as we developed a restructured role of the SGT within our next phase of charter system implementation.

The chart below outlines the delineation of responsibilities between the SGT, Principal, Superintendent and Board of Education. School Governance Team responsibilities, which are new or enhanced from our current charter system structure, are in bold italics.

Area of Responsibility	SGT Authority	Principal Authority	Superintendent Authority (or designee)	Board of Education Authority
Budget	*-Approves Proposed School Budget* *-Monitors budget allocations* *- Distributes incentive funds based upon Board-approved guidelines*	-Recommends school budget to SGT -Manages budget allocations - Recommends award of incentive funds	-Grants approval to implement school and central department budgets -Manages district budget - Recommends compensation levels and practices	-Allocates funds among schools and central functions -Monitors district budget - Approves compensation levels and practices
Resource Allocation	*-Proposes allocation of personnel and other resources within allocated budget to Superintendent*	-Recommends allocation of resources to SGT	-Grants approval of proposed allocations for schools and central departments	-Determines base allotments to define overall resource allocations to schools
Personnel Decisions	-Recommends principal candidate in the case of a vacancy, except in the case of an administrative transfer by the Superintendent	-Recommends school-based personnel (non-principal) candidates to Superintendent	-Recommends all personnel appointments to the Board of Education	-Approves all personnel appointments

	-Works collaboratively with the Superintendent to develop up to 2 annual goals for principal performance *-Provides feedback on principal performance on these goals for the principals continuous improvement and Superintendent's consideration in preparing the principal's evaluation*			
School Improvement Goals	*-Participates in development and approves School Improvement Plan (SIP)* *-Monitors implementation of the SIP*	-Leads development of SIP -Manages implementation of the SIP	-Reviews and requests modifications to SIPs -Monitors results of SIPs -Manages District Strategic Plan	-Monitors district strategic plan -Receives reports on results of SIPs
Curriculum and Instruction	-Approves local field trips *-Proposes research-based instructional innovations aligned to the SIP and student data to the Superintendent* *-Monitors results of approved innovations*	-Designs research-based instructional innovations aligned to the SIP and student needs for SGT consideration -Implements and evaluates approved innovations	-Approves research-based instructional innovations -Monitors results of local school innovations	-Confirms local school innovations and reviews reports of results
School Operations	-Adopts unified dress code according to BOE policy -Develops school-wide discipline plan based on BOE behavior code *-Approves parent engagement guidelines* -Provides input on facility use by outside groups	Recommends dress code, discipline plan, parent engagement agreements, facility use, extra-curricular activities, incentive plans to SGT for input and then to Superintendent	Approves school operation recommendations	-Approves school system calendar -Adopts board policies

	-Provides input on extra-curricular activities - Provides input and recommendations on school system calendar -Provides input on board policies			

Our required SGT training currently includes the following components: governance, Board etiquette, applicable school law, rules and regulations, parliamentary procedure, the open-meetings and open records act, school level budgets, allocation of personnel, effective communication strategies, effective utilization of facilities and measurement and assessment. We propose to continue our cycle of training all new SGT members in these areas. We will add an emphasis on effective school improvement planning immediately upon approval of our charter system in August/September of 2013-14, as these SGTs will begin approving the SIP in the fall of 2014-15.
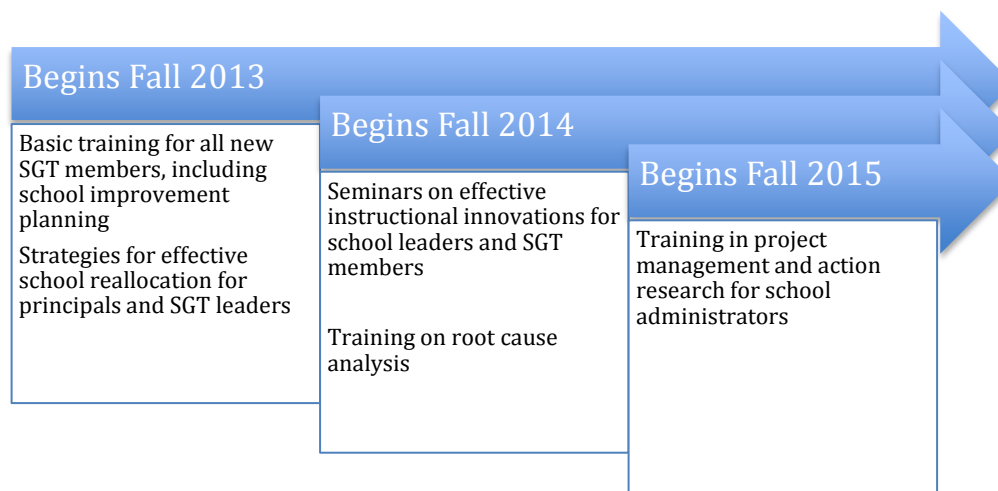
Additionally, beginning in October of 2013-14, we propose to offer additional training for our principals and SGTs on effective resource allocation. We believe the first place to start with innovation is through examining what we can accomplish by reallocating and realigning within our current programs.

