

# CHARTER SYSTEM RENEWAL APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Charter System Information			
<b>1. Full Name of Charter System:</b> Fannin County School System		<b>2. How many schools in total are included in your charter system (including college and career academies)?:</b> 5	
<b>3. How many of each of the following schools will be included in your charter system?</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div>Primary School(s): 0</div> <div>High School(s): 1</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div>Elementary School(s): 3</div> <div>College and Career Academy(ies): 0</div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">Middle School(s): 1</div>			
<b>4. Charter System Street Address:</b> 2290 East First Street	<b>5. City:</b> Blue Ridge	<b>6. State:</b> Georgia	<b>7. Zip:</b> 30513
<b>8. Contact Person:</b> Betsy Hyde		<b>9. Title:</b> Deputy Superintendent	
<b>10. Contact Street Address:</b> 2290 East First Street	<b>11. City:</b> Blue Ridge	<b>12. State:</b> GA	<b>13. Zip</b> 30513
<b>14. Contact's Telephone Number:</b> 706-632-3771	<b>15. Contact's Fax Number:</b> 706-632-7583		<b>16. Contact's E-mail Address:</b> bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

## **A. Essential or Innovative Features Implementation**

### **1. What is the status of the implementation of each Essential or Innovative Feature included in your charter system contract?**

**A. Utilizing Flexible Service Models:** If you review our CCRPI data for each school, you will see that our EL, Special Education, and Economically Disadvantaged students are improving in most areas since we have implemented our model of “Serve by need, not label”. We have also increased our percentage of students scoring Proficient and Distinguished on state testing.

**B. Implementing STEM instructional strategies:** We have one elementary school who achieved Georgia DOE STEM Certification status last year. Another elementary school and our middle school have hired a STEM teacher to include a STEM class in the specials rotation and to provide support to teachers to help expand STEM strategies into every classroom.

**C. Expand postsecondary options:** We now have 17 CTAE Pathways offered at FCHS. 112/189 seniors have completed a CTAE pathway last semester and 29 additional seniors are scheduled to complete a CTAE pathway this semester. We are predicting that 75% of our 2019 graduates will have completed a CTAE Pathway. Several of our seniors have completed more than one pathway and earned more than one credential. Our 2019 seniors have earned 151 National Industry Credentials as of January 2, 2019. Our 2019 projected dual enrollment data: 87 unduplicated students, 47 various college courses, and 231 possible college class credits. We partner with 5 of our local colleges.

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

**2. For those Essential or Innovative Features that are not on schedule, what are next steps?**

- A. We will always continue to use flexible service models as we identify the individual needs of our students.
- B. Two of our elementary schools are working on becoming Georgia DOE Certified STEAM schools – they want to support and expand the fine arts programs already offered in our schools. East Fannin Elementary is working on using STEM instructional strategies and hopes to add a STEM teacher and class to their specials rotation next school year.
- C. We are continuing to grow community partnerships to work with our schools to enhance instruction and support at all schools. Our high school is working with our Economic Development Authority and our Chamber to start a student group composed of juniors and seniors called Fannin Youth Initiative which will help our students learn about resources and opportunities in Fannin County.

**3. Is there any Essential or Innovative Features that should be deleted or added to your new charter system contract (including any college and career academies)?**

We are adding a Literacy Initiative for our entire school system. We determined by looking at test scores and all of our schools' Comprehensive Needs Assessments, that improving literacy outcomes is our greatest equity gap. We applied for and received a L4GA grant last spring. We are using these funds to provide evidence based professional learning to our faculty and staff so that literacy is embedded throughout all content areas, we have started a birth to five initiative to work with families in our area to provide support and reading materials for their children, we have started a peer-facilitated Writing

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

Center at our high school, and we are now recognized as a “Get Georgia Reading” Community.

## B. Academic Accountability

### 1. How have your schools done on meeting the academic targets in your charter system contract?

**Beating the Odds:** In 2016 and 2018 all five Fannin County Schools Beat the Odds.

#### CCRPI Improvement

School	2014 CCRPI	2015 CCRPI	2016 CCRPI	2017 CCRPI	2018 CCRPI
Fannin County School District	76.6	77.4	83.2	79.7	81.8
Georgia Average CCRPI score	72.3	75.5	73.6	75	76.6

Fannin County School District’s CCRPI score has been higher than the state average from 2014-2018.

In 2018 the district CCRPI score was not only well above the state average but it was also the highest CCRPI score in Pioneer RESA.

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

## Math and Science Performance Improvement

Year	MATH		SCIENCE	
	% of Developing, Proficient, and Distinguished Learners in District	% of Developing, Proficient, and Distinguished in State	% of Developing, Proficient, and Distinguished Learners in District	% of Developing, Proficient, and Distinguished in State
2015	63.882	60.531	61.192	56.604
2016	69.263	63.825	68.112	60.046
2017	83.059	67.769	67.623	59.217
2018	88.313	78.526	76.64	71.096

Student performance in mathematics and science from 2015 through 2018 demonstrates that our students have outperformed the state averages every year. Additionally, the percentage of students who have scored at the developing or higher level in math has increased an average of five percentage points.

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

## Increased Dual Enrollment Participation

Year	# of graduates	# of unduplicated students participating in dual enrollment in accredited colleges/universities or technical schools	% of graduates earning high school credits for dual enrollment through accredited colleges/universities or technical schools
2015-16	162	48	30.86%
2016-17	149	50	33.55%
2017-18	198	76	38.38%

The Fannin County School System has forged a strong partnership with several accredited colleges/universities and tech schools in the area.

## **2. Technical Assistance for Schools not meeting academic targets:** Fannin County

Schools have a district improvement team that meets monthly to review school and district level data and provide technical assistance and targeted support to the schools. All Fannin County Schools are required to complete an annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment each spring before developing a school improvement plan that aligns with those needs. Principals with less than two years of experience in the district are also part of a locally developed Leadership Consortia where additional support and training can be provided to ensure their success as educational leaders.

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

**3. What will you be doing for schools that fail to meet their academic targets in the future?** Should this occur, we would work closely with our school administration and their SIT teams to help identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and look for strategies to implement to make the needed improvements.

## **C. Local Schools Governance implementation**

**1. What are the main successes of your implementation of Local School Governance?**

We have developed strong SGT teams at each school. These teams have given valuable input to our schools and have become a very valuable liaison between their schools and our community. They have worked with each school on service projects that have improved their schools. They provide input, and insight, into the operation of each school.

**2. What barriers had to be overcome to implement Local School Governance? Since**

this was a whole new concept, we all had a learning curve on implementing this process. The teams have grown stronger with each year as they become more confident in the process and their roles on the team.

**3. What remains to be done to fully implement Local School Governance with fidelity?**

We feel that they are fully implemented. We continue to do our Orientation and New Member trainings but also do monthly trainings at each meeting based on member input.

## **D. Charter Supplement Uses**

**1. For what did the system use its annual charter system supplemental funds that were included in your QBE funding?** We divided the total amount by five so each school

# Fannin County School System Charter Renewal Application

would get the same amount of money. The first year we bought STEM supplies, supplemental reading program, etc. After that first year we have always used this money for personnel. Examples: a teacher to help reduce class size, STEM teachers, a testing and dual enrollment coordinator, and an interventionist.

## **2. Will any changes be made in the future to how the supplemental funds are used?**

Because of the success of the added personnel, we feel this will continue to be what the SGT teams want to do with this funding.



## 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 Renewal 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 Fannin County School System (*name of school system*) located in Fannin 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;
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; and
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 Renewal Application, Assurances Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Fannin County Board of Education on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_.

Lewis J. DeWane  
Chair, Local Board of Education

1-10-2019  
Date

Missy Cat  
Superintendent, Local Board of Education

1/10/19  
Date

If a Charter is granted, Petitioners assure that the charter system's 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.

Lewis J. DeWane  
Chair, Local Board of Education

1-10-2019  
Date

Missy Cat  
Superintendent, Local Board of Education

1/10/19  
Date



FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education is the governing body of the Fannin County School District.

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education entered into a contract with the State Board of Education on or about July 1, 2015 for the operation of Fannin County School District as a Charter System;


WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education recognizes the positive impact charter system status has had on increasing community engagement, student achievement, and flexibility throughout the Fannin County School District;

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education seeks to renew its charter system contract;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fannin County Board of Education authorizes the renewal of its charter contract with the State Board of Education and hereby submits the renewal petition and this Resolution to the State Board of Education for final approval.

Adopted this the 10th day of January 2019.

FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

  
Board Chairperson

  
Superintendent

# Charter Systems - 2018 Annual Report Form

## INSTRUCTIONS

All charter systems are required by law to submit an Annual Report to the Georgia Department of Education by November 1 of each year [O.C.G.A. §20-2-2067.1(c)].

Your charter system's 2018 Annual Report requirement will be satisfied by completing this Charter Systems Annual Report Form and submitting the Form (and any required attachments) via email no later than 12:00 midnight on Thursday, November 1, 2018 (*see submission instructions below*).

## OUTLINE

**Instructions**

**Tab 1: System Info**

**Tab 2: Accountability**

**Tab 3: Local School Governance**

**Tab 4: Waivers**

**Tab 5: Innovations**

## Tab 6: School List

### Attachment

Charter systems that have a College and Career Academy created through their charter system contract must submit a Georgia College and Career Academy Annual Report Form as an attachment along with the district's Charter System Annual Report Form.

The Georgia College and Career Academy Annual Report Form must be completed by the college and career academy itself, and be signed by the academy's CEO and governing board chair.

Please note that the Georgia College and Career Academy Annual Report Form is being sent directly to your college and career academy's CEO with instruction to fill it out and submit it to your superintendent.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING YOUR ANNUAL REPORT FORM

To properly submit your Annual Report Form you must perform the following steps.

**STEP ONE:** Before you go any further, save this Excel spreadsheet on your computer. To do this:

- a. Pull down the File menu from the upper left of your screen
- b. Press "Save As"
- c. Select "Desktop" or whatever location you chose on your computer

7 d. Enter "Your Charter System Name - Annual Report 2018" -- *but be sure to enter the actual name of your school district instead of "Your Charter System Name"*

8 e. Press Save.

9 **STEP TWO:** Verify pre-populated information and/or answer all the questions in Tabs 2-6.

10 *Be sure to Save your file frequently while you are working on it so that you don't lose any of your answers (see lines 4-8 above).*

11 **STEP THREE:** Once you have completed your Annual Report Form, Save your file one last time (*see lines 4-8 above*).

12 **STEP FOUR:** Attach your completed file to an email addressed to [kpritchard@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:kpritchard@doe.k12.ga.us).

12 **STEP FIVE:** If you have a College and Career Academy created through your charter system contract, attach the GCCA Annual Report submitted to you by your College and Career Academy CEO.

13 **STEP SIX:** Enter "Annual Report 2018 - Your Charter System Name" as the Subject line of your cover email (*be sure to replace "Your Charter System Name" with the actual name of your school district*).

14 **STEP SEVEN:** Press Send.

15 **STEP EIGHT:** Check to be sure you receive an email within one business day from [kpritchard@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:kpritchard@doe.k12.ga.us) in which we confirm that we received your submission.

16 **STEP NINE:** Check to be sure that you receive a follow-up email within **TEN** business days.

17 a. Once we receive your initial submission, we will review it to see if you answered all required questions.

18 b. We will then send you a follow-up email saying your submission was complete or that your submission is rejected.

