



*Your advocate for better schools.*

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, Georgians will vote on a proposed constitutional amendment related to how “chronically failing public schools” are governed. Governor Deal’s “Opportunity School District” (OSD), which passed out of the Georgia General Assembly in 2015 by the required two-thirds majority, is currently receiving a great deal of media attention across the state.

Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA) has prepared this document for charter school supporters to better understand the intent of the policy.

First and foremost, while the OSD is a significant piece of K-12 education policy, if passed, it will have little to no impact on current charter schools. At the same time, much of the media attention being given to OSD incorrectly attempts to link OSD with existing charter schools. For this reason, we recommend you know the facts about OSD.

### **BACKGROUND**

Introduced and passed during the 2015 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, Governor Nathan Deal’s plan would create a statewide school district and give his office new powers to take over failing schools. It would create a statewide “Opportunity School District” (OSD) to oversee the program — led by a superintendent who would report directly to the governor and not the state department of education.

Schools that earned an "F" rating on the College & Career Readiness Performance Index or CCRPI (below 60) for a minimum of three consecutive years are eligible for state takeover under Gov. Deal's proposal.

If OSD passes this November, there are four potential pathways for schools on the OSD list. The pathway will be determined by the OSD superintendent.

1. A turn-around strategy for schools on the OSD list is conversion to a public charter school with local community members serving on the board of the charter. This scenario is to place decision-making responsibilities at school level.
2. The OSD can work directly with the local board of education to address the academic and operational concerns at the school.
3. The OSD superintendent can place a school under his/her direct supervision.
4. A school can be closed.

## **QUICK FACTS**

- When OSD legislation was first proposed during the 2015 legislative session, 146 schools were on the OSD list of chronically failing schools.
- With renewed focus on OSD schools by local boards of education, the number of schools on the OSD list of chronically failing schools has dropped to 126.
- 22 school districts (out of 180 school districts in the state) and the State Charter Schools Commission have one or more schools on the OSD list of chronically failing schools.
- 96 of the 126 (76%) schools on the OSD list are located in six school districts:

Atlanta Public Schools (22 schools)	DeKalb County Schools (28 schools)
Bibb County Schools (13 schools)	Muscogee County Schools (8 schools)
Savannah-Chatham Schools (6 schools)	Richmond County (19 schools)
- 12 of the 22 (55%) school districts with schools on the OSD list have only one school that has been determined to be chronically failing.
- Of the 2,263 public schools in Georgia, only 5.7% of schools are on the current OSD list of chronically failing schools.
- Those opposed to OSD falsely accuse OSD as an attempt to promote and expand “for profit charter schools” when Georgia law clearly prohibits for profit charter schools from operating in the state of Georgia.  
*§ 20-2-2062(2) "charter petitioner" does not include home study programs or schools, sectarian schools, religious schools, private for profit schools, private educational institutions not established, operated, or governed by the State of Georgia, or existing private schools.*
- The OSD may intervene in no more than 20 OSD-eligible schools per year and no more than 100 OSD-eligible schools at any given time.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Please allow the additional information to serve as additional resources for you as we approach the November 8<sup>th</sup> referendum on OSD.

- [\*\*Georgia’s Proposed Opportunity School District - Overview\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Opportunity School District Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Schools Eligible for Opportunity School District \(OSD\)\*\*](#)  
Updated May 3, 2016
- [\*\*OSD Legislation \(Senate Bill 133\)\*\*](#)