

2010 Annual Report



Georgia Charter Schools Association

Plant a charter. Grow a kid.

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2010 Annual Report

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GCSA MISSION & GOALS

The Georgia Charter Schools Association seeks to improve educational outcomes for students by fostering the creation and spread of high-quality charter schools throughout the state.

It does so by supporting and serving charter schools in every phase of their development, promoting best and innovative practices, educating the public about the qualities and benefits of charter schools, and advocating for policies that will encourage the growth of high-quality charter schools and advance the charter school movement.

Goal 1: Quality

Encourage, demand and support excellent education in all of Georgia's charter schools by developing and implementing a comprehensive suite of services designed to manage performance and promote quality at every stage of a school's evolution.

Goal 2: Growth

Accelerate the rate of growth of Georgia's independent charter schools by ten percent a year over next three years while accelerating the rate of growth of district approved charter schools by five percent.

Goal 3: Advocacy, Communications and Outreach

Spur public and policymaker awareness of, demand for and support of the adoption of policies and practices that promote the creation and growth of high-quality charter schools throughout Georgia.

Goal 4: Sustainability

Move toward self-sufficiency by continuing to build and market a robust set of programs and member services that meets members' needs and is increasingly supported by fees while expanding the organization's local donor base to ensure that GCSA becomes measurably more self-sufficient each year.

Goal 5: Organizational Strength

Increase organizational capacity, recognition and impact by attracting strong leadership from diverse sectors, identifying qualified staff to develop and implement the initiatives described in this plan, and leveraging outreach efforts to connect to and influence policymakers and other key stakeholders throughout the State.

FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN:

The year 2010 saw a number of great accomplishments for the charter school movement and for the Georgia Charter Schools Association.

- The GCSA board and staff worked together to develop a comprehensive 3-year strategic plan which builds upon the just completed one. Our major funders have indicated their continuing support for the mission and objectives of the Association for the next three years (2011-2013).
- HB881, the law that established the Georgia Charter Schools Commission, and the Commission's funding mechanism for the charter schools it approves, were both reaffirmed by a Fulton County Superior Court judge in a ruling against seven school districts suing to have the law declared unconstitutional.
- Thirteen (13) new charter schools opened in the fall of 2010, including the first independent charter school in rural southwest Georgia.
- A higher percentage of charter schools than traditional schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in four of the metro area's largest school districts – Atlanta, Clayton, DeKalb and Fulton.
- Statewide, a higher percentage of charter middle and high schools made AYP, while the percentage of charter elementary schools making AYP was statistically the same as the traditional public schools.
- A higher percentage of charter schools serving low-income communities in Georgia made AYP than traditional public schools serving the same student population.
- The Georgia Charter Schools Commission named its first executive director, Mark Peevy, a veteran charter school administrator and a former member of the GCSA board, and added three full-time staff members.
- The Commission awarded charters to 7 new schools, all of which are scheduled to open in the fall of 2011.
- GCSA is moving to expand the number of high quality charter schools outside Metro Atlanta. For example, we mounted a successful campaign to gain approval for the first charter school located in the Macon-Bibb County School district.
- CSA held its eighth annual statewide charter school conference, which was its largest and most successful to date.
- GCSA also greatly expanded its menu of programs and initiatives for members, which now includes an alternative teacher certification program.

It was indeed a great year, filled with accomplishments. But many challenges lie ahead:

- The lawsuit filed by seven school districts to have HB881 declared unconstitutional is now in the hands of the Georgia Supreme Court.
- Many school districts continue to fall woefully short in the implementation of HB555, which calls for districts to allow charter schools to operate in unused school facilities at no cost.
- The state continues to trim funding for public education which is also detrimental to our public charter schools.
- The cost of facilities, maintenance, upgrades, and utilities continues to place a large burden on charter schools which eats away at instructional dollars meant for the classroom.

With a committed board, a competent staff and a renewed strategic plan, the GCSA is positioned to address these challenges and more through the legislative and legal process and by raising public awareness to them. At the same time, the Association will continue its 10-year-old mission of providing communities throughout the state with quality public educational options for children and their families.

Lastly, we are proud to be host this coming summer to the annual conference of the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools. This major convention will bring people from all over the country to see what Georgia has accomplished and to learn from our progress.

We invite you to join us in our efforts as the Association endeavors to make 2011 another successful year!

Sincerely,

Doug Blackmon, Board Chair
Georgia Charter Schools Association

FROM THE CEO

This has been a year of growth and maturity for the charter school movement in Georgia, and for our Association. Our partnership with school leaders, parents, teachers, lawmakers, the state Board of Education, the Georgia Charter Schools Commission, and the Department of Education has resulted in more and better school choices for students and families across the state.