19	If your submission is <u>rejected</u> , address the issues raised and then <u>resubmit</u> a completed Annual Report Form <u>before the November 1, 2018 deadline</u> .
20	<b><u>PLEASE NOTE:</u> Your charter system's legal obligation to submit an Annual Report <u>is not met</u> until you receive a follow-up email <u>confirming that your submission or resubmission is complete</u>.</b>
21	You should <u>not wait</u> until November 1 to submit your Annual Report -- since you may have missed something and therefore would have <u>no time to revise and resubmit</u> your Annual Report Form and still make the <u>deadline</u> .
22	<b><u>We strongly recommend that you start answering the questions in your Annual Report Form IMMEDIATELY upon receipt of this file.</u></b>

23	<b>Documents or Information you may need as you answer the questions in this Annual Report Form</b>
24	<b>Legal Documents/Governance Information</b>
25	• Your charter system's current charter contract
26	• Contact information for Chairs of the Local School Governing Teams/Councils
27	• Local School Governing Teams/Councils meeting minutes for the 2017-18 school year
28	<b>Academic Data and Other Information</b>
29	• Information on progress toward your academic and other goals
30	• Significant accomplishments in the 2016-17 school year
31	<b>Enrollment Information</b>
32	• Enrollment numbers for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years

33	<b>Personnel Information</b>
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification information</li> </ul>

35	<b>FILLING OUT THE REST OF THE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT FORM</b>
36	To fill out the rest of the 2018 Annual Report Form, please provide answers to each question beginning with Tab 2 and proceeding from tab to tab until you are done.
37	Instructions are provided throughout the Annual Report Form to clarify what is being requested and where you should place your answers.
38	Please note that if you are asked to type in an answer, the cell will expand to hold your entire answer.
39	If you need additional info about anything in the Annual Report Form, <b><u>please send your questions via email</u></b> to <b><u>kpritchard@doe.k12.ga.us</u></b> and be sure to include the specific Tab number(s) and line number(s) about which you are asking. You will receive a reply within two business days.
40	<b>PLEASE BE SURE TO <u>EMAIL</u> YOUR QUESTIONS; WE ARE UNABLE TO ANSWER PHONE CALLS ABOUT THE ANNUAL REPORT FORM FROM 42 CHARTER SYSTEMS AND 130 CHARTER SCHOOLS</b>
41	<b>THANK YOU!</b>

42	<b>Please proceed to Tab 1: System Info and begin answering the questions there.</b>
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# Charter Systems - 2018 Annual Report Form

## 1. System Info

This section first asks you for key contact information and system information

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE PERSON WHO COMPLETED THIS SURVEY	
Tell us how best to reach you in case we have any questions about your survey answers	Put your contact information in this column
Your name	Betsy Hyde
Your title	Deputy Superintendent
Your direct phone number	706-632-3771
Your email address	<a href="mailto:bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us">bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT	
Who is your Superintendent?	Put Superintendent contact information in this column
Superintendent's name	Dr. Michael Gwatney
Direct phone number	706-632-3771
Email address	<a href="mailto:mgwatney@fannin.k12.ga.us">mgwatney@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>
Is this a new Superintendent for 2018-19?	no
If the Superintendent is new for this year, please list the former Superintendent's name for 2017-18	

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR CHARTER SYSTEM LIAISON	
CHARTER SYSTEM LIAISON	Put information in this column
Name of your district's charter system liaison	Betsy Hyde
Charter system liaison's title	Deputy Superintendent
Charter system liaison's direct phone number	706-632-3771
Charter system liaison's email address	<a href="mailto:bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us">bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>
Is this a new Charter System Liaison for 2018-19?	no
If new this year, please list the former Charter System Liaison's name for 2017-18	

LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNING TEAMS/COUNCILS LIAISON: The person who facilitates communications between the GaDOE District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division and the chairs of each of your charter system's Local School Governing Teams/Councils	
School Governing Teams/Councils Liaison	Put contact information in this column
Name of your district's School Governing Teams/Councils Liaison	Betsy Hyde

67	Title	Deputy Superintendent
68	Direct phone number	706-632-3771
69	Email address	<a href="mailto:bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us">bhyde@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>
70	Is this a new Liaison for 2018-19?	no
71	If new this year, please list the former liaison's name for 2017-18	

BOARD OF EDUCATION CONTACT INFORMATION			
CHAIR OF YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION	Enter answers for 2016-17 in this column	Enter answers for 2017-18 in this column	Enter answers for 2018-19 in this column
Name of your District's Board Chair	Bobby Bearden	Bobby Bearden	Lewis DeWeese
Direct Phone Number	706-455-7619	706-455-7619	706-455-3380
Email Address	<a href="mailto:bbearden@fannin.k12.ga.us">bbearden@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>	<a href="mailto:bbearden@fannin.k12.ga.us">bbearden@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>	<a href="mailto:ldeweese@fannin.k12.ga.us">ldeweese@fannin.k12.ga.us</a>
If you had more than one Board Chair last year, please enter:			
Direct Phone Number of earlier Board Chair			
Direct Phone Number			
Email Address			

CHARTER INFORMATION	
CHARTER BASICS	Put information in this column
What is the <i>beginning date</i> of your current charter term (MM/DD/YYYY)?	7/1/2015
What is the <i>ending date</i> of your current charter term (MM/DD/YYYY)?	6/30/2019
In what <i>month and year</i> was your <i>first charter approved</i> (MM/YYYY)?	4/1/2015
Does your Charter System Contract include a Georgia College and Career Academy?	NO
If no, would you like to amend your contract to include a Georgia College and Career Academy?	NO
At what stage in the TCSG certification process is your CCA	
When is your SACS reaccreditation?	3/25/2019
GaDOE now embeds the charter system contract renewal process within the SACS reaccreditation process. If your charter term does <i>not</i> end in the year of your next SACS accreditation, will you submit a charter amendment this year seeking a change in your charter term so it is aligned with your SACS reaccreditation cycle?	YES
Has the current charter system contract been amended?	YES
If yes, when was the contract amended?	
What was the subject of the amendment?	To coincide with SACS/to not have a CCA

Your charter term is shown near the beginning of your charter contract. The start date will be July 1, YYYY and the end date will be June 30, YYYY

## Personnel

FACULTY		Enter Answers in Space Below									
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
What percent of your faculty and staff have had a fingerprint/background check for each school year? (Enter %)				23%	19%						
What percent of your current faculty and staff have a clearance certificate from GaPSC? (Enter %)				69%	69%						
What percent of your current faculty and staff have a Special Education Certification?				16%	10%						

100	What percent of your current faculty and staff have Gifted Certification?			16%	16%						
101	What percent of your current faculty and staff have ESOL Endorsement?			9%	10%						

102	<p>You have reached the end of Tab 1: System Info Please proceed to Tab 2: Accountability and continue answering the questions there.</p>
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# Charter Systems - 2018 Annual Report Form

## 2. ACCOUNTABILITY

This section gives you a chance to review and provide Accountability information on the major academic and non-academic performance goals in your charter system contract.

The Accountability information comes from both your charter system contract (where you will find your goals and performance measures for each year) and your accountability system data (where you will find your actual performance for each year of your charter contract term)

Please review the data shown and let us know if you have any questions about the data. DO NOT CHANGE ANY DATA.

Line #

ACADEMIC GOALS										
BEAT THE ODDS (BTO)										
Goal 1: During each year of its first five-year charter term, the Charter System shall "beat the odds"										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Charter System "beat the odds"		Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes	N/A	Yes		Yes
Goal 2: During each year of its first five-year charter term, each System Charter School shall "beat the odds"										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Number of schools included in charter system contract		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Number of schools that Beat the Odds		5	1	5	3	5	1	5	5	0
% of Schools that Beat the Odds		100%	20%	100%	60%	100%	20%	100%	100%	100%
										#DIV/0!
CCRPI										
Goal 3: The Charter System will demonstrate proficiency and/or improvement on the CCRPI. With Year 1 as the baseline.										
Measure 1: CCRPI score (minus Challenge Points) shall be better than the State average CCRPI each year (must increase CCRPI by at least 2.0 points annual)										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Overall System Average		71.2	72.6	69.3	72.4	71.5	73.2	72.1	78.8	73.7
Elementary School Average		73.0	70.4	69.0	72.7	70.2	69.0	70.0	78.1	72.3
Middle School Average		72.0	76.7	72.0	78.0	70.6	71.0	71.5	75.0	73.0
High School Average		68.6	72.3	66.8	66.6	73.8	81.3	75.0	82.9	76.5
										82.0
Measure 2: CCRPI score (minus Challenge Points) shall be better than the District's own previous year CCRPI										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Overall District Average		72.5	72.6	72.6	72.4	72.4	73.2	73.2	78.8	78.8
Elementary School Average		71.7	70.4	70.4	72.7	72.7	69.0	69.0	78.1	78.1
Middle School Average		75.6	76.7	76.7	78.0	78.0	71.0	71.0	75.0	75.0
High School Average		71.3	72.3	72.3	66.6	66.6	81.3	81.3	82.9	82.9
										82.0
Measure 3: The percentage of graduates earning high school credits for accelerated enrollment through postsecondary options will increase by a minimum of 1%										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
								25.9		
MILESTONES										
The # of students who meet or exceed state averages in all grade levels and will increase by a minimum of 1% in Mathematics and Science										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
End-of-Grade Performance Targets										
Elementary School										
Mathematics		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	63.8	61.6	66.8	67.3	69.8
Science		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57.4	55.7	61.0	67.0	62.9
Middle School										
Mathematics		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	63.8	66.8	66.8	72.5	69.8
Science		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57.4	64.2	61.0	62.8	62.9
End-of-Course Performance Targets										
Coordinate Algebra		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56.4	67.6	60.0	63.4	63.6
Analytic Geometry		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	55.6	58.8	59.3	72.4	63.0
Physical Science		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.1	50.1	54.3	67.0	58.5
Biology		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56.6	77.1	60.2	72.6	63.8
MILESTONES										
State Performance Targets:										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
End-of-Grade Performance CCRPI										
Elementary School										
English/Language Arts		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60.3	57.8	63.6	66.0	66.9
Mathematics		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	63.8	61.6	66.8	67.3	69.8
Science		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57.4	55.7	61.0	67.0	62.9
Social Studies		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.7	49.8	63.1	57.8	65.5
Middle School										
English/Language Arts		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60.3	67.7	63.6	64.8	66.9
Mathematics		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	63.8	66.8	66.8	72.5	69.8
Science		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	57.4	64.2	61.0	62.8	62.9
Social Studies		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.7	56.8	63.1	57.4	65.5
End-of-Course Performance Targets										
9th Grade Literature		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	61.5	65.1	64.7	69.9	67.9
American Literature		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	59.0	47.4	62.4	58.3	65.8
Coordinate Algebra		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56.4	67.6	60.0	63.4	63.6
Analytic Geometry		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	55.6	58.8	59.3	72.4	63.0
Physical Science		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.1	50.1	54.3	67.0	58.5
Biology		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	56.6	77.1	60.2	72.6	63.8
U.S. History		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	61.6	66.5	64.8	63.8	68
Economics		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58.3	71.8	61.8	79.3	65.3
GRADUATION RATE										
Cohort Graduation Rate										
		2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target

172		71.5	83.3	72.5	92.3	78.8	92.1	80.6	91.2	82.4	90.1
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# Charter Systems - 2018 Annual Report Form

## 3. LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

This section gives you a chance to share with us required information about the Local School Governance Teams/Councils at each of your schools.

Your charter system is required to have high-functioning Local School Governance Teams/Councils with authority over key areas affecting the school's ability to improve academic achievement.

