Charter System Application

DISTRICT NAME

Fannin County School System

DISTRICT ADDRESS

2290 East First Street
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513

Dr. John D. Barge
State School Superintendent
JULY 2014

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 **Fannin County School System**			
2. Please indicate whether this is a: New Petition **yes** or a Renewal Petition		3. How many schools in total are you proposing to include in your charter system? **5**	
4. How many of each of the following schools are you proposing to include in your charter system? Primary School(s) Middle School(s) **1** Elementary School(s) **3** High school(s) **1**			
5. On July 1 of what year do you want your charter contract to be effective? **2015**			
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 **2290 East First Street**	8. City **Blue Ridge**	9. State **Georgia**	10. Zip **30513**
11. Contact Person **Mark Henson**		12. Title **Superintendent**	
13. Contact Street Address **2290 East First Street**	14. City **Blue Ridge**	15. State **Georgia**	16. Zip **30513**
17. Contact's telephone number **706-632-3771**	18. Contact's fax number **706-632-7583**	19. Contact's E-mail Address **Mhenson@fannin.k12.ga.us**	

THE CASE

Questions# 1-8: "The Case" Matrix for the Fannin County School System Charter System Application can be found at *http://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/Download.asp?L=1&LMID=729516&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=16508&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=397769*. ***This "Case" matrix briefly summarizes questions 1-8 of the Charter System Application. Specific information relevant to the information contained in "The Case" matrix is provided.***

The Fannin County School System continues to strive to provide students with the most advantageous educational experience possible. Even though the local economy has suffered during recent years and has had an impact on the local tax digest, the strong fiscal stewardship of the Fannin County Board of Education has allowed the school system to continue to provide an education for students that is second to none. Fannin County's economy continues to be one that is driven by tourism which is greatly affected by the national and state economy. Additionally, the rural nature of our county lends itself to a retirement community which greatly affects the tax digest and revenue potential for the school system.

Fannin County School System has approximately 2,850 students (Pre-K to 12th grade) within its five schools – three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Programs and instructional methods include standards-based instruction (Pre-K to 12); technology integration (Pre-K to 12); Title I schools (elementary and middle); Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE 6-12); Advanced Placement (9-12) course offerings. The school system places high value on academic coaches and utilizes them at all schools. Graduation coaches are utilized at the middle and high schools which are also locally funded. Parent Liaisons are utilized at the elementary and middle schools through Title I resources.

The Fannin County School System prides itself in the student achievement gains and academic performance of its students. However, as a system, we see the need to increase the rigor of our academic programs specifically in the areas of mathematics and science, provide all students with programs of study that meet individual needs, increase the quantity and quality of course offerings through secondary and post-secondary partnerships, and continue to be good stewards of taxpayer resources. Current mindsets and regulations often limit us in what we are able to provide our students. In order to meet these ever-increasing demands, it is paramount that we find alternative avenues.

Creating an atmosphere conducive to open thinking and thinking outside the boundaries of the norm is of the utmost importance as we strive to increase student achievement. Providing students with the necessary instructional support and classroom practice conducive to individual successes will not only increase student achievement, but it will also open up learning opportunities for students who have often "fallen through the cracks." Providing a concrete beginning in all subject areas is critical for lifelong learning. Specifically, as our economy is now more driven by fields requiring thorough knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering, students must be exposed to these areas earlier in order to gain substantial knowledge and understanding for the job market. Additionally, as a district, we must aggressively provide our students with the necessary tools to become skilled workers who will be successful within our local economy. By providing more opportunities for post-secondary learning while in high school and increasing partnerships with local businesses and other agencies, we can mold our students into successful career oriented individuals.

Charter system status will provide our school system with the flexibility from state requirements that will allow us to be more responsive to our students' needs. Increased flexibility to develop and modify educational programs will ensure that we are better able to meet the needs of our students while also reflecting the needs, wishes, and desires of our community. Some of the potential areas of flexibility sought as a charter system include instructional programming, opportunities for students to earn credits through experience and community-based instruction, high school credits earned in the middle school, flexible uses of technology for instruction, funding, scheduling, seat time, credit by exam, course and graduation requirements, teacher certification requirements – just to name a few.

As a charter system, using flexible program models will allow us to individualize instruction for all students at all levels. These programs include, but are not limited to, early intervention, English as a second language, advanced/gifted, and remedial courses. Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM) instructional strategies and hands-on learning opportunities with STEAM laboratories at various levels will help to ensure students are taught the skills necessary for continued success. A College and Career Academy will be established that will help to cement relationships

between the school system and our community by providing additional avenues for our students both academically and in the workforce. Students will be given the opportunity to earn high school credit at the middle school, earn high school credits at post-secondary institutions and/or potentially earn post-secondary credit at the high school. Additionally, a college and career academy will help our school system individualize education by providing increased opportunities for students to choose programs of study that meet their interests thus generating more enthusiasm for learning and greater success.

Throughout the last five years, the Fannin County School System has utilized several waivers in order to maintain its current rate of financial stability and academic success. Some of these waivers included maximum class size, block scheduling, early release (parent conferences), and seat time (K-12). The Fannin County School System anticipates utilizing a broad flexibility waiver as a charter system. The waiver process allows the school system to thoroughly examine the specific needs of the district and the needs of the individual school in order to maximize resources in our efforts to increase the overall achievement of our students and effectiveness of our teachers. As a result of the charter system development process, the specific innovations proposed will require certain definite waivers from the state in order to meet the academic goals and measures. Although not specifically stated in the table below, the Fannin County School System will utilize, as needed, waivers for seat time, media scheduling, maximum class size, block (4x4) scheduling, as well as any others deemed necessary, to allow students to progress through courses at their respective pace and take full advantage of the innovations sought by the school system. Each of the innovations listed in the chart below are new innovations for the Fannin County School System.

Innovation	Legal Waivers Requested	SBOE Provision Requested
Flexible Service Models *(FCSS will begin implementing Flexible Service Models during year 1 of charter system status.)*	O.C.G.A § 20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. O.C.G.A § 20-2-156. Program for limited-English-proficient students. O.C.G.A § 20-2-154. Remedial education program. O.C.G.A § 20-2-152; O.C.G.A § 20-2-161. Gifted Program.	160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP). 160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance. Program for English Learners (ELs). 160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education Program. 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students.
STEAM Methodology *(FCSS will begin the organization and implementation of STEAM methodology during the 1st year of charter system status at varying levels in grades K-8.)*	O.C.G.A § 20-2-152; O.C.G.A § 20-2-161. Gifted Program. O.C.G.A § 20-2-159.4. Policies and guidelines for awarding units of high school credit based on demonstrated proficiency. O.C.G.A § 20-2-159.5. Dual credit courses; requirements. O.C.G.A § 20-2-200. Regulation of certificated professional personnel by Professional Standards Commission; rules and regulations; fees. O.C.G.A § 20-2-215. "In loco parentis" status of aides and paraprofessionals.	160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students. 160-4-2-.34 Dual Enrollment. 160-5-1-.22 Personnel Required.
College and Career Academy *(FCSS will begin the organization and grant application process of the College and Career Academy during the 1st year of charter system status and make yearly progress toward meeting College and Career Academy goals.)*	O.C.G.A § 20-2-159.4. Policies and guidelines for awarding units of high school credit based on demonstrated proficiency. O.C.G.A § 20-2-159.5. Dual credit courses; requirements. O.C.G.A § 20-2-154. Remedial education program. O.C.G.A § 20-2-200. Regulation of certificated professional personnel by Professional Standards Commission; rules and regulations; fees.	160-4-2-.34 Dual Enrollment. 160-4-3-.14 Work-Based Learning 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students. 160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education Program.

Flexible Service Models

Fannin County School System will implement Flexible Service Models to serve students based on their individual needs rather than their state-identified label. While students will be identified for services, their status of EIP or EL will only be used for state funding purposes and not for prescribed instructional services. Services for students will be integrated to best serve the needs of all students. Other potential program areas that will utilize Flexible Service Models include remedial education and gifted education. The implementation of Flexible Service Models will greatly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of personnel and fiscal management.

STEAM Methodology

The Fannin County School System will offer a unique approach to increase student exploration, application and evaluation through the development and utilization of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) methodology. While the STEM concept was originally the direction that Fannin County Schools wished to pursue, further discussion noted that there was also a need to include the arts. By integrating the arts in instruction, we will be able to meet the needs of all learners regardless of what learning style works best for them and offer additional creative hands-on outlets for students.

