



## **CHARTERSTART PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Opening a charter school is an enormous task encompassing not only educational planning, but also non-profit business planning. The process is intense and navigating political waters and technicalities can be difficult without support from experts in the field. CharterStart is a comprehensive program designed to provide foundational knowledge and technical assistance to charter petitioners in developing a quality charter school and writing a successful petition.

CharterStart provides two training routes to meet founding groups' needs:

1. **CharterStart Program**
2. **Workshops A la Carte**

### **CharterStart Program**

CharterStart consists of three components:

#### **1. CharterStart Workshops**

The workshops provide intensive training sessions on a variety of topics related to planning and operating a successful charter school. Sessions were developed through input from the State Department of Education, local authorizers, research based programs, documented best practices in education and business, and the work of charter support organizations nation-wide.

CharterStart workshops series are offered twice per year – in the fall and in the spring. The workshops are broken into 4-6 days of comprehensive training, as well as webinars on topics as needed. Each of the training session provides instruction on a variety of topics and guidance on developing the petition. Presentations will be provided by GCSA staff and other speakers with expertise in various areas (e.g., financial, legal, risk management, financing, etc.)

Most workshops are held on Saturdays from 10:00-3:00 p.m. in the Georgia Center Building, 600 West Peachtree Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room. Due to the dense nature of the topics, additional meeting dates may be scheduled to ensure adequate time has been dedicated to each topic and participants have an opportunity for discussion, questions and answers. Lunch is provided to participants. Parking is available in the Renaissance Hotel parking deck or along the street in specified spaces (please note that parking fees are assessed by the parking garage). The North Avenue Marta Station is also easily accessed across the street from our building.

CharterStart members will accumulate a small library of excellent foundational literature, plus valuable resources and tools to further professional growth in charter development. CharterStart participants are encouraged to bring up to 5 participants to attend the workshop series. GCSA recommends a consistent group of participants attend. A representative group from the board and founding school leadership is highly recommended.

Attached is the breakout of the workshop series:

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND GETTING STARTED**

- Educational Entrepreneurship, Charter, and Non-Profit Basics
- The Petitioning Process, Timelines, and Milestones
- Vision/Mission Development
- Establishing the Business

## **OFFICIAL MATTERS**

- Finance, Accounting, Funding, and Sustainability Planning
- Governance
- Policies and Procedures
- Facility Procurement and Financing
- Strategic Use of Waivers
- Accountability & Developing Measureable Objectives
- EMO Management and Due Diligence

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

- Standards and Research Based Curricula and Pedagogy
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Charter Schools
- Standards-Based Assessment Program
- Extracurricular and Enrichment Considerations

## **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

- Special Education (SPED)
- Gifted
- Remedial Programs (EIP and REP)
- English Language Learners (ELL)

## **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

- Technology Planning
- Food Service and Nutrition Considerations
- Transportation Considerations
- Student Support Team and Response to Intervention
- Counseling

## **HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

- Organizational Structure – Education vs. Business Management
- School Leadership and Succession Planning
- Compensation Planning
- Best Practices for Hiring and Recruitment
- Staff Development
- Employee Insurance
- Legal Requirements

## **MARKETING AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

- Marketing and Positioning the Organization
- Enrollment Practices
- Student Information Systems, Data, Records, and Reporting

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING**

- Non-Employee Insurance
- Crisis Management Plan and Ga. Emergency Management Agency
- Health and Safety Considerations and Risks

## **FUNDRAISING AND GRANT WRITING**

- Fundraising and Grant Resources
- Grant Writing Basics

## **OPERATIONS**

- Creating a School Culture
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Discipline, Code of Conduct, Dismissal, and Due Process

## 2. Group Meetings

Petitioners come to CharterStart with varying levels of background and experience in education and the petitioning process. In order to meet the individual needs of each petitioning group, groups may request meetings with the GCSA CharterStart trainer to work on specific portions of the petition as needed. The purpose of group meetings is to personalize the training experience and to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each founding group.

## 3. Consulting

To further meet the individual needs of petitioners, tailored consulting time will be afforded to each petitioning group for a one year period for the following purposes:

- Budget, revenue projections, and cash flow review and guidance
- Petition development support
- Initial Petition review and guidance from GCSA staff
- Final Petition review and guidance from external reviewers
- Grants review and support
- Mock interviews with authorizers and potential funders
- Other needs of the petitioning group

**GCSA is committed to supporting and advocating on behalf of high quality petitions developed through the CharterStart Program as determined through a post-course assessment using a rubric aligned with the GaDOE Charter Schools Division requirements for high quality charter schools. Taking advantage of all workshops, cohort opportunities, and consulting opportunities is key to preparing a quality petition that will meet rigorous standards.**

2010-2011 Cohort Sessions
<input type="checkbox"/> Spring
<input type="checkbox"/> Fall

## CharterStart A la Carte

Some groups have experience or capacity in some areas and are only in need of support on specific topics. CharterStart A la Carte allows founding groups to choose from a number of interactive workshops on key areas that strengthen charter school plans and petitions. In addition, consulting and other services are procured on an as needed basis. Workshops may be scheduled in multi-group sessions or privately.