Line #

187	<b>SCHOOL GOVERNING TEAMS/COUNCILS</b>						
188	INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the following questions, please provide the answer requested in the space provided for last year (2015-16) and for this year (2016-17)						
189	<b>SCHOOL GOVERNING TEAMS/COUNCILS, MEMBERS, AND MEETINGS</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
190	How many of your schools have <u>active</u> School Governing Teams/Councils -- All, Most, Half, Some, or None?	All	All	All		ALL	ALL
191	On average, <u>how many voting members</u> are on the School Governing Teams/Councils at your schools?	7	7	7		7	7
192	What is the <u>range</u> of the <u>number</u> of voting members on the School Governing Teams/Councils at your schools? (Enter range as <u>lowest number</u> -to- <u>highest number</u> .)	7 to 9	7 to 9	All have 7		All have 7	All have 7
193	On average, <u>how many</u> meetings did your district's local School Governing Teams/Councils have last year, and how many are scheduled for this year?	5	6	11		10	10
194	On average, how many School Governing Teams/Councils <u>members</u> typically attended School Governing Team/Council meetings last year?	6	6	7		7	7
195	<b>TRAINING FOR SCHOOL GOVERNING TEAMS/COUNCILS</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
196	How many <u>hours</u> of training were (and will be) offered to your School Governing Team/Council members?	1	1	12		10	10
197	Who did (or will) provide the training?	Principal	Principal	Martha Greenway/Pioneer RESA; Cynthia Panter; Susan Holloway; Michael Gwatney; Art Hubbard; Karen Walton		Lynn Plunkett, Superintendents, Directors, Charter Foundation PowerPoints	Lynn Plunkett, Superintendents, Charter System Videos

198	What <i>topics</i> were and will be covered in the training?	New Member Training; Council By-laws; Georgia Code on School Councils	New Member Training; Council By-laws; Georgia Code on School Councils	Roles and Responsibilities; Effective Meetings; School Funding and Budget; School Operations; Human Resources and Resource Allocation; School Improvement Planning; Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction		School funding and Budgets, Title Budgets, SPLOST, SIP, Gifted, Roles and Responsibilities, Effective Meetings	Splost, Extracurricular opportunities, FTE, CPI, Safety, SIP, Curriculum, CCRPI, Gifted, Extra Curricular, Mental Health, Building capacity, Technology
199	On average, how many School Governing Team/Council members typically attended training? (All, Most, Half, Some, None)	Some	Some	All		ALL	ALL
200	How many School Governing Team/Council members attended <i>all</i> training sessions? (All, Most, Half, Some, None)	Some	Some	All		ALL	ALL
201	How many School Governing Team/Council members attended <i>at least one</i> training session? (All, Most, Half, Some, None)		Some			ALL	ALL

202	CHARTER SYSTEM TRAINING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
203	How many <i>hours</i> of charter system training were (and will be) offered to your School Administrators?	3	2	18		5	5
204	<i>Who</i> did (or will) provide the training?	Sherry Gibney-Sherman	Sherry Gibney-Sherman	Martha Greenway/Pioneer RESA; Cynthia Panter; Susan Holloway; Michael Gwatney; Art Hubbard; Karen Walton		Lynn Pluckett, Betsy Hyde	Lynn Pluckett, Betsy Hyde
205	What <i>topics</i> were and will be covered in the training?	What are the Flexibility Options for School Systems?	Transition to Charter System Status	Roles and Responsibilities; Effective Meetings; School Funding and Budget; School Operations; Human Resources and Resource Allocation; School Improvement Planning; Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction		Flexibility, School and SGT Operations, budgets, SPLOST, Curriculum, ;	Flexibility, School and SGT Operations, Budgeting, Curriculum, SPLOST, building capacity,
206	On average, how many School Administrators typically attended training? (All, Most, Half, Some, None)	All	All	All		ALL	ALL
207	How many School Administrators attended <i>all</i> training sessions? (All, Most, Half, Some, None)	All	All	All		ALL	ALL



208	How many School Governing Team/Council members attended <i>at least one</i> training session? (All, Most, Half, Some, None)		Some			ALL	ALL
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209	<b>CHARTER SYSTEM SCHOOL AUTONOMY</b>						
210	<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> For each of the following lines, please indicate whether <u>All</u> , <u>Most</u> , <u>Half</u> , <u>Some</u> , or <u>None</u> of your charter system's School Governing Teams/Councils either directly or indirectly made						

211	CONTROL OVER THE PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL	Enter <u>All</u> , <u>Most</u> , <u>Half</u> , <u>Some</u> , or <u>None</u> for each School Year					
212		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
213	Selection of principal		None	Some		NONE	NONE
214	Professional development requirements and planning for staff		None	None		NONE	NONE
215	Selection of professional development vendors and resources		None	None		NONE	NONE
216	Evaluation of staff		None	None		NONE	NONE
217	Issuance of annual employment contracts from the non-profit governing board		None	None		NONE	NONE
218	At-will employment		None	None		NONE	NONE
219	Authority to provide input on the number of positions budgeted, type of positions, qualifications, roles, and job descriptions		None	All		ALL	ALL
220	Determine whether certification will be required		None	None		NONE	NONE
221	Authority to provide input on ALL hiring decisions, transfers, promotion, demotion, lateral moves, and termination of all faculty and staff		None	None		NONE	NONE
222	Manage human resources independent of the central office, including human resources policies, procedures, and handbooks		None	None		NONE	NONE
223	Establish work schedules of faculty and staff (hours per day, days per year, calendars, etc.)		None	None		NONE	NONE
224	Establish compensation model including salary schedules, bonus or performance based increases, supplements, and personal and professional leave, health, dental, disability, and other benefit plans offered (other than TRS, which is mandated)		None	None		NONE	NONE
225	Establish pay scale, experience, training, and other matters related to substitute teachers		None	None		NONE	NONE
226	Other examples of personnel autonomy and use of personnel waivers (enter in space below)		None	None			
227							
228	Determined to fund a STEM teacher with Charter Money					SOME	SOME
229	Determined to use Charter money for an additional teacher to reduce class size					SOME	SOME
230	Determined to use Charter money for a dual enrollment/testing coordinator					SOME	SOME
231							

232	CONTROL OVER WHAT OCCURS IN THE SCHOOL	Enter <u>All</u> , <u>Most</u> , <u>Half</u> , <u>Some</u> , or <u>None</u> for each School Year					
233		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
234	Selection of curriculum, including any changes in curriculum as needed to improve student achievement		None	Some		SOME	SOME

235	Choose instructional delivery model(s)		None	None		NONE	NONE
236	Selection of courses and programs offered		None	None		NONE	NONE
237	Choice of textbooks, technology, and instructional materials		None	Some		SOME	SOME
238	Establish additional graduation requirements		None	None		NONE	NONE
239	Set course and credit requirements		None	None		NONE	NONE
240	Establish seat time		None	None		SOME	SOME
241	Set student technology and physical education skill requirements		None	None		SOME	SOME
242	Create or modify Career Pathway curricula		None	None		NONE	NONE
243	Choose dual enrollment options		None	None		SOME	SOME
244	Choose credit recovery options		None	None		SOME	SOME
245	Utilize on-line learning platforms (e.g., Georgia Virtual School)		None	Some		SOME	SOME
246	Establish additional mastery level requirements for performance		None	None		NONE	NONE
247	Select additional formative and/or summative assessment to determine student levels of mastery and growth		None	None		NONE	NONE
248	Establish delivery model, scheduling, staffing, and supplemental services for ELL, SPED, gifted and remedial programs		None	None		NONE	NONE
249	Establish curriculum maps, pacing charts, and methods for monitoring the curriculum		None	None		NONE	NONE
250	Establish lesson plan requirements for teachers		None	None		NONE	NONE
251	Set school calendar, including length of school year, holidays, early release days, etc.		None	All		ALL	ALL
252	Set daily/weekly school and/or class schedules, including length of school day		None	Some		NONE	NONE
253	Select co-curricular and extracurricular activities		None	Some		SOME	SOME
254	Establish after school and Saturday programs as needed		None	None		NONE	NONE
255	Set enrichment and/or advisory periods as needed		None	Some		SOME	SOME
256	Establish fieldtrips including locations, date		None	None		SOME	SOME
257	Establish placement and promotion criteria		None	None		NONE	NONE
258	Set class size / student:teacher ratios		None	None		NONE	NONE
259	Set staff-to-student ratios for non-class times (i.e., lunch, recess, specials, transitions, etc.)		None	None		NONE	NONE
260	Set grading and reporting policies, plans, process, schedules, and formats		None	Some		SOME	SOME
261	Manage curriculum and instruction affairs independent of the central office, including curriculum and instruction policies, procedures, and handbooks		None	None		NONE	NONE
262	A non-staff member serves on the school improvement planning team			None			
263	Other examples of curriculum and instruction autonomy and use of waivers (enter in space below)			None		NONE	NONE
264	Reviews school initiatives and provide feedback		All	All		ALL	ALL

265						
266						
267						
268						

269	CONTROL OVER THE SCHOOL'S FINANCES & BUDGET	Enter All, Most, Half, Some, or None for each School Year					
270		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
271	Set budget priorities with funds received and exercise discretion over expenditure for all state and local funds, and as permissible, federal funds		Some	Most		ALL	ALL
272	Manage fiscal affairs independent of the central office, including financial policies and standard operating procedures		None	None		NONE	NONE
273	Ensuring that the school receives all the per-pupil funding to which it is entitled and raising additional funds through fundraising efforts		None	Some		ALL	ALL
274	Maintain a reserve fund		None	None		NONE	NONE
275	Other examples of finance or budget autonomy and use of waivers (enter in space below)			None		NONE	NONE
276	Approve fundraiser requests		None	All		ALL	ALL
277	Approve Charter System Funds if they become available		None	All		ALL	ALL
278							
279							
280							

281	CONTROL OVER THE SCHOOL'S OPERATIONS	Enter All, Most, Half, Some, or None for each School Year					
282		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
283	Determine how the school uses the facility		None	All		ALL	ALL
284	Establishes school partnerships for school growth		Some	Most		ALL	ALL
285	Selects vendors aligned with needs of the school		None	None		NONE	NONE
286	Manages transportation decisions, including authority to contract for transportation service		None	None		NONE	NONE
287	Manages food service decisions, including authority to contract for food service		None	None		NONE	NONE
288	Selects information systems (i.e., Student Information System, financial information systems)		None	None		NONE	NONE
289	Establishes school size		None	None		NONE	NONE
290	Establishes school grade span different from typical primary, elementary, middle and high school public school models (i.e., 4-8, K-8, K-12)		None	None		NONE	NONE
291	Authority over attendance policies		None	None		NONE	NONE
292	Establish student code of conduct and behavior policies, plans, processes, and formats		None	Some		SOME	SOME
293	Manage operational affairs independent of the central office, including operational policies, standard operating procedures, and handbooks		None	None		NONE	NONE
294	Authority over fundraisers and the use of these funds			All		ALL	ALL
295	Other examples of operational autonomy and use of waivers (enter in space below)						

296						
297						
298						
299						
300						

301	<p>You have reached the end of Tab 3: Local School Governance.</p> <p>Please proceed to Tab 4: Waivers and continue answering the questions there.</p>
-----	--

## Charter System - 2018 Annual Report Form

### 4. USE OF WAIVERS

In exchange for the Charter System's agreement to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and measurable objectives set forth in your charter system contract, the State Board grants the maximum flexibility or waiver allowed by law to the Charter System.

This section allows you to share how you utilize the waivers granted by your charter system contract ensures the success of your students.

#### USE OF WAIVERS

Please choose the three (3) most valuable waivers your charter school has used in the past year.

Reduce cost

Remove barrier to academic success

Reallocation of funds

What is the value of these waivers to your charter system?

We use the EIP reduced class size model but we are going over those class size numbers.

We use block scheduling at

the high school and flex time for remediation and enrichment.

We use charter system monies to hire specialized

employees (ie. stem lab teacher, class size reduction, support STEM initiative)

You have reached the end of Tab 4: Use of Waivers

Please proceed to Tab 5: Innovations

# Charter Systems - 2018 Annual Report Form

## 5. INNOVATIONS

This section gives you a chance to share information on your charter system's Essential Innovative Features.

Line #

### INNOVATIONS

Instructions: Presented below are the Essential or Innovative Features included in your charter system contract. In the columns to the right of each item, please indicate whether it has been Fully, Mostly, Partially, or Not Yet implemented; whether you need to use any waivers to implement it; and whether you are using (or will use) all or part of the charter system supplemental funding to support its implementation.

341	In the spaces below, list the <u>Essential or Innovative Features</u> included in your charter system contract. List one Innovation per line.	Indicate in this column whether each Innovation is <u>Fully</u> , <u>Mostly</u> , <u>Partially</u> , or <u>Not Yet</u> implemented.	Enter YES if you need to use any <u>waivers</u> to implement it	Enter YES if you are using (or will use) all or part of the <u>charter system supplemental funding</u> to support implementation
342				
343	Utilizing Flexible Service Models	Fully	Yes	Yes
344	Implementing STEM instructional strategies across curriculum to increase student exploration at elementary and middle school levels	Fully	Yes	Yes
345	Creation of a College and Career Academy	Not Yet	Yes	No
346	Expand postsecondary options	Fully	Yes	Yes
347				
348				
349				
350				
351				
352	<b>ADDITIONAL INNOVATIONS OR FEATURES NOT INCLUDED IN ABOVE</b>			
353	Four out of Five Schools are recognized by GADOE as Operational and one emerging.	Fully	Yes	NO
354				
355	Established elementary co-curricular and extra curricular clubs (i.e. Garden club, sign language clubs, exercise/running clubs, robotics clubs and team competitions, photography club, TOME Literary Clubs, Math	Fully	NO	NO
356				
357	Student Councils	Fully	NO	NO
358				
359	Mentoring at risk students by facility and staff	Mostly	NO	NO
360				

### OTHER USES OF CHARTER SYSTEM SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Instructions: First enter all other uses of your charter system supplemental funds. Then, in the columns to the right, indicate whether each additional use is Fully, Mostly, Partially, or Not Yet implemented -- and if each use promoted school level governance and/or improved student achievement.

