



Charter System Application

DISTRICT NAME

Warren County School System

DISTRICT ADDRESS

85 Edward Ricketson Jr. Street
P. O. Box 228
Warrenton, Georgia 30828

Dr. John D. Barge
State School Superintendent

DECEMBER 2011

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 November 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

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.

CHARTER SYSTEM APPLICATION COVER SHEET

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

Proposed Charter System Information			
1. Full Name of Proposed Charter System Warren County School System			
2. Please indicate whether this is a: New Petition or a Renewal Petition X	3. How many schools in total are you proposing to include in your charter system? 3 plus a Career Academy		
4. How many of each of the following schools are you proposing to include in your charter system? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> Primary School(s) Middle School(s) 1 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> Elementary School(s) 1 High school(s) 1 </div>			
5. On July 1 of what year do you want your charter contract to be effective? 2013			
6. How many years are you proposing for the term of your charter contract? (Note that an initial charter cannot exceed five years) 5			
7. Charter System Street Address 85 Edward Ricketson Jr. Street	8. City Warrenton	9. State Georgia	10. Zip 30828
11. Contact Person: Carole Jean Carey		12. Title: Superintendent	
13. Contact Street Address 85 Edward Ricketson Jr. Street	14. City Warrenton	State Georgia	15. Zip 30828
16. Contact's telephone number 706-465-3383	17. Contact's fax number 706-465-9141	18. Contact's E-mail Address cjcarey@warren.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 note also 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 Warren County School District, the first Charter System in Georgia, is entering the fifth year of operation under the flexibility of a charter petition. There is support from the community and schools to petition for a charter renewal. The current charter has served the system well by providing a framework for decision-making and planning. Areas of influence include: curriculum and instruction, personnel, strategic planning, and finances. The framework for decision–making has helped the school and

community articulate desired outcomes for schools and students; set expectations for the organization, the governance structure, and for student achievement

Since becoming a charter system, student achievement has improved at all levels, staff has become more stable, and parent and community satisfaction with the school system has reached an all time high. Students now have access to classes and initiatives that school systems with more resources are accustomed to offering. SACS-CASI district accreditation for the system was awarded, with five commendations, in April 2012. The system has moved out of deficit funding for the first time since 2003. In reviewing the factors associated with success in so many areas, it is clear that these accomplishments can be attributed, in part, to the allegiance and flexibility of the charter. It is critically important that the Warren County School System renews and remains committed to operation as a charter system.

Warren County is no longer on the bottom of the achievement list. The middle school's 2012 writing scores were above the State and the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) average. 100% of the 8th graders passed the reading/language arts and math sections of the CRCT. Before 2011, Freeman Elementary School made Adequate Yearly Progress for ten consecutive years. Approximately five years ago, the Warren County School System was named as a Distinguished School System for making the most improvement in student achievement. In the 2011-2012 school year, the high school met the absolute bar for adequate yearly progress in both language arts and math with all subgroups, narrowly missing making AYP because of the 75% graduation rate (absolute bar is 85% graduation rate).

Warren County School System

The Warren County School System is a small, rural, minority, and poverty school system of 692 students. Warren County, with the closest mid-size city being Milledgeville, has 5700 residents. The population of the school system and the county are both declining. The closing of the textile mill and other businesses in Warren County have caused many people to move in order to find work or to save money by moving in with relatives. The current unemployment rate of 16% is way above the state average. The poverty, child abuse, and teen pregnancy rates are all significantly above average. The school system has to deal with the impact of poverty in the lives of students and their families. 100% of the students receive free lunch and breakfast. After high achieving, successful students graduate from high school and complete college or post-secondary training, there is very little attraction to for these students to return to live and work in Warren County.

The county is 60% African-American and 40% white. The school system, however, is 94%-98% African-American. The local Warren County school systems integrated in the 1960's and then separated again in the early 1970's when a private school, Briarwood, was built in Warren County. Today, white students are split between Briarwood, Warren County Schools, and home schools. This split led yet to another challenge. Those who pay the most taxes in Warren County, including school taxes, are those who do not have children in the Warren County School System. This challenge has become more evident as funding from the state has dwindled and the cost of public education has increased for local communities. Raising taxes to support the funding gap has become next to impossible.

