Charter System Application

DISTRICT NAME

Colquitt County School System

DISTRICT ADDRESS

710 28th Avenue SE
Moultrie, GA 31768

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 Colquitt County Charter School System

2. Please indicate whether this is a: New Petition X or a Renewal Petition	3. How many schools in total are you proposing to include in your charter system? 14

4. How many of each of the following schools are you proposing to include in your charter system?

Primary School(s)	Middle School (Gr 6-7) 1 Junior High (Gr 8-9) 1
Elementary School(s) 10	High school(s) 1 Achievement Academy (Gr 6-12) 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 710 28th Avenue SE	8. City Moultrie	9. State Georgia	10. Zip 31768
11. Contact Person – Samuel A. DePaul, Ph.D.	12. Title - Superintendent		
13. Contact Street Address 710 28th Avenue SE	14. City Moultrie	15. State Georgia	16. Zip 31768
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Charter System Petition

Introduction

Colquitt County is located in South Georgia approximately 200 miles south of Atlanta and twenty-four miles west of Interstate 75. The county is nineteenth in size geographically among the state's 159 counties, and comprises 544 square miles. The county's population in 2011 was 45,645 ranking 44th in the state and is increasing on average by just under one percent each year. The county's population is 64.7 percent White, 22.4 percent Black, and 17.1 percent Hispanic. The median age in 2011 was 40.1 for White citizens, 29.7 for Black citizens, and 23.1 for Hispanics. The county is currently experiencing approximately 770 live births each year. In 2010, 439 of 767 live births were to unwed mothers. Educational data for 2006-2010 indicate that 19,999 or 71.5 percent of Colquitt County citizens 25 years and older are high school graduates or higher. 3,117 or 11.2 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

The Colquitt 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. In October 2013, the school system was serving 9,018 students in kindergarten through grade twelve with an additional 650 four-year-olds enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program. The K-12 enrollment has increased by 539 students over the past five years from 8,479 in 2009-10. The student population is 45.1 percent White, 27.1 percent Black, and 24.4 percent Hispanic. The Hispanic enrollment is increasing while Black and White enrollment is declining slightly.

The challenge for the Colquitt 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. This charter petition builds upon the system's ongoing school improvement plans, accreditation of our schools by AdvancED, 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. We believe that wise use of the flexibility granted through the charter will ensure that the school system meets the challenge of 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 charter system application asks that school systems applying for charter system status identify the challenges they face as they strive to provide an excellent and equitable educational opportunity for all of their students. We believe that challenges lead to opportunities. 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). Local school systems 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. 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 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 Strategic Plan

The school system began the development of a strategic plan in July, 2012, with the active participation of many of the school system's stakeholders. The J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership

Development, University of Georgia, coordinated an unbiased approach to the system's strategic

planning process. Approximately 200 community members and school leaders met in a town hall setting

to discuss goals and objectives for the system. Input was then solicited from student representatives,

parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to create a draft plan. The formal strategic plan was adopted by

the Colquitt County Board of Education on March 25, 2013. The strategic plan is a living document

which is reviewed and revised periodically. The most recent updating of the plan was completed on June

9, 2014 (Exhibit 12). The current strategic plan update represents the work of a school system planning

team composed of system and school level leaders who meet regularly to monitor progress to date and to

make revisions as the environment changes.

The mission of the Colquitt County School System is to be *"committed to the daily pursuit of*

excellence in student achievement while working with parents and the community to serve the needs of all

children in a positive and safe environment." The vision for the system is to *"become schools of*

excellence." The strategic goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan are:

Goal 1 – Develop Future Ready Students

Objectives

    1.1 To ensure teachers understand the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

    1.2 To use professional learning communities to support vertical and horizontal alignment and

        facilitate collaboration

    1.3 To use disaggregated data to evaluate instructional effectiveness and improve performance

        for all students

    1.4 To ensure alignment of courses of study in elementary, middle, junior high, and senior high

        schools with college and career readiness

    1.5 To restructure gifted instructional strategies to ensure vertical articulation, rigor, and

        consistency

    1.6 To ensure consistency in forms of assessment used in all schools

1.7 To select and use multiple forms of assessment to guide teachers' instructional strategies, to provide feedback to students and parents, and to ensure that assessments ascertain what students know and can do

1.8 To foster relationships with early learning partners which include all public and private human services organizations

Goal 2 – Hire and Retain 21st Century Professionals

Objectives

2.1 To provide professional development that is aligned with school system priorities

2.2 To implement Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness Systems

Goal 3 – Cultivate Leadership for Innovation and Collaboration

Objectives

3.1 To establish a county-wide parent leadership committee

3.2 To establish a county-wide teacher leadership committee

3.3 To establish a county-wide ad hoc community leaders committee

3.4 To establish a secondary school student leadership committee

3.5 To establish a county-wide classified employee leadership committee

3.6 To implement a communications plan to promote public education

3.7 To ensure a safe, orderly, supportive learning environment built on respect and encouragement

Goal 4 – Incorporate 21st Century Systems

Objectives

4.1 To establish a technology device purchase and recycle plan

4.2 To use technology in as many aspects of instructional and administrative programs as appropriate and feasible

4.3 To ensure that network infrastructure is up to industry standards

4.4 To establish a social media policy for the school system

Goal 5 – Implement a Balanced Budget, Planning, and Funding System

Objectives

     5.1 To prepare a five-year spending plan

     5.2 To research innovative ways to be more effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible

     5.3 To establish a senior administrative succession plan

     5.4 To monitor and supervise the high school construction project

     5.5 To instill the concept of defined autonomy to ensure that all stakeholders understand the need

         to function as a school system that has certain non-negotiable goals

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

The Case

The framework for identifying and addressing the major challenges facing the school system is contained in Table 1 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 1
The Case

#	Question	Challenge #1	Challenge #2	Challenge #3	Challenge #4
1	What challenges is your school district facing?	Having children ready to be successful when they enter school	Implementing instructional models & teaching frameworks that are effective for students who are not achieving at a high level	Personalizing learning through integration of digital technology & extending learning time	Providing alternative scheduling strategies & school grade configurations that are effective for all students
2	What is the rank order priority of these challenges	1	2	3	4

	(from most to least important)?				
3	Which of these challenges will your school district be able to address by becoming a charter system?	Yes	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?	**1.1** Lead the establishment of a highly coordinated & effective collaborative of early learning partners, both public & private, to ensure comprehensive & developmentally appropriate experiences for all children birth to age 5 **1.2** Implement Striving Readers Birth-5 program **1.3** Provide professional development for staff of daycare, pre-school, & pre-kindergarten providers beyond the school system	**2.1** Implement an alternative framework for teaching through merging multiple STEM models into a STEAAM (science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture, & mathematics) framework for delivery of instruction **2.2** Implement alternative organizational & instructional strategies for students in K-5 who are developmentally delayed, are English learners, or have special needs **2.3** Evaluate gifted program to ensure rigor, consistency, & better articulation among elementary, middle, junior high, & high school programs	**3.1** Prepare staff & students for effective use of digital technology in the teaching & learning process **3.2** Adopt appropriate delivery models for learning which include blended, hybrid, & virtual learning opportunities for students **3.3** Provide extended learning time beyond the school day & year with learning opportunities anywhere & anytime	**4.1** Implement later starting & dismissal time for secondary students & modify structure of school day **4.2** Maintain grade configuration for middle & high schools (middle school grades 6 & 7, junior high grades 8&9)

5	Provide a clear explanation of how each of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) will lead to the specific challenge being addressed	**1.1** Establishing & sustaining an effective early learning collaborative will ensure a focused & intentional initiative to increase children's developmental readiness for school **1.2** The Striving Readers program will improve literacy skills among pre-school children & increase parent skills in literacy development **1.1&1.2** will reduce current high retention rate at kindergarten & first grade **1.3** Professional learning for staff will improve program quality, and, in turn, learning for children in all settings prior to school entry	**2.1** STEAAM framework will increase opportunities for student exploration & application of knowledge in experiential, project-based learning environment resulting in improved student performance, particularly in math & science **2.2** Selecting "best practice" instructional delivery models for K-5 will provide strategies for organizing & grouping for instruction which will better serve the needs of students who are developmentally delayed, are English learners, or have special needs **2.3** Evaluating the gifted program to ensure rigor, consistency, effectiveness, & articulation among all grade levels will result in a significant increase in students scoring	**3.1** Providing staff & students with professional learning in the use of digital technology will result in more effective integration of technology into the teaching & learning process **3.2** Providing students alternative learning options with opportunities for personalized learning through a variety of non-traditional instructional strategies such as hybrid, blended, & virtual learning with anywhere, anytime access will increase student motivation & learning **3.3** Extending learning time will support students who learn at a slower or accelerated rate or who wish to move on when ready (MOWR)	**4.1** A later daily start time for secondary students is consistent with research indicating that adolescents require 8 to 9 hours sleep each night to maximize neural development. This action should result in students being more engaged in the classroom. Modifying the structure of the school day will allow for flexible allocation of time devoted to each course to ensure a high correlation between content to be covered & time allocated **4.2** The current grade configuration for middle & junior high school has resulted in improved attendance, conduct, & performance on state assessments. A waiver of GBOE rules is needed to continue this practice

		at the exceeds level on state assessments		
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).	**Waiver: Action 1.3** GBOE Rule 160-3-3-.04 Professional learning to allow for use of funds to provide services to staff of private providers	**Waivers: All Actions** GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.11 Promotion, Placement, & Retention (O.C.G.A. §20-2-182, 183, 184, 185) – to allow for modification of requirements for promotion, placement, & retention of students in grades 3, 5, & 8 **Waivers: Action 2.2** GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP) (O.C.G.A. §20-2-153) – to allow for instructional delivery models beyond those specified in the rule GBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for English Learners (ELs) (O.C.G.A. §20-2-156) – to allow for alternative service delivery models & to waive class-size & teacher certification requirements	**Waivers: Actions 3.2 & 3.3** 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-.02 School Day & Year for Students & Employees – to allow for modification of length of school year & school day for students GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class Size (O.C.G.A. §20-2-152/182) – to allow for variation in the number of students in a classroom consistent with instructional objectives & delivery model O.C.G.A. §20-2-182 Program Weights to Reflect Funds for Payment of Salaries &	**Waivers: Action 4.1** GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 School Day & Year for Students & Employees – to allow for modification of length of school year & school day for students **Waivers: Action 4.2** GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria (O.C.G.A. §20-2-290) – to allow for modification of middle school criteria GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.22 Personnel Required – to allow for alternative staffing configurations at the middle & junior high schools to increase efficiency & effectiveness

		Waivers: **Action 2.3** GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students (O.C.G.A. §20-2-151, 152, 161) – to modify minimum participation requirements & models required by *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*	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-.14 Instructional Extension (O.C.G.A. §20-2-184.1) – to allow for waiver of class size for instruction beyond the school day & to remove restrictions on addressing academic needs of low-performing students	
7	Indicate the timeline for implementation of each specific action (listed in #4 above).	**Actions 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3** will all be implemented in Year 1 (2015-16)	**Action 2.1** will be developed in Years 1 & 2 & implemented in Year 3 (2017-18) **Action 2.2** will be developed in Year 1 & implemented in Year 2 (2016-17) **Action 2.3** will be implemented in Year 1 (2015-16)	**Action 3.1** will be implemented in Year 1 (2015-16) **Action 3.2 & 3.3** will be developed in Year 1 & implemented in Year 2 (2016-17)	**Action 4.1** will be developed in Year 1 & implemented in Year 2 (2016-17) **Action 4.2** is currently implemented in the system
8	Indicate which of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) represents an	**Action 1.2**	**Actions 2.1, 2.2, & 2.3**	**Actions 3.2 & 3.3**	**Actions 4.1 & 4.2**

innovation for your school district.				

