



May 24, 2016

Via U.S. Mail and Electronic Mail

Ms. Marissa Key
Charter System Petition Manager
Georgia Department of Education
Charter Schools Division
2053 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

RE: Gordon County Charter System Renewal Application

Dear Ms. Key:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information regarding our Charter System Renewal. Below are the responses to the revisions requested on May 23, 2016:

1. Please specify the strategies Gordon will use to ensure Local School Governance Team (LSGT) membership is reflective of each school's student population.

Schools within Gordon County reflect different types of diversity from one school to another. Currently, the largest minority population district-wide is Hispanic (approximately 14%). We also serve a large economically disadvantaged population district-wide (approximately 65%, as indicated by Free and Reduced Lunch participation). However, these populations are not necessarily reflective of every school in the system.

To that end Gordon County Schools will work to ensure that the local school governance teams reflect the diversity of the schools they serve. The system Family Engagement Specialist, ESS Family Mentor, and Bi-lingual Resource Coordinator will work to actively recruit members to serve on LSGTs where a significant percentage of the schools' population dictate membership in certain areas. Strategies for recruitment include: Ballots and calls for nomination will be presented in both English and Spanish. Information on nominations will be available at events targeting special groups, i.e., Parent-School Partnership Programs, to include EL parent trainings and reading courses, Title I school parent meetings, and ESS parent meetings. Additionally, information regarding nominations will be made available on written communications sent home throughout the year in multiple forms of media and in both English and Spanish.

2. Given the challenges LSGTs faced in the areas of training and authority during the initial charter term, describe how Gordon plans to make sure all LSGTS are well trained and consistently engaged in important decision making processes system-wide.

As defined in the LSGT training timeline, members will receive training every month from either a member of the district leadership team or a member of the Department of Education, Charter Foundation, or Technical College System of Georgia. The topics covered will be related to the work of the governance authority exercised by the LSGTs. These training presentations will be made available online for members who are unable to attend the scheduled training sessions.

LSGT members will be required to complete training based upon the following stipulations that mirror the process for Local Boards of Education through Georgia School Boards Association:

Qualified LSGT- all members complete a minimum of 6 hours per year

Quality LSGT- majority of members complete 9 hours per year

Exemplary LSGT- all members complete 9 hours per year

The LSGT secretary will track hours completed by each member and sign off on training requirements to be sent to system-level designee no later than June 30 of each year. Each LSGT will be awarded certificates of completion, based upon documentation of hours.

System-level staff will monitor monthly minutes of LSGTs before preparing them for review by the BOE to ensure governance authority is being properly exercised.

3. Provide a detailed and realistic description of the time and capacity required of LSGT members in Gordon.

As indicated above, the levels of certification will be presented to LSGTs as options for training. LSGTs will be required to meet at least the minimum level each year, and LSGT members will be required to attend the majority of monthly meetings, which will also include training sessions. An average LSGT member can expect to spend approximately 20 hours a year attending LSGT trainings and meetings.

This letter will be mailed both electronically and via U.S. Mail. We hope that this response provides you adequate information to allow you to submit a recommendation to the SBOE in June, thus allowing Gordon time to prepare before the start of the 2016-2017 school year. Should you have any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at ajparker@gcbe.org. Our Superintendent, Dr. Susan Remillard, can be reached at sremillard@gcbe.org.

Sincerely,



Amy J. Parker, EdD
Director of Communications, Gordon County Schools

Cc: Dr. Susan Remillard, Superintendent, Gordon County Schools; Patricia Boswell, Director of School Improvement, Gordon County Schools; Louis J. Erste, Associate Superintendent for Policy, Charter Schools, District Flexibility, and Governmental Affairs