The implementation of STEAM instructional strategies will be a gradual process that is customized for each participating school. This phase-in approach will be utilized beginning at the elementary level and continue into the middle school level. Elementary school students will explore curriculum concepts using inquiry-based instructional strategies and related hands-on activities. Middle school students will apply these instructional strategies to specific grade-level math, science, and arts curriculum. Instructors will require groups of students to apply research through data collection and analysis relative to student interest and alignment with standards. Students will have the opportunity to earn various high school credits while in middle school not only in the college track but also in the area of CTAE. This will allow students with varied interests to complete additional pathways at the high school level through the proposed College and Career Academy.

The purpose of using STEAM methodology in instruction is to provide a foundation for elementary school students to learn through exploration and to provide learning opportunities for middle school students to apply prior knowledge and problem solving skills. Immersion in STEAM principles at these levels should enable students entering high school to use evaluation skills at a much higher level than our students currently possess. The integration of science, technology, art, and mathematics throughout the curriculum will help to ensure mastery of standards and an increase in student achievement. The integration of STEAM concepts and instructional strategies that will be possible in multiple settings (including STEAM laboratories, indoor classrooms, outdoor venues, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) will afford students hands-on experiences and the tools required for skill attainment. The abundance of local natural resources will provide numerous varied opportunities to extend the learning beyond the traditional classroom. This will result in increased interest in learning for students, as well as provide a connection to the real world that will make these educational experiences meaningful.

College and Career Academy

The Fannin County School System will expand postsecondary options and partnerships to include both academic and CTAE opportunities for all students based on the needs of the student population and the regional economic community. Partnerships with area postsecondary schools are not currently being fully utilized. North Georgia Technical College, Appalachian Technical College, Young Harris College, and the Ellijay Campus of Dalton State College are within easy driving distance from Fannin County High School. Additionally, a satellite campus of University of North Georgia is currently in the planning and development stages to be located in Blue Ridge, Georgia. With increased partnerships with these institutions, more students will receive postsecondary credits through dual enrollment. Accelerated courses such as ACCEL, Advanced Placement offerings, and/or Move on When Ready will also provide students with another avenue to earn additional postsecondary credits while fulfilling high school graduation requirements.

Students will also be able to earn high school/graduation credits for internships completed with local businesses through the College and Career Academy. One of the goals of the College and Career

Academy will be to continually monitor the needs of the school system and local economy to ensure that students are mastering the skills necessary to be successful in the workforce. Providing postsecondary opportunities to students while enrolled in high school will bridge the gap between K-12 education and the real world experiences that our students will encounter.

Continuous study of the economic work force will drive the course offerings and opportunities for students. As a result of these additional course offerings, Fannin County High School graduates will be better prepared to fill local jobs deemed to be critical for the regional work force and economy.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Question #9: What are your school system's specific student performance expectations for your five-year charter term?

The Fannin County School System is committed to ensuring success for all students with effective use of data as a strategic area of emphasis. The system is data rich and works deliberately to effectively understand and utilize data to improve instruction – from the broadest viewpoint to the individual student performance level with ownership of this information shared by all stakeholders. In order to use data to lead change, the district utilizes school improvement and/or leadership teams at the system and school levels. The system's strategic plan can be viewed through the following link and will illustrate the comprehensive examination of the district's focus.

http://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/Download.asp?L=1&LMID=729516&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=16508&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=380334

The Fannin County School System will utilize SMART goals as a means of monitoring and reporting the academic progress of students. The achievement goals will comply with Georgia's College and Career Readiness Performance Index. Additionally, cohort achievement will be monitored through the Georgia Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). No Fannin County school has been identified as a Needs Improvement (Alert/Priority/Focus) school.

Many students in Fannin County reach and maintain a high level of achievement. The primary focus of gaining charter system status is continued academic improvement that will increase students' knowledge and use of essential skills in order to enhance their success in college and/or at work. As is revealed by the chart below, the middle school and high school are already above the state average. The elementary schools are currently performing slightly below the state average. In both of these cases, charter system status will allow us to use the flexibility to improve student achievement at all levels.

The Georgia Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) indicators align perfectly with the intent of the Fannin County charter system proposal. For the 2014-2015 school

year, all districts will be held harmless as baseline data for all of the indicators are established using the new Georgia Milestones Assessment System. Once baseline indicators are established in the Spring of 2015, appropriate anticipated growth measures will be established and measured for five years. Under the current accountability system in Georgia, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) results indicate positive performance. The table below represents the 2013 CCRPI scores for Fannin County Schools in grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, which results in an overall score above the state average.

	Elementary (3-5)	***Middle (6-8)***	***High (9-12)***	Overall Proportional Points
Fannin County Schools	75.4	81.3	77.7	77.6
Georgia Districts (Average)	77.8	74.6	71.8	75.8

Goal #1: *During each year of the charter term, the number of students who meet or exceeds in mathematics will meet or exceed state averages in all grade levels and increase by a minimum of 1% on the Georgia Milestones Assessment (or other statewide accountability system).*

Mathematics continues to be an area of weakness for the school district. Students across the district and at all educational levels have difficulty meeting performance expectations in this content area. Based on 2013 CCRPI results, students in the multi-racial, white, and economically disadvantaged subgroups, as well as students with disabilities at the elementary level, have difficulty performing at target levels in mathematics. Similar trends are revealed in middle and high school mathematics courses as well. When provided with greater flexibility through our charter, we expect higher student achievement in mathematics at all levels and in all subgroups. Flexible Service Models will be utilized in mathematics, as well as all other curriculum subjects, to provide more individualized instruction for students.

Goal #2: *During each year of the charter term, the number of students who meet or exceed in Science will meet or exceed state averages in all grade levels and increase by a minimum of 1% on the Georgia Milestones Assessment (or other statewide accountability system).*

Science continues to be an area of weakness for Fannin County Schools as measured by benchmark data as well as statewide accountability measures. Based on the 2013 CCRPI results,

generally all student subgroups performed below the expected level. With the infusion of STEAM instructional strategies in the elementary schools and the middle school, we anticipate increased student performance that will meet or exceed state expectations. Flexible Service Models may also be utilized to better meet the needs of students in the area of science at all academic levels. In addition, new course offerings and access to higher education partnerships at the high school will contribute positively to student growth in science.

Goal #3: *During each year of the charter term, the percentage of graduates earning high school credits for accelerated enrollment through postsecondary options with accredited colleges/universities and/or technical schools will increase by a minimum of 1% as measured by CCRPI (or other statewide accountability system).*

Providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills required to be lifelong learners and productive members of our society continues to be the core of the educational process. The Fannin County School System acknowledges the need to provide our students with enhanced opportunities to explore careers while embracing the academic needs for college and/or other postsecondary work. A proposed *College and Career Academy* will help ensure that our students are prepared for and able to perform successfully in the workforce. The addition of a College and Career Academy will enable our school system to be a contributing partner in providing a viable 21st century workforce for Fannin County. Having system-wide flexibility to make data-driven, student-centered, and school-based decisions would serve to promote innovative, proactive initiatives designed to enhance the student achievement gains and align career pathways to meet emerging career opportunities to better prepare our students for future careers.

LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Question #12: "The Local School Governance Matrix" for the Fannin County Schools Charter System Application can be found at http://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/Download.asp?L=1&LMID=729516&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=16508&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=400029.

Fannin County School System's Current Governance Structure

Currently, the local board of education (BOE) and the superintendent are responsible for the management of the school system. Fannin County is aware of the benefits of local decision-making, and most of the day-to-day decisions for school operations are already currently made at the school level by the principal and school level committees.

The members of the local board of education are elected to four-year staggered terms. The chairperson and vice-chairperson are elected by the BOE members. Board of Education members are required to complete annual trainings. The BOE is responsible for establishing all policy matters. Decisions involving personnel, services, land matters, and contracts are made based on recommendations of the Superintendent.

All policies are introduced at public BOE meetings. The superintendent gathers input from stakeholders and communicates that input to the BOE. Policies are then voted upon and adopted as a part of regular public BOE meetings. All policies are accessible on-line in a web-based program called eBoard. All procedures are transparent and available to the public. The district's legal counsel assists with the review of all proposed policies prior to presentation to the public to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws. In addition, the system's legal counsel provides the superintendent with advance notice of all future policies needed to maintain compliance with new local, state and federal laws.