The following section contains expanded responses to the questions posed in **_"The Case"_** matrix included above as Table 1.

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.

   The Colquitt County School System has historically been very successful in providing a high quality education for its students. As with most school systems; however, there are many Colquitt County students who are unsuccessful in their academic work and who fail to complete school or graduate without the skills required to be successful. The system's goal is to graduate all of its students and to ensure they are prepared for college, career, and life. The challenges described below are ones that, in most instances, have many root causes and have been intractable over time. By addressing these issues effectively Colquitt County Schools will become exceptional.

Challenge #1 –Having children ready to be successful when they enter school. Research has clearly demonstrated that the first five years of life are critical to a child's development and that school readiness involves the domains of physical wellness, motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, cognition, and general knowledge (*Vision for Public Education: Equity and Excellence*. GSBA/GSSA 2010). There are many causes for lack of school readiness, and many of these causes are beyond the reach of the schools. The school system can, however, serve as a catalyst to generate support for young children and their families and can provide services that support early learning and development. The family, the community, local and state agencies, and the school system, working together, can significantly improve the quality of a child's life prior to school entry.

A major contributing factor in developmental delay among our children is revealed in birth statistics. In 2010, 439 of 767 (51%) live births in Colquitt were to unwed mothers; 105 or nearly fourteen

percent were to teens between the ages of ten and nineteen. Low weight births represented 10.2 percent or seventy-eight of the total births in that year.

One indicator of student lack of readiness in Colquitt County is the extraordinarily high student retention rates at the kindergarten and first grade levels in our system. Kindergarten retention percentages from 2009-10 through 2013-14 were 9.0%, 7.6%, 6.5%, 9.7%, and 7.7%. First grade retention percentages for the same period were 5.2%, 6.8%, 5.4%, 7.3%, and 6.2%. These rates are unacceptably high and innovative solutions must be sought.

Challenge #2 – Implementing instructional models and teaching frameworks that are effective for students who are not achieving at a high level. Effective instructional frameworks are based on clearly defined curriculum goals and assessments that are responsive to students' needs and passions. Assessments of student performance in the basic academic subjects indicate significant opportunities for improvement in several areas. Mathematics, science, and social studies scores in our system generally lag those in reading and language arts. In the 2013-14 school year, eighteen percent of students in grades three through eight, taken cumulatively, failed to meet the minimum standard in mathematics on the criterion referenced competency test. Twenty-three percent failed to meet the minimum standard in social studies, and twenty-five percent failed to meet the minimum standard in science.

Curriculum and instructional strategies should be examined to ensure alignment between curriculum and assessment and that classroom instruction provides meaningful engagement for students. Our system has abandoned the Early Intervention Program as an ineffective and uneconomical strategy and is seeking an alternative instructional model for developmentally delayed students. The Gifted Program has not resulted in significant numbers of students exceeding the standards on criterion referenced competency tests. The percent of students in grades three through eight exceeding standards on CRCTs in 2013-14 was twenty-five percent in language, mathematics, and social studies. Twenty-four percent exceeded in science and thirty percent of students exceeded the standard in reading. Alternative strategies will be considered to increase student performance.

The number of Hispanic students enrolled in the Colquitt County School System reached 2,204 in 2013-14 representing 24.4 percent of the total enrollment. This population is increasing each year and while the achievement gap between this demographic group and White students has narrowed over the past two years it remains unacceptably high. The gap in percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards in the five CRCT areas in 2012-13 was six percent in language and mathematics, seven percent in reading, thirteen percent in science, and sixteen percent in social studies. The gap was reduced in 2013-14 to three percent in language and mathematics, four percent in reading, eight percent in science, and nine percent in social studies. More effective instructional models and teaching frameworks are sought to eliminate this gap in student performance.

Challenge #3 – Personalizing learning through integration of digital technology and extending learning time. It is generally agreed that all students do not learn at the same rate nor do they necessarily learn in the same way. Traditional whole class instruction does not accommodate these realities. The emergence of digital technology offers opportunities for differentiating or personalizing learning for individual students**.** To state the obvious, there is a relationship between time devoted to learning and the amount learned. It is also obvious that this is not a fixed relationship for all people. Accepting time as a variable and accommodating the need for some students to devote more time than others to learn should result in greater success for many students.   A variety of computer-based courseware, employing hybrid, blended, and virtual learning as the delivery model, can be made available to students so they may progress at a rate that challenges them to achieve at a high level.

Challenge #4 – Adopting alternative scheduling strategies and school grade configurations that are effective for all students. Adolescents appear to maximize their neural development when they get eight to nine hours sleep. To meet this need, our high school would need to adopt a later daily start time. Our system plans to implement a later start time to determine if the schedule change results in improved student performance.

The school grade configuration for Georgia has been K-5 elementary, 6-8 middle school, and 9-12 high school since enactment of the Quality Basic Education Act in 1985. The Colquitt County School

System has found that adopting an alternative configuration of grades 6 and 7 for middle school and grades 8 and 9 for junior high school has resulted in increased student performance, improved student behavior, and more effective teacher planning.

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

The challenges are rank ordered as follows:

Priority #1 - Challenge #1 – Having children ready to be successful when they enter school

Priority #2 - Challenge #2 – Adopting instructional models and teaching frameworks that are effective for students who are not achieving at a high level

Priority #3 - Challenge #3– Personalizing learning through integration of digital technology and extending learning time

Priority #4 - Challenge #4 – Adopting alternative scheduling strategies and school grade configurations that are effective for all students

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

The Colquitt County School System will address all four of the challenges listed.

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

4. ***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 - Having children ready to be successful when they enter school.

The school system will:

Action #1.1 – Lead a highly coordinated and effective collaborative of early learning partners, both public and private, to ensure comprehensive and developmentally appropriate experiences for all children birth to five. The collaborative will coordinate services and ensure that pre-school children have access to learning opportunities provided by trained staff and informed parents using developmentally appropriate activities. In addition, the collaborative will focus on parenting skills and strategies for parents to be

more engaged in learning activities for their children. Successful implementation of an effective birth to five initiative will result in children who are better prepared for school entry and will reduce the retention rate in kindergarten and first grade.

The current Early Childhood Collaborative was established in 2010. The goal was to bring everyone involved in providing services to young children and/or their parents to the table to discuss issues and share information. Several initiatives were undertaken, but most have not been sustained. The primary shortcoming presently is the lack of focus, conflicting meeting times, poor attendance, and financial resources to deliver programs.

Action #1.2 – Implement a Striving Readers Program for ages 0-5 which will have literacy as its primary focus and which will support the early learning collaborative in organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to literacy. The program will address the need for CCGPS-aligned resources for reading, writing, language, and speaking/listening; cross-curricular continuity in literacy instruction; and robust professional development. This initiative will provide resources to support a detailed literacy plan that will guide the work of the early learning collaborative for the next five years.

Action #1.3 - Provide professional learning opportunities for staff of pre-school and pre-kindergarten providers beyond the school system. The focus will be on pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and other programs that serve children who are likely to enroll in Colquitt County Schools at kindergarten or first grade level. This action will result in teachers and parents of young children with greater capacity to teach effectively resulting in children better prepared for school entry.

Challenge #2 – Implementing instructional models and teaching frameworks that are effective for students who are not achieving at a high level.

The school system will:

Action #2.1 – Implement an alternative framework for teaching through merging multiple STEM models into a STEAAM (science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture, and mathematics) framework for delivery of instruction. A careful and thorough examination of current STEM initiatives will be conducted to determine how subjects across an existing curriculum can be incorporated into a comprehensive

approach that focuses on real-world issues, is guided by the engineering design process, immerses

students in hand-on inquiry and open-ended exploration, involves students in productive teamwork,

applies rigorous math and science content along with art and agriculture, and allows for multiple right

answers (Anne Jolly, *Six Characteristics of a Great STEM Lesson*, Education Week Teacher, Published

Online, June 17, 2014). This strategy should result in a significant increase in student engagement,

motivation, and learning. Two of Colquitt's elementary schools have made application for STEM

Professional Learning to begin a process designed to increase student achievement. The schools have a

high minority, low performing enrollment. Cox Elementary School, for example, has an enrollment of

575 with 252 Hispanic students, 249 Black students, and 60 White students.

Action #2.2 – Implement alternative organizational and instructional strategies for students in K-5 who

are developmentally delayed, are English learners, or have special needs. Selecting "best practice"

instructional delivery models will provide strategies for organizing and grouping for instruction which

will better serve the needs of these students. Classroom teachers will form professional learning

communities to study alternative student grouping strategies, ways to customize the education experience

for each child, and ways of organizing the staff to deliver the education program most effectively. This

action focuses on those students who may require interventions that are currently not available to the

school system without waivers from the state. Changes in the way students are grouped for instruction,

class size, instructional strategies, and other considerations will result in improved student performance.

One of the major local issues is the large number of Hispanic students who leave the system each year in

October and do not return until February. A strategy under consideration to accommodate the loss of time

by these students is to initiate a year-round calendar at the elementary level for specific grades and

students.

Action #2.3 – Evaluate the gifted program to ensure rigor, consistency, effectiveness, and better

articulation among elementary, middle, junior high, and high school programs. The school system will

review extant delivery models for the gifted to determine which are most appropriate for Colquitt County

students and are best aligned vertically for progression from elementary to middle, junior high, and high

school. All delivery models appear to have important learning effects whether cluster, pull-out, or full-time grouping and whether accelerated or enrichment-based.

The system currently delivers the gifted program to students enrolled in grades three through five in the ten elementary schools at a gifted center. Advanced content is the model used at the center. The system is considering expanding the advanced content concept through grade twelve to allow students who are not identified as gifted but who demonstrate exceptional ability and motivation to participate in the program. One of the goals of the gifted program is to increase student performance on Advanced Placement tests.

Challenge # 3 – Personalizing learning through integration of digital technology and extending learning time.

The school system will:

Action #3.1– Prepare staff and students for effective use of digital technology in the teaching/learning process. Professional learning opportunities will be provided to staff to increase their capacity to use digital devices and applications themselves and to understand the importance of structuring instruction through asking questions of students that allows them the opportunity to use their personal or school-owned digital technology to answer the questions. Keyboarding and other skills required for effective use of electronic devices and strategies for the use of technology will be integrated into classroom activities beginning at the elementary school level.

Action #3.2– Adopt appropriate delivery models for learning which include blended, hybrid, and virtual learning opportunities for students. Providing students with alternative learning options that include options for personalized and customized learning through a variety of non-traditional instructional strategies with anywhere and anytime access will increase student learning and success. This increased flexibility, using devices that motivate students, will result in more effective delivery of the education program. Many infrastructure issues 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.

Action #3.3 – Provide extended learning time beyond the school day & year with learning opportunities anywhere and anytime. Extended learning time 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.

Challenge #4 – Providing alternative scheduling strategies and school grade configurations that are effective for all students.