363	In the spaces below, list <u>all other uses</u> of your charter system supplemental funds. Enter one additional use per line.	Indicate in this column whether each additional use is <u>Fully</u> , <u>Mostly</u> , <u>Partially</u> , or <u>Not Yet</u> implemented	In this column, enter YES if the use will promote <u>school level governance</u>	In this column, enter YES if the use will promote <u>improved student achievement</u>
364				
365	A teacher to reduce class size	Fully	YES	YES
366	A dual enrollment/testing coordinator position	Fully	YES	YES
367	Three of our schools use charter funds for STEM class teachers	Fully	YES	YES
368	Bought equipment and supplies to start up stem labs	Fully	YES	YES
369				
370				
371				
372				
373				
374				
375				
376				
377				
378				

379				
380				
381				
382				

383	You have reached the end of Tab 5: Innovations.			
384	Please proceed now to Tab 6: School List and provide the information requested there.			

## Charter Systems - 2018 Annual Report Form

## 7. School List

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL LIST

1. The list of schools below are all school in your district, including those that are not a part of your charter system contract.
- 2 Please add any missing schools, including those that were part of your district during your charter term but are no longer included.
3. For each school on the list (including any schools you added), please place a "1" in all school-year columns in which the school was a part of your charter system.
4. Please verify System ID and School ID

Line #

385	CHARTER SYSTEM SCHOOL INFORMATION : "1" = "Included in Charter System"									
386			System ID	School ID	Charter Status 2012-2013	Charter Status 2013-2014	Charter Status 2014-2015	Charter Status 2015-2016	Charter Status 2016-2017	Charter Status 2017-2018
	#	School Name								
387	1	Blue Ridge Elementary School	655	1050				1	1	1
388	2	East Fannin Elementary School	655	194				1	1	1
389	3	West Fannin Elementary School	655	293				1	1	1
390	4	Fannin County High School	655	176				1	1	1
391	5	Fannin County Middle School	655	193				1	1	1
392	TOTAL # OF SCHOOLS IN CHART				0	0	0	5	5	5

393	ENROLLMENT	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
394	How many students did you / do you expect to have <i>enrolled</i> in your system			2959	2949	2,923	2953

395	THANK YOU!!
-----	-------------

396 **YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED YOUR 2018 ANNUAL REPORT. PLEASE RETURN TO TAB 1 FOR SUBMISSION INFORMATION.**



Fannin County School System				
School Level Governance Decision-Making Matrix				
System Name: Fannin County	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	<i>Recommends desired characteristics of principal; Recommends specific applicants to be included in the interview process to the superintendent (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>	Examples include: Input on principal goals, feedback on principal performance, type and qualifications of all positions, requirements for substitutes, attributes and qualifications for school administrative positions, distribution methods for incentive funds	<i>Provides feed back on principal performance; Provides input on school climate and operations through surveys; Annually approves positions paid from federal funds (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>
Financial Decisions and Resource Allocation	LSGTs shall have input into the final recommendations for the school budget, including number and type of personnel, curriculum costs, supply costs, equipment costs and maintenance and operations costs	<i>Set budget priorities with funds received and exercise discretion over expenditures for all state and local funds, and as permissible federal funds (minimum authority will be imlemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015</i>	Examples include : School budget approval, budget priorities aligned with school improvement plan, use of charter system funds, vendors for school resources, fundraising budget	<i>Ensures that the school recieves all the per-pupil funding to which it is entitled and raising additional funds through fundraising efforts; Approves school budget; Approves budget priorities aligned with the school improvement plan; Approve use of Charter System funds (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>
Curriculum and Instruction	LSGTs shall have input into the selection of the curriculum and accompanying materials consistent with the district's Essential and Innovative Features as included in the charter contract	<i>Reviews school selection of textbooks, technology, and instructional materials (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>	Examples include : approval of instructional delivery innovations that would traditionally require a waiver, approval of instructional programs and materials consistent with innovations, graduation requirements, new course offerings, opportunities for student acceleration/remediation	<i>Review and give input in school's choosen instructional delivery models, seat time requirements, student technology and physical education skill requirements, Career Pathway curricula, additional formative and/or summative assessments needed to determine student levels of mastery and growth; Review focus walk data in an effort to stay abreast of student achievement progress (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015)</i>
Establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals	LSGTs shall approve the school improvement plan and provide oversight of its implementation	Provides input and approves the actions, strategies and interventions of the School Improvement Plan; Monitors the implementation of the School Improvement Plan	Examples include: LSGT members serving as members of the school imporvement planning team, LSGT approval of any innovations that would traditionally require a waiver of state law	<i>Completes Self-Assessment of School Keys Standards; Sets a budget for implementing the school improvement plan; Allocates resources for implementing the school improvement plan; Evaluates success of the school improvement plan and makes revisions as needed (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter systems status - July 1, 2015)</i>
School Operations	LSGTs shall have input into school operations that are consistent with school improvement and charter goals	<i>Reviews daily operations of the school and recommends necessary improvements, Reviews and approves school safety plan on an annual basis; Makes recommendation for revisions to local Board of Education policies (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015)</i>	Examples include: approval of use of instructional time during school day, partners in education, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, stakeholder surveys, parent involvement, communications strategies, school-level policies, volunteer support, field trips, fundraisers, student dress code, student discipline plan	<i>Establishes school partnerships for school growth; Reviews and provides input on after school and Saturday programs as needed, enrichment and/or advisory periods as needed, staff-to-student ratios for non-class times (i.e., lunch, recess, specials, transitions, etc.) (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>
*The LBOE retains its constitutional authority				

## CHARTER FOR FANNIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

This Charter for Fannin County Schools (“Charter”) is entered into by the Fannin County Board of Education (“Local Board”) and the State Board of Education (“State Board”) (collectively referred to as “the parties”).

WHEREAS, the Local Board approved the petition proposing to establish a charter system pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2060 et seq., the Charter Schools Act of 1998 (“Charter Schools Act”);

WHEREAS, the State Board finds that the petition complies with the provisions of the Charter Schools Act, and the rules, regulations, policies and procedures promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2063 and further finds that the petition is in the public interest and promotes school level governance; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2063.2, the State Board grants this Charter to permit the Local Board to establish a charter system as defined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2062 (“Charter System”) in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Charter.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, mutual agreements, and covenants contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. Definitions. The terms below will be interpreted in accordance with the following definitions, unless and until federal or state law, or the state accountability system, is amended otherwise:
  - a. Elementary and Secondary Education Act as Amended (ESEA as Amended): The federal education statute, originally passed by the U.S. Congress in 1965, that defines the role of the federal government in public education and authorizes many of the major federal education programs, including Title I. This Act was reauthorized by Congress in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
  - b. College and Career Academy: A specialized school established as a charter school or pursuant to a contract for a strategic waivers school system or charter system, which formalizes a partnership that demonstrates a collaboration between business, industry, and community stakeholders to advance work force development between one or more local

boards of education, a private individual, a private organization, or a state or local public entity in cooperation with one or more post-secondary institutions.

- c. College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI): A comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all educational stakeholders that will promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.
  - d. Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE or Department): The Georgia Department of Education is the state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K – 12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education.
  - e. Local Educational Agency (LEA): A Local Educational Agency is a local system pursuant to local board of education control and management.
  - f. State Board of Education (SBOE or State Board): The State Board of Education is the constitutional authority which defines education policy for public K – 12 education agencies in Georgia.
  - g. State Performance Target: The state performance target is set using all students with the goal of decreasing the percentage of students who are not proficient.
- 2. Charter Term. The State Board grants this Charter to the Local Board to operate a Charter System for a 5-year term beginning on July 1, 2019 and expiring on June 30, 2024.
  - 3. Responsibility. The Local Board shall ultimately be responsible for all duties to be performed by the Charter System and the schools within the Charter System under this Charter.
  - 4. Charter System Schools.
    - a. Except as expressly indicated herein, all schools with a CCRPI designation, including new schools opening during the term of this charter, within the approved Charter System shall be Charter System Schools.
    - b. The Charter System shall notify the Department of any new Charter System Schools prior

to obtaining a School Code.

- c. Locally-approved start-up charter schools, conversion charter schools with separate charters and schools with admissions criteria, including but not limited to alternative education centers and magnet schools, shall be excluded from the Charter System.
- d. The following schools are not part of the Charter System:
  - i. All Fannin County schools are part of the charter.
- e. Any College and Career Academy (“CCA”) opened by or any existing CCA included in the Charter System under the terms of this Charter must meet the definition of a College and Career Academy as defined in Section 1 above, the Charter System must notify the Department’s District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division and the Technical College System of Georgia of the opening, and the College and Career Academy must meet the following requirements related to College and Career Academies:
  - i. Provide proof that the CCA governing board will continue to serve as the Local School Governance Team (LSGT) for the CCA;
  - ii. If an existing CCA is included in the Charter System, then the current CCA’s governing board would continue as the governing board of the College and Career Academy, using its current by-laws for operation and procedures for electing members;
  - iii. Provide a signed Georgia College and Career Academy Partners Roles and Responsibilities Chart and, if preferred, an optional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the College and Career Academy governing board, the charter system, and the CCA’s higher education and business partners, that provides the following:
    - 1. Description of the CCA’s independence;
    - 2. Description of the amount of funding the CCA will receive from the District;



3. Acknowledgement that the CCA Governing Board shall, in partnership with the District, exercise substantive control over and decision-making authority regarding personnel decisions, financial decisions, curriculum and instruction resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations; and
4. Description of any services and supports to be provided to the CCA by the local district.

iv. The district's charter system contract shall not include the College and Career Academy as an Essential or Innovative Feature.

5. Mission Statement. Developing Young Futures – Learning for tomorrow, today.
6. Essential or Innovative Features. The Charter System shall implement, but is not limited to, the following innovations:
  - a. Flexible Service Models: We will continue to utilize flexible service models to serve students based on their individual needs rather than their state-identified label by integrating services which will impact efficiency and effectiveness of personnel and fiscal management.
  - b. STEM Methodology: The Fannin County School System will continue to improve and expand our STEM instructional strategies. Our elementary schools will continue to utilize these STEM strategies, but wish to expand and to become STEAM schools by integrating the arts into their instruction school wide. The Middle School has expanded STEM into the curriculum by adding a specials class to their rotation. Our system will also continue to provide professional learning for teachers to help integrate these STEM strategies into all of our classrooms. We feel that all students will be better prepared for post-secondary options by using the inquiry-based instructional strategies and the related hands-on activities that STEM methodology provides.
  - c. Literacy Initiative: The Fannin County School System will offer improved educational opportunities through the development and continuation of an expansive literacy initiative.

Following both the district's and individual schools' Comprehensive Needs Assessments, we identified improving literacy outcomes as the greatest equity gap and leading priority for Fannin County students. We know that the foundation for literacy development occurs in the early learning years, and as a district, we earnestly believe that it is in the best interests of our students to nurture that development as best we can by expanding our previous working model to utilize community-based partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, including the University of North Georgia, Family Connections, medical practices, etc. Literacy has always been at the foundation of our educational system, but we are changing how we identify and cater to the needs of individual students to create more meaningful learning experiences and ultimately to ensure post-secondary success. In the spring of 2018, Fannin County School System was one of 38 districts in Georgia awarded the L4GA grant, and Fannin County is now also recognized as a "Get Georgia Reading" Community. In order to cultivate a sustainable approach to literacy instruction, we are focused on securing relevant, evidence-based professional learning for our faculty and staff so that literacy is embedded throughout all content areas. We have developed a Birth-to-Five Literacy Outreach Project, which has been a locally-funded project to increase print exposure and awareness to children by placing books in the hands of families across the community, and we will offer literacy enrichment experiences to all families. Each elementary school in the county will implement a new Bookworms core ELA curriculum, with an emphasis on leveled texts. The middle school is converting its Media Center into a Learning Commons, promoting heightened student engagement, collaboration, and interdisciplinary literacy experiences; whereas, high school students will be able to demonstrate ownership in the process through the innovation of a peer-facilitated Writing Center. By achieving gains in literacy, we believe that all aspects of a child's life can be constructively affected. Through developing and refining community partnerships and enhancing instruction, the Fannin County School System hopes to leverage all available support to promote and improve

positive, sustainable literacy outcomes for all of its children.