Each of Fannin County's five schools currently has a school council. As Fannin County converts to charter system status, these school councils will be converted into school governance teams (SGT). The success of these school governance teams will hinge upon positive shifts in mindsets of all stakeholders regarding the differences in the current governance structure of the school system compared

to the new governance structure. The school governance teams will have increased opportunities for a voice in numerous policy decisions and procedures.

Fannin County School System's Plan for Maximizing School Governance Teams

Question #10: Explain how your system will transition from Local School Advisory Councils to effective and fully functioning decision-making Local School Governance Teams (LSGTs).

The purpose of the school governance teams will be to support schools so that they have a greater opportunity to positively impact student achievement. Each of the five school's governance teams will be fully operational by the beginning of the charter system contract, which will be July 1, 2015. In order for this to occur, elections of school governance team members will be held in the spring of 2015 and trainings for members will begin in July 2015. The school governance team will meet the school governance standards established by the Georgia Department of Education:

- Governing council composition reflects the diversity of the community
- Meets regularly and complies with Open Records and Open Meetings Laws
- Governing councils stick to governance and stay out of management
- Operates with substantial autonomy from the local school district
- Receives regular updates on academic, operational, and financial progress of the school
- Participates in regular governing training each year

An orientation on the duties and responsibilities of school governance team members will be required prior to being eligible to run for election to the SGT. The orientation training will establish basic parameters and expectations of the school governance team and its members. A total of eight training sessions will be required of all members during the first year of the charter system initiative. The effectiveness of the SGTs will depend upon each team meeting the general responsibilities required of school governance teams in predefined areas. A by-laws template will be made available so that each school governance team may use it as a guide to establish their own unique by-laws.

SUMMARY OF GOVERNANCE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(*See Fannin County School System – SGT Governance Matrix for details.)

Area of Responsibility	Principal	School Governance Team	Central Office/ Superintendent	Board of Education
Budget	• Recommends annual budget for use of discretionary funds	• Approves applicable federal program budgets • Creates and approves budget for charter QBE funds • Approves annual budget for use of discretionary funds	• Assists school in maximizing QBE funding for discretionary use • Incorporates school budgets into the system budget • Recommends to the BOE	• Accountable to citizens for local tax digest • Approves annual budget for school system
Resource Allocation	• Recommends resource needs (human, technological, etc.)	• Recommends school level resources based on school improvement plan	• Identifies district resource needs and allocations to each school	• Approves expenditures of resources greater than or equal to $25,000
Personnel Decisions	• Recommends school staffing needs, identifies potential candidates • Evaluates and recommends personnel action	• Recommends qualities/characteristics that are important to them in a new principal to the superintendent • Recommends specific applicants to be interviewed for principal position	• Recruits, screens, and identifies personnel for employment • Annually reviews performance of principals and central office administrators	• Employs and evaluates the superintendent • Approves superintendent recommendations
School Improvement Plan	• Collects data; develops and recommends School Improvement Plan (SIP) in conjunction with the School Improvement Team and/or Leadership Team	• Participates in the development of and approves the School Improvement Plan (SIP) • Reviews the implementation of the SIP and performance data	• Analyzes school goals to incorporate with the district plan • Evaluates school performance	• Receives periodic updates on school progress toward goals • Holds superintendent accountable for ensuring performance
Policy	• Recommends policies for review	• Develops by-laws • Reviews BOE policies and provides input	• Recommends policies to the BOE for approval	• Approves policies
Curriculum	• Ensures effective instruction and assessment of curriculum • Reviews student performance data	• Reviews school initiatives and provides feedback	• Oversees vertical implementation of curriculum and identifies gaps in school transitions • Monitors performance of teachers and administrators	• Monitors district performance on initiatives and state assessments.

Question #11: Address the formation of the local School Governing Teams, including how members are selected, the terms of members, and how and why members may be removed.

The local school governance team for each school will operate independently of each other and the district while at the same time collaborating effectively with all other system SGTs and the district. Each school governance team will consist of a seven voting members. To qualify for candidacy, each prospective SGT member must attend an orientation of school governance teams and district initiatives. Once each prospective member has completed the orientation, he/she is eligible to serve on a school governance team. Each school governance team will consist of the principal, who is a permanent member, two parents, two community members, and two school employees. Two high school students may be recommended by the principal and appointed by the SGT to serve as non-voting members. Student members are not required to attend the SGT orientation required of all other members. Two parent members will be elected by parents from the school. Only one parent per family may serve so that parents represent different families. Two community members will be recommended by the principal and chosen by the other five SGT members. Community members may be parents at the school if no community members without students are willing to serve. Parents and/or community members may NOT be school system employees. One school member will be elected by teachers from the school; the other school member will be appointed by the principal. Election of members will be held every two years after the initial three years. Initial members will serve the first year as a hold harmless year. After that, two elected parents and one elected school employee will serve a two-year term. Community members can choose to serve either a one-year or a three-year term. One appointed school employee will serve a three-year term. After the first year, students will serve a two-year term. The table below summarizes the makeup and terms of the school governance teams. Members of the school governance team can be removed by a majority vote for failing to attend at least 50% of the meetings or for not meeting responsibilities. A portion or the entire school governance team may be suspended or removed if the local superintendent and/or the local BOE receive evidence of ethical violation(s) or major conflicts rise.

School Governance Team Terms

SGT Makeup	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	ELECTION	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	ELECTION	
Principal	X	X	X		X	X		Repeat 2 year terms on staggered basis
2 Community Members (Recommended by Principal and Chosen by SGT)	X	X	X Optional Extra 2 years		X Optional Extra 2 years	Begin new 2 year term		
Parent Member (Elected by parents)	X	X	X	X	X Begin new 2 year term	X	X	
Parent Member (Elected by parents)	X	X	X	X	X Begin new 2 year term	X	X	
School Employee (Appointed by principal)	X	X	X		X	Begin new 2 year term		
School Employee (Elected by school employees)	X	X	X	X	X Begin new 2 year term	X	X	

Question #14: Describe the governance training to be provided to principals and members of the Local School Governing Teams in order to build the capacity needed to make decisions in the areas included in the spreadsheet.

Effective operation of school governance teams depends on the quality training provided and adequate implementation time. Fannin County School System will provide a comprehensive set of training modules to school governance team members beginning July 2015. Additional training, that is deemed necessary, may be scheduled on a school-by-school basis in subsequent years. The following eight training sessions/topics covered will be required for all school governance team members:

1. *Roles and Responsibilities* – scope of roles and responsibilities for board members including code of conduct and bylaws

2. *Effective Meetings* – accountability of Open Meetings and Records and parliamentary procedures

3. *School Funding and Budget* – education funding with local, state and federal funds; budget development and implementation

4. *School Operations* – safety and security procedures, principal management of school and student/school support services

5. *Human Resources and Resource Allocation* – resource overview including technology, personnel earnings with state funds, employment/termination process, Teacher Keys Evaluation System and professional learning

6. *School Improvement Planning* – alignment to the district Strategic Plan, CCRPI, and school improvement planning

7. *Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction* – educational initiatives, curriculum expectations, assessment programs, and instructional models

8. *Community Engagement* – parent engagement strategies, activities, and federal compliance

Question #15: Provide the name of the provider(s) of local School Governing Team training that you are considering approaching, if known.

The table below indicates the training sessions and monthly timeline for SGT training. Subsequent years will require new members to obtain the training credentials for effective school governance. Multiple modes of training will be provided for school governance teams including training provided by the school district, online training, collaborative training with other school districts, and training provided by Pioneer RESA.

Training Component	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017	Year 3 2017-2018	Year 4 2018-2019	Year 5 2019-2020
Roles and Responsibilities	July	Year 1 trainings will be repeated for all new members during June and/or July prior to each school year. This will allow all new members to be ready to serve effectively beginning with the August meeting each year.			
Effective Meetings	August				
School Funding and Budget	September				
School Operations	October				
Human Resources and Resource Allocations	November				
School Improvement Planning	January				
Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction	February				
Community Engagement	March				

Question# 16: Provide the name and contact information of an employee of the charter system that will facilitate communications between the Department and the chairpersons of the Local School Governing Teams in your charter system.

The Associate Superintendent for Personnel and Administration will serve as the contact and will facilitate communications between the Department of Education, the Fannin County School System Central Office, and the chairpersons of each SGT.