The school system will:

Action #4.1– Implement later daily starting and dismissal times for secondary students and modify the structure of the school day. Adoption of a later daily starting time for secondary students is consistent with recent research which demonstrates a positive relationship between a later daily school start time for middle and high school students and school attendance, behavior, and performance on assessments (*Examining the Impact of Later High School Start Times on the Health and Academic Performance of High School Students: A Multi-Site Study*. College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. February 2014). There is strong medical evidence that adolescents need eight to nine hours sleep every night to maximize neural development. There appear to be clear benefits from starting high schools at 8:30 AM or later. The school system will examine the effect of a later start time on after-school activities in which high school students participate, student transportation, and other potential conflicts prior to implementation.

Restructuring of the school day will allow for greater flexibility in implementing blended, hybrid, and virtual learning options for students. In addition, the time allocated in traditional classrooms for

students to master the content required for graduation will be examined as the system personalizes learning.

Action #4.2 – Maintain the recently adopted grade configuration for the middle and junior high schools. Reconfiguring the organization of grades 6-9 into a grades 6-7 middle school and a grades 8-9 junior high has resulted in improved test scores, fewer discipline issues, increased parental support, and productive teacher planning. This structure, we believe, is more effective for our school system than two middle schools with grades 6-8. The school system will continue to evaluate this organizational structure to ensure that students' needs are met and that they learn at a high level.

5. ***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).***

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.

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

Challenge 1 – Having children ready to be successful when they enter school

Action 1.1 – Early learning collaborative

Action 1.2 – Striving Readers Program – Ages 0-5

Action 1.3 – Professional learning for non-school system staff

Waivers: Action 1.3

GBOE Rule 160-3-3-.04 Professional Learning – To allow for expenditure of funds for professional learning for non-school system staff

Challenge 2 – Implementing instructional models and teaching frameworks that are effective for students who are not achieving at a high level

Action 2.1 – Implement an alternative framework for teaching through merging multiple STEM models into a STEAAM (science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture, and mathematics) framework for delivery of instruction.

Action 2.2 – Implement alternative organizational and instructional models for students in K-5 who are developmentally delayed, are English learners, or have special needs.

Action 2.3 – Evaluate the gifted program to ensure rigor, consistency, effectiveness, and better articulation among elementary, middle, junior high, and high school programs

Waivers: All actions

GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.11 Promotion, Placement, and Retention (O.C.G.A. §20-2-182, 183, 184, 185) – to allow for modification of requirements for promotion, placement, and retention of students in grades 3, 5, and 8

Waivers: Action 2.2

GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program (EIP) (O.C.G.A. §20-2-153) – to allow for instructional delivery models beyond those specified in the rule while earning QBE funding for EIP

GBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02 Language Assistance: Program for English Learners (ELs) (O.C.G.A. §20-2-156) – to allow for alternative service delivery models and to waive class-size and teacher certification requirements

Waivers: Action 2.3

GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students (O.C.G.A. §20-2-151, 152, 161) – to modify minimum participation requirements and models required by *Resource Manual for Gifted Education Services*

Challenge 3 – Personalizing learning through integration of digital technology and extending learning time

Action 3.1 – Prepare staff and students for effective use of digital technology

Action 3.2 – Adopt appropriate delivery models for learning including blended, hybrid, and virtual learning opportunities for students

Action 3.3 – Provide extended learning time beyond school day and provide learning opportunities anywhere and anytime

Waivers: Actions 3.2 and 3.3

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-.02 School Day and Year for Students and Employees – to allow for modification of length of school year and school day for students

GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class Size (O.C.G.A. §20-2-152/182) – 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-.14 Instructional Extension (O.C.G.A. §20-2-184.1) – 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

Challenge 4 – Adopting alternative scheduling strategies and school grade configurations that are effective for all students.

Action 4.1 – Implement later daily starting and dismissal time for secondary students and modify structure of school day

Action 4.2 – Maintain grade configuration for middle and junior high schools (middle school grades 6-7 and junior high grades 8-9)

Waivers: Action 4.1

GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02 School Day and Year for Students and Employees – to allow for modification of length of school year and school day for students

Waivers: Action 4.2

GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria (O.C.G.A. §20-2-290) – to allow for modification of middle school criteria

GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.22 Personnel Required – to allow for alternative staffing configurations at the middle and junior 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

Middle school program -GBOE Rule 160-4-2-.05; O.C.G.A. §20-2-290

Class size - GBOE Rule 160-5-1-.08 and O.C.G.A. §20-2-152/182

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

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 system over the past five years have, with one exception, been employed to ensure the continued financial solvency of the school system. The exception is the middle school waiver which has allowed us to reconfigure the organization of grades 6-9 into a grades 6-7 middle school and a grades 8-9 junior high. This reconfiguration has resulted in improved test scores, fewer discipline issues, increased parental support, and productive teacher planning.

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

Six of the eleven actions identified in the application to address the four challenges are either already being implemented or will be ready for implementation at the beginning of year one of the charter period which is the 2015-16 school year. Four additional actions will be developed during year one and implemented in year two. The final action will be implemented in year three. The timeline follows.

Table 2
Implementation Timeline for Actions

Action	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017	Year 3 2017-2018	Year 4 2018-2019	Year 5 2019-2020
#1.1 Early learning collaborative for school readiness	Implement				
#1.2 Striving Readers – Birth to 5 Program	Implement				
#1.3 Professional development for early childhood providers	Implement				
#2.1 STEAAM framework	Develop	Develop	Implement		
#2.2 Organizational & instructional strategies for selected students	Develop	Implement			
#2.3 Evaluating & improving gifted program	Implement				
#3.1 Prepare staff & students for use of digital technology	Implement				
#3.2 Adopt delivery models for blended, hybrid, & virtual learning	Develop	Implement			
#3.3 Provide extended learning time	Develop	Implement			
#4.1 Later daily starting & dismissal times for high school & modify structure of school day	Develop	Implement			
#4.2 Middle & junior high grade configuration	Implement				

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

The following actions represent an innovation for our school system:

Action #1.2 – Implement Striving Readers birth-to-five program

Action #2.1 – Implement an alternative framework for teaching through merging multiple STEM models into a STEAAM (science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture, and mathematics) framework for delivery of instruction

Action #2.2 – Implement alternative organizational and instructional strategies for students in K-5 who are developmentally delayed, are English learners, or have special needs

Action #2.3 – Evaluate the gifted program to ensure rigor, consistency, effectiveness, and better articulation among elementary, middle, junior high, and high school programs

Action #3.2 – Implement appropriate delivery models for learning which include blended, hybrid, and virtual learning opportunities for students

Action #3.3 – Provide extended learning time beyond school day and provide learning opportunities anywhere and anytime

Action #4.1 – Implement later daily starting and dismissal times for secondary students

Action #4.2 – Maintain recently adopted grade configuration for middle and junior high schools

Performance Expectations

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

The Colquitt County School System, as a charter system, anticipates a considerable increase in student performance on CCRPI assessments and growth indicators during the five-year term of our charter. The first three goals listed below are required components of the charter contract, and we accept the challenge of achieving these goals. In addition, the system has projected performance levels over the five-year period of the charter using a five-year history of student performance on the current state assessment instruments as the basis for projections. These performance projections would be the targets for the school system were the current program to remain in place.

Goal 1: During each year of its first five-year charter term, the Colquitt 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 Colquitt 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 one of the charter, the Colquitt County Charter System shall decrease the number of system charter schools not beating the odds during years two and three at a rate so that all schools will beat the odds in year four.

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

   A. Measure 1:   Using year one 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 two, and better than the State in years three-five 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 two of the charter term to close the gap between the system and the State.

   C. Measure 3:   In years three-five of the charter term, the system's CCRPI score shall be better than the State.

The school system has reviewed student performance on the state assessment program and provides below the percent of students meeting or exceeding and exceeding the standards on the CRCT and the EOCT for the past five years. Performance levels at the end of the initial charter period, fiscal year 2020, are projected assuming no change in the state assessment program. Implementation of end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) assessments in 2014-15 will require modification of the projections.

Tables three through six reflect historical student performance on the state-mandated assessments and projections of expected performance by fiscal year 2020 at the end of the term of the charter assuming the current assessment program remained in place. Adjustments to expected performance will be required as the state moves to end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) assessments beginning in fiscal year 2015.

Table three indicates the percent of students meeting or exceeding CRCT standards in grades 3-8 for fiscal years 2010 through 2014. Of the twenty-five measures contained in the table, five are at ninety percent or above, seven are at 80-89 percent, four are at 75-79, eight are at 70-74 and one is below seventy percent. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading has increased from eighty-eight to ninety-one over the five-year period with consistent performance each year. Student performance in reading and English language arts has been significantly higher throughout the period than in math, science, and social studies. The greatest gain over the period has been in social studies while math scores have declined by three percentage points during the five-year period. The 2020 projection reflects two areas, reading and English language arts, with over ninety percent of students meeting or exceeding the standards. Mathematics is projected at eighty-two percent, social studies at seventy-seven percent, and science at seventy-five percent.

Table 3
Percent of Students in Grades 3-8 Meeting or Exceeding Standards on Criterion Referenced Competency Tests 2010-2014 and 2020 Projection

Year	Reading	ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
2010	88	85	80	71	68
2011	90	88	80	73	72
2012	90	90	79	73	74
2013	90	88	79	71	74
2014	91	87	77	72	75
2020 Projected	93	93	82	75	77

Table four below shows the percent of students exceeding the standards on CRCTs in grades 3-8. Thirty percent of students have exceeded the standards on four occasions during the five year period. Twenty-five to twenty-nine percent have exceeded the standards on thirteen occasions. Twenty to twenty-four percent exceeded seven times and less than twenty percent exceeded on only one occasion.

The greatest gain has been in social studies while the percent of students exceeding the standards in mathematics has declined. It is projected that in 2020 thirty-three percent of students will exceed the standards in reading and English language arts, thirty-one percent will exceed in mathematics, and twenty-seven percent will exceed in science and social studies.

Table 4
Percent of Students in Grades 3-8 Exceeding Standards on Criterion Referenced Competency Tests 2010-2014 and 2020 Projection

Year	Reading	ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
2010	27	25	28	21	15
2011	27	30	29	24	21
2012	30	29	27	25	24
2013	30	28	26	24	24
2014	30	25	25	24	25
2020 Projected	33	33	31	27	27

Table five indicates the percent of secondary students meeting or exceeding standards on the forty end-of-course tests for the period 2010-2014. Of the forty discrete measures recorded over the five-year period, there were eleven occasions when 80-89 percent of the students met or exceeded the standards. 70-79 percent met or exceeded the standards on eleven occasions, also. In six instances, 60-69 percent met or exceeded the standards, and on twelve occasions the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards was fifty-nine or below. Students performed best in ninth Grade Literature and Composition followed closely by their performance in Physical Science and American Literature. The greatest gain has been in Economics while the poorest performance has been in Mathematics.