Despite the challenges of poverty exasperated by race segregation, an intergovernmental agreement was established over six years ago. This working agreement was formed between the County government, the City Government, the Chamber of Commerce, and the school system. Collectively these organizations have provided many resources to students. Examples include: the new football stadium built at no expense to the school system, the College and Career Academy Program, the Youth Entrepreneur Program, scholarship awards, a grant to renovate the last part of the old high school and demolish the oldest wing, a grant to pave the parking lot of the College and Career Academy, Youth Leadership Warren, and the use of the football field and our busses by the recreation department.

The agencies also work together to help each other in smaller ways too. The community agencies and directors use school facilities for events such as the Chamber banquet, Relay for Life, and the community choir and theatre. If there are issues with large trees falling on campus or if construction needs 130 loads of dirt for career academy renovations, the county offers resources. There are many more examples of this collaborative work. As a charter system, the community collaboration has been highlighted and strengthened. Many workers in these agencies now serve on school governance boards. These professionals are more aware of the needs of the school and are seen a source of solutions when trying to address the needs of students.

Through the chartering process many grants and programs have been put into place that have positively impacted student achievement (see Exhibit 12). Many strategies have been used to involve the community and parents in the education of

Warren County students. Experienced and knowledgeable administrators, teachers, and support staff have rededicated their allegiance to students by using the flexibility offered by being a charter system, working collaboratively with the county government and business agencies to maximize resources, and continuing with efforts to stay abreast of the most recent innovations and resources that can help students be successful while in school and after they graduate.

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).*
- *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.*

(See Exhibit 13 for Achievement Graphs: A. Warren County Student Performance Past 5 Years and B. Warren County Predicted Student Performance Next 5 Years)

The Warren County School System has moved to a Balanced Report Card to publically monitor progress. The Warren County Board of Education adopted a resolution in support of the *Vision for Public Education in Georgia* in the spring of 2011. The former strategic plan no longer communicated the intentions of the BOE. The *Vision for Public Education* formed the basis for the new strategic plan developed in of 2011. The achievement goals represent compliance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and State Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). The district achievement goals are 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. Each year, the balanced scorecard for each school and for the system are posted on the respective websites.

Establishing goals for the next five years has been a challenge. The Georgia Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) indicators align with efforts in Warren County's strategic plan and the charter application. In some areas, the current achievement levels are high. For example, 100% of our 8th graders passed the CRCT in reading/language arts and mathematics in the

spring 2012. It would not be reasonable to project great gains in future years in that area. However, we will seek to maintain high achievement and to increase the percentage of students exceeding in each category. In most areas, our SMART goals indicate a need for improvement.

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 93% or better by the 2016-2017 school year.

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 30% or better by the 2016-2017 school year.

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 11, Physical Science, Biology, US History, Economics) will increase to 80% or better by the 2016-2017 school year.

Student Performance Goal 4: The percentage of high school students exceeding state standards on each EOCT (9th Lit, Am Lit, Math I, Math11, Physical Science, Biology, US History, Economics) will increase to 15% or better by the 2016-2017 school year.

Student Performance Goal 5: The percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the 8th grade and 11th grade Writing Tests will increase to 90% by the 2016-2017 school year.

Student Performance Goal 6: The percentage of students exceeding standards on the 8th grade and 11th grade Writing Tests will increase to 20% or better by the 2016-0217 school year.

Student Performance Goal 7: The Warren County graduation rate will increase from 79% in 2012 to 95% or better in 2017.

It should be noted that the school system is so small that the only subgroups are black boys and girls and economically disadvantaged students. There are not enough students in other ethnic groups or special education to constitute a subgroup. Warren County does track cohorts of students through the elementary, middle, and high school years to get true measures of student performance. This progress monitoring will continue.

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*

There are many educational innovations that will be continued, modified, and developed over the term of the charter renewal period. Innovations in Warren County usually come about as a result of a Professional Learning Community's research, study, and recommendation. As part of the PLC's work, a plan is developed, resources are identified, and necessary waivers are identified. After full implementation, there is an

evaluation of each initiative. For example, a high school PLC recommended block scheduling several years ago. The recommendation was fully implemented after one year of professional learning on how to teach in the “block.” The analysis of data has shown that test scores have increased each year since this implementation.

Similarly, another Professional Learning Community recommended that the system institute a uniform dress code (khakis and collared polo type shirts in school colors) to reduce referrals for dress code violations and to help with discipline. This is the third year of successful implementation. Governing Councils now also play an important part in recommendations. They will continue to provide input in planning and implementing educational innovations.