Summary of Current School Council Structure vs. School Governance Team Structure

Question #13: Highlight the differences between the current local school advisory structure and the new structure your new charter system will implement.

The current school level governance structure is the same for all schools in Fannin County. Each school has a school council that meets a minimum of four times per year. This body has a minimum of seven members. The parents are elected and serve two year terms. The business and staff representatives serve two years. This group serves in an advisory capacity for school matters, but has no independent decision-making authority. Each school council will be replaced by the newly established school governance team (SGT).

In terms of governance structure, the main differences between what is currently in place and what will be in place under the charter system include:

- selection process of governance members;
- training required of governance members;
- decision-making authority of governance teams;
- relationship between each school-level governance teams with the local board of education (LBOE); and,
- potential impact on student achievement by the members of the school level governance teams.

Central Office – Accountability Culture

Question #17: Explain how your system will transition its central office from a Compliance Culture (where success is measured by simply achieving requirements) to an Accountability Culture (where success is measured by achieving high expectations).

The mission of the Fannin County School System, "Developing Young Futures...Learning for Tomorrow, Today," provides the basis for the work that all Fannin County employees from central office to classroom teachers to bus drivers to maintenance workers to nutrition workers as well as all other employees strive to achieve each day. We believe that if our students spend their thirteen years in public education in an educational culture that does not believe in holding high expectations for ALL students, they will not be prepared to successfully compete in an ever-changing world.

For this reason, it is important to understand that our journey through the school improvement process began several years ago when we adopted the vision of being *"recognized as a world class school system that holds a vision of excellence for all students with successful progression at each level and a 100% graduation rate."* This is not an easy vision to reach as 100% means EVERY student in our system. When we adopted this vision to guide us as we worked to achieve our mission, we realized that we were setting a goal that many people might believe was unachievable, but setting our expectations high felt like the only acceptable goal. No one believed then or believes now that we are willing to lower our expectations for our students even though achieving our vision will be a difficult journey.

The Fannin County superintendent and central office directors will continue to meet in district school improvement meetings with school principals to review data on progress monitoring, RTI progress, common needs, and individual school successes in order to focus on what we need to do to continue to raise the bar higher for our children. In addition, we will continue our current policy of central office remaining "hands-off" in the hiring of individual school employees. Our process is to allow the principal of each school to determine which applicant for an opening is the best fit for each of their schools. In this way, the accountability factor at the school level increases. Holding school level administrators accountable for the progress of students at their schools would not be possible if we chose the teachers, paraprofessionals, or other employees for the school. Giving our school level administrators

the authority to make staffing, as well as instructional decisions, allows them to set high goals for their school and their students. None of our administrators are content to meet only a barely acceptable goal. By collaborating with peer administrators, we will jointly create lofty goals, and while we may struggle to achieve all of them, we will constantly encourage each other to aspire for excellence. Fannin County central directors, as well as the superintendent, conduct walkthroughs throughout the school year in all classrooms in all Fannin County schools. This is an important process that helps each of our administrators stay abreast of what is actually happening in our schools with our students. Seeing instruction happening daily helps confirm that we are on the right path and that our high expectations of a 100% graduation rate will become a reality.

Fannin County board members and central office employees are not just satisfied with compliance, and simply achieving requirements set by the state or federal departments of education is not our ultimate goal. Rather, we will continue to promote and nurture a culture in which we will meet our goal of 100% graduation rate, that of an accountability culture where success is measured by achieving high expectations. The Fannin County central office employees believe, just as Sam Walton stated, that "High expectations are the key to everything."

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Appendix of EXHIBITS

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.
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.
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. Online link to the school system's most recent annual audit.
11. Online link to the school system's most recent accreditation report.
12. Online link to the school system's most recent strategic plan.

Exhibit 1: Board of Education Resolution (Assurances)

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET

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

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

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

9. Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as applicable;
10. Shall provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners, as applicable;
11. Shall provide for supplemental educational services as required by federal law and pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03, and for remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01;
12. Shall notify the state of any intent to contract with a for-profit entity for education management services;
13. Shall be subject to the requirement that it shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized by local boards by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133;
14. Shall comply with federal due process procedures regarding student discipline and dismissal;
15. Shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school;
16. Shall have a written grievance procedure to resolve student, parent, and teacher complaints;
17. Shall have a written procedure for resolving conflicts between the system charter schools and the local board of education;
18. Shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20 -2-211.1 relating to fingerprinting and criminal background checks;
19. Shall remit payments to TRS on behalf of employees;
20. Shall ensure that if transportation is provided for its students, the system shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
21. Shall ensure that if the charter system participates in federal school meals programs, then each participating system charter school shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
22. Shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 and submit and obtain approval from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency;
23. Shall comply with the state facility requirements regarding site codes, facility codes, the submission of architectural plans for any new facility that the system may build or occupy during the charter term and all other facility requirements as established by the Department;
24. Shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160, subsection (e) of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-320, and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-740;

Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

25. Shall be subject to an annual financial audit conducted by the state auditor or, if specified in the charter, by an independent certified public accountant licensed in this state;
26. Shall acknowledge that all criteria used to calculate QBE funding may not be waived;
27. Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the charter system; and
28. Shall use any funds appropriated for the QBE weight for charter systems, in accordance with recommendations of the school governance teams or to advance student achievement goals and school level governance training.
29. Shall ensure that all new principals and other school leaders, central office staff, superintendents, and Board of Education members receive a detailed orientation session on their charter system commitments as part of their "on-boarding" process.

This Charter System Application, Assurance Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Fannin Board of Education on the 9th day of October, 2014.

Superintendent — Date: 10-9-14

Chair, Local Board of Education — Date: 10-9-2014

If a Charter is granted, all Petitioners assure that the proposed charter system programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with the terms of the Charter and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

Superintendent — Date: 10-9-14

Chair, Local Board of Education — Date: 10-9-2014

Exhibit 2: Notice of Public Hearings on Charter System Application

Brian Ledford

From:	Brian Ledford
Sent:	Thursday, August 28, 2014 11:10 AM
To:	Erik Cioffi; Lori Chastain; Robert Ensley; Sarah Finch; Shannon Miller
Cc:	Central office Admin.; Central Office Staff
Subject:	Notice of Community Meeting #2 and Public Hearings Regarding Proposed Charter System

Memorandum Via Email

FCSS Principals:

We will need your help in promoting FCSS Charter System Community Meeting #2 and FCSS Charter System Public Meetings concerning the proposed application to become a charter system.

FCSS Charter System Community Meeting #2 will be held on:

- ✓ September 30, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. @ the Fannin County Performing Arts Center

The FCSS Charter System Public Hearings will be held on:

- ✓ October 8, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the Fannin County Board of Education Office
- ✓ October 9, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. at the Fannin County Board of Education Office

Fannin County Schools is seeking Charter System Status to allow the system the freedom from state rules in regulations to structure educational opportunities that best fit the needs of the children in our community. Charter System status will allow our local schools to make the best decisions possible for the children in our community and provide for more local governance and decision making that can be made at the state level. In exchange for freedom from state rules, the school system will commit to increasing academic performance beyond the current state requirements. All school systems in Georgia must decide to become a Charter System, IE2 System or a Status Quo System by June 2015. A study of the three options determined that becoming a Charter System was the best choice for our community. Specific information concerning our charter system application will be presented at the FCSS Community Meeting #2.

This announcement will be placed on the system website, the local newspapers, and an Alert Now message will be sent at the district level. Please include the date of the community meeting and the public hearings on your school's website and in any communication you send home where this announcement is appropriate. If you have any questions, please let me know!

1

Exhibit 3: Application Process (Stakeholder Involvement)

Since its decision to seek charter system status, the Fannin County School System executed a variety of deliberate efforts to disseminate its intent and solicit input from internal and external stakeholders in the community.

In preparation for district AdvancEd/SACS accreditation, the school system continued the process of reviewing and evaluating many of the system's plans including the district strategic plan, school level accreditation plans, Title I plans, Title II-A Equity plan, CTAE plan, IDEA plan, safety plans, facilities plans, charter system guidelines/requirements and annual school improvement plans. Survey results gained from the accreditation process were instrumental in obtaining valuable insight from parents, students, and the community, as well as school system employees, regarding the needs of the school system.