As this letter is being written, we still await a verdict in the State Supreme Court challenge to HB881 which created the Georgia Charter Schools Commission. We remain firm in our resolve to defend the right of charter school petitioners to seek approval from an alternate authorizer when local districts say “no.” Regardless of the court ruling, we are prepared with several contingencies for remedying any possible negative aspects of the ruling. The growth of charter schools in Georgia depends on a strong and independent alternate authorizer.

In a time when charter schools are expanding nationally, we continue to press for the highest educational and operational quality in Georgia charter schools. There is no room for mediocrity in the charter school sector. This year we were pleased to offer comprehensive operational audits to several of our member schools, helping them strengthen their educational program and ensure financial sustainability. We are on the verge of launching our own alternate certification program for charter school teachers and leaders. And through CharterUniversity we have vastly expanded our training programs for charter school stakeholders.

Our broad legislative priorities remain clear:

Local Control for Charter Schools – We urge the General Assembly to pass legislation which promotes local control through school self-governance. While a local school district or other charter schools authorizer must provide quality oversight, oversight cannot be allowed to strip autonomy and/or true decision-making away from a charter school governing board.

Equitable Funding for Charter School – Because charter school students ARE public school students, they should be funded exactly like traditional public school students. To support charter school students differently undermines their school’s sustainability and threatens offering a quality education.

Facilities for Charter Schools – We will continue to press the General Assembly to pass legislation that enables all charter schools to have adequate, financially viable facilities. The goal is to make more facility and financing options available to charter schools so they can keep more of their income in the classroom.

Any victories we claim in this organization are for the children of Georgia who deserve the opportunity to attend a high-quality charter school.

Pressing forward,

Tony Roberts, Ph.D.
CEO, Georgia Charter Schools Association

CHARTER SCHOOLS IN GEORGIA: BY THE NUMBERS

- There are now **130** charter schools in Georgia
- **13 new charter schools** opened in 2010.
- In 2010, the Georgia Charter Schools Commission awarded charters to **7 new schools, all of which are scheduled to open in the fall of 2011.**
- There are **64,949** students enrolled in GA charter schools, a **4% market share.**
- **DeKalb, Fulton, and Cobb County were in the top 50 charter schools nationwide** serving the highest percentage of market share in their districts (organized first by population of charter school students in each district).
- **Market share breakdown is DeKalb, 5%; Cobb County, 5% and Fulton County, 9%.** Although APS did not make it into the top 50 because it had a lower number of total students served in charters, it still has 6% of the district's market share.
- Charter schools in Georgia serve a **higher population of minority students** than traditional public schools.
- **Students in middle and high school charter school grade levels outperform traditional public schools.** However, there is room for growth in the elementary grade school levels, where the results are lower.
- Charter school student performance scores have **exceeded the aggregate public school scores by 4-6% statewide** and **10-15% in Atlanta and in Fulton County School Districts.**
- Charter School graduation rates have exceeded the aggregate public school graduation rates **by 20+%**
- 61 charter schools or 47% out of 130 charter schools are GCSA members and 17 petitioners (potential charter schools) are members. **Of start-up charter schools, the Association has a 96% member rate.**

2010 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The tangible results of three years of focused and diligent legislative work can be summed up in one word – growth. From the 2008-09 to the 2009-10 school year, there has been a 40% increase in the number of charter schools in the state. As of August 2010, there were 171 charter schools in Georgia.

This increase was complemented by the growth and momentum of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission (the Commission), Georgia’s single-purpose alternate charter school authorizer. In August, five charter schools approved by the Commission opened their doors to communities in Atlanta, DeKalb County, Coweta County and Fulton County. These new schools joined Ivy Preparatory Academy in Gwinnett County and Charter Conservatory for Liberal Arts and Technology in Bulloch County as our state’s Commission charter schools.

The Commission Lawsuit

Even as a lawsuit tests the constitutionality of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission Act, the Commission continues to review petitions and provide authorization and oversight in the state’s charter sector. We remain optimistic that the Commission’s authority will be upheld. In April, Judge Wendy Shoob and the Fulton County Superior Court ruled from the bench that the Georgia Charter Schools Commission Act *is* constitutional in every respect. On appeal, the Georgia Supreme Court heard the case in October, 2010. As of this writing, the court has not rendered its final verdict.

GCSA assisted the case by submitting three “friend of the court” briefs. Working through the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, GCSA provided the Georgia Supreme Court with an amicus brief underscoring our case’s similarities in funding and make-up to the 2010 Missouri Supreme Court decision supporting their alternative authorizer. The Missouri Supreme Court ultimately upheld the lower court’s decision that the alternative authorizer in Missouri is constitutional.

GCSA supported the Georgia Families for Public Virtual Education brief to the Georgia Supreme Court by adding Georgia Parent Advocacy Network (G-PAN) as a cosigner and contributor. G-PAN’s advocacy added the support of nearly 2,000 charter families from around the state.

