

## **Tift County School System Charter System Petition Introduction**

Today our country, our state, our community, and our school system are all facing significant challenges; challenges we could not have imagined a few years ago. In public education, the most significant question, for which we constantly seek an answer, is how do we ensure that the educational opportunity we provide for our students prepares them adequately for college, career, and life itself? We want all of our schools to provide the highest quality and most meaningful educational experience possible for every student.

For the past several years under the No Child Left Behind Act, accountability for our schools and school system has been primarily to the state and federal governments in the form of making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools have operated in a compliance mode. We now have the opportunity through achieving charter system status to create our own vision for the future. Our school system and our community, through working effectively on behalf of all our children, can create a culture that values education.

The Tift County School System has the responsibility for ensuring highly reliable and effective schools which deliver a high quality educational program to all children and youth served by the system. The challenge for the Tift County Board of Education, the administration, teachers, and support staff is to adopt policies, programs, procedures, processes, and practices that result in an equitable and excellent education for all students. The system serves 7,535 students in kindergarten through grade twelve in seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. The system also provides in its pre-kindergarten center and one elementary school a pre-kindergarten program for 336 four-year-olds.

We want to ensure that our community is meaningfully engaged in charting the future of our school system. To that end, the school system regularly surveys parents, school faculties, and students to

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elicit their perceptions of the school system. Community conversations have been conducted to solicit our citizens' views about what is required for our system to become exemplary in every respect.

The school system began the development of a strategic plan in May 2012 using a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association and the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. The strategic plan represents the work of a 35-member planning team composed of system and school level leaders, parents, students, and business and other community representatives. Five action teams, whose membership also totaled 35, were assembled to support the work of the planning team.

The planning team was charged with the responsibility of developing a strategic plan for the period 2013 through 2018. First, the team developed a set of belief statements (core values). Next, a SWOT analysis was conducted to determine the current state of the school system, the community served by the system, and the larger community. Mission and vision statements were adopted along with strategic goal areas and performance objectives. The "Strategic Improvement Planning Report" was presented to the Board of Education on February 28, 2013. The school system has completed an annual update of the plan and is currently implementing components of that plan. The most recent annual update of the strategic plan is contained as Exhibit 12.

The mission of the school system is *"to educate, prepare, and inspire students to reach their fullest potential."* The vision for the system is to *"... prepare our students for tomorrow by building on our tradition of excellence."* The strategic goal areas and performance objectives identified in the strategic plan are:

### Goal Area I – Student Achievement

- To improve student mastery of curriculum
- To increase student performance
- To increase non-academic course offerings
- To provide a research-based instructional program

### Goal Area II – School Culture

- To determine stakeholder perceptions of pride and motivation in each school and the district

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- To make each school and the district a safe, orderly, and inviting place for students, faculty, and parents
  - To foster innovation and a positive learning environment
- Goal Area III – Stakeholder Engagement
- To improve community involvement
  - To raise student attendance rates
  - To increase parental involvement
- Goal Area IV – High Quality Workforce
- To ensure high-quality professional learning programs
  - To empower visionary leaders
  - To ensure teacher effectiveness
- Goal Area V – Operations and Infrastructure
- To develop and maintain efficient facilities and technology infrastructure
  - To ensure an efficient use of fiscal resources
  - To ensure student services are efficient

Contained in these goal areas and performance objectives are the challenges that the school system has been addressing and must continue to address to be an exemplary and high-reliability system.

This charter petition builds upon the system’s ongoing school improvement plans, accreditation of our schools by AdvancED (SACS/CASI), the system’s strategic planning initiative, the informal partnerships with the post-secondary institutions in the community, and extensive interaction with the community and business community we serve.

A primary impetus for our seeking charter system status is to improve student performance significantly through the implementation of strategies that are currently constrained by state statute and/or state board of education rule. One of our goals is for all of our students to perform at a high level. Table 1 contains the elementary, middle, and high school CCRPI scores for 2012 through 2014 for Tift County Schools and the state average scores. In addition, system scores for Tift are reflected. The scores indicate that Tift has scored lower than the state average each year at the elementary level and has scored higher than the state average at the middle and high school levels for two of the three years. Tift’s scores overall deviate little from the state average. Being at the state average is not good enough for our system and our students. Charter system status will challenge us to do significantly better.

**Table 1**  
**College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)**  
**Elementary, Middle, High School, System, and State Average Scores**  
**2012-2014**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>System</b>
2012 - Tift	67.9	79.3	75.2	72.5
2012 - State	74.5	73.8	72.8	
2013 – Tift	70.9	70	69.2	70.9
2013 – State	77.8	74.6	71.8	
2014 – Tift	67.4	75.9	71.2	71.2
2014 – State	72.7	73.8	68.4	

We believe that wise use of the flexibility granted through the charter will ensure that the school system meets the challenge of improving student performance, transforming education in our county, and significantly improving the quality of life in our community. We gladly accept a higher level of accountability in exchange for greater flexibility to ensure a significant increase in student learning and performance.

## The Case

The framework for identifying and addressing the major challenges facing the school system is contained in Table 2 below. The table identifies the challenges, rank orders them, specifies the actions to be taken to address each of the challenges, indicates how the actions will lead to addressing the challenges, the flexibility required through waivers, the timeline for implementation of the actions, and which of the actions are considered by the school system to be innovative.

**Table 2  
The Case**

#	Question	Challenge #1	Challenge #2	Challenge #3
1	What challenges is your school district facing?	To ensure that all students are reading on grade level and are proficient in mathematics by the end of third grade	To implement organizational strategies and instructional delivery models for grades K-5 that will be effective for identifiable groups of students who are not currently realizing academic success	To create an educational model that increasingly personalizes learning for students in grades 6-12 through focusing on individual student needs, skills, and interests
2	What is the rank order priority of these challenges (from most to least important)?	1	2	3
3	Which of these challenges will your school district be able to address by becoming a charter system?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	What specific actions will your district take to address each of these challenges (listed in #3 above) during its five-year charter term?	<p><b>1.1</b> Conduct horizontal and vertical alignment of literacy/reading and math curricula from Pre-K through grade 3</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Align the Pre-K – 3 literacy/reading and math curricula with state learning standards, instructional</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Implement innovative and effective organizational strategies for the following sub-populations of students in K-5: economically disadvantaged, developmentally delayed, English language learners, special needs and gifted students, and other students who are unable</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Develop learner profiles and personalized learning plans to ensure that the educational needs, skills, and interests of each student in grades 6-12 are recognized and incorporated into the instructional program</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Provide a competency and project-based curriculum that is flexibly</p>