Initial study of all of the Georgia school system flexibility options began in June of 2012 and resulted in a collaborative decision that the best pathway for the Fannin County School System to meet our mission and vision would be conversion to a charter system. In January 2014, the Fannin County Board of Education submitted a letter (email) of intent to the Georgia State Department of Education to become a charter system. The Fannin County charter system development process began to take formal shape at this time. Presentations and discussions led by district representatives took place at all five schools on multiple occasions. School level administrators hosted discussions about the charter process within their buildings. School level committees including school improvement teams, leadership teams, school councils, parent teacher organizations, booster clubs, and parent advisory councils were presented to and were prompted for discussion on the charter system. Charter system information was presented to community groups including the Kiwanis and Lions Clubs and the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce. Feedback was sought from all stakeholder groups. A Fannin County School System – Flexibility Options link was added to the district website to help disseminate information to the community. Charter system community meetings were held to inform parents, students, district employees, and the community in general of the ideas and details surrounding the charter system process. In order to meet the needs of stakeholder groups, translation services were provided at the community meetings and were available if schools needed them during other parent/community meetings.

During the development stages of the charter system process, committees were formed to help steer the direction of the charter. These committees included Governance, Innovations, and Waivers. District administrators were selected to lead each committee. Committee membership included district administration, school level administration, teachers, academic coaches, parents and members of the business community. Members of each committee were evenly distributed into four visiting teams who then participated in onsite visits to one or more charter systems. Four operating charter systems were

visited to gain an insight into the charter system process and status. Once visiting teams concluded their visits, committees met to discuss governance, innovations, and waivers that they had observed in the operating charter systems.

All school system employees including bus drivers, cafeteria staff, clerical staff, paraprofessionals, maintenance staff, teachers, administrators, school board members, community members, parents and students were invited to and/or participated in the meetings and planning processes. The district's Finance Director and Student Information Specialist took an in-depth approach to the planning process by attending workshops and meetings, providing data, and participating in discussions.

Discussions, recommendations, and suggestions from all stakeholder groups were taken into consideration as the charter system plan and application began to take shape. The charter system application is considered a "working plan" as details will continue to unfold as school level governance teams come into place and contribute to the decision making process. A draft of the charter system application was presented to stakeholder groups in late August/early September for review and revisions and the final draft was presented to the public in September 2014. A community meeting was held along with two public hearings seeking additional input into the charter petition. Suggestions were incorporated into the draft. At the October 2014 Board of Education meeting, the charter system petition was approved unanimously by board members and deemed ready for submission to the Georgia Department of Education.

Details of stakeholder involvement are chronicled in the following "Timeline of Events."

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Fannin County School System Charter System
Timeline of Events

Action	Participants/Audience	Date
GaDOE consultant ((Louis Erste/Dr. Howard Hendley) overview on school system flexibility and charter system option	FC Board of Education District/School Administration Community Members	6/12/12
Pioneer RESA (Gerald Boyd) presentation – school system flexibility options	FC Board of Education District/School Administration Community Members	10/8/13
School System flexibility options overview presentation (Cynthia Panter)	FC Board of Education District/School Administration Community Members	10/10/13
Discussion: school system flexibility/Charter System	BRES Faculty Meeting	10/15/13
Discussion: school system flexibility/Charter System	EFES Facult Meeting	12/4/13
Discussion: school system flexibility/Charter System	EFES Faculty/Staff	12/5/13
Discussion: school system flexibility/Charter System	WFES Faculty/Staff	12/16/13
Discussion: Charter System	BRES School Improvement Team	1/23/14
Discussion: Charter System	FCHS Instruction Meeting	1/27/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	Academic Coach Meeting District Administrators	1/27/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	BRES Faculty Meeting	1/27/14
Letter of Intent (email) submitted to GaDOE	GaDOE	1/27/14
Presentation of Charter System	WFES School Council	2/4/14
Presentation of Charter System	WFES Parent Advisory Group	2/6/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	WFES Faculty Meeting	2/17/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	EFES Faculty Meeting	2/18/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	Academic Coach Meeting District Administrators	2/24/14
Presentation/Planning: Charter System	FCHS School Advisory Council	2/25/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	District School Improvement Team	2/26/14
Media: *The News Observer – "School Officials to Discuss Changes"*	Community	2/26/14
Presentation/Discussion/Planning: Charter System	EFES – Parent Advisory Group	2/28/14
Presentation/Discussion/Planning: Charter System	FCMS – School Council	3/3/14
Presentation of charter system initiative (County-Wide (Technology, District Planning & CRCT Night)	Community Members School District Administrators School Administrators District Faculty/Staff	3/6/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	EFES – School Council Meeting	3/6/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System (Title IIA Meeting)	District/School Administrators	3/10/14
Presentation/Training: Charter Systems (Presenter: Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman)	FC Board of Education District Administrators School Administrators Media/Community	3/11/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	EFES – PTO Meeting	3/11/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	FCMS – Leadership Team Meeting	3/12/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	EFES – Faculty Meeting	3/18/14
Community Announcement: WPPL, WLJA, ETC	Media Community Members	3/18/14

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Fannin County School System Charter System
Timeline of Events

ALERT NOW: Charter System Informational Meeting	Faculty/Staff Parents/Students	3/23/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	Academic Coach Meeting District Administrators	3/24/14
ALERT NOW: Charter System Informational Meeting	Faculty/Staff Parents/Students	3/24/14
Facebook Post – Charter System Informational Meeting	Media	3/25/14
FCSS Charter System Informational Meeting #1	Community Members Parents/Students School System Employees	***3/25/14***
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	District School Improvement Team (DSIT) Meeting	3/26/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	BRES Faculty Meeting	4/15/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System/Study Committees	EFES Faculty Meeting	4/15/14
Presentation to "Leadership Fannin – Education Day" (Mark Henson)	Community Members	4/17/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System (study committees/ visiting teams)	FCMS School Council	4/21/14
Email: Charter System Study Committees/System Visits	Parents Community Members	4/22/14
Charter System Study Committee Visit - Union County School System	Study Committee Members	4/22/14
Charter System Study Committee Visit – Madison County School System/College & Career Academy	Study Committee Members	4/23/14
Charter System Study Committee Visit – Marietta City School System	Study Committee Members	4/24/14
Charter System Study Committee Visit – Cartersville City School System	Study Committee Members	4/25/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	Academic Coach Meeting District Administrators	4/28/14
Planning/Discussion: Governance Committee Meeting (C. Panter – chairperson)	Committee Members, Brian Ledford	5/13/14
Planning/Discussion: Innovations Committee Meeting (K. Walton – chairperson)	Committee Members, Brian Ledford	5/13/14
Planning/Discussion: Governance Committee Meeting (C. Panter – chairperson)	Committee Members, Brian Ledford	5/30/14
Planning/Discussion: Innovations Committee Meeting (K. Walton – chairperson)	Committee Members, Brian Ledford	5/30/14
Charter System Foundation – South Georgia New Charter System Workshop (Dublin, Georgia)	Brian Ledford	6/4/14
Charter System Foundation – Coffee Pot Workshop (Calhoun, Georgia)	Brian Ledford	6/25/14
Charter System Foundation – North Georgia New Charter System Workshop (Calhoun, Georgia)	Brian Ledford; Karen Walton; Mark Henson; Michael Gwatney; Cynthia Panter; Erik Cioffi; Susan Holloway; Cindy Godfrey; Lucas Roof; Shannon Miller; Matthew Price; Sarah Finch;	07/25/14

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Fannin County School System Charter System
Timeline of Events

	Robert Ensley; Lori Chastain	
Planning/Discussion: Waiver Committee Meeting (Dr. M. Gwatney – chairperson)	Committee Members B. Ledford C. Panter	8/14/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	BRES School Improvement Team	09/09/14
Presentation/Discussion: Charter System	FCMS School Council, Brian Ledford	9/10/14
Presentation/Discussion: Charter System	FCMS Parent Advisory Council, Brian Ledford	09/11/14
Discussion/Planning: Charter System	EFES School Improvement Team	09/11/14
FCSS Charter System Informational Meeting #2	Community Members, Parents/Students, School System Employees, General Public, Media	09/30/14
FCSS Charter System – Public Hearing #1	FC Board of Education, District Administrators, School Administrators, Community Members, Parents/Students, General Public, Media	10/8/14
FCSS Charter System – Public Hearing #2	FC Board of Education, District Administrators, School Administrators, Community Members, Parents/Students, General Public, Media	10/9/14
Fannin County Board of Education – Resolution (Charter System)	FC Board of Education, District Administrators, School Administrators, Community Members, Parents/Students, General Public, Media	10/10/14