The Warren County Schools and community continue to work together to provide opportunities for students that are typically not available to students in similar demographics. Some of our “innovations” may be commonplace in affluent systems but rare for in places where there are so few students and so little money. The educational innovations are related to the four components of the charter and to the shared vision of preparing students for college, career, and life.:

K-12 Vocational Awareness

1. **Youth Entrepreneurship Program**—This is a joint program with the Warren County Chamber of Commerce that will be continued. This is one of the classes in one of our business pathways where students actually plan, develop and start up a business of their own. Business owners in the community serve as mentors and presenters during

this class. They compete for funding from community businessmen by presenting their business plans to a panel. This correlates with the business component of our charter and helps students participate in real world planning for a business, which helps students in planning for life.

2. **Youth Apprenticeship Program/Workforce Investment Act Program**—By combining these two programs, students are allowed to receive credit while they work in the community and receive compensation. This correlates with the vocational component of our charter and students learn the value of hard work and a good work ethic, which helps prepare students for life.

3. **Dual Enrollment Classes**—The Career Academy opened in September 2012 and, based on a market analysis of our area, five courses are being offered by Oconee Fall Line Technical College: Nursing, Welding, Computer Systems, Early Childhood Education, and Construction. These hands on classes and the dual enrollment with Oconee Fall Line Technical College help prepare students for college, careers and life.

4. **College and Career Fairs**—These are held at **each** school each year for students, parents, and community members. An added feature is that successful graduates of Warren County High School are invited back to speak with students in small settings about what it takes to be successful and to assure students that they can make something out of their lives.

K-12 Advanced Academics

1. **Spanish** - The middle/high Spanish teacher has completed research on best practices in teaching a foreign language. Based on his research, he is volunteering to teach Spanish at the elementary school during his 90-minutes planning period which means he can teach two classes of Spanish for elementary students. Beginning in August 2012, he is also teaching Spanish for Carnegie credit at the middle school as well as one exploratory Spanish class for middle school students. This correlates to our charter component of providing advanced academics. (We plan to start elementary Spanish classes in September 2012.)

2. **Science Lab**—A science lab is being established at the elementary school for all teachers who teach science. Plans are being made for the Gifted Teacher to provide professional learning to other teachers on how to best use this valuable resource in the fall of 2012. Science is still an area of concern on the elementary CRCT. This lab and the science supplies available will help by providing more hands-on activities for students.

- **Gifted/Honors Program**—Although we are very small and have only a few eligible for Georgia’s gifted program, we established a gifted/honors class for elementary and middle school students which meets one day per week. At the high school, honors classes will start in fall 2012. Soon these course will be weighted for GPA calculations. The AP Calculus class will begin the second semester of FY13 and the leadership team is currently studying the weights for

- AP classes. Although students can take AP classes via computer, the objective is to increase the number of AP classes offered by our teachers again in FY 14.
- **Kids College, Kids University and Jumpstart**—In conjunction with Augusta State University (ASU), students in grades K-12 will have the opportunity to attend ASU in the summer to participate in advanced academic opportunities and field trips. In the summer of 2012, the first JumpStart Program for three, four and five year old students was held to provide a ‘jumpstart’ for the new year. These programs expose students to the idea of college and the idea that they can go to college if they work hard.
 - **Early College** - Plans are to revive the Early College Concept for Warren County Students. We were awarded an Early College grant several years back but it was rescinded because the economy. By FY14, we plan to establish an Early College at the Career Academy. Augusta State University is our partner in this venture. English and Math 101 will be offered to our students as dual enrollment classes. If students participate in Early College and the Career Academy dual enrollment options, they will enter college with several courses already under their belts. This helps our students in that they can begin receiving college credit at no cost, without having to leave home or travel to Augusta to class.
 - **Data Analysis retreats/rooms/notebooks**—Data teams will continue to focus on student work and instructional strategies. The principals meet weekly with their teachers during common planning time for grade levels or content area teachers. Data is discussed, disaggregated, charted, compared, and monitored. Common

assessments and/or mock assessments are developed. Innovations for addressing areas of weakness are developed during this planning time. The SLDS tool is being used and more training will be delivered, as other components of the tool are made available. After two years of training from Tom Guskey on using assessment to improve instruction as well as for evaluation, data analysis is one of our most important tools for continuing improvement.