<b>A la Carte Workshop Modules and Components</b>	
<p><b>Getting Started</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choosing a target location and student market</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identifying a premise and focus</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach and stakeholder buy-in</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting up the business</li> </ul>	<p><b>Facility Procurement and Financing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Key guidelines for facility size, layout, and costs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Thinking outside the box on facilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Financing a facility</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legislative provisions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finance, Accounting, and Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining a fiscally healthy school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Financial responsibilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting up an accounting system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calculating revenue in Georgia</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Developing a charter school budget and cash flow</li> </ul>	<p><b>Marketing and Enrollment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Branding your school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Using the media effectively</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outreach initiatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment practices – what’s legal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practical considerations for enrollment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fiduciary duties</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staying out of hot water</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Selecting, monitoring, retaining, and evaluating an effective school leader and succession planning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Effective board governance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Human Resources Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Charter Schools as Employers - legal responsibilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Compensation and Benefits</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organizational structure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Best practices for hiring and recruitment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sources of risk in charter schools</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning effectively to avoid or minimize risk</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insurance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Legal and Regulatory Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Federal, state, and local legal and regulatory requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practical considerations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Writing Measureable Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creating baselines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> SMART objectives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legislative requirements and considerations with authorizers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Special Education and Charter Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legislative requirements for charter schools</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organizational structures that support Special Needs students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Budgetary considerations</li> </ul>

In addition to a la carte training workshops, other services are available including:

- Petition Review
- Mock Interviews
- Budget Review
- Consulting

## 2010-2011 Fees

Program Offerings	Description	Cost
CharterStart Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop Series <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars <input type="checkbox"/> Library and Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Cohort Group Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year Consulting (max 40 hours) which includes petition review, budget review, mock interviews, and as needed consulting services	<b>GCSA Members:</b> <b>\$2,500</b> non-refundable <b>base</b> program fee  <b>\$7,500</b> additional fee due upon receipt of grant(s) or authorization  <b>\$500</b> GCSA membership  Above rates reflect member rates. Non members are not eligible to participate in the CharterStart Program.
CharterStart A la Carte	<input type="checkbox"/> Getting Started <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, Accounting, Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Risk Management <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing and Enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> Legal and Regulatory <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources/Labor Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Facility Procurement and Financing <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Performance Objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Petition Review <input type="checkbox"/> Mock Interview <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Review <input type="checkbox"/> Consulting	<b>\$1000</b> <b>\$1500</b> <b>\$750</b> <b>\$250</b> <b>\$750</b> <b>\$1000</b> <b>\$1000</b> <b>\$1250</b> <b>\$500</b> <b>\$750</b> <b>\$1500</b> <b>\$750</b> <b>\$500</b> <b>\$190 per hour</b>  Above rates reflect member rates. Non members are not eligible to participate in CharterStart a la Carte.

- Membership fees are due prior to training.
- Base training fees are due prior to training.
- Credit card option is available.

## **Program Acceptance:**

CharterStart Program participants are selected based on their demonstration of readiness and capacity to develop a high quality charter school. To attain acceptance into the program, participants must:

1. Provide an executive summary of their school plan which includes: mission, vision, educational philosophy, targeted attendance zone, targeted student population, school focus/features, evidence of need and academic/organizational innovation
2. Research: demographics of the targeted attendance zone/student population; academic achievement; and school options in the area
3. Thoroughly read the state statutes pertaining to charter schools, as well as state board rules pertaining to charter schools. These may be found on the Department of Education's website at: [http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea\\_charter.aspx](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_charter.aspx). Also, review the state's charter petition requirements found on this site, as well as the district and/or Commission's petitioning requirements and timelines.
4. Establish a founding board with a minimum of 5 participants from diverse backgrounds.
5. Meet with their local school district (charter liaison if one is available).
6. View the free recording trainings "Getting Started" and "Building Blocks". Register at <https://gcsatrainings.webex.com> (recorded trainings).
7. Meet with the Director of Education and Training.
8. Obtain founding group governance training through GCSA.
9. Register with the Secretary of State as a Georgia Non-Profit. Optional: Begin application for 501(c)(3) status.
10. Register for CharterStart at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9ZPM2LV>.

GCSA reserves the right to deny program entry to any individual or founding group who is unable to meet entry requirements for the program.

GCSA cannot guarantee petitions or grants will be approved by local or state agencies. The purpose of the program is to provide a solid foundation in quality school development and to increase the likelihood of authorization. Development of the school and negotiations with local and state authorities remains the responsibility of the petitioner. GCSA only advocates on behalf of charter founding groups who demonstrate readiness, according to standards established by the Georgia Department of Education Charter Schools Division, to open a high quality school.

## **Contact Information:**

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