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EXHIBIT 4: List of FCSS Schools

Blue Ridge Elementary School
224 East Highland Street
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
706-632-5772
Principal: Shannon Miller

Needs Improvement Status: N/A

Fannin County Middle School
4560 Old Hwy 76
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
706-632-6100
Principal: Lori Chastain

Needs Improvement Status: N/A

East Fannin Elementary School
1 Elementary Circle
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
706-374-6418
Principal: Sarah Finch

Needs Improvement Status: N/A

Fannin County High School
360 Rebel Circle
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
706-632-2081
Principal: Erik Cioffi

Needs Improvement Status: N/A

West Fannin Elementary School
5060 Blue Ridge Drive
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
706-492-3644
Principal: Robert Ensley

Needs Improvement Status: N/A

Proposed:
Fannin College & Career Academy
300 Rebel Circle
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
706-632-2013

CTAE Director: Patricia DuBois

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Exhibit 5: Description of Charter System:

The vision of the Fannin County School System is to be "*recognized as a world class school system that holds a vision of excellence for all students with successful progression at each level and a 100% graduation rate.*" This vision will be attained through increasing the rigor of student learning, increasing educational opportunities for all students, and integrating community and post-secondary partnerships. This continued focus will strengthen the district's mission, "*Developing Young Futures...Learning for Tomorrow, Today*" by providing flexible student-focused instructional opportunities. A comprehensive approach to serving the diversified needs of the students will begin in kindergarten and extend through twelfth grade. Three innovations will serve as the focus for our charter system implementation. The innovations that will be implemented include:

1. Flexible Service Models - Fannin County School System will implement Flexible Service Models to serve students based on their individual needs rather than their state-identified label. While students will be identified for services, their status of EIP or EL will only be used for state funding purposes and not for prescribed instructional services. Services for students will be integrated to best serve the needs of all students. Other potential program areas that will utilize Flexible Service Models include remedial education and gifted education. The implementation of Flexible Service Models will greatly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of personnel and fiscal management.
2. STEAM Methodology - The Fannin County School System will offer a unique approach to increase student exploration, application and evaluation through the development and utilization of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) methodology. While the STEM concept was originally the direction that Fannin County Schools wished to pursue, further discussion noted

that there was also a need to include the arts. By integrating the arts in instruction we will be able to meet the needs of all learners no matter what learning style works best for them and offer additional creative hands-on outlets for students.

The implementation of STEAM instructional strategies will be a gradual process that is customized for each participating school. This phase-in approach will be utilized beginning at the elementary level and continue into the middle school level. Elementary school students will explore curriculum concepts using inquiry-based instructional strategies and related hands-on activities. Middle school students will apply these instructional strategies to specific grade-level math, science, and arts curriculum. Instructors will require groups of students to apply research through data collection and analysis relative to student interest and alignment with standards. Students will have the opportunity to earn various high school credits while in middle school not only in the college track but also in the area of CTAE. This will allow students with varied interests to complete additional pathways at the high school level through the proposed College and Career Academy.

The purpose of using STEAM methodology in instruction is to provide a foundation for elementary school students to learn through exploration and to provide learning opportunities for middle school students to apply prior knowledge and problem solving skills. Immersion in STEAM principles at these levels should enable students entering high school to use evaluation skills at a much higher level than our students currently possess. The integration of science, technology, art, and mathematics throughout the curriculum will help to ensure mastery of standards and an increase in student achievement. The integration of STEAM concepts and instructional strategies that will be possible in multiple settings (including STEAM laboratories, indoor classrooms, outdoor venues, field trips, guest speakers, etc.) will afford students hands-on experiences and the tools required for skill attainment. The abundance of local natural resources will provide numerous varied opportunities to extend the learning beyond the traditional classroom. This will result in increased interest in learning for students as well as provide a connection to the real world that will make these educational experiences meaningful.

3. College and Career Academy - The Fannin County School System will expand postsecondary options and partnerships to include both academic and CTAE opportunities for all students based on the needs of the student population and the regional economic community. Partnerships with area postsecondary schools are not currently being fully utilized. North Georgia Technical College, Appalachian Technical College, Young Harris College, and the Ellijay Campus of Dalton State College are within easy driving distance from Fannin County High School. Additionally, a satellite campus of University of North Georgia is currently in the planning and development stages to be located in Blue Ridge, Georgia. With increased partnerships with these institutions, more students will receive postsecondary credits through dual enrollment. Accelerated courses such as ACCEL, Advanced Placement offerings, and/or Move on When Ready will also provide students with another avenue to earn additional postsecondary credits while fulfilling high school graduation requirements.

   Students will also be able to earn high school/graduation credits for internships completed with local businesses through the College and Career Academy. One of the goals of the College and Career Academy will be to continually monitor the needs of the school system and local economy to ensure that students are mastering the skills necessary to be successful in the workforce. Providing postsecondary opportunities to students while enrolled in high school will bridge the gap between K-12 education and the real world experiences that our students will encounter.

   Continuous study of the economic work force will drive the course offerings and opportunities for students. As a result of these additional course offerings, Fannin County High School graduates will be better prepared to fill local jobs deemed to be critical for the regional work force and economy.

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Exhibit 6: Local School Governance Training Timeline

Effective operation of school governance teams depends on the quality training provided and adequate implementation time. Fannin County School System will provide a comprehensive set of training modules to school governance team members beginning July 2015. Additional training, that is deemed necessary, may be scheduled on a school-by-school basis in subsequent years. The following eight training sessions/topics covered will be required for all school governance team members:

1. *Roles and Responsibilities* – scope of roles and responsibilities for board members including code of conduct and bylaws;
2. *Effective Meetings* – accountability of Open Meetings and Records and parliamentary procedures;
3. *School Funding and Budget* – education funding with local, state and federal funds; budget development and implementation
4. *School Operations* – safety and security procedures, principal management of school and student/school support services
5. *Human Resources and Resource Allocation* – resource overview including technology, personnel earnings with state funds, employment/termination process, Teacher Keys Evaluation System and professional learning
6. *School Improvement Planning* – alignment to the district Strategic Plan, CCRPI and school improvement planning
7. *Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction* – educational initiatives, curriculum expectations, assessment programs and instructional models
8. *Community Engagement* – parent engagement strategies, activities and federal compliance

The table and legend below indicate the training sessions and monthly timelines for initial training. Subsequent years will require new members to obtain the training credentials for effective school governance. Multiple modes of training will be provided for school governance teams including training provided by the school district; online training; partnerships training with other school districts and training provided by Pioneer RESA.

Training Component	**Year 1 2015-2016**	**Year 2 2016-2017**	**Year 3 2017-2018**	**Year 4 2018-2019**	**Year 5 2019-2020**
Roles and Responsibilities	July	Year 1 trainings will be repeated for all new members during June and/or July prior to each school year. This will allow all new members to be ready to serve effectively beginning with the August meeting each year.			
Effective Meetings	August				
School Funding and Budget	September				
School Operations	October				
Human Resources and Resource Allocations	November				
School Improvement Planning	January				
Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction	February				
Community Engagement	March				

Exhibit 7: Conflict of Interest Policy

Fannin County School System will hold school governance team members to a similar standard for Conflict of Interest as established for school board members. As appropriate and applicable, the board policy will be utilized as guidance in the creation of the SGT by-laws in regard to conflict of interest for SGT members.

Board Policy **Descriptor Code: BHA**
Board Member Conflict of Interest

The Fannin Board of Education shall adhere to these Conflict of Interest provisions, as set forth in state law.