Table 5

Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards on End-of-Course Tests 2010-2014 and 2020 Projection

Year	9th Lit	Am Lit	Math I & Coord Alg	Math II & An Geom	Phy Sci	Biology	U. S. History	Econ
2010	80	77	69	48	75	74	58	53
2011	82	82	76	49	79	70	50	33
2012	82	77	72	45	80	70	56	61
2013	87	80	43	58	84	78	63	79
2014	86	87	41	37	88	69	63	69
2020 Projected	90	90	75	60	87	80	68	81

Table six reflects the percent of secondary students exceeding standards on end-of-course assessments for 2010-2014. Student performance on the forty measures reflects that on ten occasions thirty percent or more exceeded the standards and on the other thirty occasions twenty-nine percent or fewer exceeded the standards. The range was from zero to fifty-five percent. Students performed significantly better on the Physical Science assessment than on any other. Ninth Grade Literature and Composition and Biology reflect the next best scores. The poorest performance was in Mathematics and Economics with a significant upturn in performance in Economics the past two years.

Table 6
Percent of Students Exceeding Standards on End-of-Course Tests 2010-2013 and 2020 Projection

Year	9th Lit	Am Lit	Math I & Coord Alg	Math II & An Geom	Phy Sci	Biology	U. S. History	Econ
2010	26	21	10	7	34	28	18	0
2011	31	19	21	0	34	29	14	1
2012	28	14	17	1	43	28	19	12

2013	35	20	4	1	47	37	25	31
2014	31	26	6	5	55	28	27	29
2020 Projected	38	30	25	10	50	35	30	30

The school system will focus on ways to increase student performance as the State transitions to end-of-grade (EOG) assessments at the elementary and middle school levels, the end-of-course (EOC) assessments at the secondary level, and implementation of the growth model to reflect student growth each year in the areas assessed. The school system will target areas of weak performance, conduct root cause analyses, and select best practice methodologies to increase student learning and performance on the state assessments. Included in these strategies will be those that reduce the achievement gap between White students and Black and Hispanic students; between male and female students; between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students; and between students with disabilities and other students.

Below is a summary of the eleven actions to be pursued by the charter system to ensure improved academic performance by the students enrolled in the Colquitt County Charter School System.

Challenge #1 - having children ready to be successful when they enter school, reflects the system's concern about children's development prior to school entry.   The percentage of students retained at the kindergarten level has been very high each of the past five years: 9.0% in 2009-10; 7.6% in 2010-11; 6.5% in 2011-12; 9.7% in 2012-13; and 7.7% in 2013-14. First grade retentions have also been high: 5.2% in 2009-10; 6.8% in 2010-11; 5.4% in 2011-12; 7.3% in 2012-13; and 6.2% in 2013-14. Through implementation of Actions #1.1 through #1.3, making the early learning collaborative more focused and effective, implementing the Striving Readers birth-to-five program, and providing professional development for daycare, pre-school, and pre-kindergarten staff, the system expects to reduce kindergarten and first grade retentions to less than three percent by the end of the charter term. While student retention is not a specific indicator on the CCRPI, increasing the percentage of students who are

successful in kindergarten and first grade will positively affect performance at all grade levels in the long

term.

Challenge #2 – implementing instructional models and teaching frameworks that are effective for

students who are not achieving at a high level, focuses on the strategies used to deliver the curriculum to

populations of students with specific, identifiable barriers to learning. Action #2.1 is a long-term

undertaking to identify and embrace the best elements of the various STEM models to provide an

effective framework for delivery of instruction. Action #2.2 addresses the need to better serve specific

populations of elementary students through effective class sizes, appropriate grouping, and instructional

strategies that will better address their specific needs. Action #2.3 focuses on the gifted program to ensure

rigor, consistency, effectiveness, and better articulation among elementary, middle, junior high, and high

school programs. This action should result in an increase in the percentage of students who perform at

the exceed level on state assessments.

Challenge #3 – personalizing learning through integration of digital technology and extending learning

time, is an effort to deliver the curriculum in ways that motivate students to learn. The increasing use of

technology in the classroom demands a change in the delivery model for teaching. 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 goal is to integrate technology effectively into the

classroom and modify the delivery of education to include instruction delivered over the Internet. Actions

#3.2 and #3.3 embrace strategies to move toward differentiation in classroom instruction and the

personalization of the educational experience for each student. In addition, these actions address time as a

variable by looking at alternatives to the traditional school day and year. The issue is, how can the school

system positively affect student learning beyond the school day? Colquitt County YMCA is currently the

recipient of four 21st Century Community Learning Center grants which have as a primary focus extended

learning time for participants. The school system is actively engaged in this program.

The preparation of faculty and students for integration of digital technology into the teaching/learning process, Action #3.1, is well underway. The system will identify best practices in the use of blended, hybrid, and virtual delivery of instruction and will proceed expeditiously to integrate more digital technology beginning at the secondary level. On-line learning and on-line assessment of student progress will provide self-paced learning and a feedback mechanism that will reinforce student achievement and will allow individual students to progress at a faster rate with less down time which often occurs in whole class instruction. Implementation of this action should result in increased student performance on state assessments, accelerated learning, and students entering college or earning college credit at a younger age, if desired.

Challenge #4 –adopting alternative scheduling strategies and school grade configurations that are effective for all students, relates to how the Colquitt County Schools organize to deliver the curriculum to students. The actions enumerated in this application to address this challenge provide a comprehensive approach to transforming the way the education enterprise is structured to challenge all students to perform at a high level, learn in the best way suited to each of them, to respond to their passions, and to ensure that all students are engaged and motivated to be successful.

Action #4.1 calls for a later start time each day for high school students based on research relating to the sleep needs of adolescents. This action is aimed at improving learning across the secondary curriculum which should result in increased performance on state assessments which is currently very uneven from subject to subject. Action #4.2 relates to the recent grade organization change for grades six through nine. The school system currently has one middle school for grades six and seven and a junior high school for grades eight and nine. A state waiver has been granted to organize in this fashion. The system plans to retain this grade configuration for the foreseeable future because of early successes and requires a waiver for this purpose.

Our ultimate goal is to graduate all of our students prepared for their future endeavors. The 4-year cohort graduation rate for Colquitt County Schools was 76.9% in 2012 and increased to 78.3% in 2013. The school system projects a relatively flat graduation rate over the next two years (2014 and 2015) and

then an increase in the 4-year cohort graduation rate of approximately one and three-fourths percent each year or an annual increase of approximately nine to ten students reaching 87.1% by 2020. In addition to increasing the overall graduation rate, the school system will focus on sub-populations that historically have experienced a lower graduation rate. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to be a contributing member of society and to be successful. We believe that the eleven actions embraced in this application will lead to significantly increased student learning, performance on state assessments, and on the graduation rate for the school system.

Local School Governance

A primary goal of the Colquitt 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 Colquitt County School System revises its governance structure to ensure an appropriate distribution of 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 its schools and for the local 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. Defined autonomy should not be construed as an effort to suppress the decision-making authority of local school

governance teams but rather an effort to place that authority in the context of the several levels of governance and decision-making in any highly effective local school system.

The Colquitt County Board of Education policies and established practices that will be retained under the charter include but are not limited to:

- System-adopted curriculum;
- Student assessment system including grading, promotion/retention, and graduation requirements;
- Code of conduct for school board members;
- Code of ethics for school system staff;
- Superintendent evaluation;
- Employment and dismissal of personnel;
- Purchasing procedures;
- Student information system;
- Student support services;
- Student discipline procedures;
- System-developed benchmark assessments;
- Instructional strategies: standards-based classrooms, differentiation, and professional learning communities; and
- Other non-negotiable system goals which may be established from time to time.

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

(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 Colquitt 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 Governance Teams

Effective July 1, 2015, the school system will transition from local school councils to local school governance teams (LSGTs). Table seven 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 (Table 9) 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 2015, 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 school/community relations office will ensure that the proposed governance structure is communicated to all stakeholder groups in Colquitt County through a

variety of media and on a regular basis. In the spring of 2015, the charter system steering committee will develop 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 this work with ongoing input from stakeholders. Principal training will commence in April 2015 after completion of the draft bylaws. Module one will provide principals with a clear understanding of how LSGTs will function and their relationship to the school system as a whole. Module two will provide strategies for increasing parental and community engagement. Elections for LSGT membership will be conducted in May.

LSGT orientation and training on Modules one and two will be conducted in June. Local school councils will cease operation on June 30 and LSGTs will commence operation on July 1. During the month of July, LSGTs will conduct their initial meetings, continue orientation, and further their training with Modules three and four. The first business meeting for LSGTs will be in August 2015.

Table 7
Timeline for Conversion to Local School Governance Teams (LSGTs)

Beginning Date	Ending Date	Transition Step	Responsibility
April 15, 2014	April 15, 2014	Preliminary discussion of locus of control & school-level decision making	Charter system steering comm
May 20, 2014	May 20, 2014	Stakeholder meeting to provide charter system overview and general discussion of local school governance teams	Stakeholder Group
May 28, 2014	May 28, 2014	Receive input from school & community representatives relative to establishment of LSGTs	Ad hoc school governance committee
July 2014	Sept 2014	Develop school level governance decision-making matrix & petition narrative	Charter system steering comm
January 2015	June 2015	Develop training modules for principals & LSGTs – Module 1 to be developed by end of March 2015	Prof learning staff, RESA, & consultants

February 2015	April 2015	PSAs, Website notification, public meetings to inform stakeholders of proposed governance structure	Superintendent & school/community relations office
March 2015	March 2015	Establish roles, relationships & responsibilities of LSGT, principal & school staff, superintendent & CO staff, & BOE (consistent with School Level Governance Matrix)	Charter system steering committee
March 2015	March 2015	Develop template for LSGT bylaws including commencement date, membership, election of members, term of office, vacancies, officers & duties, meetings, training, responsibilities, accountability, & school system support	Colquitt staff member serving as liaison to LSGTs
April 2015	April 2015	Conduct principal training – Modules 1 & 2	Colquitt staff serving as liaison to LSGTs
May 2015	May 2015	Conduct LSGT elections in all schools	Principals
June 2015	June 2015	LSGTs orientation & training – Modules 1 & 2	Colquitt staff
June 30 2015	June 30 2015	Local School Advisory Councils cease operation	Principals notify council members
July 1, 2015	Ongoing	Commencement date for LSGTs	Principals & LSGTs
July 1, 2015	July 31, 2015	LSGTs initial meeting (orientation & training) Modules 3 & 4	Principal convenes, CO staff provide training
August 2015	August 2015	LSGTs second meeting – election of officers – establish operational procedures – conduct business	Principal conducts meeting
Sept 2015	Sept 2015	Second meeting of LSGTs – Business meeting	LSGT
October 2015	Ongoing	Training on remaining Modules will be scheduled on as-need basis by LSGTs in keeping with meetings scheduled for the year	Colquitt staff, RESA, 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 Colquitt 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 all schools in the system with the exception of the Achievement Center which is an alternative school.

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

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 full-time in the

school, two parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, one member who resides in Colquitt 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 Colquitt business community. The total membership of the LSGT shall be eight. All members with the exception of the school 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 and the business community member shall be recommended by the principal and elected by the other voting members of the LSGT.

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. The certified school leadership or support staff member shall be appointed by the principal for a two-year term and may serve consecutive terms. 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 for one year. Parent members may be re-elected for subsequent terms by their electing body provided their child has two years remaining at the school when the parent's term of office begins. Teachers may serve non-consecutive terms, and the community member and the business community member may serve consecutive terms, if eligible. The following will be elected or appointed for a one-year term in the initial election cycle: Classroom teacher one, Parent one, and the community member (see Table 8). 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 are no longer employed full-time 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 becomes ineligible when he/she no longer lives in Colquitt County and the business member becomes ineligible when no longer engaged in a business in Colquitt 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. Any member who has violated any provision of the Educator Code of Ethics established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission may be removed by a 2/3 vote. Special elections shall be held to replace members who have been removed as provided in the team's bylaws. Table eight below contains information relating to service on LSGTs.