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	<p>materials, and local and state assessments</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Implement alternative grouping and instructional strategies, restructured school day, and extended school day or year</p>	<p>to function effectively in the regular classroom</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Adopt instructional delivery models for identified student sub-populations that will increase significantly their engagement, attendance, and academic achievement</p>	<p>paced, emphasizes 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and accommodates students' individual needs</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Establish an instructional delivery system that incorporates cutting edge technology which supports blended, hybrid, and virtual learning through anytime, anywhere learning opportunities</p>
<p>Provide a clear explanation of how each of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) will lead to the specific challenge being addressed</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Ensuring horizontal and vertical alignment of literacy/reading and math curricula across all classes at each grade level and over the 4 grades will significantly decrease instructional variability among classes and grades</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Aligning Pre-K – 3 literacy/reading and math curricula with standards, materials, and assessments will ensure a focused curriculum through the primary grades</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Alternative grouping strategies will allow for more effective grouping of students whose needs may require a different structuring of space and time. Adopting time as a variable will recognize that students learn at different rates. A variety of instructional strategies will recognize that students learn in different ways.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Organizing the school day and year differently, utilizing alternative grouping of students for instruction, personalizing learning, and ensuring that adequate time is allocated for each subject will result in greater academic success for the identified student sub-populations</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Alternative instructional strategies will ensure an increase in engagement, attendance, and learning and will best serve the needs of the identified sub-populations of students</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Development of learner profiles and personalized learning plans will provide the impetus for restructuring the middle and high school curriculum and the adoption of an instructional delivery system that will result in increased learning and engagement</p> <p><b>3.2</b> A curriculum that is competency and project-based, flexibly paced, and which emphasizes real world 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, will increase student interest and engagement which, in turn, will lead to increased student learning</p> <p><b>3.3</b> The instructional delivery system will include the creation of an academy that will provide an innovative learning environment in which students will progress through a curriculum that is flexibly paced and</p>

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		<p><b>Waivers:</b>  <b>Action 1.1</b>          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.01 The Quality Core Curriculum and Student Competencies          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.20 State-funded K-8 subjects and 9-12 courses for students entering ninth grade in 2008 and subsequent years  <b>Action 1.2</b>          O.C.G.A. §20-2-1010 State board to prescribe textbooks; choosing from multiple listings          GBOE Rule 160-4-4-.10 Learning resources selection &amp; recommendation  <b>Action 1.3</b>          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class size;          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student attendance          GBOE Rule 160-04-2-.11 Promotion, placement, &amp; retention          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 Early intervention          O.C.G.A. §20-2-153 Early intervention program          GBOE Rule 160-5-2-.02 Withholding of funds from local units of administration</p>	<p><b>Waivers:</b>  <b>Action 2.1</b>          GBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 Language assistance; program for English learners (ELs)          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education program for gifted students          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 Early intervention program          O.C.G.A. §20-2-153 Early intervention program          GBOE Rule 160-5-2-.02 Withholding of funds from local units of administration;  <b>Action 2.2</b>          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 School day &amp; school year for students &amp; employees          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student attendance          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class size          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.11 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-182, 183, 184, 185) Promotion, Placement, and Retention          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 Early intervention          O.C.G.A. §20-2-153 Early intervention program</p>	<p>that is responsive to student needs and interests. The delivery system will embrace extensive use of digital technology</p> <p><b>Waivers:</b>  <b>Action 3.1</b>          None  <b>Action 3.2</b>          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.05 Middle school program criteria          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 High school graduation requirements for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in the 2008-09 school year and subsequent years          GBOE Rule 160-4-4-.10 &amp; O.C.G.A. §20-2-1010 Learning resources selection and recommendation  <b>Action 3.3</b>          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 School day &amp; school year for students &amp; employees          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student attendance          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.14 Instructional extension          GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class size          O.C.G.A. §20-2-182 Program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries &amp; benefits; maximum class size; reporting requirements          GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-159.5) Dual credit courses</p>
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				<p>GBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 Language assistance: Program for English learners (ELs)  O.C.G.A. §20-2-156 Language assistance: Program for English learners  GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education program for gifted students  O.C.G.A. §20-2-151, 152, 161)  Education program for gifted students</p>	<p>O.C.G.A. §20-2-319.4 Virtual instruction programs  GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.22 Personnel required</p>
7	<p>Indicate the timeline for implementation of each specific action (listed in #4 above).</p>	<p><b>Action 1.1</b> will be developed in Year 1 &amp; implemented in Year 2 (2017-18)  <b>Action 1.2</b> will be developed in Year 1 &amp; implemented in Year 2 (2017-18)  <b>Action 1.3</b> will be developed in Years 1 &amp; 2 &amp; implemented in Year 3 (2018-19)</p>	<p><b>Action 2.1</b> will be developed in Year 1 &amp; implemented in Year 2 (2017-18)  <b>Action 2.2</b> will be developed in Year 1 &amp; implemented in Year 2 (2017-18)</p>	<p><b>Action 3.1</b> will be developed in Year 1 &amp; implemented in Year 2 (2017-18)  <b>Action 3.2</b> will be developed in Years 1 &amp; 2 &amp; implemented in Year 3 (2018-19)  <b>Action 3.3</b> will be developed in Year 1 &amp; implemented in Year 2 (2017-18)</p>	
8	<p>Indicate which of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) represents an innovation for your school district.</p>	<p><b>1.3</b> Alternative grouping &amp; instructional strategies</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> Organizational strategies for identified sub-populations  <b>2.2</b> Instructional delivery models for identified sub-populations</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Learner profiles and personalized learning plans  <b>3.2</b> Competency &amp; project-based curriculum that is flexibly paced  <b>3.3</b> Creation of academy that accommodates hybrid, blended, &amp; virtual learning</p>	

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The following section contains expanded responses to questions 1-5 posed in “The Case” matrix included above as Table 2.

1. *What challenges is your school district facing?*

*Provide a brief description of the specific issues that, if resolved, would allow you to consider your school district a complete success.*

2. *What is the rank order priority of these challenges (from most to least important)?*

3. *Which of these challenges will your school district be able to address by becoming a charter system?*

4. *What specific actions will your district take to address each of these challenges (listed in #3 above) during its five-year charter term?*

5. *Provide a clear explanation of how each of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) will lead to the specific challenge being addressed.*

### **Challenge #1 - To ensure that all students are reading on grade level and are proficient in mathematics by the end of third grade**

This challenge is the first priority for our system as a charter system. We recognize that the first years of school are critical to the ultimate success of our students. They must become proficient in reading and mathematics in the early grades to realize academic success in the higher grades. Their readiness to learn when they come to school plays a large role in determining how successful they will be academically. Our system is currently experiencing an increasing number of entering pre-kindergartners and kindergartners who are unready for school entry. The school’s curriculum in the early grades, how it is aligned, and the effectiveness with which it is taught and learned are critically important to the success of all of our students. We have identified three actions to address challenge #1 and Goal Area I of our strategic plan.

#### **Action 1.1 Conduct horizontal and vertical alignment of literacy/reading and math curricula from Pre-K through grade 3**

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This action will ensure that our curriculum is well organized and designed to facilitate learning, is free of gaps, and is not filled with needless repetitions. We want to ensure alignment across subject areas and grade levels and that all teachers, pre-kindergarten through grade three, understand what is being taught at their grade level and at those grades above and below their grade level.

### **Action 1.2 Align the Pre-K – 3 literacy/reading and math curricula with state learning standards, instructional materials, and local and state assessments**

The second action will ensure that what is written in the curriculum is what is taught and what gets tested. We will use the Webb alignment process or one of like quality to accomplish actions 1.1 and 1.2. The horizontal and vertical alignment of pre-kindergarten through grade three will ensure appropriate progression in literacy/reading, mathematics, and engagement in learning which are crucial to students' future success.