- d. Expand post-secondary options based on the needs of our student population and our regional economic community. We will continue to develop our CTAE offerings and the opportunities for our students to graduate as Path Way Completers and earn industry certifications. We are also continuing to partner with our local universities to increase our dual enrollment opportunities.

7. Maximum Flexibility Allowed by Law. In exchange for the Charter System's agreement to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and measurable objectives set forth in Section 9 below, the State Board shall grant the maximum flexibility allowed by law to the Charter System. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(a), the Charter System shall be entitled to the maximum flexibility allowed by state law from the provisions of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and from any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure established by the Local Board, State Board or the Georgia Department of Education ("Department"). Notwithstanding this maximum flexibility, the Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with the terms of this Charter, the Charter Schools Act, including the provisions set forth in Section 18 below, and any rules, regulations, policies, or procedures established by the State Board consistent with the Charter Schools Act.
8. Accreditation. The district's accreditation pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 20-3-519(6.1)(A) shall be maintained for the duration of the charter term.
9. Performance-Based Goals and Measurable Objectives. In exchange for the flexibility granted in Section 7 above, the Charter System agrees to meet or exceed the performance-based goals and measurable objectives that are designed to result in improvement of student achievement as set forth in Appendix A attached to this Charter.
10. Organizational Goals and Measurable Objectives. In exchange for the flexibility granted in Section 7 above, the Charter System agrees to meet or exceed the organizational goals and measurable objectives that are designed to result in improvement of organizational efficiency and school-level



governance as set forth in Appendix A attached to this Charter.

11. Assessment and Accountability. Notwithstanding Sections 7 and 9 above, each Charter System School is subject to all accountability and assessment requirements set forth within Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and any corresponding State Board Rules, including but not limited to the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-49, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-73, and the use of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Systems, including Student Learning Objectives. The Charter System Schools are also subject to all federal accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, subject to any amendment, waiver or reauthorization thereof.
12. Annual Report. The Charter System shall submit an annual report by November 1 of each year to the Georgia Department of Education that complies with all requirements set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2067.1(c), including but not limited to an indication of the Charter System's progress towards the goals and objectives stated in Section 9 above and all state-mandated assessment and accountability scores from the previous year.
13. Open Enrollment and Admissions. The Charter System shall enroll students in its Charter System Schools per the terms of this Charter and in accordance with State Board rules. Each Charter System School shall comply with the open enrollment and admissions provisions set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066. Enrollment shall be open to any student in accordance with the following criteria:
  - a. Attendance Zone. Enrollment shall be open to any student who resides within the attendance zone for the Fannin County School System. The attendance zone for each Charter System School shall be determined by the Fannin County School System.
  - b. Admissions. Charter System Schools may not use admissions criteria or applications that would not otherwise be used at a traditional public school, including but not limited to, requests for letters of recommendation, essays, resumes, or information regarding a student's school or community activities, grades, test scores, attendance record, or disciplinary history. Charter System Schools may use applications for the purpose of



verifying students' residence within the Charter System School's attendance zone. Charter System Schools may gather supplemental information from students after enrollment is determined.

- c. Random Lottery. If the number of timely applicants who reside in the attendance zone does not exceed the capacity of the Charter System School, the Charter System School shall allow students from outside the attendance zone an equal opportunity to enroll through the use of a random lottery process. Charter System Schools shall not conduct more than one lottery per grade per admissions cycle.

14. Withdrawal Without Penalty. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(d).

15. State and Federally Mandated Educational Services.

- a. Students with Disabilities. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with all federal special education laws and regulations, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Special education teachers must have a bachelor's degree and must either be certified in special education or hold a special education license in Georgia.
- b. English Language Learners. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations relating to the provision of educational services to English Language Learners.
- c. Supplemental Education. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall provide supplemental education services in required cases pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-5-.03 and Elementary and Secondary Education Act, subject to any amendment, waiver or reauthorization thereof.
- d. Remediation. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall provide remediation in required cases pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-5-.01 and

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, subject to any amendment, waiver or reauthorization thereof.

16. Governance Structure.

- a. Governing Body. Each Charter System School shall utilize a Governing Council as its governing body, which shall operate with the intent and purpose of maximizing school-level decision making. The Governing Councils shall be responsible for complying with and carrying out the provisions of this Charter, including compliance with all applicable law. For the purposes of the Appendix attached to this charter, the Governing Councils shall be designated as the School Governance Teams (SGTs).
- b. School-Level Governance. The Governing Councils shall maximize school-level governance, which is defined as decision-making authority in personnel decisions, financial decisions, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations.
- c. Control and Management by Local Board. The Governing Council at each Charter System School shall be subject to the control and management of the Local Board.
- d. Function. It shall be the function of the Governing Councils to maximize school-level governance, uphold the Charter System's mission and vision, set policy for each Charter System School, ensure effective organizational planning, and ensure that Performance-based Goals and Measurable Objectives set forth in Sections 9 and 10 are met.
- e. Decision-Making Authority. The decision-making authority of the principal of each Charter System School, the School Governing Council of each Charter System School, and the Local Board in personnel decisions, including hiring school principals and teachers; financial decisions; curriculum and instruction; resource allocation; establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals; and school operations shall be implemented.
- f. Annual Training. The Local Board shall adopt an annual training program that includes, at

a minimum, an explanation of charter system culture and expectations. All Local Board members, all Governing Council members, the Superintendent, key Local District staff, and principals of Charter System Schools shall be trained.

- g. Public Meetings. The Governing Councils are subject to and shall comply with the Open and Public Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.*, and any subsequent amendment thereof. The Governing Councils shall conduct regular meetings consistent with principles of transparency and avoidance of actual or apparent conflicts of interest in the governance of each Charter System School.
- h. Public Records. The Governing Councils are subject to and shall comply with the Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et seq.*, and any subsequent amendment thereof. The Governing Councils shall maintain their adopted policies, budgets, meeting agendas and minutes and shall make such documents available for public inspection.
- i. Conflicts of Interest. The Charter System shall establish a formal policy to prevent and disclose conflicts of interest. Members of the Governing Councils and Charter System School employees shall abide by such conflicts of interest policy.
- j. Public Status. The Local Board assures that each Charter System School shall be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, nonprofit school organized and operated under the laws of the State of Georgia. The Local Board further assures that the Charter System Schools shall not be home based.
- k. Governance Council Compensation. The Charter System shall not compensate Governance Council members in excess of reasonable expenses incurred in connection with actual attendance at council meetings or with performance of duties associated therewith.

17. Fiscal Control.

- a. Annual Audit. The Charter System shall be subject to an independent annual financial audit conducted by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts or an independent CPA licensed in Georgia as required by law.



- b. Federal Monitoring Requirements. Each Charter System School shall comply with all federal monitoring requirements related to the receipt of federal funds.
- c. Charter School Program Grant Funds Eligibility. In the event the Charter System seeks grant funds under the federal Charter School Program, the Charter System must satisfy all federal eligibility requirements as a prerequisite to applying for and receiving such funds.
- d. Insurance. Prior to opening, the Charter System shall secure adequate insurance coverage, and the Charter System shall maintain such coverage throughout the Charter term in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia. Prior to execution of this Charter, the Charter System shall secure adequate insurance coverage and the Charter System shall maintain such coverage throughout the Charter term in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia.
- e. Responsibility for Debts. The Charter System is solely responsible for all debts incurred by the Charter System and its governing body. Except as agreed hereto, the State Board shall not be contractually bound to the Charter System or to any third party with whom the Charter System has a contract or from whom the Charter System has purchased goods or services.

18. Compliance with Other Laws, Rules, and Regulations. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall operate in accordance with the United States Constitution, the Constitution of the State of Georgia and all applicable federal, state and local laws that may not be waived pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065, including the following, which are listed by way of example and not by way of limitation.

- a. Civil Rights, Insurance, Health and Safety and Conflicting Interests. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall operate in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions and the prevention of unlawful conduct.
- b. Asbestos Remediation. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply

with the terms of any applicable asbestos remediation plan.

- c. Unlawful Conduct. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school.
- d. Student Conduct and Discipline. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall maintain and implement a written policy regarding student discipline, which policy shall be consistent with due process.
- e. State Board Rules. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall operate in accordance with all State Board Rules promulgated in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-240 during the term herein that are not subject to any waiver granted in Section 7 above.
- f. Prohibition on Discrimination. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall not discriminate against students on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, academic ability, the need for special educational services or any other characteristic protected by local, state or federal law.
- g. Reporting Requirements. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-160, 20-2-161(e), 20-2-320 and 20-2-740.
- h. Tuition. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized for local boards pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133.
- i. Brief Period of Quiet Reflection. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050, which requires a brief period of quiet reflection.
- j. Individual Graduation Plans. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-327 related to Individual Graduation Plans.
- k. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The Charter System and each Charter System School are subject to all provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. In the event a Charter System School closes, it shall transmit all

official student records in the manner prescribed by the State Board.

- I. QBE Formula Earnings. The Charter System acknowledges that criteria used to calculate Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding may not be waived.
      - m. Funding. The Charter System acknowledges that, although becoming a Charter System provides a district maximum flexibility, waivers cannot be used to generate additional funding.
19. Compliance with Rules, Practices, Policies, and Procedures of the Department. The Charter System shall operate in accordance with the rules, practices, policies, and procedures established by the Department under the authority granted by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2063 *et seq.*
20. Employment Matters. Employees at each Charter System School shall not be considered employees of the State Board or Department.
  - a. Background Checks. Each Charter System School shall adopt background check procedures and shall ensure that all prospective staff members undergo a fingerprinting and background check prior to beginning employment at the Charter System School.
  - b. Teachers Retirement System. All teachers at each Charter System School shall be members of the Georgia Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and subject to its requirements unless otherwise provided by law.
21. Record Inspection. Subject to state and federal laws, the Local Board, the State Board, its agents, and the state auditor's office shall have the right to examine and copy all records, reports, documents, and files relating to any activity, program, or student at each Charter System School.
22. Facilities.
  - a. Should the Charter System choose to participate in capital outlay pursuant to O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-260 through 20-2-262, the Charter System shall meet with all applicable Law, Rules, and Regulations.
  - b. Should the Charter System choose to not participate in capital outlay pursuant to O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-260 through 20-2-262, the Charter System shall meet the following requirements:



- i. Approval of Site and/or Facility. The Charter System shall obtain proper approval for all sites and/or facilities prior to committing to any certificate of lease or ownership, prior to commencing any construction and prior to student occupation. The Charter System shall contact the Georgia Department of Education's Facilities Services Division regarding the following:
  1. Site Approval. No less than nine (9) months prior to proposed occupation, the Charter System shall contact the Facilities Services Division and obtain site approval. Once site approval has been granted, the Charter System will be issued a site code. The Charter System shall not commit to any certificate of lease or ownership, allow any construction to commence, nor allow student occupation prior to site approval.
  2. Architectural Review. The Charter System shall submit and have approved by the Facilities Services Division all architectural plans for any facility that will house the Charter System during the charter term. The Charter System shall not commit to any certificate of lease or ownership, allow any construction to commence nor allow student occupation prior to architectural review.
  3. School Code Approval. After securing both site approval and architectural review approval a school code shall be obtained. The Charter System shall properly obtain a school code prior to occupancy of the site and/or facility.
- ii. Prior to the beginning of the charter term, the Charter System shall obtain documentation from the Facilities Services Unit that the Department is in possession of the following documents for each Charter System School:
  1. Documentation of Ownership or Lease Agreement. The Charter System shall obtain documentation of ownership or the lease agreement for each Charter System School.

2. Certificate of Occupancy. The Charter System shall obtain a Certificate of Occupancy for each Charter System School.
  3. Emergency Safety Plan. The Charter System shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185, which plan shall be submitted to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency for each Charter System School.
- c. The Charter System further agrees that the list of requirements with regard to Facilities contained herein may not be exhaustive to the extent that they impact student health and safety and therefore the Charter System should approach the Facilities Services Unit prior to committing to any certificate of lease or ownership, allowing any construction to commence or allowing student occupation of a facility.
23. Grant Programs. To the extent that the Charter System wishes to participate in a state or federal grant program, the Charter System hereby acknowledges that the requirements of the grant program may not be waivable.
  24. Transportation. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with all applicable laws governing transportation of students.
  25. Food Services. The Charter System and each Charter System School shall comply with all applicable laws governing food service for students.
  26. Agreements with Local Board. This Charter shall not preclude any Charter System School from entering into an agreement with the Local Board, provided no such agreement supersedes, overrides or conflicts with any provision of this Charter.
  27. Termination of Charter.
    - a. Termination Procedures. The parties acknowledge and agree that this Charter may be terminated following the procedures set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068 and the accompanying State Board Rule.
    - b. Requests for Termination. The termination of this Charter may be requested by any School



Governing Council following the procedures set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068 (b) and the accompanying State Board Rule.