The local school governance teams will become active in year one. Members of the teams will be elected, and the LSGTs will be organized, trained, and become functional in year one of the charter. The LSGTs will become fully functioning governing councils 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.

Table 8
Local School Governance Teams – Membership, Term of Office, Succession, Method of Election, Voting Status, and Eligibility

Category	Initial Term	Succeeding Term	Method of Election	Voting Status	Eligibility
Principal	Ongoing	Ongoing	Virtue of position	No	While serving as principal
Certified school leadership or support staff	2 years	2 years	Appointed by principal	Yes	Full-time at school - may serve consecutive terms
Classroom Teacher 1	1 year	2 years	Vote of teachers in school	Yes	Full-time at school - may serve non-consecutive terms
Classroom Teacher 2	2 years	2 years	Vote of teachers in school	Yes	Full-time at school - may serve non-consecutive terms
Parent 1	1 year	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	1 year	2 years	Elected by other voting members upon recommendation of principal	Yes	Adult citizen of Colquitt County (residing in school attendance zone desired) – may serve consecutive terms
Business member	2 years	2 years	Elected by other voting members upon recommendation of principal	Yes	Adult citizen of Colquitt County engaged in business – may serve consecutive terms

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, officers of the governance team, meetings, 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 governing 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

o 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 Colquitt County Board of Education through its chief executive officer, the superintendent.

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*

Table 9 below contains the school level governance decision-making matrix which reflects minimum and additional authority of the local school governance team and "how" and "when" such authority will be implemented.

Table 9
School Level Governance Decision-Making Matrix

System Name: Colquitt 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
Personnel Decisions	LSGTs shall recommend the principal or school leader for selection by the BOE	**Principal employment** - HR advertises position, receives apps & resumes & screens applicants (e.g., background check, references) - LSGT (less current principal) & system staff interview candidates & score rubric. LSGT & system staff reach consensus on candidate recommendation, superintendent recommends selected candidate to BOE, BOE employs or rejects recommendation (Year 1);	Examples include: Input on principal goals, feedback on principal performance, type & qualifications of all positions, requirements for substitutes, attributes & qualifications for school administrative positions, distribution methods for incentive funds	**Principal goals** - established annually as integral part of school improvement planning process by LSGT (Year 2); **Principal performance** - LSGT meets annually to conduct self-evaluation; principal's performance in achieving goals is evaluated by LSGT as part of evaluation process (Year 3); **Personnel qualifications & characteristics -** LSGT shall be provided an

		Principal transfer - Supt. provides notification to LSGT prior to recommendation to BOE (Year 1)		opportunity each year to submit recommendations relating to qualifications & characteristics desired for all school staff (Year 2); **Incentive funds** - LSGT recommends to superintendent proposed use of incentive funds allocated to school as part of proposed school budget (Year 1)
Financial Decisions & Resource Allocation	LSGTs shall have input into the final recommendations for the school budget, including number & type of personnel, curriculum costs, supply costs, equipment costs & maintenance & operations costs	**Allocation of Staff** - System projects student enrollment & allocates staff; LSGT, through principal, may request reconsideration stating reasons for request; (Year 1); **Budget** - System allocates specified general & special revenue funds for school for FY; principal & staff develop proposed budget with participation of LSGT; LSGT reviews final budget & may recommend changes (Year 1) **Personnel positions** – LSGT recommends types of positions, roles, qualifications, & job descriptions (Year 2)	Examples include: School budget approval, budget priorities aligned with school improvement plan, use of charter system funds, vendors for school resources, fundraising budget	**School budget approval** - School budgets for general & special revenue funds are prepared by principal, staff, & LSGT. Budget is based on school improvement plan & system priorities; LSGT approves at school level (Year 2); **Alignment of budget priorities** - LSGT, with guidance of principal, shall ensure that budget priorities are aligned with school improvement plan (Year 2); **Fundraisers** - LSGT may recommend fundraisers that are consistent with Board of Education policy

				& for designated purposes; budget for use of funds shall be consistent with stated purpose; generally fundraisers are for specific purpose & are limited in number (Year 2)
Curriculum and Instruction	LSGTs shall have input into the selection of the curriculum & accompanying materials consistent with the district's Essential and Innovative Features as included in the charter contract	**Curriculum** - Defined as "what is taught," shall be basically uniform across the system to ensure alignment with state & system goals & with state student assessment program. LSGT shall be represented on all curriculum review committees & on committees convened to recommend instructional materials; LSGTs shall have prerogative to recommend enrichment programs & activities that complement the basic curriculum (Year 1)	Examples include: approval of instructional delivery innovations that would traditionally require a waiver, approval of instructional programs & materials consistent with innovations, graduation requirements, new course offerings, opportunities for student acceleration & remediation	**Instructional delivery innovations** - 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, may recommend additional models, & shall be given opportunities to provide feedback (Year 1); **Graduation requirements** - LSGT shall be represented on all system-wide committees established to review graduation requirements (Year 2); **Course offerings** - LSGT is authorized to recommend enrichment courses in addition to the system-adopted curriculum;

				recommendations shall be made to superintendent. (Year 1)
Establishing & monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals	LSGTs shall approve the school improvement plan & provide oversight of its implementation	**School improvement plan** - LSGT shall participate in development of school improvement plan, shall approve plan at school level, & shall receive regular reports by principal on implementation progress (Year 1)	Examples include: LSGT members serving as members of the school improvement planning team, LSGT approval of any innovations that would traditionally require a waiver of state law	**Membership on SIP Team** - LSGT shall designate 1 or more members to serve on school improvement planning team & shall approve at the school level innovations that would require waiver of state law (Year 2); **School Improvement Goals** – LSGT develops actions, strategies, & interventions with input from teachers & principal (Year 2); **Budget** – LSGT allocates resources for implementing the school improvement plan
School Operations	LSGTs shall have input into school operations that are consistent with school improvement & charter goals	**Operational components** - LSGT, with guidance of principal, shall identify school operational components in which the LSGT shall have involvement & decision making authority (Year 1)	Examples include: approval of use of instructional time during school day, partners in education, co-curricular & extra-curricular activities, stakeholder surveys, parent involvement, communications strategies, school-level policies, volunteer support, field trips, fundraisers,	**Partners in education and parental engagement** - LSGT shall participate actively in establishing & sustaining partners in education & parental engagement programs (Year 1); **Parent, stakeholder, & student surveys** - LSGT shall participate

			student dress code, student discipline plan	actively in development & administration of surveys (Year 2); **Tutoring, mentoring, & volunteer programs;** LSGT shall assume lead in establishing & maintaining active tutoring, mentoring, & volunteer programs in the school (Year 2); **Communications strategies & plan** - LSGT shall develop a school/parent communication plan which shall be approved by the school leadership team (Year 2)
*The LBOE retains its constitutional authority				

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

The Colquitt County School System began the formation of local school councils with the

development of a *Handbook for School Councils: Bylaws and Guidelines* which was adopted by the

Colquitt County Board of Education on December 11, 2000. One school council was created in 2000,

three in 2001, and nine in 2002. The only local policy relating to the councils was adopted in 2006.

Policy BBFA states that "The Colquitt County Board of Education believes the Superintendent should be

responsible for recommending the hiring of administrative staff for the system. In the case of a vacancy

of a building principal, at his discretion, the superintendent may solicit input from a school council before

beginning interviews in order to receive input regarding attributes deemed important in a building

principal."

Each school in the Colquitt County School System has a local school council whose role is advisory. These councils have no decision-making authority. 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. Article II of the school council bylaws states that "the establishment of school councils is intended to help the local board of education develop and nurture participation, bring parents and community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns, and share ideas for school improvement." "School councils shall provide recommendations, advice, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses."

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 each LSGT is set at eight (seven voting members); whereas, council membership currently varies from school to school. The term of office of school council members and that 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 but classroom teachers may not serve two consecutive terms. 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 good 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 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 governance teams.

Training program modules

The initial training program will include nine modules that may be delivered in a variety of formats. Table ten 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 Colquitt 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.

Colquitt County School System

All other modules will be available in multiple formats and will be selected by LSGTs on an as-need

basis.

Table 10
Local School Governance Team
Training Program

Module	Topics
Module 1	• Bylaws for local school governance team • Roles, relationships, & responsibilities of LSGT, principal & school staff, superintendent & system staff, Colquitt County Board of Education • Conduct of LSGT meetings – agenda, minutes, meetings, parliamentary procedure, dissemination of LSGT actions, and other operational issues
Module 2	• Parent and community engagement strategies
Module 3	• School improvement plan & school system strategic plan • Student performance data – history and CCRPI projections for the term of the charter
Module 4	• Educational programs – local, state, & federal • Colquitt County School System curriculum overview (Common Core & Pathways)
Module 5	• Education funding – Federal funding, QBE funding formula, & local property tax • Budget development & implementation
Module 6	• Personnel earnings, allocations, & processes for employment & termination • Professional learning program
Module 7	• Student assessment – College & Career Ready Performance Index • Colquitt County School System Student Assessment Program
Module 8	• School operations – daily management of the school – safety, conduct, support services – Value of the classified staff at the school

Module 9	• Education delivery options – use of technology in the classroom & beyond

15. _Provide the name of the 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, 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._

Dr. Samuel DePaul, Superintendent of Colquitt County Schools, and Lou Ann Lardy,

School/Community Relations Coordinator, are designated as the system contact persons 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 and the School/Community Relations

Coordinator 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 is as follows:

Dr. Samuel DePaul
Superintendent, Colquitt County Schools
710 28th Avenue SE
Moultrie, GA 31768
229-890-6205
sdepaul@colquitt.k12.ga.us

Ms. Lou Ann Lardy
School/Community Relations Coordinator
Colquitt County Schools
710 28th Avenue SE
Moultrie, GA 31768
229-890-6235
llardy@colquitt.k12.ga.us

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 Colquitt 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 to comply without adopting a culture of compliance. Colquitt 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. System staff, school leaders, 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/her 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.

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 Colquitt County School System located in Colquitt 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;

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, Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Colquitt County Board of Education on the twelfth day of January, 2015.

(signature)   1-12-15

Samuel A. DePaul, Ph.D., Superintendent   Date

(signature)   1-12-15
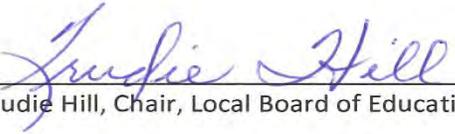
Trudie Hill, Chair, Local Board of Education   Date

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.