### **Action 1.3 Implement alternative grouping and instructional strategies, restructured school day, and extended school day or year**

The third action should provide our primary teachers with effective grouping and instructional strategies that move beyond whole-class to differentiated instruction that is responsive to the diversity that exists in our classrooms in terms of student experiences, interests, cognitive ability, readiness, and ethnic diversity. As a school system we must seek to overcome the lack of readiness of many of our children when they enter school. In 2012, 53.4 percent of 575 live births in Tift County were to unwed mothers; 77 of those births to unwed mothers were to mothers aged 10-19; and 125 were low weight births. These characteristics often result in lack of readiness for school entry. The number of retentions at the kindergarten level is also an indicator of lack of readiness. There were 24 kindergarten retentions in 2011-12 and 27 in 2012-13.

The focus on pre-kindergarten through grade three is a critical starting point for our work as a charter system to ensure that every child is the recipient of a high quality educational experience.

**Challenge #2 - To implement organizational strategies and instructional delivery models for grades K-5 that will be effective for identifiable groups of students who are not currently realizing academic success**

This challenge is our second priority as a charter system. We recognize that all students do not learn at the same rate nor do they necessarily learn in the same way. In addition, students who possess certain characteristics experience a variety of challenges that students in the general population may not experience. This challenge focuses on those students who may require interventions that are currently not available to the school system without waivers from the state. The target student sub-populations that will be the focus of this challenge are economically disadvantaged students (approximately 1,575 in K-5), those who are developmentally delayed (766 currently in EIP), students who are English language learners (445 in K-5 ESOL), special needs students who are eligible for special education services (432 in K-5), students who have been identified as gifted (314 in K-5), and students who, for a variety of reasons, are not succeeding academically. Organizational and instructional strategies that are not currently employed are needed to ensure greater success for these students.

**Action 2.1 Implement innovative and effective organizational strategies for the following sub-populations of students in K-5: economically disadvantaged, developmentally delayed, English language learners, special needs and gifted students, and other students who are unable to function effectively in the regular classroom**

Through the first action, our system will examine, select, and implement effective alternative organizational strategies for students in K-5 who are included in the targeted sub-populations. We will consider changes to the school day and year, class-size options, looping, multi-grade or multi-age grouping, time and resource allocations, teacher teams within and across grades (professional learning communities), advisory and mentoring options, and additional structures and strategies deemed to improve learning opportunities for students.

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Many students in the targeted populations have life circumstances that interfere with their opportunity to learn. The system will analyze the physical, emotional, and social needs of students, determine new options for parental support, and determine the student support services that may be provided by the system to reduce or eliminate the circumstances that keep students from realizing success in school.

### **Action 2.2 Adopt instructional delivery models for identified student sub-populations that will increase significantly their engagement, attendance, and academic achievement**

Action 2.2 focuses on how instruction will be delivered to the students. The system will first conduct root-cause analyses of students in each of the sub-populations who are not experiencing success, identify a variety of instructional strategies that have proven effective over time with student populations similar to those included in this challenge who are not learning at a high level, and implement the selected strategies.

### **Challenge #3 - To create an educational model that increasingly personalizes learning for students in grades 6-12 through focusing on individual student needs, skills, and interests**

Creating a new educational model for our students in grades 6 – 12 is ranked third in priority order but represents the greatest challenge to our ingenuity and our capacity to change. The challenge of focusing on individual student needs, skills, and interests effectively may produce the greatest return on our educational investment. Understanding that people learn at different rates and in different ways and the availability of digital technology that will accommodate those realities have led the school system to embrace a vision of creating an educational model that will allow for greater differentiation and personalization of instruction. Strategies for effective use of electronic devices in the teaching and learning process are evolving at a rapid but uneven pace. The challenge is to increase students' motivation to engage and learn through their ability to access information and use it effectively. The system's plan is to integrate technology effectively into and beyond the classroom, modify the delivery of

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education to include instruction delivered over the Internet, and to structure the school day and year to accommodate increased students' active participation in their education. Effective use of instructional technology for hybrid, blended, and virtual delivery models where appropriate, flexible scheduling and seat time devoted to individual classes, rethinking the school day and year, varying class sizes in delivery of the education program, and use of digital texts will result in increased student achievement.

### **Action 3.1 Develop learner profiles and personalized learning plans to ensure that the educational needs, skills, and interests of each student in grades 6-12 are recognized and incorporated into the instructional program**

The system will identify the elements to be included in learner profiles and personalized learning plans, how they will be formatted, and the learning management system that will be required to track data elements for each student. Profiles and plans will then be developed according to a timetable that will be established by the system.

### **Action 3.2 Provide a competency and project-based curriculum that is flexibly paced, emphasizes 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and accommodates students' individual needs**

This action will require the system to analyze the personalized learning plans developed through action 3.1, then to restructure the curriculum so that students may pursue their learning in different ways, at different levels, anytime and anywhere, and which may be approached from different perspectives to accommodate the needs of individual students.

### **Action 3.3 Establish an instructional delivery system which incorporates cutting edge technology that supports blended, hybrid, and virtual learning through anytime, anywhere learning opportunities**

As the system moves from a teacher-driven instructional program to that of a student-driven program significant flexibility will be required. This increased flexibility, addressing individual student needs and using devices that motivate students, will result in more effective delivery of the education

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program. Many infrastructure issues, however, must be addressed for extensive use of digital technology to become a reality in the school system. Among these are wireless capability, band-width adequacy, and financial resources that are required to ensure that an appropriate number of up-to-date devices are available for students and staff.

Providing extended learning time beyond the school day and year will support students who learn at a slower rate or who wish to progress at an accelerated rate. In addition, virtual learning opportunities will remove prescribed time limitations. The use of time as a variable is critical to address the fact that students learn at different rates. Extended learning time should reduce the number of student retentions and increase performance on state-mandated assessments. A caution in this area is that simply adding time is not enough to raise student performance.

6. *Although you will be granted a broad flexibility waiver if you are granted a charter, please list the specific Georgia law or State Board rule that must be waived to allow your district to implement each specific action (listed in #4 above).*

### **Connecting the Dots – Challenges, Actions (Solutions), and Waivers Required**

The response to this question includes a listing of each challenge, the actions required to address each challenge, waivers required for implementation, and an explanation of why the waiver is required.

#### **Challenge #1 - To ensure that all students are reading on grade level and are proficient in mathematics by the end of third grade**

##### **Action 1.1 - Conduct horizontal and vertical alignment of literacy/reading and math curricula from Pre-K through grade 3**

- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.01 The Quality Core Curriculum and Student Competencies – to allow flexibility in selection of literacy/reading and math curriculum components for grades K-3 and the alignment of the components.

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- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.20 State-funded K-8 subjects and 9-12 courses for students entering ninth grade in 2008 and subsequent years – to allow flexibility in selection of curriculum components and integration of subjects.

### **Action 1.2 - Align the Pre-K – 3 literacy/reading and math curricula with state learning standards, instructional materials, and local and state assessments**

- O.C.G.A §20-2-1010 State board to prescribe textbooks; choosing from multiple listings
- GBOE Rule 160-4-4-.10 Learning resources selection & recommendation  
Waiver of this statute and rule will allow significant latitude in selection of instructional materials for inclusion in the K-3 curriculum.