In the second semester of 2013-14 we will offer training on root-cause analysis using structure analytical tools. This will ensure our SGT members and school leadership teams have processes in place to thoroughly examine student needs and school issues before jumping to solutions.

In the first semester of 2014-15, we will begin a series of Effective Practice seminars for our school leaders, including SGT members. This will feature national experts in closing achievement gaps, technology integration career readiness and college preparation for all students. We will assign a Task Force to study leading-edge thinkers in this area and design the seminar series. In first semester of 2015, we will provide training in project management and action research techniques to our principals and school administrators, so that the research-based innovations they select can be effectively implemented

and evaluated. The timeline below provides an outline of our proposed approach.

Begins Fall 2013

Basic training for all new SGT members, including school improvement planning

Strategies for effective school reallocation for principals and SGT leaders

Begins Fall 2014

Seminars on effective instructional innovations for school leaders and SGT members

Training on root cause analysis

Begins Fall 2015

Training in project management and action research for school administrators

Financial Objectives, Plan and Waivers

Marietta City School's financial performance over the past five years has been remarkable, given significant budget reductions in all sources of revenue, including local property taxes, state QBE revenues and federal grants and the increasing costs in all areas. Local and state revenues decreased 8.7% and 3.5%, respectively, and federal revenue decreased 77%, over the last five years. However, through conservative budgeting and spending, the System has maintained adequate reserves. The System has succeeded in increasing designated reserves for the Building Fund, Technology Fund, Asset Replacement Fund and unemployment and workers compensation costs, which provides a safety net for future capital needs. Unlike many Georgia school systems, MCS approved a 2012-13 budget that includes no furlough days, no additional class size increases and a 2% increase in compensation.

Marietta has recently been provided the opportunity to participate in a Resource Reallocation Project supported by the Georgia Department of Education through federal Race to the Top funds. This project is managed by Education Resource Strategies (ERS). This organization works with school systems to transform their resource use to dramatically improve student learning. Their mission is to be a

catalyst for positive change by helping educational leaders rethink how they use system- and school-level resources—people, time and money—to support strategies for improved instruction and performance. ERS has worked with more than 20 school systems nationwide over 10 years, including 13 of the 100 largest urban U.S. school systems and has worked hand-in-hand with educational partners to introduce solutions that are both innovative and effective. Education Resource Strategies can provide analytic rigor that school systems are otherwise unable to access or currently afford. We anticipate that this project will lead to innovative methods of allocating funds among programs and subjects. While we cannot anticipate the specific reallocation that will result, we anticipate that many of these innovations will require waivers to current state allotment formulas.

9. Financial Performance Objectives

Based upon this review of our past performance, we propose the following financial objectives for the term of our proposed charter system.
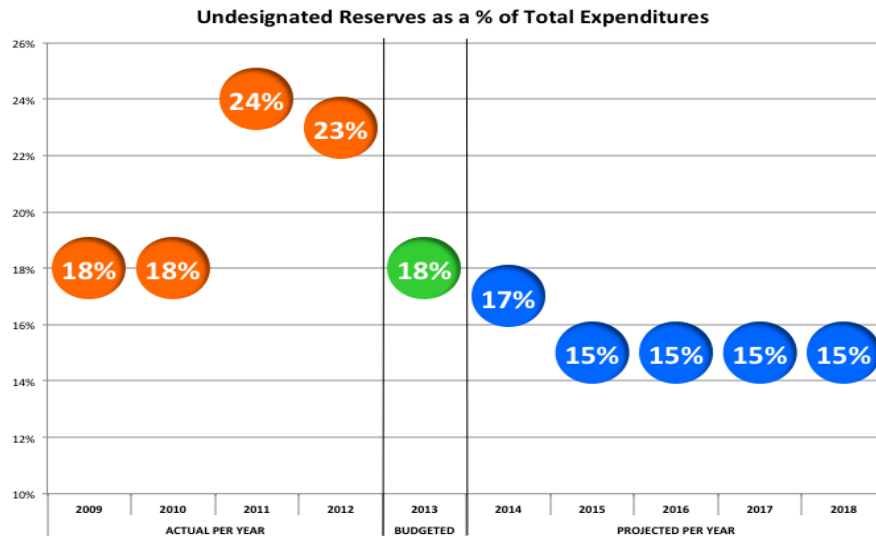
1. Maintain instructional expenditures at 70% or more of total operational expenditures (based upon current definitions)