(signature)   1-12-15

Samuel A. DePaul, Ph.D., Superintendent   Date

(signature)   1-12-15

Trudie Hill, Chair, Local Board of Education   Date

Exhibits

1. Colquitt County Board of Education resolution approving creation of charter system

2. Notice to principals regarding required hearings on the charter system application

3. Stakeholder involvement in the development of the charter system application

4. All schools to be included in the charter system

5. A brief description of the charter system

6. Local school governance training timeline including training topics

7. Conflict of interest policy for local school governance teams

8. Business arrangements or partnerships with existing schools

9.   A brief description of the system's fiscal history and whether the system is or has ever operated

        under a fiscal deficit

10.   The school system's most recent annual audit

11.   The school system's most recent accreditation report

12.   The school system's most recent strategic plan

13.   Charter School Accountability Report

Exhibit 1

Signed Colquitt County Board of Education resolution approving the creation of the charter system

Colquitt County Board of Education

Resolution to Apply for Charter System Status

WHEREAS, the mission of Colquitt County Schools is *"committed to the daily pursuit of excellence in student achievement while working with parents and the community to serve the needs of all children in a positive and safe environment;"* and

WHEREAS, the vision for our school system is to *"become schools of excellence,"* and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education on April 28, 2014, authorized the superintendent and school system staff to conduct a planning process and prepare a charter system petition; and

WHEREAS, the superintendent and staff have conducted numerous meetings with the Colquitt County community for the purpose of envisioning the future desired for the school system; and

WHEREAS, the superintendent and staff have developed a strategic plan and charter system petition; and

WHEREAS, the community has responded positively to the plan and petition developed;

RESOLVED, the Colquitt County Board of Education approves the charter system petition, and, hereby, submits said petition to the Georgia Board of Education and Georgia Department of Education for favorable consideration and approval.

Trudie Hill, Board Chair   1 - 12 - 15
                                                             Date
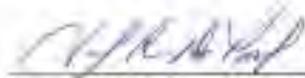
Samuel A. DePaul, Ph.D., Superintendent   1 - 12 - 15
                                                             Date

Exhibit 2

Notice that was sent to each principal within the proposed charter system regarding required hearings on the charter system application

The following e-mail regarding required hearings on the charter system application was sent by Superintendent, Dr. Samuel A. DePaul, to all principals and others in the Colquitt County School System on August 27, 2014.

Subject: Hearings for charter System Petition
From: Dr. Samuel A. DePaul <sdepaul@colquitt.k12.ga.us>
To: (Recipient List Suppressed)
Date: Wednesday, 27/08/2014 9:04 AM
1 attachment: Charter System PPT for staff and hearings etc.pdf 624 KB

This e-mail serves as notification of the two public hearings required for the Charter System Petition for the Colquitt County School System. You are hereby requested to forward this e-mail to all members of your staff. The dates and times for the hearings are:

Thursday, September 11, 6:30 pm, at Colquitt County Board of Education Central Office Board Room
Thursday, September 18, 6:30 pm, at Colquitt County Board of Education Central Office Board Room

A slide presentation is attached and is to be shown to your faculty prior to the first hearing. The presentation will also be posted on the school system's website prior to the first hearing. Comments will be solicited at each of the hearings.

The Colquitt County Board of Education will consider the charter system petition for approval at its meeting on September 29, 2014, which begins at 7:00 pm. The petition will be submitted to the Georgia Department of Education by November 1, 2014.

Your staff, after viewing the slide presentation, is invited to send comments to Lou Ann Lardy, School/Community Relations Coordinator at llardy@colquitt.k12.ga.us. Comments should be received by Lou Ann Lardy no later than September 8, 2014.

I wish to express my appreciation to all school system staff and to the Colquitt County Citizens who are engaged in charting the future for our school system.

Samuel A. DePaul, Ph.D.

Superintendent
Colquitt County Schools
P.O. Box 2708
Moultrie, Georgia 31776
229-890-6205
229-873-3414
sdepaul@colquitt.k12.ga.us

Exhibit 3

Description of how stakeholders, including parents and community members, were involved in the development of the Charter System Application

Stakeholder Engagement in Development of the Charter System Application

The planning process which has led to making application for charter system status for the Colquitt County School System began on Tuesday, October 23, 2012, when faculty members from the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development conducted a town hall meeting with members of the Colquitt community in support of the creation of an inclusive vision for the school system. The purpose at that time was to engage citizens from all sectors of the community in a candid conversation about the current and future state of the Colquitt County School System. Participants included school system staff, community members, parents, and local officials. Five key questions guided the conversations of over two hundred participants organized into groups of ten. The key questions were:

1. What is working well in Colquitt County School System?

2. What are the most significant challenges facing the Colquitt County School System?

3. Aside from academics, what should the school system budgetary priorities be?

4. Where do you see the Colquitt County School System in 5 years? What are the important steps to get to that vision?

5. Are there issues we missed?

A report was prepared which contained responses to the questions posed. Some two months later, December, 2012, student focus groups were convened to respond to the same set of questions, and a second report was prepared. These two activities provided the impetus for initiation of a strategic planning process which was concluded with adoption of the plan by the Colquitt County Board of Education on March 25, 2013. Parents, school staffs, and community members were actively engaged in development of the plan. The strategic plan has been updated periodically with the most recent update adopted by the Board of Education on June 9, 2014.

The formal charter system application process began with an orientation meeting of the charter system steering committee on April 15, 2014. The steering committee was composed of superintendent

DePaul and members of the system cabinet. A second meeting of the steering committee was convened on April 30 for the purpose of establishing a work plan to develop the charter system petition.

A planning session was conducted on May 20, 2014. The meeting was attended by Board of Education members, local college and university representatives, civic club officers, local elected officials, hospital staff, Board of Education attorney, and community members including parents. Those attending received information about the charter options available to local school systems, the decision of the Board of Education to pursue charter system status, and the flexibility and accountability dimensions of charter system status. Those attending discussed the challenge of improving student performance on state assessments, governance implications with the establishment of local school governance teams, early childhood issues relating to school readiness, and other issues that may be addressed with the flexibility granted to charter systems.

School readiness and early childhood issues was the focus of a session held on May 21. The superintendent and steering committee met with representatives of agencies that provide services to young children and their parents. Head Start, private pre-kindergarten providers, Babies Can't Wait, YMCA, United Way, Regional Hospital speech therapy representatives, faith-based daycare providers, migrant program staff, school system staff, and parents met to discuss opportunities to collaborate in the delivery of services to young children and their parents. The participants shared information about services provided by their agencies and how those services could be better coordinated through collaboration. Programs currently in place included four 21st Century Community Learning Centers sponsored by the YMCA with support from the school system and serving young children and their parents; Head Start serving 181 three and four-year-olds and their parents; Babies Can't Wait acting on referrals from pediatricians and others; the Ferst Foundation providing books for pre-school children; the school system providing professional learning for child care providers; and the school system's anticipated funding for a Striving Readers grant for birth-five (subsequently funded). The role of health services, poverty, and language barriers for non-English speaking citizens was also addressed.

Colquitt County School System

The charter system steering committee met with stakeholders on May 21 to discuss the expanding role of technology in teaching and learning and issues that would need to be addressed to become fully functional in this area. Challenges identified were inadequate wireless infrastructure, inadequate band-width, lack of or age of digital devices, and additional personnel required to keep the system functional. Current use of technology was discussed acknowledging limited digital learning opportunities. Opportunities for blended, hybrid, and virtual learning through computer-based instruction with greater flexibility as a charter system were identified and discussed. The need for a learning management system was also addressed. All agreed that personalized or differentiated learning is a laudable goal to pursue to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn at a pace that is appropriate for them.

A conversation with post-secondary partners of the school system was conducted on May 28, 2014. The charter system steering committee met with representatives of Moultrie Technical College, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, and Valdosta State University to explore partnering to increase student preparedness for college and to make the transition a seamless one. Opportunities discussed included dual enrollment, the sharing of teachers, ensuring that teachers are qualified to teach at the secondary and post-secondary levels, vertical alignment of curriculum and assessment from secondary to post-secondary, reducing the need for learning support, and ensuring preparedness for college-level work by high school graduates.

On May 28 a session was held to discuss the role, relationships, and responsibilities of local school governance teams. The charter system steering committee met with representatives of local businesses and organizations along with school administrators and teachers for the purpose of sharing perspectives on how the LSGTs could fill a decision making role that would be aligned with the authority and non-negotiable system goals established by the Colquitt County Board of Education.

A slide presentation on the charter system application and dates for public hearings was transmitted to all schools on August 28, 2014. All faculties and system level staff were provided an opportunity to view the presentation. Public hearings were held on September 11 and on September 18, 2014, for the purpose of presenting the proposed charter system application and to receive comments

from those attending. On September 24, 2014, the charter system steering committee held a session to

conduct a final review of the charter system application. The application was submitted to the Colquitt

County Board of Education on September 29, 2014, for its consideration and adoption.

Exhibit 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.

Schools That Are to Be Included in the Charter System

Cox Elementary School

Doerun Elementary School

Funston Elementary School

Hamilton Elementary School

Norman Park Elementary School

Odom Elementary School

*Okapilco Elementary School

Stringfellow Elementary School

Sunset Elementary School

Wright Elementary School

Willie J. Williams Middle School

C.A. Gray Junior High School

Colquitt County High School

*Okapilco Elementary School is designated as a Focus School

Exhibit 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

Colquitt County School System – A Charter System

The Colquitt County Charter School System has as its vision *"to become schools of excellence."* The school system's mission is *"committed to the daily pursuit of excellence in student achievement while working with parents and the community to serve the needs of all children in a positive and safe environment."* The system serves 9,000 students from kindergarten through grade twelve in ten elementary schools (K-5), one middle school (6-7), one junior high school (8-9), one high school (10-12), and an alternative school (6-12). The system also provides in its elementary schools a pre-kindergarten program for 650 four-year-olds in Colquitt County.

In July 2012, the Colquitt County Board of Education authorized the superintendent and staff to engage in a strategic planning process which ultimately led to petitioning the Georgia Board of Education for charter system status to gain the flexibility needed to ensure a high quality educational experience for all of the system's students. The system began the strategic planning initiative with a town hall meeting of approximately 200 community members and school leaders to discuss goals and objectives for the school system. Input was then solicited from students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to create a strategic plan. A strategic planning team and several sub-committees developed the final plan which was adopted by the Colquitt County Board of Education in March, 2013. The outcome of the initiative was a carefully crafted strategic plan designed to improve significantly the educational opportunities for all students enrolled in the Colquitt County School System. Many of the strategic plan elements were incorporated into the charter system application.

The school system's application for charter system status identified four challenges that the school system will address during the five-year term of the charter. The first challenge, that of ensuring children are ready for school when they enter kindergarten, is to be addressed through the establishment of an effective and sustainable early learning collaborative whose purpose is to implement and coordinate learning activities for children birth to age five and their families. The collaborative will be composed of agencies and organizations that provide services to pre-school children and their parents. The collaborative will focus on the goal of ensuring that children enter school ready to learn and that the

schools are ready for the children. The Striving Readers Birth-Five Program will be implemented through the collaborative and professional learning opportunities will be provided by the school system to staff of member agencies and organizations.

The second challenge is the adoption of instructional models and teaching frameworks that are effective for all students. Multiple STEM models will be merged into a framework for delivery of instruction which embraces science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture, and mathematics (STEAAM). This action will focus on experiential, project-based learning designed to increase student motivation, engagement, and success. The system will evaluate current organizational and instructional strategies for the purpose of designing and implementing strategies that are more effective for students in K-5 who are developmentally delayed, are English learners, or who have special needs. The gifted program will be evaluated to ensure rigor, consistency, effectiveness, and better articulation among elementary, middle, junior high, and high school program components. The school system will review extant delivery models for the gifted to determine which are most appropriate for Colquitt County students and are best aligned from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Personalizing learning through integration of digital technology and extending learning time is the third challenge to be addressed by the charter system. The increasing use of technology in the classroom demands a change in the delivery model for teaching. 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 goal is to integrate technology effectively into the classroom and modify the delivery of education to include instruction delivered over the Internet. Strategies to move toward differentiation in classroom instruction and the personalization of the educational experience for each student are essential. The preparation of faculty and students for integration of digital technology into the teaching/learning process is well underway. The system will identify best practices in the use of blended, hybrid, and virtual delivery of instruction and will proceed expeditiously to integrate more digital technology beginning at the secondary level.