### **Action 1.3 - Implement alternative grouping and instructional strategies, restructured school day, and extended school day or year**

- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class size - to allow for variation in the number of students in a classroom consistent with instructional objectives and delivery model
- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student attendance – to allow for redefinition of student attendance
- GBOE Rule 160-04-2-.11 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-182, 183, 184, 185) Promotion, placement, & retention - to allow flexibility in establishing criteria for student progression through the primary grades
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-153) Early intervention program – to allow for alternative grouping and instructional strategies to better meet the needs of students in K-3
- GBOE Rule 160-5-2-.02 Withholding of funds from local units of administration – to allow for alternative organizational strategies without loss of state funds

### **Challenge 2 – To implement organizational strategies and instructional delivery models for grades K-5 that will be effective for identifiable groups of students who are not currently realizing academic success**

**Action 2.1 - Implement innovative and effective organizational strategies for the following sub-populations of students in K-5: economically disadvantaged, developmentally delayed, English language learners, special needs and gifted students, and other students who are unable to function effectively in the regular classroom**

- GBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 Language assistance: program for English learners (Els)
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education program for gifted students
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-153) Early intervention program
- GBOE Rule 160-5-2-.02 Withholding of funds from local units of administration

Waiver of the above rules will allow the system significant flexibility in implementing organizational strategies for the identified populations that are deemed more effective than those currently prescribed by state board rules without risking the loss of state funding.

**Action 2.2 - Adopt instructional delivery models for identified student sub-populations that will increase significantly their engagement, attendance, and academic achievement**

- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 School day & school year for students & employees – to allow for flexible scheduling
- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student attendance – to allow for redefinition of attendance
- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class size – to allow for variation in the number of students in a classroom consistent with instructional objectives and delivery model
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.11(O.C.G.A. §20-2-182, 183, 184, 185) Promotion, Placement, and Retention– to allow for modification of requirements for promotion, placement, and retention of students in grades K – 5
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-153) Early Intervention Program (EIP)– to allow for instructional delivery models beyond those specified in the rule while earning QBE funding for EIP

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- GBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-156) Language Assistance: Program for English Learners (ELs) – to allow for alternative delivery models and to waive class-size and teacher certification requirements
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-151, 152, 161) Education Program for Gifted Students– to modify minimum participation requirements and models required by *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*

**Challenge 3 – To create an educational model that increasingly personalizes learning for students in grades 6-12 through focusing on individual student needs, skills, and interests**

**Action 3.1 - Develop learner profiles and personalized learning plans to ensure that the educational needs, skills, and interests of each student in grades 6-12 are recognized and incorporated into the instructional program**

- No waivers required

**Action 3.2 - Provide a competency and project-based curriculum that is flexibly paced, emphasizes 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and accommodates students' individual needs**

- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.05 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-290) Middle school program criteria– to allow for modification of middle school criteria
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 High school graduation requirements for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in the 2008-09 school year and subsequent years – to allow for flexibility in students meeting high school graduation requirements
- GBOE Rule 160-4-4-.10 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-1010) Learning resources selection and recommendation – to provide flexibility in selection and use of instructional material

**Action 3.3 - Establish an instructional delivery system that incorporates cutting edge technology which supports blended, hybrid, and virtual learning through anytime, anywhere learning opportunities**

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- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 School day & school year for students & employees - to allow for modification of length of school year and school day for students
- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.10 Student attendance – to allow for redefinition of attendance
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.14 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-184.1) Instructional extension– to allow for waiver of class size for instruction beyond the school day and to remove restrictions on addressing academic needs of low-performing students
- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-152/182) Class size– to allow for variation in the number of students in a classroom consistent with instructional objectives and delivery model
- O.C.G.A. §20-2-182 Program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits; maximum class size; reporting requirements; application to specific school years – to allow for waiver of the class size requirement related to funding
- GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34 (O.C.G.A. §20-2-159.5) Dual credit courses – to allow maximum flexibility in advancement of students when ready
- O.C.G.A. §20-2-319.4 Virtual Instruction Programs – to allow greater flexibility in selection of a provider for virtual instruction should the school system choose such a delivery model
- GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.22 Personnel Required – to allow for alternative staffing configurations at the middle and high schools to increase efficiency and effectiveness

**Please also list the waivers you have used during the past five years (including those granted to the entire state, e.g. class size) and what goals they helped you accomplish during those five years?**

- **School day and school year for students and employees** - GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02
- **Class size** - GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 and O.C.G.A. §20-2-152/182
- **Required personnel** – GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.22
- **Categorical expenditure controls** – GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.29 and O.C.G.A. §20-2-171
- **Categorical expenditure controls** – O.C.G.A. §20-2-167

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- **Categorical expenditure controls** – O.C.G.A. §20-2-184.1
- **Categorical expenditure controls** – O.C.G.A. §20-2-184-186
- **Salary schedule** – O.C.G.A. §20-2-212-212.1-212.2
- **QBE Financing** – O.C.G.A. §20-2-160

All of the waivers received by our school district over the past five years have been employed to ensure the continued financial solvency of the school system.

**7. Indicate the timeline for implementation of each specific action (listed in #4 above)**

Six of the eight actions identified in the application to address the three challenges will be developed in year one of the charter period which is the 2016-17 school year. The remaining two actions will be developed in years one and two. The timeline follows.

**Table 3  
Implementation Timeline for Actions**

Action	Year 1 2016-2017	Year 2 2017-2018	Year 3 2018-2019	Year 4 2019-2020	Year 5 2020-2021
#1.1 Align literacy/reading & math curricula Pre-K – 3	Develop	Implement			
#1.2 Align Pre-K – 3 literacy/reading & math curricula with learning standards, instructional material, & local & state assessments	Develop	Implement			
#1.3 alternative grouping & instructional strategies for Pre-K – 3	Develop	Develop	Implement		
#2.1 Innovative & effective organizational strategies for specified student sub-populations	Develop	Implement			
#2.2 Instructional delivery models for	Develop	Implement			

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specified student sub-populations					
#3.1 Learner profiles & personalized learning plans	Develop	Implement			
#3.2 Competency-based, flexibly paced curriculum	Develop	Develop	Implement		
#3.3 Instructional delivery system	Develop	Implement			

**8. Indicate which of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) represents an innovation for your school district.**

The following actions represent innovations for our school system:

**Action 1.3** - Implement alternative grouping and instructional strategies, restructured school day, and extended school day or year

**Action 2.1** - Implement innovative and effective organizational strategies for the following sub-populations of students in K-5: economically disadvantaged, developmentally delayed, English language learners, special needs and gifted students, and other students who are unable to function effectively in the regular classroom

**Action 2.2** - Adopt instructional delivery models for identified student sub-populations that will increase significantly their engagement, attendance, and academic achievement

**Action 3.1** - Develop learner profiles and personalized learning plans to ensure that the educational needs, skills, and interests of each student in grades 6-12 are recognized and incorporated into the instructional program

**Action 3.2** - Provide a competency and project-based curriculum that is flexibly paced, emphasizes 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and accommodates students' individual needs

**Action 3.3** - Establish an instructional delivery system that incorporates cutting edge technology which supports blended, hybrid, and virtual learning through anytime, anywhere learning opportunities

## Performance Expectations

9. *What are your school system's specific student performance expectations for your five-year charter term?*

The Tift County School System, as a charter system, anticipates considerable growth in student performance on CCRPI assessments and growth indicators during the five-year term of our charter. The three goals listed below are required components of the charter contract, and we accept the challenge of achieving these goals.

Goal 1: During each year of its first five-year charter term, the Tift County Charter System shall “beat the odds” as determined by formula measuring expected student growth.