- **Graduation Advantage Program**—The details of this program change each year as the initiative is redesigned to meet the current needs of students. At the high school, this includes special tutoring for the EOCT, special writing strategies, credit recovery options during and after school through Nova net, and ensuring that 95% of the junior class take the SAT. Block scheduling is part of this program at the middle and high school. At the elementary and middle school, it includes the Yearly Progress Pro, Science Acuity, Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math Programs, school- wide writing strategies, regrouping for targeted instruction (RTI), and the ABE program. The mastery learning options will be expanded over the next two years at all levels to accelerate students so that they can take advantage of additional, advanced course offerings as well as to help students catch up and graduate with their peers.
- **Technology**---Through grants active boards have been placed in every classroom K-12. I pads, ipods, mobile labs, laptops, active expressions, active votes, etc., in lieu of textbooks, are also provided. Bring Your Own Technology to School Initiative will start in the 2012-2013 school year.

K-12 Leadership

1. **Service Learning Class**—Service Learning Classes started fall 2012. The emphasis is on serving the school and the community. Students are landscaping the school grounds, providing plants for the schools, and will provide the nursing homes and community agencies with plants and flowers for the buildings and for special occasions. This is a hands-on class where students can be creative, work together, and give something back to the community.

- **Key Club/ Student Council**—This was established last year at the high school. The Club works with the Kiwanis Club of Warrenton on activities to help in the community such as Relay for Life, collecting coats for students, and raising money through a BBQ for the elementary school playground. The elementary and middle schools have student councils. The high school has a principal's club. Students in Warren County serve on committees when principals, head coaches, and other personnel are hired. Soon students will serve on the Governing Boards at each school.
- **4-H/WIA/Talent Search/Parking Crew** –All of these programs have students serving and leading in our schools. It is a privilege to be in these programs so students work hard to stay eligible.

K-12 Fine Arts

1. **The Warren County Schools Band/ Music appreciation classes**—A band of about 50 students marched during the marching and competition season. This is possible because the band director has what is called a “pick up” band after school. Students are not required to be in band class during the school day to participate. Band/music appreciation is offered at all three schools. At the elementary school, there is a complete set of ORF instruments. Students must remain academically eligible to participate. In addition, students have had the opportunity to go to Atlanta to watch professional ballet performances.

2. **Drama** - Drama is offered at the high school every other year. Students love competing in the One Act Plays and other competitions.

3. **Freeman Singers** - The elementary school has a singing group called the Freeman Singers. This group sings at school and community events throughout the year. Students must be in good standing at the school to participate and they all love to be a part of this group.

4. Which of the specific actions in the academic plan require a waiver of state law, rule, and 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.***

1. **Seat Time Waiver**—needed for mastery learning, credit recovery
2. **Block scheduling waiver**—needed for the high school as on a 4X4 block

3. **Teacher certification waiver**—needed for drama teacher and during the extended learning time for RTI at the elementary school
4. **Waiver to bring and use personal technology to school**—needed if we decide to join the BYOTTS (Bring Your Own Technology To School)
5. **65% rule**—needed because the same administrative requirements and requirements for transportation, food service, maintenance, media, counseling, as larger schools.
6. **Required personnel**—needed and used to eradicate the school system’s debt and establish a reserve. The superintendent, finance director, and associate superintendent work 49% which allows major savings to the system.
7. **Class size waiver**—needed for 2nd grade, EIP classes this year. There are no other classes in the system that meet the maximum class sizes as originally established by the state. Most classes are under the maximum class size.
8. **School Council Waiver**—needed to establish a Governing Boards at each school in lieu of a council.

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).*

Organizationally, there have been many changes throughout the system over the past 5 years. Some of the changes are based on research and best practices and some are the result of reduced state allocations. Specifically, we have gone from a middle/high school set up with one principal and one assistant to a middle/high school in one building with two facility codes and two principals. Until budgets got tighter in 2010, there was an assistant principal working between the two schools. That position was cut before the start of the 2010 school year. The elementary school has had a principal and an assistant until this year when the elementary principal moved to the county office to become the assistant superintendent. The assistant principal moved up to be principal and a teacher was chosen to be a lead teacher. The lead teacher replaced the assistant principal position with many of the same responsibilities. The county office has transitioned from a full time superintendent, associate superintendent, and federal programs director with a secretary and a receptionist to a half-time superintendent, half-time associate superintendent, no clerical staff, and a full-time assistant superintendent. This addition of an assistant superintendent was made to put a succession plan in place. The succession plan is necessary because the superintendent and associate superintendent have the experience and knowledge needed for this small system, but there was no one else at the system or in the schools to continue a seamless transition when they completely retire in the next 5 to 10 years.