- c. Termination Grounds. In accordance with Sections 27(a) and (b), the State Board may terminate this Charter based on any of the following grounds:
- i. The Charter System's failure to comply with any recommendation or direction of the State Board with respect to O.C.G.A. § 20-14-41;
  - ii. The Charter System's failure to adhere to any material term of this Charter, including but not limited to the performance goals set forth in Section 9 above;
  - iii. The Charter System's failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
  - iv. The Charter System's violation of applicable federal, state, or local laws, or court orders;
  - v. The Charter System's failure to comply with any provision of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065;
  - vi. The existence of conditions that place the health, safety or welfare of students or staff of the Charter System in danger; or
  - vii. Other sufficient grounds the State Board finds appropriate to terminate the Charter as a result of evidence presented at the hearing on a request for termination.

28. Suspension.

- a. Pre-Opening Suspension. In the event the Charter System fails to comply with any provision set forth in this Charter that requires compliance prior to the opening of any Charter System School, the conversion to a Charter System may be suspended until a time after all requirements have been fulfilled by the Charter System and as determined by the Department. Suspension shall not result in an extension of the Charter term set forth above in Section 2.
- b. Emergency Suspension. In the event of an emergency, as solely determined by the State

Board, the State Board, through a regular or special-called meeting, may suspend the operations of the Charter System until a termination hearing can be conducted, as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068 and the accompanying State Board Rule.

29. Renewal, Non-Renewal and Probationary Status.

- a. Renewal. The Charter may be renewed by agreement of the parties following the procedures set forth in the Charter Schools Act and accompanying State Board Rule.
- b. Non-Renewal. Any grounds for termination stated in Section 27(c) above may also be grounds for non-renewal. In addition, the State Board may elect not to renew the Charter if the petition for renewal does not comply with the Charter Schools Act and the rules, regulations, policies and procedures promulgated in accordance with the Charter Schools Act or if the State Board deems that the Charter System or a Charter System School has not sufficiently increased student achievement or is no longer in the public interest.
- c. Probationary Term. In the event the State Board determines that the Charter System has failed to comply with any provision of this Charter, the State Board may elect to grant a renewal for a probationary term, within which term the Charter School must come into compliance satisfactory to the Department.

30. Interventions and Sanctions. In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-14-41 and O.C.G.A. § 20-14-45 through § 20-14-49, the State Board shall impose one or more of the following interventions or sanctions for the Charter System and Charter System Schools that receive an unacceptable rating on student achievement, achievement gap closure, student progress, or any combination thereof:

- i. Issue public notice of the deficiency to the Local Board;
- ii. Order a hearing to be conducted at the Charter System School by the Local Board with the participation of the Governing Council for the purpose of notifying the public of the unacceptable performance, the improvements in performance expected by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, and the interventions that may be imposed under the Code sections if the performance does not improve within a

- designated period of time, and for the purpose of soliciting public comment on the initial steps being taken to improve performance;
- iii. Order the preparation of an intensive school improvement plan that addresses each academic excellence indicator for which the Charter System School's performance is unacceptable, the submission of the plan to the State Board for approval, and implementation of the plan;
  - iv. Appoint a third-party specialist to conduct a comprehensive on-site evaluation of each low-performing Charter System School and, in cooperation with a turnaround coach and a regional educational service agency, recommend appropriate actions and assist in the development and monitor the implementation of an intensive school improvement plan focused on student achievement;
  - v. Conduct individual assessments of students identified as low-performing and provide them with various services and supports as needed, and screen all students to diagnose factors for low performance;
  - vi. Create local collaborations to identify state and community resources that are available or that could be built upon, reallocated, or repurposed to address personal and community conditions impacting a Charter System School's performance;
  - vii. Appoint a school master or management team to oversee and direct the duties of the principal of a Charter System School that has received an unacceptable rating for two consecutive years or more;
- b. For a Charter System School that has received an unacceptable rating for three consecutive years or more after implementing an intensive school improvement plan and upon consultation with the Local Board (after an opportunity for a hearing):
- i. Remove school personnel;
  - ii. Allow for the implementation of a state charter school or a special school, as defined in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2062;



- iii. Mandate the complete reconstitution of the school;
- iv. Mandate that parents have the option to relocate their students to another public school chosen by the parents within the district;
- v. Mandate the operation of the school by a private nonprofit third-party operator selected and contracted by the Local Board;
- vi. Mandate the operation of the school by a successful school system and pursuant to funding criteria established by the State Board;
- vii. Continue the implementation of the school's intensive student achievement improvement plan; or
- viii. Mandate a complete restructuring of the school's governance arrangement and internal organization; or
- ix. Any other interventions or requirements deemed appropriate for the school by the Chief Turnaround Officer and the State Board; or

c. For a Charter System School that has received an unacceptable rating for two consecutive years or more, upon consultation with the Local Board, in accordance with State Board rules, and in addition to any other interventions imposed, the State Board shall mandate public school choice, specified maximum class sizes, and site-based expenditure controls.

31. Temporary Extension. At the discretion of the Department and the local Superintendent, a Charter System may be extended for a grace period not exceeding sixty (60) days.

32. Amendments to Charter. Any material term of this Charter, to be determined by the Department, may be amended in writing upon the approval of the Local Board and the State Board. Any proposed amendment shall be made in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2067.1 and the accompanying State Board Rule.

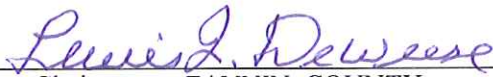
33. Administrative Clarifications. Any request for a clarification to a non-material term of this Charter, to be determined by the Department, shall be submitted in writing to the Department for review. Any non-material term of this Charter may be clarified upon written approval of the Department.

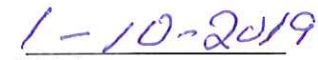
34. Non-Agency. Nothing in the Charter shall be construed as creating or constituting the relationship of a partnership, joint venture, (or other association of any kind or agent and principal relationship) between the parties thereto. No party to the Charter has the authority to enter into any contract or create an obligation or liability on behalf of, in the name of, or binding upon another party to the Charter.
35. Delegation. The parties agree and acknowledge that the functions and powers of each party may be exercised only by each party and may not be delegated to a third party without written agreement by the Local Board and the State Board.
36. Application of Amended Law. This Charter is subject to applicable state and federal laws and shall be deemed amended to reflect applicable changes to those laws upon the effective date of any such change.
37. Non-Waiver. No waiver of any breach of this Charter shall be held as a waiver of any other or subsequent breach.
38. Severability. If any provision of the Charter is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any reason, the remainder of the Charter shall remain in full force and effect.
39. Governing Law and Venue. This Charter shall be governed by, subject to, and construed under the laws of the State of Georgia. This Charter shall be interpreted in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2060 *et seq.*, as amended within the term of this Charter. Any action brought by one party to this Charter against another party shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton.
40. Contradicting or Conflicting Provisions. If any provision of the Charter is determined to contradict or conflict with any other provision of the Charter, the contradiction or conflict shall be resolved in favor of the broad flexibility guaranteed pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065 *et seq.*
41. Entire Agreement. This Charter sets forth the entire agreement between the Local Board and the State Board with respect to the subject matter of this Charter. All prior contracts, representations, statements, negotiations, understandings, and undertakings between the Local Board and the State Board are superseded by this Charter. The petition submitted to and approved by the Local Board

serves only as the formal application for a Charter System and does not constitute a contract between the State Board and the Local Board. This Charter supersedes any conflicting provision contained in the petition.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION


\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

  
Chairperson, FANNIN COUNTY

  
(Date)

BOARD OF EDUCATION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, FANNIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

  
(Date)

## Appendices to Charter for Fannin County Schools

### Appendix A

The State Board shall hold the Charter System accountable for the full performance of each of the academic goals listed below.

Goal 1: During each year of its first five-year charter term, each Charter System School shall “beat the odds” as determined by a formula measuring expected CCRPI without Challenge points. If less than all of the Charter System Schools beat the odds in the first year of the charter contract, the Charter System shall increase the number of Charter System Schools beating the odds each year so that all Charter System Schools will beat the odds in the fourth year of the charter contract.

- Schools that Beat the Odds are those with a higher CCRPI (without Challenge points) than similar schools serving similar students in Georgia.
- The Beating the Odds analysis predicts a range within which each school’s CCRPI is statistically expected to fall – given the school’s size, grade cluster, student demographics (including race/ethnicity, disability, English Learners, and poverty), and student mobility.
- If an individual school’s actual CCRPI is above the predicted range, then that school Beat the Odds.
- An annual unique cross-sectional dataset is created using information from the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement’s Report Card, and the Georgia Department of Education’s Student Record. *Beating the Odds* uses the CCRPI Single Score without Challenge points. Note that the factors may change during the charter term.

Goal 2: The Charter System will demonstrate proficiency and/or improvement on the CCRPI Single Score



without Challenge Points.

1. Measure 1: Year 1 of the charter term will establish a CCRPI baseline. The Charter System's CCRPI score shall be equal to or better than the State in Year 2, and better than the State in Years 3-5 of the charter contract.
2. Measure 2: If Charter System's first year CCRPI score is lower than the State, it shall have until the end of Year 2 of the charter term to close the gap between the district and the State.
3. Measure 3: In Years 3-5 of the charter term, the Charter System's CCRPI score shall be better than the State.

The State Board shall hold the Charter System accountable for the full performance of each of the operational goals listed below.

Goal 3: Promote a positive school experience by providing a safe school environment.

Measure 1: According to data reported by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement Report Card, from a baseline established in Year 1 of the charter term, the Charter System shall decrease the percentage of students absent 15 days or more by at least 1% each year.

Measure 2: From a baseline established in Year 1 of the charter term (2016-2017), the charter system will increase parent satisfaction annually by 5% as measured on the annual parent perception survey until parent satisfaction measures 90% at which time the Charter System shall maintain the 90% satisfaction rate.

Measure 3: From a baseline established in Year 1 (2016-2017) the Charter System will increase parent participation annually by 5% up to 90% at which time the Charter System shall maintain the 90% participation rate.

Goal 4: The Charter System will be economically sustainable.

Measure 1: Each year, the charter system will operate in a fiscally sound manner as measured by an external audit.

Measure 2: Actual and proposed budgets for each school year will demonstrate effective allocation of resources.



Measure 3: Yearly balance sheets will demonstrate that the charter system maintains adequate cash reserves.

Measure 4: The charter system will meet all Generally Accepted Governmental Accounting Standards (GAGAS) as demonstrated by external, annual audit reports.

Goal 5: The Charter System will foster individual school-level governance.

Measure 1: All School Governing Teams will undergo annual governance training.

Measure 2: All School Governing Teams will meet a minimum of six times during the school year.

Measure 3: All School Governing Teams will have representation from a variety of stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and community leaders.

Measure 4: System will create a spreadsheet listing the decisions being made by each School Governing Team in the areas of personnel decisions, financial decisions and resource allocation, curriculum and instruction, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals and school operations, to be updated quarterly and maintained through the duration of the charter term.