Goal 2: During each year of its first five-year charter term, each Tift County Charter System school shall “beat the odds” as determined by a formula measuring expected student growth. If a school or schools fail to beat the odds in Year 1 of the charter, the Tift County Charter System shall decrease the number of system charter schools not beating the odds during years 2 and 3 at a rate so that all schools will beat the odds in year 4.

Goal 3: The Tift County Charter System will demonstrate proficiency and/or improvement on the CCRPI.

- A. Measure 1: Using year 1 of the charter term to establish a CCRPI baseline, the system's CCRPI score shall be equal to or better than the State in year 2, and better than the State in years 3-5 of the charter contract.
- B. Measure 2: If the system's first-year CCRPI score is lower than the State, the system shall have until the end of year 2 of the charter term to close the gap between the system and the State.
- C. Measure 3: In years 3-5 of the charter term, the system's CCRPI score shall be better than the State.

## Local School Governance

A primary goal of the Tift County School System is visionary governance and leadership which ensure success for all students. The Board of Education, superintendent, and leadership team are dedicated to ensuring a highly reliable and accountable school system that guarantees qualified and effective leaders, teachers, and support staff throughout the school system. Thus, one of the expectations is that the quality of instruction in every classroom shall be at the highest level without significant variance. As the Tift County School System revises its governance structure to further distribute the decision-making process, such revisions must be crafted in the context of a governance structure established over time at the local level with certain board of education policies and practices retained because they have proven effective. In addition, there are certain state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements with which the school system must abide.

The school system will strive to ensure appropriate decision-making authority for each of the schools and for the school governance teams with the caveat that all decisions must be within the parameters referenced herein. The school governance structure established for the system will be one of defined autonomy; defined in the context of certain non-negotiable system goals for student achievement, instruction, and support (Marzano and Waters, *District Leadership that Works*, Solution Tree Press, 2009), and in keeping with certain state and federal requirements which may not be waived.

The Charter Schools Act of 1998 cites several statutory requirements that may not be waived through the charter process. These requirements are listed in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b). Several additional state statutes may not be waived in the charter system process. These include statutes relating to local board of education reporting requirements, open meetings, access to public records, and a brief period of quiet reflection for all students.

Federal requirements that may not be waived include, but are not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, Governmental Accounting Standards Board

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(GASB) provisions, and program availability requirements for students with disabilities, limited English, or in poverty.

The goal of maximizing school level governance is to ensure an appropriate balance of authority and responsibility at the system and school levels. It is the system's plan to assign decision-making authority within the Tift County School System where it is most effective and efficient in supporting student achievement and guaranteeing the highest level of community involvement in the schools.

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

- **Provide a timeline that shows all the major steps in this transition, including the timing of the formation of LSGTs, the training of principals and LSGTs, and anything you deem important in making this critical transition for decentralized/distributed decision-making.**
- **Include information about the steps that have already occurred or will occur to inform all stakeholders of the new governance structure.**

### Local School Advisory Councils

The Tift County School System began the formation of local school councils when councils were first mandated by state statute in 2001. The only local policy relating to the councils was adopted in 2004 and was revised in 2009. Policy BBFA states that each school in the system shall have a local school council which meets requirements of state law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86) and operates pursuant to adopted bylaws and guidelines. In addition, the policy states that whenever a vacancy occurs in the position of principal, the superintendent shall consult with the school council as he/she deems appropriate to assist him/her in making a recommendation to the Board.

Each school in the Tift County School System except for one-grade schools has a local school council whose role is advisory. One-grade schools are aligned with sister schools to allow for continuity in school council membership. These councils have no decision-making authority. They offer advice to the school leadership in several areas of school operations including development of the school improvement plan, extra-curricular activities, communications, student code of conduct, and day-to-day

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issues that arise in the life of students. The councils operate under written bylaws which specify the responsibilities of the council, its role, membership, terms of office, elections, vacancies, meetings, minutes, officers of the council, duties of the principal, and board of education responsibilities.

### **Local School Governance Teams**

Effective July 1, 2016, the school system will transition from local school councils to local school governance teams (LSGTs). Table 4 below provides the timeline that shows the major steps in the transition beginning with a preliminary discussion of locus of control and school-level decision making by the charter system steering committee. Community and school system stakeholders in structured meetings next discussed potential responsibilities of LSGTs in the areas of budget and finance, resource allocation, personnel decisions, establishing and monitoring achievement of school improvement goals, curriculum and instruction, and school operations. The steering committee then completed the school level governance decision-making matrix showing how the superintendent will share decision-making authority with local school governance teams in developing recommendations for consideration by the Board of Education.

Beginning in January 2016, the school system's professional learning staff, RESA, and consultants will develop training modules which will be designed to prepare principals and LSGTs to carry out their responsibilities effectively. The school district's media and community relations office will ensure that the proposed governance structure is communicated to all stakeholder groups in Tift County through a variety of media and on a regular basis. In the spring of 2015, the charter system steering committee developed proposals for roles, relationships, and responsibilities of the LSGTs, school principals and staff, and the central office staff to ensure effective administration of the school system and to carry out board of education policies.

A template for LSGT bylaws will be developed by the staff member who will serve as liaison to the LSGTs. Bylaws which have been adopted by existing LSGTs in the state will be used as a guide in

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this work with ongoing input from stakeholders. Principal training will commence in May 2016 after completion of the draft bylaws. Module 1 will provide principals with a clear understanding of how LSGTs will function and their relationship to the school system as a whole. Module 2 will provide strategies for increasing parental and community engagement. Orientations for candidates for LSGT membership will be conducted in May 2016 to heighten their awareness of the role of the teams. Elections for LSGT membership will be conducted in May 2016.

LSGT orientation and training on Modules one and two will be conducted in June for LSGTs. Local school councils will cease operation on June 30 and LSGTs will commence operation on July 1. During the month of July, LSGTs will continue orientation and will further their training with Modules 3 and 4. The first business meeting for LSGTs will be in August 2016.

**Table 4**  
**Timeline for Conversion to Local School Governance Teams (LSGTs)**

<b>Beginning Date</b>	<b>Ending Date</b>	<b>Transition Step</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
May 2014	May 2014	Preliminary discussion of locus of control & school-level decision making	Charter system steering committee
May 2014	May 2014	Receive input from school & community representatives relative to establishment of LSGTs	Ad hoc school governance committee
July 2014	October 2015	Develop school level governance matrix (Table 6) & charter system petition narrative	Charter system steering committee
January 2016	June 2016	Develop training modules for principals & LSGTs – Module 1 to be developed by end of March 2016	Professional learning staff, RESA, & consultants
February 2015	April 2015	PSAs, Website notification, public meetings to inform stakeholders of proposed governance structure	Superintendent & staff
March 2015	March 2015	Establish roles, relationships & responsibilities of LSGT, principal & school staff, superintendent & CO staff, & BOE (consistent with matrix, Table 6)	Charter system steering committee
April 2016	April 2016	Develop template for LSGT bylaws including commencement date, membership, election of members, term of office, vacancies, officers &	Tift staff member serving as liaison to LSGTs