GCSA was a resource to the Georgia Chamber of Commerce which also submitted an amicus brief in support of charter schools. It stated that “. . . the Georgia Chamber believes Commission charter schools are a vital component of innovation and improvement in education in Georgia.” This marks the first time any state chamber of commerce has provided such visible support of the charter public school sector in their respective state.

Academic Achievement

Georgia’s independent charter schools continue to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) at a higher rate than traditional public schools and dependent charter schools. This has been

the case every year since 1998, the year the Georgia General Assembly allowed for the creation of independent charter schools.

In recent years, the charter school sector as a whole in Georgia has had slightly lower percentages of schools making AYP. In large measure, the lower AYP rates for Georgia's charter sector correlate with an increase in the number of traditional public schools using a conversion charter school "turnaround strategy" for their low performing schools.

2010 Elections & Beyond

The 2010 elections advanced prospects for Georgia's charter public school sector. The election of Governor-elect Nathan Deal (R) is viewed by education reformers in Georgia and across the nation as a win for the movement as a whole. GCSA met with Governor-elect Deal and his staff before the 2010 elections and received strong, positive responses to our interview and subsequent charter school questionnaire.

The Georgia General Assembly continues to see growth on the Republican side of the aisle. The November elections boosted Republican majorities in both the House and Senate. There were additional gains for the Republican caucus in the weeks following the elections as a number of House and Senate Democrats switched parties.

The current election cycle has been positive for charter schools. While Republicans in the state and around the nation have tended to be stronger on charter legislation, support from Democrats in Georgia and around the nation is trending upward.

Statewide Outreach

In October, GCSA held its fourth round of "State of the Charter Sector" meetings in Atlanta, Albany and Savannah. Attendees heard reports from Lou Erste, Director of the GA DOE Charter Schools Division and Mark Peevy, Executive Director of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission. They also heard presentations on GCSA membership opportunities and advocacy considerations for 2011.

In 2010 GCSA hosted showings of the nationally acclaimed documentary "The Lottery," in several Georgia communities. These local screenings helped illuminate some of the complex issues facing the charter sector and drew attention to GCSA's role advancing charter school growth across the state.

On Friday December 3rd, GCSA co-sponsored the Georgia Chamber of Commerce's "2010 Education Reform Conference" in Macon. The conference brought in education leaders from around the state and nation discussing the most important areas of education reform in Georgia. State Superintendent-elect John Barge was one of the keynoters at the event.

There is no question that 2010 was a good year for the charter schools movement in Georgia, though much work remains. Charter school advocates continue to struggle for student and school equity in far too many areas. The accomplishments of 2010 will falter if further work is not accomplished in 2011 and subsequent years.

Andrew Lewis,
Executive V.P.

2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Upon the completion of our initial three-year grant from Marcus Foundation, the Association was awarded a three-year continuation grant which became effective June 1, 2010.
- The Walton Family Foundation On October 22, 2010, not only approved a generous three-year grant to implement our Strategic Plan 2011-2013 but also granted an 80% increase over our last three-year grant.
- During the past year, our capacity and effectiveness was rated by the WFF as reaching their Level Two category. Three years ago, we were rated a Pre-Level One (the lowest). The only two associations that rank higher than Georgia are the long-established California and Colorado charter associations.
- Through our grant partnership with Walton Family Foundation, we have now funded the development of new charter schools in Georgia with grant dollars in an amount nearing \$2 million.
- The Association is on the verge of being approved by the Georgia Standards Commission to be a provider of Alternative Teacher Certification. We have already been approved as a provider of T-6 School Leader (Principal) Certification in conjunction with North Georgia College.
- The Dobbs Foundation became our second local foundation supporter with a generous grant to establish our support of charter school business and financial operations and to begin the process of performing operational assessments of our charter schools as a “free” service to them.
- We developed and implemented a nationally recognized and replicable (in other states) program to train much-needed new leadership for charter schools—CharterLeader. The National Alliance of Public Charter Schools assisted us in the development of the curriculum and content of the training.
- The Association backed the State and our Commission-approved charter schools by providing legal advocacy funds to hire McKenna Long to defend HB881 and the schools already operating as well as the recently approved by the Georgia Charter Schools Commission.
- The Superior Court of Fulton County gave an unequivocal ruling for the constitutionality of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission and the funding mechanism for Commission schools created by the State legislature.