Colquitt County School System

On-line learning and on-line assessment of student progress will provide self-paced learning and a feedback mechanism that will reinforce student achievement and will allow individual students to progress at a faster rate with less down time which often occurs in whole class instruction. Implementation of this action should result in increased student performance on state assessments, accelerated learning, and students entering college or earning college credit at a younger age, if desired. The initial action will be to ensure that staff and students have the capacity to use digital technology effectively in the teaching/learning process. The system will evaluate and adopt alternative learning options with opportunities for personalized learning through a variety of non-traditional instructional strategies such as blended, hybrid, and virtual learning with anywhere, anytime access for students.

The system will analyze time as a variable by looking at alternatives to the traditional school day and year. The issue is, how can the school system positively affect student learning beyond the school day? Colquitt County YMCA is currently the recipient of four 21st Century Community Learning Center grants which have as a primary focus extended learning time for participants. The school system is actively engaged in this program.

The fourth challenge is to provide alternative scheduling strategies and school grade configurations that are effective for all students. The school system will initiate a later start time each day for high school students based on research relating to the sleep needs of adolescents. This action is aimed at improving learning across the secondary curriculum which should result in increased performance on state assessments which are currently very uneven from subject to subject.

The system has recently changed its organization for grades six through nine. The school system currently has one middle school for grades six and seven and a junior high school for grades eight and nine. The system plans to retain this grade configuration for the foreseeable future because of early successes.

We believe that the initiatives outlined in this application will lead to significantly increased student learning, performance on state assessments, and on the graduation rate for the school system.

Exhibit 6

Local school governance training timeline including training topics

Timeline and Topics for Local School Governance Team Training

Schedule	Module	Topics
June 2015	Module 1	• Bylaws for local school governing council • Roles, relationships, & responsibilities of the council, principal & school staff, superintendent & system staff, Colquitt County Board of Education • Conduct of council meetings – agenda, minutes, open meetings statute, parliamentary procedure, dissemination of council actions
June 2015	Module 2	• Parent and community engagement strategies
July 2015	Module 3	• School improvement plan & school system strategic plan • Student performance data – history and projected increases for charter term
July 2015	Module 4	• Educational programs – local, state, & federal • Colquitt County School System curriculum overview (Common Core & Pathways)
To be selected	Module 5	• Education funding – Federal funding, QBE funding formula, & local property tax • Budget development & implementation
To be selected	Module 6	• Personnel earnings, allocations, & processes for employment & termination • Professional learning program
To be selected	Module 7	• Student assessment – College & Career Ready Performance Index • Colquitt County School System Student Assessment Program
To be selected	Module 8	• School operations – daily management of the school – safety, conduct, support services – Value of the classified staff at the school
To be selected	Module 9	• Education delivery options – use of technology in the classroom & beyond

Modules one and two will be required of all local school governing team members in June 2015 and modules three and four will be required of all team members during the month of July 2015. In subsequent months during the first year of operation of LSGTs, each LSGT shall select and be trained on two additional training modules. In the second year of operation LSGTs shall receive training on the three remaining modules.   Additional training modules shall be developed when requested by LSGTs or when deemed necessary by the school system. When new members are elected to LSGTs, these new members will receive training in keeping with the initial schedule.

Exhibit 7

Conflict of interest policy for local school governance teams

Conflict of Interest – Local School Governance Teams

The Colquitt County Board of Education will develop and adopt a conflict of interest policy for local school governance teams prior to their formation. The conflict of interest policy shall become a part of the bylaws for the school governance teams. The policy will be consistent with any state statutory provisions and with the Colquitt County Board of Education conflict of interest policy.

The conflict of interest policy for school governance team members will contain at a minimum the following provisions:

- No council member shall use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges, advantages, employment for himself or herself, any of his or her immediate family members, or others.

- No council member shall act in his or her official capacity in any matter in which he or she, any of his or her immediate family members, or any 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.

- No council member shall solicit or accept or knowingly allow any of his or her immediate family members or any 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 council member in the discharge of his or her official duties.

- No council 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 of securing financial gain for himself or herself, any of his or her immediate family members, or any business organization with which he or she is associated.

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- No council 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 school governing council, 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.

- No council member may also be an officer of any organization that sells good or services to the Colquitt County School System, except as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-505 and excluding membership organizations.

- No council member shall accept a monetary fee or honorarium in excess of $101 for a speaking engagement, participation in a seminar, discussion panel or other activity which directly relates to the official duties of that council member or the office of that council member. 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 considered monetary fees or honoraria.

- No council member shall disclose to or discuss with any person other than council members or the superintendent, any information which is subject to attorney-client privilege.

- Each member of a school governance team understands and acknowledges that no person shall be eligible for election as a school governance team member if he or she is a convicted felon and unless he or she has read and understands the conflict of interest provisions applicable to council members, agrees to abide by them, and has agreed to annually disclose compliance with the policy on training for members of school governing councils and conflict of interest provisions applicable to members of councils.

- *Note: Several of the above provisions are excerpted from Colquitt County School System's board of education conflict of interest policy.*

Exhibit 8

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

Colquitt County School System
School-Business-Community Partnerships

Business or Community Partner	Description -Nature of Partnership
Cox Elementary	
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	STEM partner
Art Center	After school programs, art training for paraprofessionals for redelivery at schools
Box Tops 4 Education, Chick fil A, Dairy Queen, Harvey's	Family night fundraisers throughout the year
Boys and Girls Club	Sponsors low cost after school care
Christmas Cheer Shop	Student/teacher support
Colquitt County Sheriff's Department	CHAMPS for 5th grade students
CRMC	FastForWord Reading, IPAD give away
Kiwanis	BUGS & Terrific Kids
Moultrie Fire Department, Public Library	Field trips, sponsors "Fire Safety Week"
Moultrie Oncology Support Team	Helping students with cancer
Moultrie Technical College	5th grade Career Day
Trinity, Presbyterian, & Methodist churches	On-going support of school
Wendy's	Wendy's Friends, attendance incentives, end of semester bicycle give away
YMCA	2nd grade SPLASH, after school sports teams, Primetime, mentoring program, 21st Century CLC
4-H	Agriculture awareness for 4th & 5th grades`
Doerun Elementary	
Aidens Minit Market, Ameris Banking, Apothecary, Bentley's, Carlton Insurance, Demott Peanut, Doerun Gin, Doerun IGA, Farmers Seed, Farm Bureau, Lasseter Tractor, McLean Tires, Mobley Gin, Robert Hutson, Rock's T-Shirts, Tyson Steel Buildings, Weeks Farm Machinery, Wheeler Hardware	Support of education field trip to Washington, D.C.; instructional suppliers
Funston Elementary	
Art Center	After school programs, art instruction training for re-delivery
Box Tops 4 Education, Harvey's Rewards	Funds for school events
Boys & Girls Club	Sponsors low-cost after school care
Chick fil A	Donates coupons, free goodies, etc.
Colquitt County Sheriff-s Department	Sponsors CHAMPS for 5th grade students
Culbertson Head Start	School provides transition into Pre-K and works with their advisory committee regarding curriculum
Funston Gin Co., Moultrie Public Library, Fire Department	Sponsors student activities and field trips
Moultrie Technical College	Sponsors 5th grade Career Day
Wendy's	Sponsors system wide "Wendy's Friends" plays for 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th grades

YMCA	2nd grade SPLASH, after-school sports teams, gymnastics, tumbling for Pre-K, Primetime, Mentor Program
4-H	Provides ag awareness programs - 4th & 5th grades

Hamilton Elementary	
Applebee's, Little Caesar's	Coupons for good grades
Art Center	After school programs, art instruction training for re-delivery at the school
Babies Can't Wait	Birth-3 target program for at-risk students
Box Tops 4 Education	Provides funds
Chick fil A	Donates coupons, food, etc., sponsors Spirit Night fundraisers throughout the school year
Colquitt County Sheriff's Department	Sponsors CHAMPS for 5th grade students
Culbertson Head Start	School provides transition into Pre-K & works with advisory committee regarding curriculum
Dairy Queen	Sponsors family night fund raisers
Fire Department, Moultrie Public Library	Field trips (Pre-K) & sponsors 'Fire Safety Week'
Moultrie Technical College	Sponsors 5th grade 'Career Day'
Pine Grove Church	Sponsors 'Backpack Buddies' program
Wendy's	Sponsors system wide "Wendy's Friends" plays for 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th grades
YMCA	2nd grade SPLASH, after-school sports teams, gymnastics, tumbling for Pre-K, Primetime, Mentor Program
4-H	Provides ag awareness programs - 4th & 5th grades

Norman Park Elementary	
A&S Rentals	Donates use of equipment for field activities
Applebee's	Provides honor roll incentives
Art Center	After school programs, art instruction training for re-delivery at the school
Babies Can't Wait	Birth-3 target program for at-risk students
Boys & Girls Club	Sponsors low-cost after school care
Burger King	Provides student incentives
Chick fil A	Donates coupons, food, etc., sponsors Spirit Night fundraisers throughout the school year
Colquitt County Sheriff's Department	Sponsors CHAMPS for 5th grade students
Dairy Queen	Sponsors family night fund raisers
Dollar General	Donates merchandise, sponsors toy collection
GA Baptist Conference Center	Use of facilities for 5th grade honors night
Georgia Farm Bureau	Agriculture day
Kohl's	Helps sponsor Christmas Toy Shop for students
Moultrie Technical College	Sponsors 5th grade 'Career Day'
Norman Park Fire & Police Departments	Provides outreach/enrichment activities
Pine Ridge Meats	Donates items for needy school families
Pizza Hut	Provides "Book It" reading incentive kits & coupons for free pizzas, sponsors spirit night
Southside Baptist Church	Sponsors shoe ministry donations for students
Telamon Corp. (Kiddie Kastle III)	School provides transition into Pre-K & works with advisory committee regarding curriculum