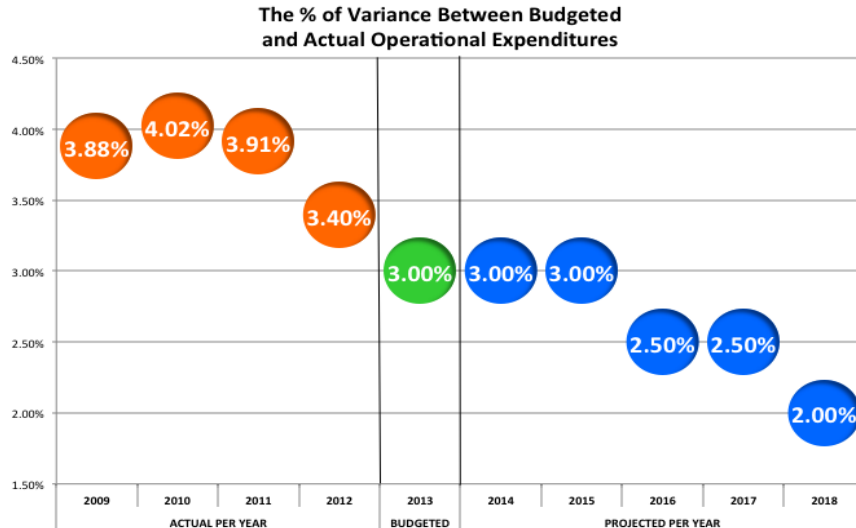Operational Expenditures as a % of Total Expenditures
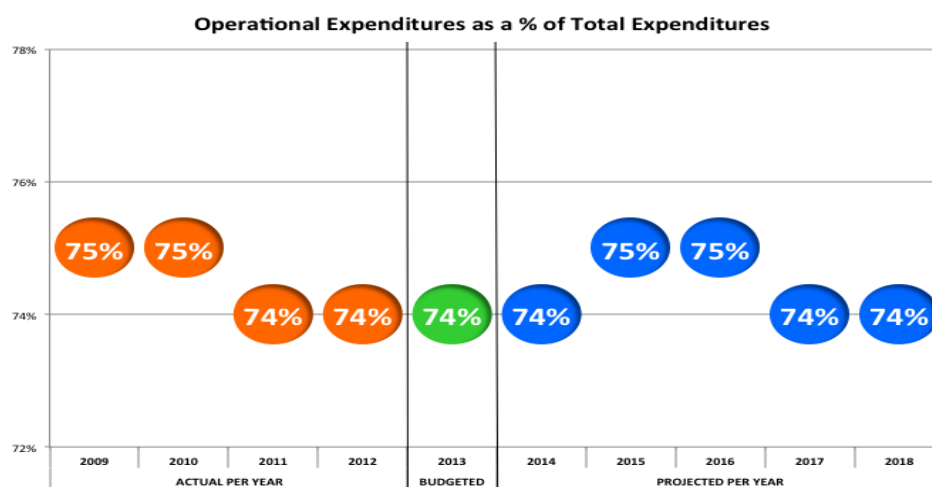
2. Improve the budget development process by empowering local schools through a site-based budgeting approach, as evidenced by requests to traditional budget allocations so that by fall of 2018, all school budgets will reflect customization aligned with their student needs

Marietta City Schools

3. Maintain adequate reserves to ensure the fiscal stability and longevity of the School System with

    undesignated reserves not falling below 15% of total expenditures by 2018.