The system has transitioned from school councils to Governing Boards where parents and community members have some decision-making responsibilities. Schools were once led almost singlehandedly by principals. Schools now have shared leadership by the principal, staff, and Governance Board. Teachers who want to become administrators are given extra leadership responsibilities as they work to gain valuable experience.

The middle and high schools have transitioned from a seven-period day to block scheduling and from offering just the basics in academic and elective classes to offering numerous higher-level academic courses and 16 elective classes. Organizationally, staff have learned to effectively analyze data. The professional learning program is now based on needs assessment data from teachers and staff instead of offering what a couple of people in the central office thought might be needed. Pacing charts are revised during the year based on mock test results and formative assessments. Instructional strategies are revised based on student performance on common assessments and mock tests. Data rooms or notebooks can be found in each school demonstrating the status of every student stands any minute. There has also be a transition from being technology poor to having active boards in all K-12 classrooms, having modern computers, computer labs, netbooks, laptops, mobile laptops, ipads and ipods available to all teachers.

Class sizes are well under the maximum as set by the state. In almost all cases self-contained or team teaching occurs at the elementary level. A common planning schedule for elementary teachers is available each day. All middle school teachers plan at the same time every day. The high school teachers have content level planning together

every day. Administrators at each school meet with the teachers weekly to analyze data, develop common and mock assessments, discuss needs of students and staff, plan and write units.

Finally, the Board of Education sanctioned by SACS-CASI in 2009 with the threat of losing accreditation and admonished by the Governor's removal of two board members is in a new place. The 2012 SACS-CASI number one commendation for the BOE was "having total community support for the school system." Warren County is now a school system where 95% of parents and students rate the system as 3 and above on a five point scale regarding satisfaction with the schools and teachers.

Organizational Goal #1: The elementary school will move to the middle/high campus. The administrators for the system will then include an elementary principal and lead teacher, a middle high principal and assistant principal, a full time superintendent and assistant superintendent with the support of a secretary/receptionist.

Organizational Goal #2: Parent involvement will increase at each school. Baseline data will be established and SMART goals developed. This is also a SACS-CASI recommendation.

Organizational Goal #3: The interventions developed and used in our system will result in an increase of Warren County students who graduate on time (within four years) and who, subsequently complete their college, technical college, or career path plans will increase. The baseline will be established based on the graduation rate for 2011-2012 and SMART goals developed.

Organizational Goal #4: The Board of Education and the Governing Boards will all continue to fulfill their respective responsibilities in support of the schools.

Organizational Goal #5: Ninety five percent of our parents will express support and satisfaction for the school system on a survey especially developed to measure parent satisfaction. Baseline data will have to be obtained and the survey used annually for the term of the charter.

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. Succession Planning: The Warren County School System will fully develop and begin implementing a succession plan within three years. The plan should be complete within 5 to 7 years. This is in conjunction with the development of the five-year facility plan, the retirement of the middle school principal in the next few years, and the retirement of the half-time associate superintendent and half-time superintendent within the next decade. This is critically important for this system, as there must be a plan so that there is no void in knowledgeable and experienced leadership. To date, there are no school administrators with any central office experience or experience in federal programs, special education, and other support programs. In a small system, the leaders

must have a broad knowledge of all areas because there will only be two people in the central office as administrators.

2. Professional Development: Continue effective and practical professional development for administrators in distributed leadership roles, for Board of Education members, and Governing Board members in roles and responsibilities, and for teachers and paraprofessionals in best practices on an annual basis. This professional learning will be specifically tailored to each group based on the situation and needs of each group annually. Teachers will become more effective in implementing the CCGPS within the constraints of a small system, the administrators will be able to handle their responsibilities because of distributed leadership, and parents and community will develop an even stronger commitment to the system because they will be more aware and involved in supporting school operations.