Wendy's	Sponsors system wide "Wendy's Friends" plays for 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th grades
YMCA	2nd grade SPLASH, after-school sports teams, gymnastics, tumbling for Pre-K, Primetime, Mentor Program
4-H	Provides ag awareness programs - 4th & 5th grades
Odom Elementary	
Boys & Girls Club	Sponsors low-cost after school care
Chick fil A	Donates coupons, food, etc., sponsors Spirit Night fundraisers throughout the school year
Colquitt County Arts Center	After school programs, art training for paraprofessionals for redelivery at schools
Dairy Queen & Freckles Skate Center	Student nights – proceeds go to school
Harvey's Rewards	Reward points to purchase equipment
Hopewell Baptist Church	Backpack Buddies sponsor
Moultrie-Colquitt County Library	Bookmobile visits
Okapilco Elementary	
Alan Roberts Photography & Design, Bell Farms, David Herndon, Attorney at Law, Hutson Motors, Freckles Skate Center, Jenny's Hair Salon, Lasseter Tractor, Pfizer Pharmaceutical, Dr. Roberts, Rossman Apiaries, Russ Davis Insurance, Wilmot & Powell, Attorneys at Law	Technology club sponsor
Beef O' Brady's, Dairy Queen	Okapilco family night
Crystal Pharmacy	Books for kindergarten
DeMott Tractor	Provides tractors for demonstrations, donations
Flowers by Barrett	Provides decorations for 5th grade graduation
Greg Yarbrough	School council business rep, yearbook donation
Mo & Jenny Cronk	Yearbook sponsor, spring fling donations
Tyson Steel	Pre-K field trip/animal museum
Stringfellow Elementary	
Colquitt Regional Medical Center	FastForWord partner
First Baptist Church	Backpack Buddies, tutoring, staff breakfast, 5th grade honors, fall festival
State Farm Insurance	Door prizes for back to school breakfast
Sunset Elementary	
Arby's, ASHUR Tech, Beans & Strings, Beef O' Brady's, Cheese & Feed, Christian Nails, COCO's, Corner Cakery, Crystal Pharmacy, Dairy Queen, Doughboy's, Edwards Motors, Enchanted Boutique, Family Ties, Freckles Skate Center, Huddle House, Main Street Tan, Margarita's, Merle Norman, Packer Produce, Pic-N-Stitch Embroidery, Shuga Foot, Sircy Chiropractic, Sonic, Sunbelt Signs, Sunset Tires, Tarragon Grill, The Cotton Shop, The Square, Thirth-One (Gidget Lacy), Three Crazy Bakers, Triangle Furniture, Tropical Sun Tanning	Provides coupons, discounts, goodies, etc.
Art Center	After school programs, art instruction training for re-delivery at the school

Babies Can't Wait	Birth-3 target program for at-risk students
Boys & Girls Club	Sponsors low-cost after school care
Chick fil A	Donates coupons, free goodies, etc.
Colquitt County Sheriff's Department	Sponsors CHAMPS for 5th grade students
Culbertson Head Start	School provides transition into Pre-K & works with advisory committee regarding curriculum
Fire Department	Field trips (Pre-K) & sponsors 'Fire Safety Week'
Moultrie Technical College	Sponsors 5th grade 'Career Day'
Wendy's	Sponsors system wide "Wendy's Friends" plays for 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th grades
YMCA	2nd grade SPLASH, after-school sports teams, gymnastics, tumbling for Pre-K, Primetime, Mentor Program
Zaxby's	Provides coupons & discounts
4-H	Provides ag awareness programs - 4th & 5th grades
R.B. Wright Elementary	
Art Center	After school programs, art instruction training for re-delivery at the school
Babies Can't Wait	Birth-3 target program for at-risk students
Box Tops 4 Education	Provides funds
Boys & Girls Club	Sponsors low-cost after school care
Camp Phun	Provides camp experience for students of incarcerated parents
Camp Salvation Army	Provides camp experience for economically disadvantaged students
Chick fil A	Donates coupons, food, etc., sponsors Spirit Night fundraisers throughout the school year
Colquitt County Healthy Coalition	Provided grant to establish outdoor garden area
Colquitt County Sheriff's Department	Sponsors CHAMPS for 5th grade students
Culbertson Head Start	School provides transition into Pre-K & works with advisory committee regarding curriculum
Dairy Queen	Sponsors family night fund raisers
Fire Department	Field trips (Pre-K) & sponsors 'Fire Safety Week'
Modern Cleaners	Cleans/stores 5th grade choir shirts
Moultrie Public Library	Field trips & chapel programs
Moultrie Technical College	Sponsors 5th grade 'Career Day'
St. John's Episcopal Church	Sponsors Backpack Buddies program
Walmart	Donates water, Gatorade, etc., for field days
Wendy's	Sponsors system wide "Wendy's Friends" plays for 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th grades
YMCA	2nd grade SPLASH, after-school sports teams, gymnastics, tumbling for Pre-K, Primetime, Mentor Program
4-H	Provides ag awareness programs - 4th & 5th grades
Willie J. Williams Middle	
Chick fil A	Judges annual Christmas door decorations
Great American Opportunities	Percent of profits benefit student rewards program
Heritage Church	Partners with school through MERGE program
Home Depot, Lowe's	Donations

YMCA	Trains mentors , provides fun day for mentors & students
C.A. Gray Junior High	
Chick fil A	Coupons
Harvey's Rewards	Reward points to purchase equipment
Colquitt County High	
Colquitt County Arts Center, Corner Cakery, Dairy Queen, Golden Apple Griffin Timber Service, Harvey's, Humane Society, Jalisco, McKee's Master Muffler, Oxley's Grocery, Schoolhouse Learning Center, Shepard's Supply, Sonny's Meats, Southside Veterinary, Triangle Furniture, Waffle House, Wags to Whiskers, YMCA	Student/business internships
Baker Funeral Home, Chick fil A, Cobb Funeral Home, Coke, Colquitt Regional Medical Center, Crystal Pharmacy, DeMott Tractor, Edwards Motors, Golden Apple, Jostens, Krystal, Lasseter Tractor, Mattco Realtors, Mashburn Printing, McDonald's, Packer Produce, Southside Veterinary, Southwest Ga Bank, Valdosta State University, Vereen Rehabilitation Center, Whatagraphics, Zaxby's	Donations & volunteer time
System Level	
Altman & Barrett, Architects	Donates to employee of year winner (BRAVO)
Cobb Funeral Home	Donates baked good to school staffs
Colquitt County Sheriff's Department	School resource officers
Colquitt Regional Medical Center	Physicals for student athletes–Telehealth services
Commercial Banking Company	Donates to TOTY
CNS (Community Network Services)	Video coverage of school events
Help a Child Smile	On-site dental services
Moultrie-Colquitt County Library	Bookmobile services
Moultrie YMCA	SPLASH, 21st Century CLC, Primetime
Mt. Olive Baptist Church	Beginning of year treats
Southwest Georgia Bank	Breakfast for all system staff at beginning of year
University of Georgia Archways Partnership	Collaborative to address community issues
Vereen Rehabilitation Center	Rehabilitation services to student athletes
Special Services	
ABAC, Ameris, Archway, Boys & Girls Club, Bud K, Chick fil A, Christian Life Center, City of Moultrie, CNS, COCOS, Colquitt County Extension, Colquitt County FBLA, Colquitt County Sheriff's Office, Colquitt EMC, Colquitt Regional Medical Center, Commercial Banking	Teen Maze – dress rehearsal for life. 700 9th graders participate in two-day event each year
Artistic Flower Shop, Colquitt County Arts Center, Cross Roads Mission, Harvey's, Hope House, Moultrie Humane Society, Oxley's Grocery, Sunrise Nursing Home, YMCA	Community-based instruction job sites
Bytespeed, CNS, Metro Services, MXN	Technology fair donations

Colquitt Regional Medical Center, Green Oaks Center	Project Search job site
Class of 1988, Ellen Payne Odom Award of Excellence, Jim Buck Goff Memorial Scholarship, Jim Mack Odom Scholarship, Lamar DeMott Scholarship, Leon Pippin Memorial Scholarship, McKee Memorial Scholarship, Moultrie Civitan Club	Student scholarships
Gin Creek, Magnolia Civitan, Moultrie Jr. Woman's Club, Moultrie Service League, National Beef, Rotary Club, Standard Discount, Women's Club	Donations, volunteers & support for Special Olympics
Packer Foundation/Boosters	Booster clubs in which school personnel & community are members. Proceeds benefit students in sports & other organizations & activities

Exhibit 9

A brief description of the system's fiscal history and whether the system is or has ever operated under a fiscal deficit

Colquitt County School System Fiscal History

The Colquitt County School System derives its general fund financial support from state allocations through the Quality Basic Education Act funding formula and categorical grants, from local property taxes, from a one percent local option sales tax, and from the federal government through various special purpose grants and allocations. The system has maintained fiscal stability over the past five years despite a decline in net state funding from $53.9 million in fiscal year 2009 to $49.9 million in fiscal year 2013. Total general fund revenue has declined from just over $68.7 million in fiscal year 2009 to $64 million in fiscal year 2013 to support the 8,926 students enrolled in kindergarten through grade twelve in that year. America Recovery and Restoration Act (ARRA) funds totaling just under $7.5 million, over the five years analyzed here, offset some of the loss in state funding. Local revenue has increased from $12.8 million to $13.7 million over the five fiscal years.

The school system, to remain solvent, has reduced the length of the work year for teachers by six days in fiscal years 2010 and 2011and by four days in fiscal years 2012, 2013, and 2014. An immediate goal is to return all staff to full employment and compensation. The school year for students was reduced to 177 days in 2009-10 and 2010-11. For the past three years, 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14, the school year was set at 179 days. A second immediate goal is to restore the 180-day school year and to devise new strategies to maximize student learning in and out of school.

The number of classroom teachers has decreased from 668 in fiscal year 2010 to 634 in fiscal year 2014. In fiscal year 2010 the student/teacher ratio was 12.7:1. The ratio has increased each year since reaching 14.2:1 in fiscal year 2014. These reductions in people, compensation, and services have obviously had a negative overall effect on the ability of the school system to provide a high quality educational experience for all students. The school system has been diligent in its effort to ensure financial solvency while protecting the educational program to the greatest extent possible.

The school system has never been in deficit financing and has maintained an adequate fund balance (ending fund equity) each year until fiscal year 2013 when the general fund balance dipped from $7.5 million at the beginning of the year to just under $4.7 million at the end of the year. The equity was

$8.2 million in fiscal year 2009 and was $7.5 million at the end of fiscal year 2012. While this level of equity is not deemed adequate, it has enabled the school system to avoid short term borrowing for operational purposes.

The Board of Education is offsetting some of the loss in state funding through an increase in the property tax mill rate to 10.287, a two mill increase over the current rate. The school system is one of ten in the state that has a one percent local option sales tax for school maintenance and operation in lieu of property tax. The system is required to roll back its property tax mill rate to account for sales tax revenue anticipated each year. The effective mill rate taking sales tax revenue into account is 16.164 for the current fiscal year. The property tax digest for school maintenance and operation has increased slightly over the past six years from $856.7 million in calendar year 2009 to $897.5 in calendar year 2014 for an increase of 4.75% over the six year period. The system is 174th in property wealth per weighted full-time-equivalent student placing it near the bottom among the state's 180 school systems in its financial ability to support public education. The system is best characterized as a low ability/high effort school system.

The system believes that financial performance should be judged in terms of the resources available to the school system, the system's stated goals, the allocation of resources toward those goals, and the results achieved. The system has devoted just under 77 percent of its general fund budget in three of the past five years to the expenditure functions of instruction, pupil services, improvement of instructional services, and media services; in other words, to those areas that directly support teaching and learning. In the other two years the percentages have been 74.9 and 74.1. Student performance as measured by the state testing program has improved in virtually every area for each of the past five years. Thus, the system has maintained its focus on the classroom during a period of declining resources.

The citizens of Colquitt County have approved four special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) referenda which have provided the school system with funds to construct and renovate many of its school facilities. The school system has been "assigned a rating of A1 underlying rating and an Aa1 enhanced rating" by Moody's.

Exhibit 10

Colquitt County School System's most recent audit

Exhibit 11

Colquitt County School System's most recent accreditation report

Exhibit 12

Colquitt County School System's most recent strategic plan

Exhibit 13

Charter School Accountability Report