Undesignated Reserves as a % of Total Expenditures

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	18%	18%	24%	23%	18%	17%	15%	15%	15%	15%
	ACTUAL PER YEAR				BUDGETED		PROJECTED PER YEAR			

4. Provide evidence of sound fiscal management by continuing to have a minimal variance between

    budgeted and actual expenditures, with such variance no higher that 2.0% by 2018.

The % of Variance Between Budgeted and Actual Operational Expenditures

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	3.88%	4.02%	3.91%	3.40%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.00%
	ACTUAL PER YEAR				BUDGETED		PROJECTED PER YEAR			

5. Develop an alternative, sustainable compensation plan that rewards effective teachers for

    remaining in the classroom by 2015

10.   Specific Actions to Achieve Organizational Performance Objectives

We will retain funding flexibility in all areas to allow us to allocate System resources as needed, rather than based on state formulas.

We will pay off all remaining debt through the passage of Splost IV. This debt-free position will allow MCS to direct more financial resources towards our instructional goals.

Improvements in budgeting, including site-based approaches, will empower our schools and provide flexibility, but also require a high level of accountability, innovation and emphasis on results. School leadership will have flexibility over utilization of resources, financial as well as human, and how they choose to spend their allotments. All financial resources will be focused on the overall mission of MCS, which is the preparation of our students through academic achievement for life success.

We will implement recommendations of the Resource Reallocation project regarding scheduling, staffing, program support and other allocations.

We will explore alternative compensation strategies focused on retaining effective teachers in the classroom, including a teacher career ladder and incentives for innovation leading to increases in student achievement.

11. Requested waivers

Marietta City Schools will request the broad flexibility from state law as permitted by O.C.G.A. 20-2-2065(a). However, the specific waivers we anticipate requiring for our Financial Innovations may include

Innovation	Waiver	SBOE Provision(s)	OCGA
Providing more opportunity for differentiation by utilizing teachers earned through targeted programs such as EIP, Remedial, Gifted and ESOL to teach outside of their funded areas during segments of the day in order to create small student groups by	Funding by segment and seat time for special program classes, specifically EIP, Remedial, Gifted and ESOL	160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students	§ 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level § 20-2-154. Remedial education program § 20-2-171. Minimum direct classroom

performance levels			expenditures; waivers; sanctions for noncompliance; submission of budget and expenditure information; rules and regulations § 20-2-182. Program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits; maximum class size; reporting requirements; application to specific school years
Utilize funds based upon school needs	Categorical expenditure requirements	60-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students	§ 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level § 20-2-154. Remedial education program § 20-2-171. Minimum direct classroom expenditures; waivers; sanctions for noncompliance; submission of budget and expenditure information; rules and regulations § 20-2-182. Program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits; maximum class size; reporting requirements; application to specific school years
Allow some courses and segments to drop below required instructional minutes so that other courses can	Seat time	160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees.	§ 20-2-154. Remedial education program § 20-2-290. Organization of

Marietta City Schools

be lengthened, based upon student academic needs		160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students

160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria | schools; middle school programs; schedule

§ 20-2-171. Minimum direct classroom expenditures; waivers; sanctions for noncompliance; submission of budget and expenditure information; rules and regulations

§ 20-2-182. Program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits; maximum class size; reporting requirements; application to specific school years |
| Allow FTE funding and course credit for learning outside of the traditional classroom | Seat time | 160-5-1-.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees.

160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students

160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria. | § 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level

§ 20-2-154. Remedial education program

§ 20-2-290. Organization of schools; middle school programs; schedule

§ 20-2-171. Minimum direct classroom expenditures; waivers; sanctions for noncompliance; submission of budget and expenditure information; rules and regulations

§ 20-2-182. Program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries |

			and benefits; maximum class size; reporting requirements; application to specific school years

12. Purposes of the Approximately $100 per Pupil Earned as a Charter System

We propose to offer Innovation Grants to schools to support implementation of research-based initiatives aligned to documented student needs. We also propose to expand our career pathway offerings in areas of growing demand and student interest. We would utilize the additional funding to support increased use of technology in our classrooms. These funds would also allow us to enhance our compensation structure as referenced in this application by creating a master teacher salary schedule and incentives to teachers for innovation and improved student achievement. We would also utilize these funds to support the training for our SGT members.