## Appendix B: School-Level Governance Decision-Making Matrix

Fannin County School System				
School Level Governance Decision-Making Matrix				
System Name: Fannin County	Minimum LSGT Authority	How and When Minimum Authority will be Implemented	Additional LSGT Authority *	How and When Additional Authority will be Implemented
<b>Personnel Decisions</b>	LSGTs shall recommend the principal or school leader for selection by the BOE	<i>Recommends desired characteristics of principal; Recommends specific applicants to be included in the interview process to the superintendent (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>	Examples include: Input on principal goals, feedback on principal performance, type and qualifications of all positions, requirements for substitutes, attributes and qualifications for school administrative positions, distribution methods for incentive funds	<i>Provides feed back on principal performance; Provides input on school climate and operations through surveys; Annually approves positions paid from federal funds (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>
<b>Financial Decisions and Resource Allocation</b>	LSGTs shall have input into the final recommendations for the school budget, including number and type of personnel, curriculum costs, supply costs, equipment costs and maintenance and operations costs	<i>Set budget priorities with funds received and exercise discretion over expenditures for all state and local funds, and as permissible federal funds (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015)</i>	Examples include : School budget approval, budget priorities aligned with school improvement plan, use of charter system funds, vendors for school resource, fundraising budget	<i>Ensures that the school reviews all the per-pupil funding to which it is entitled and raising additional funds through fundraising efforts; Approves school budget; Approves budget priorities aligned with the school improvement plan; Approve use of Charter System funds (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>
<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b>	LSGTs shall have input into the selection of the curriculum and accompanying materials consistent with the district's Essential and Innovative Features as included in the charter contract	<i>Reviews school selection of textbooks, technology, and instructional materials (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>	Examples include : approval of instructional delivery innovations that would traditionally require a waiver, approval of instructional programs and materials consistent with innovations, graduation requirements, new course offerings, opportunities for student acceleration/remediation	<i>Review and give input in school's chosen instructional delivery models, seat time requirements, student technology and physical education skill requirements, Career Pathway curricula, additional formative and/or summative assessments needed to determine student levels of mastery and growth; Review focus walk data in an effort to stay abreast of student achievement progress (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015)</i>
<b>Establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals</b>	LSGTs shall approve the school improvement plan and provide oversight of its implementation	<i>Provides input and approves the actions, strategies and interventions of the School Improvement Plan; Monitors the implementation of the School Improvement Plan</i>	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	<i>Completes Self-Assessment of School Keys Standards; Sets a budget for implementing the school improvement plan; Allocates resources for implementing the school improvement plan; Evaluates success of the school improvement plan and makes revisions as needed (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter systems status - July 1, 2015)</i>
<b>School Operations</b>	LSGTs shall have input into school operations that are consistent with school improvement and charter goals	<i>Reviews daily operations of the school and recommends necessary improvements; Reviews and approves school safety plan on an annual basis; Makes recommendation for revisions to local Board of Education policies (Minimum authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015)</i>	Examples include: approval of use of instructional time during school day, partners in education, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, stakeholder surveys, parent involvement, communication strategies, school-level policies, volunteer support, field trips, fundraisers, student dress code, student discipline plan	<i>Establishes school partnerships for school growth; Reviews and provides input on after school and Saturday programs as needed, enrichment and/or advisory periods as needed, staff-to-student ratios for non-class times (i.e., lunch, recess, specials, transitions, etc.) (Additional authority will be implemented at the beginning of charter system status - July 1, 2015.)</i>

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Fannin County School System**

Mr. Mark Henson  
2290 East First Street  
Blue Ridge, GA 30513

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## **Introduction**

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning. <br><br> The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School System**

**Describe the school system's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school system serves?**

Fannin County is named for Georgia native, James Walker Fannin, Jr., a member of the Texas army who lost his life in the Texas Revolution. Fannin County is approximately 1 ½ hours north of Atlanta and borders Union County to the east; Dawson and Lumpkin Counties to the southeast; Gilmer County to the southwest; Murray County to the west; Polk County (Tennessee) to the northwest; and Cherokee County (North Carolina) to the northeast. Fannin County is located in the Appalachian Mountains and is known as the starting point for the Appalachian Trail. This rural county covers an area approximately 392 square miles in size with 40% of the land being part of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Blue Ridge is the largest town and serves as the county seat. Other smaller towns in the county are McCaysville, Morganton, Mineral Bluff, and Epworth. With very little industry in the county, the economy is dependent upon tourism and the natural resources of the area.

According to recent U.S. Census Bureau information in 2010, there were 23,492 people with 10,040 households in the county. The county population was 19,906 in 2000 and increased to 23,682 in 2010. This was an increase of 3,776 or 18.97%. Since 2010; however, the population has decreased by approximately 200. Fannin County outpaced the state with retirees as 23.6% of the residents in Fannin County were 65 years and older compared to the state average of 11.5%. This was also evident in our school-aged population as 18.6% of the population was under the age of 18 compared to 25.1% of the state. The racial makeup of the county was 97.5% White; .5% African American; .3% American Indian and Alaska Native; .4% Asian; 1.2% multiracial; and 1.9% Hispanic. (The racial makeup total is more than 100%). The estimated median income for a household was \$36,323 compared to the Georgia median of \$49,604. About 20.1% of citizens were below the poverty level, which is greater than the Georgia average of 17.4%.

The Fannin County School System (FCSS) consists of five schools: Blue Ridge Elementary (K-5); East Fannin Elementary (K-5); West Fannin Elementary (K-5); Fannin County Middle School (6-8); and Fannin County High School (9-12). As of the October 2013, Full-Time Equivalency count (FTE), the district serves approximately 2,940 students in grades K-12. The FCSS employs 243 certified and 209 classified personnel for a total of 452 employees. There are 77 teachers and administrators with master's degrees, 125 with specialist degrees, and 7 with doctorate degrees. The schools have a student-teacher ratio of 15:1. The teacher retention rate has remained above the state level in middle and high school. The elementary retention rate has dropped below the state level due to teacher reduction in force events. The FCSS is the largest employer in the county. The FY14 school district operating budget is \$29,454,067 with a 15% fund balance. The budget is approximately 55.93% local funds, 37.73% state funds, and 6.33% federal funds. With a millage rate of 13.9, the district ranks as one of the lowest rates in Georgia. This generates \$1 million per mill. The per pupil expenditure is \$9,814.75, which is above the state average of \$8,336.32.

The student population, much like the community, is not highly diverse, as 64.11% are considered to be economically disadvantaged as compared to students across Georgia with a rate of 62.16%. The population of Students with Disabilities is 12.9%, and 0.7 % or 23 students are identified as English Learners (EL). This number is still considered low by most accounts, but it is an increase over previous years. Four of our five schools - Blue Ridge Elementary, East Fannin Elementary, West Fannin Elementary, and Fannin County Middle - are identified as school-wide Title I schools. Fannin County High School is the only non-Title I school in the system. There is one private school in the county serving Fannin and Union counties. The enrollment number is 130 at that school.

## **Executive Summary**

Fannin County School System

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The FCSS faces the challenge of achieving a 100% graduation rate, but it strives to meet the goal. The system is working to increase the number of ways to ensure progression at all levels and ultimately achieve the goal of graduation and be ready for post-secondary opportunities. Freshman Success Class, high school student tutors, advisement sessions, career cluster classes, Credit Recovery, Georgia Virtual School, college visits, Work-Based Learning, and Career Technical Student Organizations like Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Future Farmers of America (FFA), Skills USA, Technology Student Association (TSA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), Family, Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) are all committed to this challenge. Regardless of the financial cuts placed on the district, efforts continue to meet this goal.



## **System's Purpose**

**Provide the school system's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school system embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

The mission and vision for the Fannin County School System are important for the foundation for the strategic plan process and are supported by the commitment from the district level, school level, and stakeholders.

### **Vision**

The Fannin County School System will be recognized as a world class school system that holds a vision of excellence for all students with successful progression at each level and a 100% graduation rate.

### **Mission**

Developing Young Futures...

Learning for Tomorrow,

Today.

These belief statements form foundational values needed to fulfil the vision and mission.

### **Belief Statements**

All students can learn; but they learn in different ways, at different rates and with different learning styles.

All students deserve equal access to quality education.

Higher expectations result in higher achievement.

High school graduation is an essential key to lifelong success.

Parent and community involvement increases student achievement.

Education and learning are shared responsibilities and should take place in the home, at school, and in the community.

All students deserve the opportunity to learn, achieve success, and become productive citizens.

A safe and secure environment is essential for teaching and learning.

All schools should be accountable for improving student achievement.

## **Executive Summary**

Fannin County School System

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Quality education requires quality staff, programs, facilities, equipment, and technology.

All policy, administrative, instructional and educational support decisions should be based on student needs and what is best for students.

All students must be prepared for a knowledge-based, technologically rich, and culturally diverse 21st century.

The vision, mission, and belief statements provide direction for program offerings, expectations for students and the district strategic plan. A concerted effort ensures that the goals of the strategic plan align to the AdvancED Standard for Quality School Systems. These goals and objectives serve as the guidance for the continuous improvement process. The system reviews program offerings to ensure that students are ready for the next level of progression.

For graduating students, the focus is on preparing them to be college and career ready. For middle and elementary school students, the emphasis is directed towards growth and preparation for the next level. The curriculum focus continues to be the implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Providing a curriculum that connects the standards, the instruction, and assessments, both formative and summative, is essential for student success.

The system is committed to providing a wide variety of learning opportunities. Some of the programs and initiatives include Advanced Placement, Honors classes, gifted education, Needs Based Instruction, Bring Your Own Device, English to Speakers of Other Languages, Title I, CTAE pathways, Special Education, and the Early Intervention Program. While these learning opportunities are important for progression, delivering a balanced approach is also essential.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school system's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school system is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

West Fannin Elementary School (WFES) was one of 46 schools in Georgia to receive the 2010 Platinum Single Statewide Accountability System Award (SSAS) for showing the greatest improvement in scores on the CRCT. WFES met the following requirements to receive this award: making AYP for three consecutive years, exceeding the standards on the CRCT by 35% or more, and placing in the 98th percentile for meeting and exceeding standards on the CRCT.

Fannin County High School (FCHS) was one of eight high schools in the state of Georgia to receive the 2011 Platinum Single Statewide Accountability System Award (SSAS) for showing the greatest improvement in scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT): Grade 11 first-time test takers in English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Award winning schools met the following criteria, which was based on the results of the most recent two years. FCHS met the following requirements to receive this award: making AYP for three consecutive years, exceeding the standards on the GHSGT by 35% or more, and placing in the 98th percentile for meeting and exceeding standards on the GHSGT.

East Fannin Elementary School (EFES) was one 14 elementary schools in Georgia to receive the 2011 Gold Single Statewide Accountability System Award (SSAS) for showing the greatest improvement in scores on the CRCT. Award winning schools met the following criteria, which was based on the results of the most recent two years. EFES met the following requirements to receive this award: making AYP for two consecutive years, exceeding the standards on the CRCT by 30% or more, and placing in the 97th percentile for meeting and exceeding standards on the CRCT.

EFES was named as a 2012 and a 2013 Reward - High Progress School for being among the top ten percent of Title I schools in the State that are making the most progress in improving the performance of the "all students" group over a number of years on the statewide assessments.

FCHS was named a 2012 "Top 9% High School" in the nation by the Washington Post. The High School Challenge conducted by The Post is completed each year to recognize high schools that expose students to the demands of college. America's Most Challenging High Schools ranks schools through an index formula that's a simple ratio: the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education tests given at a school each year, divided by the number of seniors who graduated that year.

The 2012 five-year cohort graduation rate was 91.8%, while the state average was 71.6%. The 2013 four-year cohort graduation rate was 83.3% for FCHS and 71.5% for the state.

Grades 1-8 Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores were above the state average for 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 in 18 of the 20 areas. In the remaining two areas FCSS tied with the state average.

The Fall 2013 Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (GHSGWT) had a pass rate of 98%. This score placed FCHS at the top of the Pioneer Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) list of 15 school systems.

FCHS was named a 2013 AP Challenge School for offering AP classes in the four content areas.

## Executive Summary

Fannin County School System

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In February 2014, the Georgia Senate signed a resolution congratulating the FCHS for placing second in the nation in the Taco Bell Graduate for Más Program. Two areas were noted - five year cohort graduation rate of 91.89% and daily attendance rate of 95.9%,

In 2012, FCHS had a College Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) of 80.4. The state average for high schools was 73.2.

In 2012, Fannin County Middle School (FCMS) had a CCRPI score of 86.3. The state average for middle schools was 81.4.

In 2012, our three elementary schools had a CCRPI score of 85.2. The state average for elementary schools was 83.4.

We are awaiting our district CCRPI score for 2013.

With all these great achievements, we recognize that there are areas that present challenges for our school system. The FCSS is faced with implementing the new teacher evaluation system to be in compliance with Georgia requirements; therefore, we have undertaken piloting the TKES (Teacher Keys Effectiveness System) as well as the LKES (Leader Keys Effectiveness System) during the 2013-2014 school year. This implementation is being supported by the Georgia Department of Education. In addition, the FCSS has hired a planning and evaluation coordinator for the last half of the school year to oversee the development of the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), which will be required next year in order to arrive at a Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) score for all classroom teachers. Upon full implementation, the positive outcomes we will see should be: (1) Improved teacher performance in the classroom; (2) increased student achievement; and (3) better diagnostic information that will guide individual teacher growth plans and professional learning needs.