3. Communication Planning: The communication plan for the system will be constantly revised to incorporate better ways of communicating effectively with staff, parents and community. Computer calendars and reminders, weekly calendar of events, special notices, and post calls will be expanded as we search for even better ways to communicate with staff members. This may call for professional development for teachers. Post calls, emails to parents, texts to parents, ipad face-time with parents and students, will be explored. This may involve students bringing their own technology to school for instruction and parental contacts.

3. **Tracking Students** –The Warren County School System will research and implement a plan to track students who graduate for at least five years following graduation. This is important so that we know where we need to improve as far as interventions, course offerings, data analysis and instructional strategies are concerned relative to our vision of preparing our students for college, career and life

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 six areas in organizational planning that currently require a waiver. There may be more as time goes on.

1. **Required Personnel Waiver**—Succession planning is based upon the superintendent, associate superintendent and finance director being able to continue to work half-time for at least 5 to 10 more years while they train others to take their places. A waiver is required to have less than a half-time superintendent or finance director.

2. **Certification rules**—There will be a need, as budgets and the number of students in the system continue to decline, for teacher certification to be waived related to providing RTI at the elementary school.

3. **School Council Waiver**—must be kept in place as we have Governing Boards.

4. **Waiver of 65% rule** - the system can remain out of the deficit, hire needed personnel and purchase needed software, technology or innovations as needed.

5. **The block scheduling, mastery learning and seat time waivers** will be important as remediation and acceleration of students is necessary so that students

graduate on time or are able to show mastery of lower level courses in order to take more higher level courses in preparation for college.

6. **The class size waiver** will be needed so teachers can be placed where they are needed most and not in places where we may be over by one or two students.

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 level 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.*

The current Governing Boards of the schools are much more effective than the previous school councils. However, by the end of this charter period, the Governing Councils will be expanded to include a minimum of four parents and community members with the chair selected by the council. For continuity, there is a need to increase the length

of the term for Governing Board members to staggered three and four year terms instead of the current two-year term. There is a need to increase responsibilities.

At the present time, our Governing Board members are involved in the hiring of the principal, assistant principal, all teachers, paraprofessionals, and custodians. The BOE has agreed to approve recommendations approved and brought forth by the superintendent on behalf of the Governing Councils. However, their role in strategic planning, facility planning, budget (now that we are out of the deficit and have enough money to allocate more to each school), school operations and data analysis will increase during the terms of this charter as we expand and improve upon the training for these governing boards. Joint Governing Board meetings will be held with members providing input/advice serving as a superintendent's advisory committee. These joint meetings will began in August 2012 and will continue for the term of the charter.

The staff will continue to nominate and vote upon teachers and staff members who will serve on the Governing Boards. Meetings will be announced and held for parents to nominate and select parents and community members to serve. In the absence of sufficient parent and community members being selected, the principal will recruit additional parent and community members to serve upon the agreement of those already selected for council membership. Bylaws for each Governing Board will be revised and posted on the schools' websites no later than the start of the 2013 school year. The Governing Boards will increase their scheduled meetings from four to six per year. This will provide the needed meetings for adequate training of the governing board members.

The BOE has agreed to hire personnel recommended by the boards. The governing boards receive information on and have input into the budgets of the schools, textbook adoption, and school operations. Then BOE accepts each school's allocation of the resources provided for them to budget. Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year the Governing Boards will make decisions regarding the expenditure of Charter Funds allocated to each school. (Now that the district is out of deficit, the allocation will be divided among the school based on enrollment. Members will be more confident in providing input into these areas with expanded training opportunities.)

School Governance Training

Training for Governing Boards will be held at each of the six regular meetings of the year. There will be called meetings for personnel and other issues where training will not be on the agenda. As topics are fully developed, Governing Board members will be more comfortable in providing input and actually making decisions. Although a common training template will be developed by the principals as they plan to lead the training for each of their Governing Boards, principals will tailor the training and any additional training needs to the specific needs of their boards. Proposed topics for training for the first year of this charter term are listed below. This list is based on the fact that we have had Governing Boards and training in place for five years. A needs assessment will determine training needs for subsequent years.