Financial Governance

1. No Board member shall use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges, advantages, or employment for himself or herself, his or her immediate family member, or others.
2. No Board member shall act in his or her official capacity in any matter where he or she, his or her immediate family member, or a business organization in which he or she has a material financial interest that would reasonably be expected to impair his or her objectivity or independence of judgment. Compliance with Code Section 20-2-505 shall not constitute a violation of this paragraph.
3. No Board member shall solicit or accept or knowingly allow his or her immediate family member or business organization in which he or she has an interest to solicit or accept any gift, favor, loan, political contribution, service, promise of future employment, or other thing of value based upon an understanding that the gift, favor, loan, contribution, service, promise, or other thing of value was given or offered for the purpose of influencing that board member in the discharge of his or her official duties. This paragraph shall not apply to the solicitation or acceptance of contributions to the campaign of an announced candidate for elective public office if the local board of education member has no knowledge or reason to believe that the campaign contribution, if accepted, was given with the intent to influence the local board of education member in the discharge of his or her official duties. For purposes of this paragraph, a gift, favor, loan, contribution, service, promise, or other thing of value shall not include the items contained in subparagraphs (a)(2)(A) through (a)(2)(J) of Code Section 16-10-2.
4. No Board member shall use, or knowingly allow to be used, his or her official position or any information not generally available to the members of the public which he or she receives or acquires in the course of and by reason of his or her official position for the purpose of securing financial gain for himself or herself, his or her immediate family member, or any business organization with which he or she is associated.
5. No Board member or any of his or her immediate family members or business organization in which he or she has an interest shall represent any person or party other than the local board of education or local school system in connection with any cause, proceeding, application, or other matter pending before the local school system in which he or she serves or in any proceeding involving the local school system in which he or she serves.
6. No Board member shall be prohibited from making an inquiry for information on behalf of a constituent if no fee, reward, or other thing of value is promised to, given to, or accepted by the local board of education member or his or her immediate family member in return therefor.
7. No Board member shall be deemed in conflict with these provisions if, by reason of his or her participation in any matter required to be voted upon by the local board of education, no material or monetary gain accrues to him or her as a member of any profession, occupation, or group to any greater extent than any gain could reasonably be expected to accrue to any other member of that profession, occupation, or group.
8. No Board member may also be an officer in any organization that sells goods or services to that local school system, except as provided in Code Section 20-2-505 and excluding nonprofit membership organizations.
9. No Board member shall be deemed in conflict with these provisions if, by reason of his or her participation in any matter required to be voted upon by the local board of

education, no material or monetary gain accrues to him or her as a member of any profession, occupation, or group to any greater extent than any gain could reasonably be expected to accrue to any other member of that profession, occupation, or group.

10. No Board member shall sell to any county board any supplies or equipment used, consumed, or necessary in the operation of any public school in this state unless there are fewer than three sources for such supplies or equipment within the county; provided, however, that any purchase pursuant to this subsection for supplies or equipment that is equal to or greater than $10,000.00 shall be approved by a majority of the members of the board in an open public meeting. Any member violating this shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.
11. No local board may do business with a bank or financial institution where a Board member is an employee, stockholder, director or officer when such board member owns 30% or more stock in that institution.
12. No Board member may have a financial interest in school buses, bus equipment or supplies, provide services for buses owned by the Board, or sell gasoline to the Board from a corporation in which the Board member is a shareholder.
13. No Board member shall accept a monetary fee or honorarium in excess of $101.00 for a speaking engagement, participation in a seminar, discussion panel, or other activity that directly relates to the official duties of that public officer or the office of that public officer. Actual and reasonable expenses for food, beverages, travel, lodging, and registration for a meeting which are provided to permit participation in a panel or speaking engagement at the meeting shall not be monetary fees or honoraria.

Conduct As Board Member

1. No Board member shall disclose to or discuss any information which is subject to attorney-client privilege belonging to the local board of education to any person other than other Board members, the Board attorney, the local school superintendent, or persons designated by the local school superintendent for such purposes unless such privilege has been waived by a majority vote of the whole Board.
2. No Board member shall vote on the employment or promotion of any of his or her immediate family members. No immediate family member of a Board member may be employed or promoted unless a public, recorded vote is taken separately from all other personnel matters.
3. No Board member may be employed in any position in the school district in which they serve.
4. No Board member shall hold another county office.
5. No Board member shall be employed by the State Department of Education or serve concurrently as a member of the State Board of Education.
6. No Board member shall serve on the governing body of a private elementary or secondary educational institution.

Each member of this Board understands and acknowledges that no person shall be eligible for election as a member of a local board of education unless he or she:

(1) Has read and understands the code of ethics and the conflict of interest provisions applicable to members of local boards of education and has agreed to abide by them; and
(2) Has agreed to annually disclose compliance with the State Board of Education's policy on training for members of local boards of education, the code of ethics of the local board of education, and the conflict of interest provisions applicable to members of local boards of education.

Each person offering his or her candidacy for election as a member of a local board of education shall file an affidavit with the officer before whom such person has qualified for such election prior to or at the time of qualifying, which affidavit shall affirm that he or she meets all of the qualifications required pursuant to this subsection. This subsection shall apply only to local board of education members elected or appointed on or after July 1, 2010.

Fannin County Schools Date Adopted: 2/8/2011

FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

2290 East First Street
Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513
Phone: 706-632-3771 Fax: 706-632-7583
www.fannin.k12.ga.us

Exhibit 8: List of Business Arrangements/Partnerships

Abernathy Home Furnishing
Ace Hardware
Akins Funeral Home
Alexander's
All Purpose Pressure Washing
All Star Photo
Alpha Insurance
Americorps Service to Families
Andy's Jewelry
Angela Stewart Delorme, Attorney at Law
Appalachian Fence
Appalachian Roofing
Audrey Whitehead
Bakers
Bear Eye Care
**Bearden Muffler and Signs
Big Jim's Flooring
Black Sheep Restaurant
Blue Ridge Adventure
Blue Ridge Beef
Blue Ridge Bird Seed Co.
Blue Ridge Chiropractic
Blue Ridge Computers
Blue Ridge Dentistry
Blue Ridge Design Development LLC
Blue Ridge Fly Fishing
Blue Ridge Glass
Blue Ridge Insurance
Blue Ridge Law Firm
Blue Ridge Manufacturing
Blue Ridge Mountain BBQ
Blue Ridge Mountain EMC
Blue Ridge Mountain Medical
Blue Ridge Mountain Outfitters
Blue Ridge Oil
Blue Ridge Pawn Shop
Blue Ridge Spinal
Blue Ridge Stone Depot
Bo Chance
Body Plex
Brotherhood 0il
Browns Barber Shop
C & M Auto repair
Cadence Bank
Car Crafters
Charles Flowers Log Homes
Circle J Steakhouse
Circuit World
Cochran's Jewelry
Cohutta Cove Mini Golf
Cohutta Mountain Pet and Feed
Community & Southern Bank
Complete Cash Title Pawn
Content Creative
Copper Basin Federal Credit Union
Copper Basin Veterinary Clinic
Couch Lawn Care
Country Corners
Courtyard Grill
Craig's Flowers
CVS Pharmacy
Dacorp, Inc.
Dana Chastain, Fannin County Clerk of Superior Court
Dana Nazerian Spencer
David Ralston
Deal Quality Mountain Homes
DEKA Technology
DHQ Ventures Metal Products
Diamond Center
Dickey McCay Insurance
Doss/Kiker
DQ Grill & Chill
Dr. Joe Monticello
Dr. M.K. Wooten
Ducks Truck Parts
Edward Jones
El Rio
Elements of Blue Ridge
Ellijay Telephone Company
EMT- Paul Davenport
Ensley Trucking
Epworth Community Club
Family Life Chiropractic
Fannin County Co-Op
Fannin County Farm Bureau
Fannin County Recreation Department
Fannin Lanes
Fannin Quarterback Club
Fannin Regional Hospital
Fannin Upholstery
First Community Mortgage
Food Lion
FRH Appalachian Physicians Group
GA Real Estate Company
Georgia Mountains Health Services, Inc.
Go Green Spray Foam
GoCo
Gregory S. McHan, M.D.
Hair Studio
Harvest on Main
Heritage Healthcare of Blue Ridge
Holloway's Garage Door Company
Home Depot
IGA
Ingles
Integrative Sports Medicine & Wellness of Blue Ridge
Interstate Welding and Steel
Jabaley Eye Care
Jack Roof, MD
Jackson Hewitt
Jacky Jones Chevrolet, Buick, GMC
James Thomas Heating and Cooling
Jerry's Mtn. Home Furniture
Joe's BBQ
Johnson Paving
June Walker Chevrolet
Kayes Auto Parts
Keith Summer Construction
Kenny's Pizza & Subs
Kevin Panter Insurance
Kevin Ware Trucking
King Heating & Air
L & T Nails
Lakewood Auto Sales
Lance Trucking Company
Latigo Dreams Feed & Tack
Levi Strauss
Life Care Center of Copper Basin
Mark of Excellence
Mark Seven Autoplex
Mason Tractor Company