- The Walton Family Foundation granted an additional, substantial grant to allow our members to take legal action for equity, when necessary, supported by our Legal Advocacy Fund.
- G-PAN (Georgia Parent Advocacy Network) was launched and now boasts more than 1,600 members statewide and is already making an impact in our target areas to establish charter schools. Working with local community groups and the Education First Foundation, G-PAN assisted in the approval of Bibb County's first independent charter school by the Bibb County School District.
- The Association has just completed and revised its "continuation" strategic plan for 2011-2013. The process of evaluating our past progress and projecting these future goals and objectives was a joint process of board, staff, our member schools and leaders in the charter and larger communities. The process was facilitated by Kronley and Associates and financed by another generous grant of the WFF.
- Due to our strong advocacy efforts, Georgia's charter laws were ranked the fourth strongest in the nation in 2010 following an extensive study of state laws by the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools.
- The Association improved and amplified its support of local charter school governance training which we offer either on-site or through internet venues. Training sessions are tailored to the needs of the school and status of the board.
- During the past year, positive news stories, op-eds, and editorials in support of Georgia's charter school movement, support of pro-charter school candidates for office, and demand for local independent charter schools tripled over the past year.
- Association members continue to reap the benefits of HB555 which was conceived by our Association and passed by the State legislature. Four new schools established during the year were granted rent-free facilities by their local school district (APS). We have given initial legal support to two schools in DeKalb County School district in their bid for two rent-free facilities which seem to be nearing availability to them. Our charter schools in APS are saving approximately \$800,000 annually due to HB555.
- We have intensified our efforts to "take the Association to our members" by expanding our meetings held outside of metro Atlanta for the convenience of our members.
- Membership in our Association by independent charters continues to be in the 95% range. We have been very successful in recruiting new charter schools under development and opening to be members of our Association.
- We have embarked upon a major study of charter school facilities in Georgia which is being supported financially by the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools, Walton Family Foundation, and the Colorado League of Charter Schools. The goal of this

study is to demonstrate to the public and the legislature the inadequacy of current facilities, the drain on school resources to pay for facilities and upkeep, and to move the legislature to pass facility funding mechanisms such as per-pupil facility reimbursements to independent charter schools.

- We improved our sustainability by growing earned income. While the bulk of GCSA's funding comes from grant sources, the Association is committed to growing its earned revenue base. For the fiscal year ending 6/30/09, these efforts raised \$241,312(gross).

GCSA PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Advocacy: Georgia Parent Advocacy Network (G-PAN)

2010 marked the launch of the Georgia Parent Advocacy Network (G-PAN). The project is funded by a generous grant from a national foundation supporting the creation of a statewide parent advocacy organization. G-PAN's goal is not only to motivate and mobilize parents in defense of charter-friendly policies, but to enhance understanding of the charter school movement across the state. Through community meetings, PTA/PTO trainings and other outreach vehicles, G-PAN also cultivates and supports parent groups who are interested in becoming charter school petitioners.

Nina Rubin, who spent the previous year working on marketing and development for GCSA, leads this initiative. Assisting the G-PAN director are 2 part-time outreach coordinators in Savannah and Southwest Georgia. In Bibb County and the greater Macon area, G-PAN works with Julie Moore, Director of Education First, a Macon-based school advocacy organization.

First year accomplishments:

- In year one, G-PAN built membership from zero to 1,500+
- Was a factor in the successful local approval of Macon's first charter school
- Cultivated new petitioner groups in Savannah, Columbus, Athens, and Henry County
- Invited to participate in two National Alliance webinars on building a parent advocacy organization
- Convened 6 community meetings on chartering in GA
- Sponsored 2 screenings of "The Lottery" in Metro Atlanta
- Engaged Metro Atlanta parents in outreach for the National "Done Waiting" campaign and solicited hundreds of signatures in support of public school reform
- Supported Ivy Prep and DeKalb County parents with talking points at their local school board
- Launched G-PAN website and sent bi-weekly informational email blasts
- Established an effective Facebook presence "liked" by 650+ fans
- Supported 2 reform candidates for local school board
- Created GCSA Parent Advocacy Advisory Committee
- Piloted "100Dads" - an initiative to engage more fathers in their charter schools
- Co-sponsor and convener of Rep. Alisha Morgan's "Parent Community Engagement Symposium" scheduled for early 2011

Sustainability: Operational Assessments

In 2010, with support from a local foundation, GCSA piloted an offer of free operational assessments to a select number of charter schools. The purpose of the assessments is provide charter schools with an opportunity for self-reflection and outside observation, which help ensure operational success and fulfillment of the school's charter. The operational assessment also assists with school improvement, strategic planning, effective governance,

risk management, internal controls, and compliance with state and local rules and regulations.

These assessments are valued at \$2,400 each, but will be performed, without charge, for schools that agree to be a part of our pilot program during the 2010-2011 school year. After this school year, there will be a charge for these assessments in addition to membership fees.

The assessment is conducted over a 2-5 day period depending upon the stage of implementation of the charter. Charters that are engaged in a management contract may also require additional time to provide for the analysis of the service contract.

Upon completion of the operational assessments, school and board leaders will have results and recommendations to address the following key questions:

- 1) Is my school operating efficiently and effectively according to the goals and objectives set forth in the school's charter?
- 2) Is my business and accounting operation cost effective?
- 3) Am I operating in compliance with federal and state laws?
- 4) Am I operating in compliance with rules and operating guidelines of my authorizer?
- 5) Do I have the right capacity in terms of staffing, governance and financial management?