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		duties, meetings, training, responsibilities, accountability, & school system support	
May 2016	May 2016	Conduct principal training – Modules 1 & 2	Tift staff member serving as liaison to LSGTs
May 2016	May 2016	Conduct orientation for candidates for membership on LSGTs	Tift staff member serving as liaison to LSGTs
May 2016	May 2016	Conduct LSGT elections in all schools	Principals
June 2016	June 2016	LSGTs orientation & training – Modules 1 & 2	Tift staff
June 30 2016	June 30 2016	Local School Advisory Councils cease operation	Principals notify council members
July 1, 2016	Ongoing	Commencement date for LSGTs	Principals notify Superintendent
July 1, 2016	July 31, 2016	LSGTs orientation & training – Modules 3 & 4	Principal convenes, CO staff provide training
August 2016	August 2016	First meetings of LSGTs – election of officers – establish operational procedures	Principal conducts meeting
September 2016	September 2016	Second meeting of LSGTs – Business meeting	LSGT
October 2016	Ongoing	Training on remaining Modules will be scheduled on as-need basis by LSGTs in keeping with meetings scheduled for the year	Tift staff, RESAs, consultants

**11. Address the formation of the LSGTs, including how members are selected, the terms of members, and how and why members may be removed.**

- **Be specific!**

The Tift County School System proposes to transition from local school councils to local school governance teams immediately upon becoming a charter system. An LSGT will be established in each school except the two one-grade schools in the system. J. T. Reddick (grade 6) will be paired with Eighth Street Middle School (grades 7-8) and Tift High School, Northeast Campus (grade 9) will be paired with Tift County High School (grades 10-12) for the purpose of establishing LSGTs which will allow continuity for multiple years. Members of LSGTs will be elected for a specific term on a staggered basis. The membership will be composed of the school principal, classroom teachers, other school staff, parents with children in the school, and representatives of the larger community of stakeholders.

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The local school governing teams will become active at the beginning of year one – July 1, 2016. Members of the teams will be elected, and the teams will be organized, trained, and become functional at the beginning of year one of the charter. The LSGTs will become fully functioning governance teams upon completion of required training before and during year one of their operation.

Specific decision-making authority and overall responsibilities and role of the LSGTs will be established in bylaws prior to the beginning of year one of the charter. Members of the LSGTs will be provided training relative to their roles, responsibilities, and relationships. In addition, a comprehensive training program will be provided to ensure that team members have adequate knowledge of the school system's mission and vision, its goals and objectives, both strategic and operational, and how the system is organized to pursue its mission. The strategic plan is a key tool for each local school governance team and is the subject of Training Module 3 to be delivered in July 2016.

The LSGT bylaws will address in detail the purpose of the team, operational date and training, membership, election of members, how and when vacancies occur, how vacancies are filled, how members are removed, officers of the team, meetings of the team, team responsibilities, parliamentary authority, amendment of bylaws, and other areas as deemed appropriate. The chairperson shall be elected by the membership in accordance with the bylaws.

The school system does not propose to establish a system-level governance team at the outset of the charter term, but does plan to have representatives from the LSGTs at each school meet on a regularly scheduled basis with system staff and the superintendent to discuss issues of concern, to solicit the views of team members about the effectiveness of the governance structure, and to consider changes which may lead to greater effectiveness on the part of the LSGTs and the school system. Organizationally, the school governance teams' primary relationship is with the Tift County Board of Education through its chief executive officer, the superintendent.

### **Membership of local school governance teams and method of selection of members**

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The membership of each LSGT shall include the principal of the school, two classroom teachers employed full-time in the school, one certificated support or leadership person employed in the school, two parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, one member who resides in Tift County and who is not formally associated with the school either as a parent/guardian or as an employee of the school system in any capacity, and one member from the Tift business community. The total membership of the LSGT shall be eight. All members with the exception of the principal shall be voting members.

The school principal is a member of the LSGT by virtue of holding the position of principal. The two classroom teachers shall be elected by a vote of all classroom teachers employed in the school. The certificated support or leadership person shall be selected by the principal. The two parents/guardians shall be elected by a vote of parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school at the time of the election or will be enrolled at the beginning of the next school year after the election, the community member shall be selected by the principal, and the Tift business community member shall be nominated by the principal and elected by the voting members of the school governance team.

### **Terms of office of LSGT members**

The terms of office of LSGT members shall be for a specified length of time and shall be staggered to ensure greater continuity in the work of the council. The principal shall serve during the individual's entire tenure as principal. All other members shall serve a two-year term with the term of office beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30 except during the initial election cycle when a portion of the members shall be elected/selected for one or three years. Parent and teacher members may be re-elected for subsequent terms by their electing body and appointed members may be re-appointed for subsequent terms, if eligible. The following will be elected or appointed for a term of three years in the initial election and appointment cycle with the exception noted: one classroom teacher, the certificated support or leadership person, one parent/guardian (selected for a one year term at Matt Wilson Elementary and Charles Spencer Elementary), the non-school affiliated resident of Tift County, and the

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Tift business community member. The school principal will be responsible for conducting the initial teacher and parent/guardian elections.

### **How and why LSGT members may be removed**

Members of the LSGT shall be removed from membership when they no longer meet the eligibility requirements as enumerated in the bylaws. Classroom teachers and the certificated support or leadership person become ineligible when they no longer work at the school at which they serve as a member. Parents become ineligible to serve when they no longer have a child enrolled in the school where they serve as a member. The community member and the Tift business community member become ineligible when they no longer live in Tift County.

Any member of the LSGT who is deemed to be inactive may be removed from membership by a 2/3 vote of the members in a regular or called meeting. A member will be deemed to be inactive if the member has three consecutive unexcused absences from meetings of the LSGT. Any member who has violated any provision of the Educator Code of Ethics established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission or the LSGT conflict of interest provisions may be removed by a 2/3 vote. Special elections shall be held to replace members who have been removed as provided in the LSGT's bylaws.

**Table 5**  
**Local School Governance Teams – Membership, Term of Office, Succession, Method of Election, Voting Status, and Eligibility**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Initial Term</b>	<b>Succeeding Term</b>	<b>Method of Election</b>	<b>Voting Status</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>
Principal	Ongoing	Ongoing	Virtue of position	No	While serving as principal
Certified school leadership or support staff	3 years	2 years	Selected by principal	Yes	Full-time at school - may serve consecutive terms
Classroom Teacher 1	3 years*	2 years	Vote of teachers in school	Yes	Full-time at school - may serve consecutive terms
Classroom Teacher 2	2 years	2 years	Vote of teachers in school	Yes	Full-time at school - may serve consecutive terms

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Parent 1	3 years*	2 years	Vote of parents	Yes	Parent of any student who will have 2 years remaining at school after election
Parent 2	2 years	2 years	Vote of parents	Yes	Parent of any student who will have 2 years remaining at school after election
Community member	3 years	2 years	Selected by principal	Yes	Adult citizen of Tift County (residing in school attendance zone desired) – may serve consecutive terms
Business community member	3 years	2 years	Nominated by principal, elected by team	Yes	Adult business person in Tift County – may serve consecutive terms

\*These positions are elected for one-year terms at Matt Wilson and Charles Spencer Elementary Schools

**12. Use the Charter System Application – School Level Governance Decision-Making Matrix to show how the Superintendent will share with LSGTs his/her authority to develop recommendations to the Board of Education**

The school level governance decision-making matrix is provided below in Table 6 to demonstrate how the superintendent will share with LSGTs the superintendent’s authority to develop recommendations to the Board of Education and to conduct the business of the school system. The matrix reflects minimum and additional authority of the LSGT and “how” and “when” such authority will be implemented.