Warren County School System

- August 2013: Review of purpose, meeting etiquette, sunshine laws, and effective meetings and decision-making, CCGPS review, Strategic Planning, By-laws revisions
- October 2013: Developing the Balanced Scorecard and report of progress
- November 2013: College and Career Preparedness Index
- January 2014: Budgeting, Federal Programs
- March 2014: Personnel Issues and hiring,
- May 2014: Assessing needs, Assessment, CCRPI indicators

Warren County School System

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TEAM	PRINCIPAL	SUPER	BOE
PERSONNEL	RECOMMEND PRINCIPAL FINALIST TO SUPERINTENDENT INPUT INTO RECOMMENDATION FOR HIRING SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO INCLUDE TEACHERS, PARAS AND CUSTODIANS	RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT	FINAL REFERENCE CHECK AND RECOMMEND TO BOE	APPROVE
RESOURCE ALLOCATION	INPUT INTO AND RECOMMENDATION FOR SCHOOL LEVEL RESOURCES BASED ON SCHOOL PLAN	RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT	INFORM BOARD OR PRESENT FOR APPROVAL	APPROVE
BUDGET	APPROVE TITLE I AND TITLE II BUDGETS INPUT INTO FUND RAISERS INPUT AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE OF LOCAL FUNDS ALLOCATED TO SCHOOLS RECOMMEND THE BUDGET FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THE SCHOOL	INFORM SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMEND TO THE SUPERINTENDENT	INCLUDE IN SYSTEM BUDGET FOR BOARD APPROVAL APPROVE INCLUDE IN SYSTEM BUDGET FOR BOARD APPROVAL RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD DURING THE BUDGET PROCESS	APPROVE APPROVE APPROVE APPROVE
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	ALL MEMBERS HAVE INPUT INTO THIS PLAN DETERMINE WAIVERS NEEDED	RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT	RECOMMEND TO BOARD	APPROVE
CURRICULUM	DETERMINE WAIVER NEEDS FOR INNOVATIONS	RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT	RECOMMEND TO BOARD	APPROVE
OTHER SCHOOL OPERATIONS	DETERMINE WAIVERS NEEDED SELECT/INPUT ON PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, HOMECOMING, CORONATION, FIELD	RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT	RECOMMEND TO BOARD RECOMMEND TO BOARD AS NEEDED	APPROVE APPROVE

	<p>DAY, CAREER FAIRS, ETC.</p> <p>INPUT ON SCHOOL CALENDAR</p> <p>INPUT ON FACILITY PLAN</p> <p>ANNUAL SURVEY OF SATISFACTION</p>	<p>RELAY INPUT TO SUPERINTENDENT</p> <p>RELAY INPUT TO SUPERINTENDENT</p> <p>RELAY INPUT TO SUPERINTENDENT</p>	<p>RECOMMEND TO BOARD</p> <p>RECOMMEND TO BOARD</p> <p>RECOMMEND TO BOARD</p>	<p>APPROVE</p> <p>APPROVE</p> <p>APPROVE</p>
TEXTBOOK ADOPTION	<p>REVIEW TEXTBOOK CHOSEN BY TEACHERS AND PROVIDE INPUT DURING 30 DAY REVIEW PERIOD</p>	<p>RELAY INPUT TO TEXTBOOK TEAM AND SUPERINTENDENT</p>	<p>RECOMMEND TO BOARD</p>	<p>APPROVE</p>
DISCIPLINE/ CODE OF CONDUCT	<p>REVIEW/ PROVIDE IDEAS FOR REVISION ANNUALLY</p>	<p>RECOMMEND TO SUPERINTENDENT</p>	<p>INFORM OT RECOMMEND TO BOARD AS NEEDED</p>	<p>APPROVE</p>

FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES, PLANS, and WAIVERS

9. **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).**

During the past five years, the Warren County School System developed and implemented a plan to eliminate the debt that had been inherited due to overruns on the cost a high school built ten years ago. When the system closed out for the 2010-2011

school year, there was money in the general fund for the first time in 8 years. The deficit was eliminated three years earlier than planned. The Warren County School System has never had material findings in an annual audit. An assistant to the finance director was hired in 2011-2012 which is helping the system to be more timely in financial uploads and submissions. The Finance Department handles accounts payable and receivable as well as all insurances, workman's compensation, family medical leave, employee benefits, fingerprinting, food service finances, audits, and ordering. The two employees in the finance department work closely with staff members, the auditors, the superintendent and the board. Although things are improving, there are still several Financial Performance Goals for the term of this charter.

Financial Performance Goal 1: To maintain yearly financial audit status with no material findings.

Financial Performance Goal 2: To increase the general fund so that the balance is at least \$1,000,000 by the end of the term of this charter.