In addition to providing critical assistance to the schools, the operational assessments allow GCSA to remain responsive to the needs of the charter industry.

Training & Professional Development Programs

Charter University

In 2010 GCSA greatly expanded its training and professional development programs and consolidated them under the umbrella of **CharterUniversity**. Though many of our trainings are done live, the growth of the charter sector in Georgia and the demand for training led GCSA to leverage online technology. In 2010 20 trainings, both live and recorded, were offered in webinar format – a far more flexible way to train charter school petitioners, boards and professionals.

Also added in 2010: Online programs leading to Gifted, SEOL, SPED and AP/IB endorsements and certifications.

Another milestone accomplished in 2010 was the development of an L-6 Certification Program, offered in collaboration with North Georgia College and State University. This advanced leadership program is tailored to the needs of charter school professionals. The program will launch in summer, 2011. In the pipeline for 2011 is an alternative certification program targeted to begin in the summer. Below is an overview of training topics, programs, and courses available through **CharterUniversity**:

Boards:

- Governance Training
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainability Institute
- Fiscal Health Monitoring
- Effective Leader Selection and Oversight
- CharterStart (for new founding boards interested in starting schools)
- Working with Your Management Organization
- QBE Funding 101
- Ethical Matters for Charter School Board Members

Leaders:

- School Improvement Using Quality School Standards
- CharterLeader Case Study Library
- Building School Culture
- QBE Funding 101
- Special Education in Charter Schools for Non-SPED Teachers and Leaders
- Mission Driven Results
- Spanish for Educators
- Fiscal Health Monitoring
- CharterLeader Summer Institute (summer 2011)
- CharterLeader L-6 Certification Program (summer 2011)
- Establishing a PLC Structure
- Building Rigor & Relevance
- Creating an Effective Discipline Plan
- Strategies for Hiring and Retaining the Right Staff
- RTI That Works
- QBE Funding 101
- 10 Minute Focus Walk
- The Leadership Engine Book Study

Teachers:

- GaTAPP Alternative Certification Program
- Gifted Endorsement On-Line Program
- ESOL Endorsement On-Line Program
- Special Education in Charter Schools for Non-SPED Teachers and Leaders
- Building Rigor and Relevance
- Spanish for Educators
- Teaching the Urban Learner
- CharterLeader Case Study Library
- Practical Application of Data Analysis
- SPED Certification Online Course, AP/IB Online Course
- RTI That Works

Office Managers:

- Internal Controls – Creating Consciousness and Continuity
- Working with Your Back Office Provider

- Controlling School Spending
- Finance 101 and 102
- QBE Funding 101

CharterStart

CharterStart is a comprehensive and targeted training program offering technical and hands-on assistance to those interested in starting high quality charter schools in Georgia. More specifically, CharterStart supports potential charter school operators, as they move through the petitioning process (specific to the laws and rules of Georgia). This program is designed to support and guide participants at all stages from conception to implementation.

CharterStart training is offered in two formats:

1. **CharterStart Total Program** includes a comprehensive training curriculum over 4-6 months, 40 hours of consulting time, petition review, budget and financial review, mock interview, and numerous resources and templates to support development of the school. This option is perfect for groups who need support through the entire development and authorization process.
2. **CharterStart a la Carte** allows groups to select from a number of individual training modules as well as other services such as petition review, budget and financial review, mock interviews, and consulting services. This option is perfect for groups needing specific training and development support.

CharterLeader

CharterLeader is an intensive and comprehensive training program covering all aspects of charter school leadership. This program is intended to prepare new leaders for the responsibilities of operating a high quality charter school. The program also helps build skills and competencies in operational leader in both instructional and business leadership. CharterLeader will fill the charter sector with a bench of visionary, entrepreneurial leaders with the skills to effectively lead schools.

“To get consistently high-quality [charter] schools, we need a large number of high-caliber people – and they need extensive and rigorous grounding, plus a challenging test-drive, before they’re handed the keys to a school.”

–Toward a New Generation of Leadership (2009 – National Association for Public Charter Schools)

There are 2 options for the CharterLeader program:

1. **Summer Boot Camp** (1 or 2 weeks) 2 modules: Educational Leadership and/or Business Leadership.

2. L-6 Certification Program through North Georgia College and State University.

- Begins as part of the Boot Camp in the summer. University courses begin September 2011
- 32 credit hour program which leads to L-6 certification through the Professional Standards Commission
- Blended learning (on-line and cohort based)
- Interested applicants must hold L-5 certification and be eligible to apply through North Georgia College and State University.

CharterExcellence

In 2010 GCSA consolidated programs that support quality operations and performance management under the umbrella **CharterExcellence**. GCSA is committed to supporting schools in ensuring high quality operations that lead to sustainability and high academic achievement. This year Elisa Falco, a former GCSA board member, and principal at Atlanta's Tech High School, joined our staff. Ms. Falco is providing member schools with Operational Audits and consulting services. The Association's plan for a performance management and data system rollout target is August 2011.