Table 6

School Level Governance Decision-Making Matrix				
System Name: Tift County School System	Minimum LSGT Authority	How and When Minimum Authority will be Implemented	Additional LSGT Authority*	How and When Additional Authority will be Implemented
<b>Personnel Decisions</b>	LSGTs shall recommend the principal or school leader for selection by the BOE	<b>Principal employment - HR</b> advertises position, receives apps & resumes & screens (e.g., background check, references) - LSGT w/assistance of System/LSGT liaison uses rubric to score resumes & apps (minimum of 3 selected by HR) - LSGT rubric scores submitted to HR - System interview team interviews & ranks candidates - HR combines info from HR screening, LSGT rubric scores, ranking of interview team, submits to supt who recommends to BOE, BOE employs or rejects recommendation (Year 1); <b>Principal transfer - Supt.</b> provides notification to LSGT with opportunity for input prior to recommendation to BOE (Year 1)	Examples include: Input on principal goals, feedback on principal performance, type and qualifications of all positions, requirements for substitutes, attributes and qualifications for school administrative positions, distribution methods for incentive funds	<b>Principal goals</b> - established annually as integral part of school improvement plan - developed by principal & senior school staff - reviewed by LSGT w/recommendations for modification (Year 2); <b>Principal performance</b> - LSGT meets annually to conduct self-evaluation; principal is evaluated as member of LSGT (Year 3); <b>Personnel qualifications and characteristics</b> - LSGT shall be provided an opportunity each year to submit recommendations relating to qualifications and characteristics desired for all school staff (Year 2); <b>Incentive funds</b> - LSGT recommends to superintendent proposed use of incentive funds allocated to school as part of proposed school budget (Year 1)
<b>Financial Decisions and Resource Allocation</b>	LSGTs shall have input into the final recommendations for the school budget, including	<b>School budget</b> - System projects student enrollment & allocates staff; LSGT, through principal, may request reconsideration stating reasons for request;	Examples include: School budget approval, budget priorities aligned with school	<b>School budget approval</b> - school budgets for general and special revenue funds are prepared by principal & staff based on school improvement plan & system priorities; budgets are reviewed

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	<p>number and type of personnel, curriculum costs, supply costs, equipment costs and maintenance and operations costs</p>	<p>system allocates specified general &amp; special revenue funds for FY; principal &amp; staff develop proposed budget; LSGT reviews budget &amp; may recommend changes to proposed budget (Year 1)</p>	<p>improvement plan, use of charter system funds, vendors for school resources, fundraising budget</p>	<p>&amp; approved at school level by LSGT (Year 2); <b>Alignment of budget priorities</b> - LSGT, with guidance of principal, shall ensure that budget priorities are aligned with school improvement plan (Year 2); <b>Fundraisers</b> - LSGT may recommend fundraisers that are consistent with Board of Education policy &amp; for designated purposes; budget for use of funds shall be consistent with stated purpose; generally fundraisers are for specific purpose &amp; are limited in number (Year 2)</p>
<p><b>Curriculum and Instruction</b></p>	<p>LSGTs shall have input into the selection of the curriculum and accompanying materials consistent with the district's Essential and Innovative Features as included in the charter contract</p>	<p><b>Curriculum</b> – The first responsibility of the system is to ensure that the state-mandated curriculum is implemented. LSGT shall be represented on committees convened to recommend curriculum, instructional strategies, and materials. LSGTs shall use the system strategic plan as the basis for development of school improvement plans (Year 1)</p>	<p>Examples include: approval of instructional delivery innovations that would traditionally require a waiver, approval of instructional programs and materials consistent with innovations, graduation requirements, new course offerings, opportunities for student acceleration and remediation</p>	<p><b>Instructional delivery innovations</b> - The goal of all classroom teachers is to employ effective instructional strategies - their recommendations must be a primary consideration; the LSGT shall be informed of innovative models to be implemented &amp; given an opportunity to provide feedback (Year 1); <b>Graduation requirements</b> - LSGT shall be represented on all system-wide committees established to review graduation requirements (Year 2); <b>Course offerings</b> - LSGT is authorized to recommend enrichment courses in addition to the state-mandated curriculum; recommendations shall be made to superintendent. (Year 2)</p>
<p><b>Establishing and monitoring the</b></p>	<p>LSGTs shall approve the school improvement plan</p>	<p><b>School improvement plan</b> - LSGT shall participate in development of school</p>	<p>Examples include: LSGT members serving as members</p>	<p><b>Membership on SIP Team</b> - LSGT shall designate 1 or more members to serve on school improvement planning</p>

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<p><b>achievement of school improvement goals</b></p>	<p>and provide oversight of its implementation</p>	<p>improvement plan, shall approve plan at school level, &amp; shall receive regular reports by principal on implementation progress (Year 1)</p>	<p>of the school improvement planning team, LSGT approval of any innovations that would traditionally require a waiver of state law</p>	<p>team &amp; shall approve at the school level innovations that would require waiver of state law (Year 2)</p>
<p><b>School Operations</b></p>	<p>LSGTs shall have input into school operations that are consistent with school improvement and charter goals</p>	<p><b>Operational components -</b> LSGT, with guidance of principal, shall identify school operational components in which the LSGT shall have involvement &amp; decision making authority (Year 1)</p>	<p>Examples include: approval of use of instructional time during school day, partners in education, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, stakeholder surveys, parent involvement, communications strategies, school-level policies, volunteer support, field trips, fundraisers, student dress code, student discipline plan</p>	<p><b>Partners in education and parental engagement -</b> LSGT shall participate actively in establishing &amp; sustaining partners in education &amp; parental engagement programs (Year 1); <b>Parent, stakeholder, &amp; student surveys -</b> LSGT shall participate actively in development &amp; administration of surveys (Year 2); <b>Tutoring, mentoring, &amp; volunteer programs;</b> LSGT shall assume lead in establishing and maintaining active tutoring, mentoring, and volunteer programs in the school (Year 2); <b>Student dress code &amp; discipline plan -</b> LSGT shall provide input into dress code and discipline through membership on committees established to review &amp; revise dress code and discipline plan (Year 2); <b>Communications strategies &amp; plan -</b> LSGT shall develop a school/parent communication plan for review &amp; approval of school leadership team (Year 2)</p>
<p><b>*The LBOE retains its constitutional authority</b></p>				

**13. Highlight the differences between the current local school advisory council structure and the new structure your new charter system will implement**

The most significant difference between the current local school advisory councils and local school governance teams is the LSGTs' decision-making authority which has been enumerated in this application. The membership of the LSGTs is set at eight; whereas, council membership currently varies from school to school. The term of office of school council members varies from school to school while the term of office of LSGT members is two years. Under the current structure, each council may decide whether members may serve more than one term. LSGT members may serve more than one term. School councils meet a minimum of four times per year while LSGTs will meet a minimum of six times each year. Other structural differences between the two bodies may result when bylaws are established for the LSGTs.