Financial Performance Goal 3: Continue to fund teachers so that 90% of the class sizes in grades 4-12 do not exceed 28 and 90% of the class sizes in grades K-3 do not exceed 23 through the term of this charter.

Financial Performance Goal 4: Pass an E-Splost before the end of the first year of this charter which will be used to finish paying for the high school. (The long-range plan was for there to be four consecutive SPLOSTS to pay for the building and this is the last one.)

Financial Performance Goal 5: Restore the ten workdays that were cut from the calendar for all employees who work 190 days or more each year by the end of the term of the charter.

Financial Performance Goal 6: Prepare a budget so that the mil rate does not increase during the term of this charter. It is currently at 17.4 and has held steady for several years.

Financial Performance Goal 7: The Governing Board for each school will make decisions regarding the expenditure of the Charter funds allocated to the school beginning in the 2013-2014 school year and throughout the term of this charter.

10. *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*

Reaching the financial performance objectives will require work and planning.

1. The superintendent and finance director will continue to work 49% for the duration of this charter term with the superintendent transitioning to full time retirement within 10 years. The savings generated will help increase the general fund over the term of the charter. The superintendent will cross train the newly hired assistant superintendent and the finance director will cross train the assistant finance director.

There will be a reduced void of knowledge regarding budgeting when the superintendent fully retires.

2. The system will continue to write grants for materials, supplies and technology each year since state allocations have decreased. This will insure that teachers have the needed materials and supplies and that the system does not return back into the deficit.
 3. The superintendent, finance director, and principals will continue careful review of all expenditures and continue to match expenditures with funding sources in the budget process such that the general fund increases over time. The budget presented to the Warren County BOE shows anticipated expenditures and the anticipated funding source for all expenditures listed.
 4. Train the Governing Board members on the system allotment sheets, federal program funding, and local funding to allow for informed decision-making regarding budgeting for the schools. By the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the Governing Boards should be better able to assist the principals and schools in making funding decisions.
 5. Conduct an annual public review of the audit for transparency and clarity regarding the financial performance of the school system.
- 11. 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. It will be necessary for the system to waive the required **personnel requirements** through the term of this charter so that the superintendent and finance director can continue to work 49% so that the savings realized can be added to the general fund balance each year.
2. It will be necessary to waive the **65% rule** through the term of this charter so that funds can be directed to areas of need without decreasing the general fund balance.
3. It will be necessary to continue to waive the **expenditure controls** for areas under instruction so that funds can flow between and among the areas as needed.
4. It is quite probable that **facility requirements** may have to be waived as we get to the end of the charter term and are developing/implementing the plan to move all three schools to the middle/high school campus. There are some rooms already available at the middle/high school and facility requirements may be waived if they do not support our instructional and organizational goals.
5. It will be necessary to **waive personnel certification requirements** which will save the system money while, at the same time, allows us to continue to be committed to the four main components of our charter. Specifically, during the years when we offer drama, the certification requirements of our band teacher will be waived such that he can teach drama. The certification requirements of elementary teachers will be waived during RTI time. Specifically, the music teacher will be teaching remedial reading during RTI time each day. Other personnel waivers may be needed to reach our

instructional goals while at the same time saving us money because we do not have to hire another teacher for part of the day.

12. *Should the QBE weight for charter systems be funded, for what purposes would you use the approximately \$100 per pupil in extra funds you would earn as a charter system?*

- *A school system's decision to become a charter system should not be based on the expectation of additional funding, since the funding is not guaranteed.*
- *There are no limitations or requirements on the use of such funds.*

Since the school system was in deficit funding through 2010, the Charter Funds were used to fund priorities for the system for which other funding was not available. In 2011, the school system had its first general fund balance at the end of the year. That balance is expected to grow such that by the end of the 2012-2013 school year the Charter Funds can be divided among the schools for school priorities with the Governing Boards making the expenditure decisions relative to these funds. The principal, leadership team, and Governing Board will have the flexibility to fund items necessary for the success of their strategic plan. There would be no set limitations on this money as funding may be needed for anything from software, books for reading relative to Lexile scores, technology, playground equipment, tutoring, summer jumpstart programs, field trips and speakers, and trips to college campuses.

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. Grants and Special Programs Impacting Student Achievement
13. Student Achievement Graphs
 - a. Warren County Student Performance Past 5 Years
 - b. Warren County Student Performance Next 5 Years