Through CharterExcellence, the Association provides several supports to schools:

- **Quality Charter School Standards** to guide founding groups in development of high quality schools and to guide operational schools in strategic and school improvement planning.
- **Operational Assessments** to support charters through the renewal process (CharterRenewal), as well as to assist with strategic and school improvement planning
- **Accreditation** support and guidance through the accreditation process
- **Performance Management Data System**

CharterPolicy

In 2010, the Georgia Charter Schools Association, in partnership with The National Charter Schools Institute and Education Advisors, developed policy and form templates for critical policies and forms needed in every charter school policy manual. These foundational documents not only help our schools, they have provided a growing revenue stream for the Association. The policy templates have been carefully crafted following best practices and have been reviewed and vetted by legal experts (schools should have their own legal experts review policies prior to adoption). The policies provide a solid foundation for your board to utilize for adopting your own policies.

Policy Template Offerings (roll out began August 2010)

- Complete Manual
- Federal (for LEA and non-LEA schools)

- Financial
- Human Resources
- Board – AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY 2011
- Operational – AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY 2011
- Individual Policies

Bi-annual and yearly update service for federal and state policies are available.

CharterRenewal

Association offers support to schools up to 18 months prior to renewal and throughout the renewal process. The program is designed to ensure that schools understand the most recent legal and regulatory requirements for local and state authorizers and that schools include key information in their charter renewal petition which will ensure a successful renewal.

CharterRenewal includes:

- Operational Assessment
- Detailed Petition Review
- Budget/Financial Review
- Performance Review from Past Charter Term
- Assistance in Drafting New Performance Objectives
- 10 hours of General Consulting (may include Governance Training)

CharterConsulting

GCSA staff provides customized consulting, (discounted fee to member schools), to assist schools in a wide variety of ways:

- General Consulting
- Mock Interview for Petitioning Groups
- Petition Review (Initial or Renewal)
- Budget and Financial Review
- Specialized Training

GCSA COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADVOCACY

Members: Andrew Lewis (staff), Russ Moore (chair), Melissa Bishop-Murphy, Russ Cadwell, Andrea Cooper Gatewood, Gene Eidelman, Robert Giordano, David Jernigan, David Morgan, Tim Pinson, David Pusey, Mayor Ed Rieker, Sarina Russotto, Steve Saltzman, Committee Advisors: Bud Mattingly, Jr., Kelly McCutchen

Accomplishments:

- Implemented communications advocacy campaign in support of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission Act as the lawsuit traveled through the courts
- Continued defense of Ivy Preparatory Academy, Charter Conservatory for Liberal Arts & Technology, and the Georgia charter Schools Commission Act against lawsuits through the GCSA Legal Advocacy Fund
- Received approval by the Walton Family Foundation for a second “legal advocacy” grant to make available potential legal assistance for charter schools in Georgia
- Assisted the Georgia Chamber of Commerce with their amicus brief in support of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission Act
- Distributed and received charter school sector questionnaires from all candidates running for governor and state superintendent during the 2010 election cycle.
- Established charter related topics as a major education concern at most gubernatorial and state superintendent debates.

Challenges/Goals

- Enforcement of HB555, ensuring current and future charter schools are able to utilize “unused” school facilities
- Guaranteeing charter schools are afforded the maximum levels of autonomy and flexibility through self-governance
- Ensuring the Georgia General Assembly continues to support the growing charter schools movement in Georgia

MEMBERSHIP

Members: Kevin Wall (chair), Susan Andes, Matt Arkin, Dr. Ruth Baskerville, Angelia Howell, Ehab Jaleel, Dr. Graysen Walles, Rena Youngblood (staff)

Accomplishments

- Rate structure for membership determined for the 2010/2011 school year
- Increase in membership from existing schools, new schools and petitioners
- Increase in vendor memberships
- 2010 conference saw an increase in attendance and sponsorships
- Staples group purchasing revenue increased significantly
- Business Manager meetings for member schools initiated in 2010

Challenges/Goals

- 2011 state conference being moved out of Atlanta for the first time. It will be held in Macon, Georgia, October 5-7, 2011.
- Plan and successfully execute first affinity group summit event in 2011
- Plan and successfully execute first school job fair in 2011

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Members: Kelly Cadman (staff), Jelena Naim, Amana Academy; Lisa McDonald, Brighten Academy; Kelli Love, The Museum School; Jennifer Pomfret, The Museum School; Stacy Henry, Hapeville Charter School; Greg Wickersham, DOE Charter Schools Division; Elisa Falco (staff)

Accomplishments:

- Established Membership Standards
- Established Quality Charter School Standards
- Developed Training Prospectus for Boards, Leaders, Teachers, and Office Managers
- Implemented “Reach for the Stars” award in collaboration with the Membership Committee

Challenges/Goals:

- Develop a Performance Management Data System
- Establish a Peer Review Process to support quality schools
- Conduct a needs assessment regarding: Special Education, human resources, finance/back office, facility/risk management, and legal/regulatory
- Refine “Shoot for the Moon and Reach for the Stars” process

PARENT ADVOCACY

Nina Rubin (staff), Dee Dee Horton, Ivy Preparatory Academy; Douglas Bass, Peachtree Hope Charter School; John Newcomb, Tech High School; Leah McLeod, The Intown Academy; Kim Purvis, Center for an Educated Georgia; Dr. Jitendra Singh, The Museum School of Avondale Estates; Rich Thompson, KIPP Strive

Accomplishments

- Creation of G-PAN website, www.mygpan.org
- G-PAN membership now exceeds 1,500
- Piloting “100 Dads” project in GA charter schools
- Creation of “Parent Power” award for 2011 GA Charter Schools Conference
- Sponsor of 2010 Parent & Community Engagement Symposium with Rep. Alisha Morgan
- Support for pro-charter school board candidates

Challenges/Goals

- Boost parent attendance at GCSA Annual Conference
- Increase traffic on G-PAN website
- Share “best practices” and success stories more widely
- Communicate G-PAN and GCSA advocacy and benefits across the state

COMMUNICATIONS

Members: Seth Coleman (staff), Doug Blackmon, GCSA Board Chair, Wall Street Journal Bureau Chief; Jeremy Cole; Peggy Brooks; Becky Peterson; Ben Jakes, GCSA Board Member, Destiny Academy; Dr. Maury Wills, DeKalb Academy of Technology and the Environment; Dr. Mridula Hormes, Imagine Wesley; Dr. Zeda George, International Studies Elementary Charter; Martha Nesbit, Oglethorpe Charter School

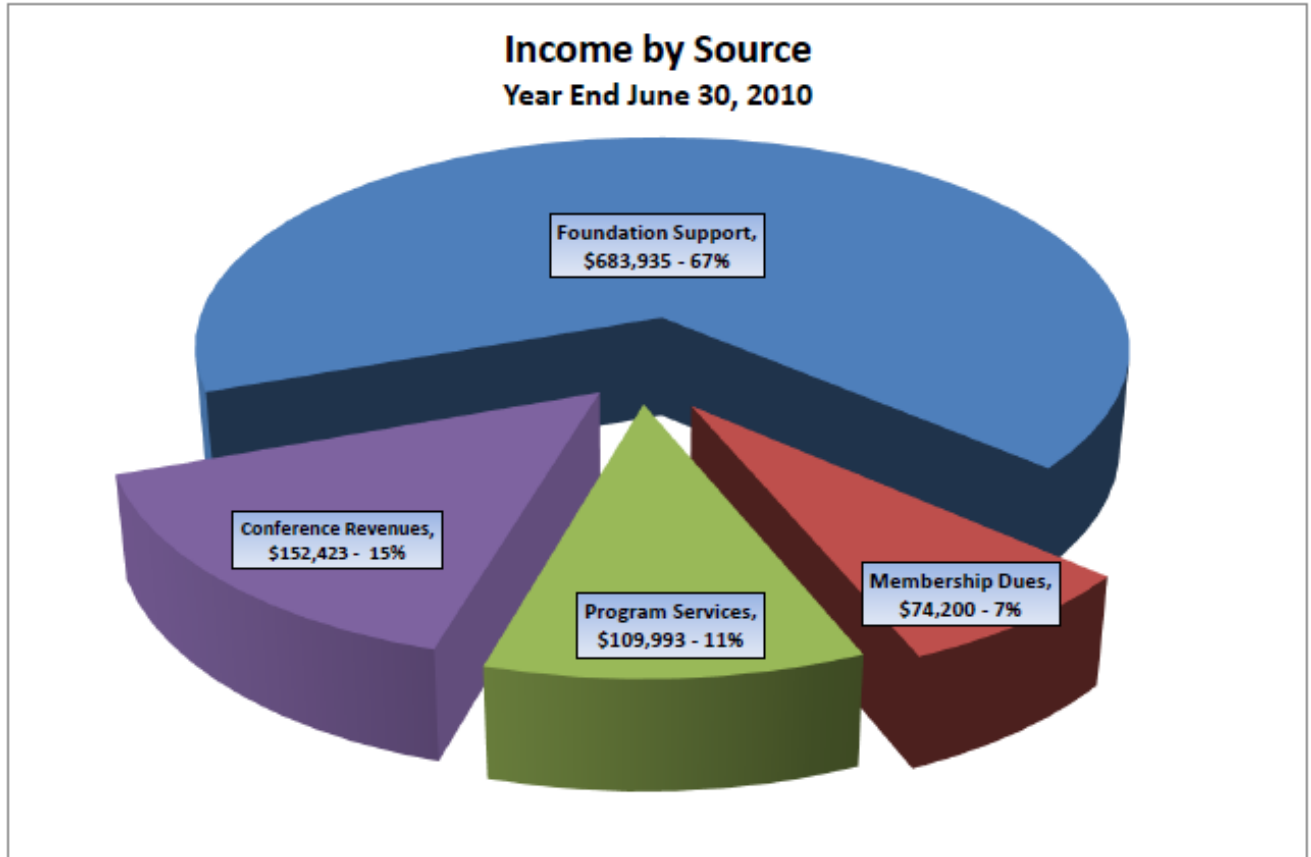
Accomplishments:

- Op-Ed published in the *AJC* – “Power and Money Trumps Students”
- GCSA featured in the annual Education Guide of the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*
- GCSA gubernatorial questionnaires featured in *AJC*’s “Get Schooled” blog
- GCSA and member schools featured in an article in *Georgia Trend* magazine
- GCSA featured in Macon media during approval of Macon Academy of Excellence
- GCSA and member schools featured on three Alabama TV stations during vote on charter school law
- Implemented a weekly publication: *Information Bulletin for School Leaders*
- Introduced a “SEARCH” button/function on the website
- Began holding monthly conference calls/updates with Communications Committee members

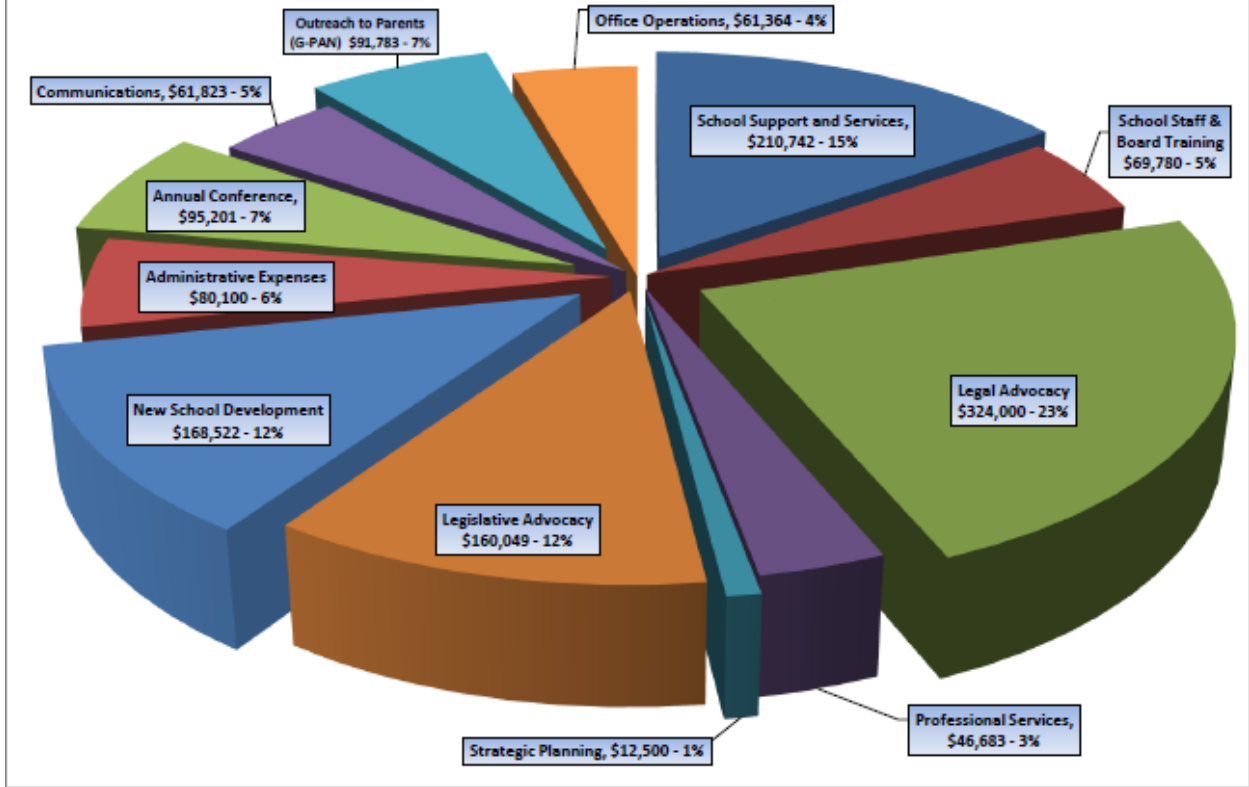
Challenges/Goals:

- Make better use of social media
- Expand readership of weekly newsletter

GCSA FINANCIAL SNAPSHOTS



Expenditures by Source Year End June 30, 2010



GCSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010

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