**14. Describe the governance training to be provided to principals and members of the LSGTs in order to build the capacity needed to make decisions in the areas included in the spreadsheet.**

- **Note that training should occur before the charter begins because your LSGTs will be expected to make decisions beginning in Year 1 of your charter. Be sure to show this in the timeline requested in #10 above.**

The greatest challenge in the implementation of any initiative is to ensure that the individuals involved possess the capacity and the will to guarantee that the initiative is successful. A transition in the governance structure of a local school system requires that those participating in the new structure have a clear understanding of the *locus of control* in the decision-making process within the system. Thus, a major component of the initial training of LSGTs must be the roles, relationships, and responsibilities of those charged with making decisions at all levels within the organization.

The training program presupposes that the best decisions at all levels are informed decisions. The program will include components that provide the information needed by LSGTs to make sound decisions within their realm of autonomy and sound recommendations in areas in which they are active participants. The program must have a strong component relating to effective methods for engaging parents and the

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community at-large in the education of the community's children and youth. Such engagement will guarantee better decisions relating to the educational program for all students.

Time is virtually always a limiting factor in the implementation of training programs. The training program, thus, will be delivered in a variety of formats to fit the schedules of LSGT members. The delivery system for the training sessions will include face-to-face interaction, videos of training sessions, slide presentations, and other formats as suggested by members. These considerations were foremost in the minds of the committee charged with developing the training program for local school governing teams.

### **Training program modules**

The initial training program will include nine modules that may be delivered in a variety of formats. Table 7 below provides a tentative listing of the modules and the topic for each module.

### **Development and delivery of the training program**

The LSGT training program modules will be developed by school system staff, Regional Educational Services Agency staff, and consultants retained by the school system. In addition, the system will communicate with current charter systems to determine whether components of their training program may be adapted for use in the Tift County School System. Presenters will be members of the school system staff, RESA staff, or consultants.

Modules one and two will be required of LSGT members prior to their first year of membership. Modules three and four will be delivered to each team during the first month of the LSGT's operation. All other modules will be available in multiple formats and will be selected by LSGTs on an as-need basis.

The Tift County School System upon becoming a charter system plans to seek active membership in the Charter System Foundation to ensure that we remain abreast of advocacy and training opportunities.

**Table 7  
Local School Governance Team  
Training Program**

Module	Topics
Module 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bylaws for local school governance team</li> <li>● Roles, relationships, &amp; responsibilities of LSGT, principal &amp; school staff, superintendent &amp; system staff, Tift County Board of Education</li> <li>● Conduct of LSGT meetings – agenda, minutes, meetings, parliamentary procedure, dissemination of LSGT actions, and other operational issues</li> </ul>
Module 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent and community engagement strategies</li> </ul>
Module 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School improvement plan &amp; school system strategic plan</li> <li>● Student performance data – history and CCRPI projections for the term of the charter</li> </ul>
Module 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational programs – local, state, &amp; federal</li> <li>● Tift County School System curriculum overview (Common Core &amp; Pathways)</li> </ul>
Module 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Education funding – Federal funding, QBE funding formula, &amp; local property tax</li> <li>● Budget development &amp; implementation</li> </ul>
Module 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personnel earnings, allocations, &amp; processes for employment &amp; termination</li> <li>● Professional learning program</li> </ul>
Module 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student assessment – College &amp; Career Ready Performance Index</li> <li>● Tift County School System Student Assessment Program</li> </ul>
Module 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School operations – daily management of the school – safety, conduct, support services – Value of the classified staff at the school</li> </ul>
Module 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Education delivery options – use of technology in the classroom &amp; beyond</li> </ul>

**15. Provide the name of provider(s) of Local School Governing Team training that you are considering approaching, if known.**

- **Note that such providers can be internal or external to the school district.**

It is the intent of the school system to use school system staff, RESA staff, the Charter System Foundation, and yet unnamed consultants to prepare and present the nine training modules and others which may be desired over time. The training modules will be presented in a variety of formats to facilitate the needs of LSGT members.

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

Patrick Atwater, Superintendent of Tift County Schools, is designated as the system contact person to provide support and assistance to the LSGTs and to facilitate communications between the Department of Education and the chairpersons of the LSGTs. The superintendent will be responsible for assisting principals in the formation of the LSGTs, development of bylaws, coordination of training, provision of ongoing support, and response to or forwarding of inquiries from LSGTs to the appropriate staff and the Board of Education. The contact information for Mr. Atwater is:

Mr. Patrick Atwater, Superintendent  
Tift County School System  
207 North Ridge Avenue  
Tifton, GA 31793  
229-387-2400  
[patwater@tiftschools.com](mailto:patwater@tiftschools.com)

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

The central office staff of the Tift County School System views its primary role as that of support for the individual schools which make up the system. Many mandates are imposed on local school systems from the state and federal levels, and it is typically the responsibility of central office staff of local school systems to ensure that the system responds appropriately to such mandates. The challenge is

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to comply without adopting a culture of compliance. Tift County Schools has met this challenge through creating and cultivating a trusting and supportive relationship between school and system staff. There is a clear understanding that all staff at the school and system levels must focus on the students and their achieving at a high level. The system, its schools, and classroom teachers must all establish high expectations for themselves and for the students. Non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction will continue to be pursued so that high quality instruction is the hallmark in every classroom in the system.

Charter system status will give the school system the flexibility needed to design and deliver a highly effective education program that will challenge every student to do his very best to achieve at a high level, graduate, and be prepared for post-secondary work or career entry. The central office will ensure broad-based participation by school leaders and staff in pursuing the actions enumerated in this application.

**Addendum  
Capital Improvement Program  
Implications for Charter System Application**

The Tift County Board of Education is currently considering a capital improvement program that will result in a change in the grade configuration for most of the district’s schools. Implementation of the program is contingent upon the Board’s calling an E-SPLOST referendum in March of 2016 and an affirmative vote by the electorate. If the referendum is called by the Board and is approved, the capital improvement program will be implemented and the grade reorganization will be effective at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. The table below indicates current grade configurations and the proposed configuration upon completion of the capital improvement program.

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Current Grade Configuration</b>	<b>Proposed Grade Configuration 2018-19</b>
Annie Bell Clark Primary School	Grades K-3	Grades Pre-K - 5
G. O. Bailey Primary School	Grades Pre-K – 3	Grades Pre-K - 5
Len Lastinger Primary School	Grades K-3	Grades Pre-K - 5
Northside Primary School	Grades K-3	Grades Pre-K - 5
Omega Elementary School	Grades Pre-K – 5	Grades Pre-K - 5
Charles Spencer Elementary School	Grades 4-5	Grades Pre-K - 5
Matt Wilson Elementary School	Grades 4-5	Grades Pre-K - 5
J. T. Reddick School	Grade 6	Grades Pre-K - 5
Eighth Street Middle School	Grades 7-8	Grades 6-8
Tift High School, Northeast Campus	Grade 9	Grades 6-8
Tift County High School	Grades 10-12	Grades 9-12
Unnamed College & Career Academy	N/A	Grades 9-12

If the capital improvement program is implemented as outlined above, the Tift County Board of Education requests that local school councils, as currently configured, continue to function through the

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2017-18 school year. Any members of any school council not wishing to serve through 2017-18 would be replaced by the remaining members of the council. School councils would be renamed “local school governance team,” would participate in training as outlined in the charter system application, and would exercise the decision making authority enumerated for LSGTs in the application effective July 1, 2016.

We make this request to ensure a viable transition to the LSGT governance model contained in the application. We believe that electing members to LSGTs in May 2016 only to have those teams restructured two years later would be counterproductive and would negatively affect long-term viability of the concept.