Massage Therapist- Terri Thatcher
McCaysville Drug and Gun
Melwood Springs
**Mercier Orchards
Mercier's Apple House
Michael D. Birchmore, PC
Midas
Mike's Trackside BBQ
Milestones Learning & Child Care
Mimi Smith CPA
Miracles for Hair & Nails
Mitzis on Main
MJR Seemless Guttering
Monte Alban Mexican Restaurant
Monty's Auto Repair
Moore's Garage
Mountain Laurel Cabin Rentals
Mountain Medical
Mountain Place Realty
Mountain Valley Motors
Mountain Valley Systems
Mountain Getaway Cabin Rentals
Mr. Fix It Automotive
Mundy's Heating and Air
N & N Florist
Nancy Maclean, Century 21
NAPA
National Title Pawn
Nature Healing Concepts
Nelson Tractor
Nicholson Tire Center
North GA Paper
North GA Physical Therapy
North GA Spas
North GA Sports Zone
North GA Title & Home Services
North Georgia Ford
North Georgia Respi-Care
Northwest Georgia Maxiofacial
Ocoee Animal Hospital
Office of District Attorney
One Main Financial
O'Reilly's Auto Parts
Papa's Pizza
Park Sterling Bank
Parker's Ladies & Men's Apparel
Peach State Prosthetics
Peoples Bank of East TN
Pepsi
Phoenix Company
Piedmont Health
Pittman's Florist
Plaza Barber shop
Posh
Presents of Mind
Pride Electric
Pulse Medical
RaceWay
Rachel Callihan & Associates
Raper's Heating and Air
Raymond Milton Youth Golf Fund
Reuben's Barber Shop
Riverstone Medical Center
Rock Solid
Ronnie Hold Dentistry
Ronnie Thompson Ford
Roses
Russell Seabolt, DMS
S & S Electrical Service, LLC
S & S Painting Pressure Washing
Save-A-Lot
Serenity Garden Café
Sisson Log Homes
Sister's Restaurant
Southern Charm
Southern Financial
Southern Highland Seafood
Spa & Deck Creations
Sports Medicine and Wellness
State Farm - Charlie Edmondson
Sterling Customs
Sue's Café
Super Saver
Tallent Drug Company
Tanglez Salon
Tank Town
TDS Telecom
Terry Lee Wilson, LLC
The News Observer
The Rehabilitation Center
The Terminator Pest Control
The Trailer
Threads of Blue Ridge
Three Sister's Fudge
Tin - Loong
Tipton Orthodontic
Toccoa Management
Tom's Amusement Company
Top Hand Safety
Town & Country Furniture
TRC
Tri State Heating and Air
Tri-state EMC
Tucker's Tree Service
Tyson Foods, Inc.
United Community Bank
Vacations By Sally
Waffle King
Welcome Fannin
Whatnot Frozen Yogurt
Whitepath Fab Tech
Wholesale Supply Group
Wide World of Sports
Wilderness Creek Falls
Woodmen of the World
World Of Smiles
X-Trem Graphics
Zaxby's

*****These businesses are owned and operated by members of the local Board of Education. These businesses continually support the academic and athletic programs of our schools with donations. The school system nor any school in the system has any contractual arrangements with these businesses.***

FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Exhibit 9: Description of FCSS Fiscal History

The Fannin County School System's fiscal history continues to display trends of stability. Over the course of time, the school system has consistently provided students with an education that is second to none while maintaining fiscal stability. Even with the economic downturn of the past several years, the system has been able to maintain a 180-day school calendar *(with the exception of one year)* and a positive fund balance. Even though our expenses exceeded our revenues in FY11, FY12, FY13, and FY14, due to the conservative approach of our current and past Board, we were able to cover the difference with our healthy fund balance. Austerity cuts since 2003 amount to more than $13 million which is in addition to the loss of revenue from the local 5 mills of almost $50 million. The current mileage rate for the Fannin County School System is 12.90 which continues to be one of the lowest mileage rates in Georgia.

Fannin County Board of Education General Fund Budget Revenue and Expenditure History is detailed in the following table. Fannin County's per pupil expenditure is listed to give an example of the board's desire to continue to provide the best possible education for all students.

FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION					
GENERAL FUND BUDGET REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE HISTORY					
	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
REVENUES					
LOCAL TAXES	14,596,874.00	14,560,440.00	14,624,975.00	14,671,937.00	16,191,830.00
LESS: 2.5% COLLECTION FEES	(364,922.00)	(364,011.00)	(365,624.00)	(366,798.00)	(404,796.00)
LOCAL TAXES - INTANGIBLE TAX	375,000.00	308,218.00	264,311.00	288,253.00	385,353.00
LOCAL TAXES - TRANSFER TAX	100,000.00	93,677.00	85,988.00	88,690.00	92,174.00
LOCAL TAXES - TVA	1,033,000.00	1,126,879.00	1,085,826.00	1,511,163.00	1,712,309.00
LOCAL TAXES - EARNINGS ON INVESTMENT	150,000.00	125,000.00	140,000.00	146,700.00	20,000.00
OTHER LOCAL SOURCES	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	45,400.00	40,918.00
STATE SOURCES - QBE	12,443,859.00	12,134,810.00	10,993,703.00	10,997,804.00	11,063,946.00
STATE SOURCES - GRANTS	157,573.00	142,884.00	124,654.00	199,067.00	224,953.00
FEDERAL IN LIEU OF STATE GRANTS	100,000.00	94,591.00	9,105.00		
STIMULUS	799,715.00				
TRANSFER IN		237,656.00		500,000.00	221,768.00
TOTAL REVENUES	**29,441,099.00**	**28,510,144.00**	**27,012,938.00**	**28,082,216.00**	**29,548,455.00**
EXPENDITURES					
INSTRUCTION	19,171,456.00	19,525,930.00	19,213,108.00	19,129,207.00	19,387,282.00
PUPIL SERVICES	947,252.00	987,044.00	907,252.00	1,144,349.00	1,022,429.00
IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES	1,002,795.00	928,008.00	974,617.00	986,687.00	1,021,737.00
EDUCATIONAL MEDIA SERVICES	616,621.00	606,621.00	638,548.00	608,250.00	620,250.00
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	810,222.00	782,527.00	779,016.00	823,712.00	807,280.00
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	2,103,504.00	2,058,211.00	2,113,877.00	2,080,035.00	2,184,629.00
MAINTENANCE & OPERATION	2,541,633.00	2,295,362.00	2,452,246.00	2,326,377.00	2,308,765.00
STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	1,967,231.00	1,920,527.00	2,017,809.00	2,174,772.00	2,143,960.00
SUPPORT SERVICES - CENTRAL	75,000.00	65,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES	5,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	27,224.00	32,123.00
TRANSFER OUT	110,000.00				
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**29,350,714.00**	**29,179,230.00**	**29,126,473.00**	**29,320,613.00**	**29,548,455.00**
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES	90,385.00	(669,086.00)	(2,113,535.00)	(1,238,397.00)	0.00
ESTIMATED FUND BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR	4,247,604.00	3,854,615.00	6,180,977.00	5,469,820.71	4,831,424.00
ESTIMATED FUND BALANCE AT ENDING OF FISCAL YEAR	4,337,989.00	3,185,529.00	4,067,442.00	4,231,423.71	4,831,424.00
FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION					
ACTUAL PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES					
FTE's	3,076	3,043	3,026	3,001	*
Per Pupil Expenditures	9,587.73	10,167.94	10,070.10	9,814.75	*
Local Taxes Per Pupil Expenditures	5,088.88	5,299.34	5,480.84	5,597.56	*
State QBE Per Pupil Expenditures	3,644.32	4,207.55	3,710.93	3,777.21	*
			**indicates that the fiscal year/audit is not closed out*		

Exhibit 10: Fannin County BOE – FY13 Audit Report
http://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/Download.asp?L=1&LMID=729516&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=16508&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=394043

Exhibit 11: Accreditation Report – AdvancEdEd/SACS
http://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/Download.asp?L=1&LMID=729516&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=16508&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=380333

Exhibit 12: FCSS Strategic Plan – 7/1/2014 – 6/30/2015
http://www.fannin.k12.ga.us/Download.asp?L=1&LMID=729516&PN=DocumentUploads&DivisionID=16508&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&SubP=&Act=Download&T=1&I=380334