The FCSS recognizes the need for a new teacher induction program. We should be ready to implement this Fall 2014. The need for this is driven by several factors. First, all new teachers, whether beginning teachers or simply those new to the state, need support in order to grow and be successful. Providing additional support will help our system retain teachers longer, as some in the past may have thought teaching was not the profession suited for them because of frustration or feelings of inadequacy. Second, the teacher induction program will provide a more customized professional learning plan for those teachers who need assistance to perform in a more effective manner. Third, as the State of Georgia moves toward Tiered Certification, there will be a greater need for teacher development and support. Having a good teacher induction program that will span a three-year period will support teachers as they move from the induction certificate to the professional certificate.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

The recent economic downturn has had a significant impact on Fannin County. Many people have had to leave the area to find work, take part-time jobs, move in with family members, face foreclosure, or apply for government assistance. The free/reduced lunch rate over the past five years has increased from 55.87% in 2008 to 64.11% in 2013. Our homeless population has increased from 301 in 2009 to 414 in 2013.

The FCSS is participating in its third Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). The community support for this tax is evident by the most recent pass rate of 79.55%. This vote of confidence demonstrates the continued commitment to capital outlay projects for our school system.

Per O.C.G.A 20-2-84.3, Georgia school systems are required to seek waivers from Title 20 statutes in order to exercise flexibility that will enable innovation and reallocation of resources in exchange for increased student achievement. By June 30, 2015, all local school system must choose a flexibility option such as Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2), a Charter School System, or continue as a Status Quo School System. In January 2014, the Fannin County School System made the initial inquiry with Georgia Department of Education to pursue the flexibility option of becoming a charter system. Upon successful completion of the charter system application and approval process, the FCSS will begin as a charter system on July 1, 2015 for the 2015-2016 school year. As a charter system, the FCSS will gain flexibility to investigate and utilize innovative educational practices, will have more autonomy in school-based leadership and decision making, and will benefit from financial savings through the use of waivers.

# Report of the External Review for Fannin County School System

2290 East First Street  
Blue Ridge, GA, 30513  
US

Mr. Mark Henson

Date: May 4, 2014 - May 7, 2014



*North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.*

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## Introduction to the External Review

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED standards specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

## Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as observations about Student Performance, the Learning Environment, and Stakeholder Feedback.

### Accreditation Standards and Indicators

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.91
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**Standard 1: The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.**

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning that are aligned with the institutions' vision and supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard 1			
The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Governing body policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>• District purpose statements - past and present</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Documentation or description of the process for creating the district's purpose including the role of stakeholders</li> <li>• Examples of communications to stakeholders about the district's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Copy of strategic plan referencing the district purpose and direction and its effectiveness</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the schools' purpose statements</li> <li>• Examples of school purpose statements if different from the district purpose statement</li> <li>• Examples of written stakeholder communications or marketing materials that portray the school purpose and direction</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	3.0
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• District Quality Assurance Review plans that document two-way communication on district and school effectiveness and learning, thinking, and life skills</li> <li>• Examples of schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li> <li>• Statements of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning</li> <li>• The district strategic plan</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Examples of schools continuous improvement plans</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Professional development plans and implementation timelines on topics related to equity, organizational effectiveness, and improved instruction and programs</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• The district data profile</li> <li>• The district strategic plan</li> </ul>	4.0

**Powerful Practices****Indicator**

1. District and school leaders have established and implemented a systematic continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving student learning and the conditions that support student learning.

1.4

The Fanning County School System is committed to providing an equitable and challenging learning environment for all students. The district continuously monitors and supports the improvement of instructional practices. Instructional walk-throughs are frequently administered by district personnel, building administrators, and the School Improvement Team members. System personnel hold one another accountable for and evaluate the overall quality of the implementation of all interventions and strategies. Documentation that the process is implemented with fidelity and yields improved student achievement and conditions that support student learning is available and communicated to stakeholders.

**Standard 2: The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.**

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of educational institution leadership research, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and their practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their communities to attain continuous improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow institutional leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED's experience gained through evaluation of best practices has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard 2			
The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Professional development plans</li> <li>• Student handbooks</li> <li>• Staff handbooks</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• District operations manuals</li> <li>• Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions</li> <li>• School handbooks</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing authority minutes relating to training</li> <li>• Governing authority training plan</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	4.0
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications regarding governing authority actions</li> <li>• District strategic plan</li> <li>• Examples of school improvement plans</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of school leadership</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of district leadership</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Stakeholder input and feedback</li> <li>• Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation</li> <li>• Agendas and minutes of meetings</li> </ul>	3.0



Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of decisions aligned with the district's strategic plan</li> <li>• Professional development offerings and plans</li> <li>• Examples of collaboration and shared leadership</li> <li>• Examples of decisions aligned with the school's purpose statement</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of decisions in support of the schools' continuous improvement plans</li> <li>• Examples of improvement efforts and innovations in the educational programs</li> <li>• Examples of decisions aligned with the district's purpose and direction</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Minutes from meetings with stakeholders</li> <li>• Examples of stakeholder input or feedback resulting in district action</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys</li> <li>• Survey responses</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan</li> <li>• Involvement of stakeholders in district strategic plan</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation</li> <li>• Job specific criteria</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0

**Powerful Practices****Indicator**

1. Fannin County School System district and school level leadership have effectively engaged all stakeholder groups in support of the systems purpose and direction.

2.5

Leaders of the Fannin County School System consistently communicate effectively with all stakeholders and provide opportunities for all stakeholder groups to be an instrumental part of the district's decision making processes. This was evident from data collected through stakeholder interviews and surveys, minutes from meetings with stakeholders that resulted in system action, and specific processes which are in place in order to solicit feedback.

Proactive and persistent efforts on the part of system leaders result in a strong sense of community and community ownership that leads to a positive school environment, which ultimately leads to increased student performance.

2. The Fannin County Board of Education (BOE) operates responsibly and functions effectively to ensure student success and increase student achievement at all levels.

2.2

The Fannin County Board of Education's desire to continue as a Georgia Board of Distinction is commended and shows its dedication to student achievement. The board has in place a process to evaluate actions and decisions that are aligned to its defined roles and responsibilities, and adhere to the adopted code of ethics. The board functions in a manner that is free of conflict of interest issues and complies with all policies, procedures, laws and regulations, and functions as a cohesive unit for the benefit of effective system operations and student learning. This can be seen through provided evidence such as historical compliance data, an approved governing body training plan, a governing code of ethics, and interviews with multiple stakeholder groups.

***Standard 3: The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.***

A high-quality and effective educational system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Standard 3
The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning expectations for different courses and programs</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Course, program, or school schedules</li> <li>• Course or program descriptions</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Lesson plans</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Survey responses from program leaders receiving students from previous programs, schools, or grade-levels</li> <li>• Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>• Posted learning objectives</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Descriptions of instructional techniques</li> </ul>	3.0
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum guides</li> <li>• A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Common assessments</li> <li>• Surveys results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Curriculum writing process</li> <li>• Profile of educational model or delivery system</li> <li>• Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps</li> <li>• Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum</li> </ul>	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation</li> <li>• Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource</li> <li>• Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool</li> <li>• Surveys results</li> <li>• Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the approved or prescribed instructional strategies and programs</li> <li>• Teacher evaluation criteria relating to prescribed instructional designs and proprietary practices</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	2.0
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum maps</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Supervision and evaluation procedures</li> <li>• Surveys results</li> <li>• Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Evidence of informal conversations that reflect collaboration about student learning</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning</li> </ul>	3.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	2.0
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Volunteer program with variety of options for participation</li> <li>• List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress</li> <li>• Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Description of formalized structures for adults to advocate on behalf of students</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Master schedule with time for formalized structure</li> </ul>	2.0
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• District quality control procedures including the monitoring of grading practices across all schools</li> <li>• Sample report cards for each program or grade level and for all courses and programs</li> <li>• Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting</li> </ul>	2.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• District quality control procedures showing implementation plan for professional development for district and school staff</li> <li>• District professional development plan involving the district and all schools</li> <li>• Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	3.0



Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedules, lesson plans, or example student learning plans showing the implementation of learning support services</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• List of learning support services and student population served by such services</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning</li> <li>• Data used to identify unique learning needs of students</li> </ul>	3.0

**Powerful Practices****Indicator**

1. The Fannin County School System has implemented multiple programs that engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.

3.8

Fannin County Schools have developed multiple ways of effectively engaging families in the educational and learning processes of their children. Communication is provided through multiple means, including the My Time smartphone application, Infinite Campus Parent Portal, school and teacher websites, and an automated calling system, etc. Survey data is collected on an annual basis to assess the degree to which effective communication is occurring, and adjustments are made accordingly.

**Opportunities for Improvement****Indicator**

1. Develop and implement a systematic process to improve curriculum and instruction that is monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning.

3.2

Interviews with leadership team members at various schools revealed that student data is gathered from common assessments, i.e., Study Island, USA Test Prep, and Star Enterprise. These data are used to place students in Response to Intervention (RtI) tiers. The students are retested every six weeks. Additional data are collected that are not being used to the fullest extent to support improved learning for students. A review of documents and artifacts did not reveal the consistent use of daily formative assessments to inform and modify instruction to meet the immediate needs of students.

Students will benefit by staff understanding how to analyze and interpret data to improve the curriculum and/or the student's academic achievement.

2. Develop, implement, and regularly assess a structure whereby each student is well known by one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.

3.9

The External Review Team found that Fannin County School System provides and supports various initiatives that assist and support many students. In the Self Assessment document and the standards presentation, the district indicated a need for improvement in this area. Additionally, interviews with stakeholders validated that there is no district-wide structure in place. The district is attempting to connect students with adults for the purpose of providing long-term relationships, etc. Interviews at the high school revealed that a formal process is in place for teachers to build relationships with a set group of students. However, formal processes were not evident at other schools within the district.

In interviews, students reported that there are caring adults that they can turn to for help; staff indicated that they cared for their students. While day to day school and classroom interaction might allow students and staff to build relationships so that students' needs are met, the review team could find no evidence of a formal structure whereby students have adult advocates who support their educational experience.

Students who have adult advocates supporting their academic and emotional needs are more likely to develop confidence in themselves, increasing their success.

3. Develop and implement a collaborative learning organization that drives instruction and student learning at all levels.

3.5

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that collaborative learning communities are in place to a very limited degree. The review of PLC meeting agenda and minutes did indicate that some members of school staff in some content areas collaboratively meet to discuss student achievement data. There was no uniformity in the documentation which suggests that there has been no common training in the use of PLC processes or protocols. This training would strengthen the PLC process throughout the school. The district should ensure that all system staff participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) that are highly effective and 1) meet formally and informally on a regular basis, 2) collaborate across grade levels, content areas, and system divisions, 3) use a process which includes a review of action research and student work, as well as other best practices known to yield information about student learning and the conditions that support learning. System leaders should further ensure that staff is able to link their collaborative efforts to improvement in student performance, instructional practice, and overall system effectiveness.

Once collaborative learning communities are in place to examine students' work, personnel can clearly link their collaboration to improve instructional practices, system effectiveness, and student performance.

**Standard 4: The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.**

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the 30,000 institutions in the AdvancED network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• District budgets or financial plans for the last three years</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• District quality assurance procedures for monitoring qualified staff across all schools</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Documentation of highly qualified staff</li> <li>• Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff for the district and schools</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of school schedules</li> <li>• District quality assurance procedures showing district oversight of schools pertaining to school resources</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Examples of school calendars</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Alignment of school budgets with school purpose and direction</li> <li>• Alignment of district budget with district purpose and direction</li> <li>• District strategic plan showing resources support for district</li> </ul>	3.0
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li> <li>• Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District strategic plan showing the areas of budget, facilities, quality control, and other strategic systems</li> <li>• District quality control procedures showing the monitoring of compliance with district expectations for school facilities, learning environments</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Policies, handbooks on district and school facilities and learning environments</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Evaluation procedures and results of education resources</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• District education delivery model intended for school implementation including media and information resources to support the education program</li> <li>• Data on media and information resources available to students and staff</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>• Policies relative to technology use at the district-level and school-level</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> <li>• Examples of school-level technology plans and budgets to improve technology services and infrastructure to students and staff</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Student assessment system for identifying student needs</li> <li>• Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills</li> <li>• Rubrics on developmentally appropriate benchmarks; e.g. early childhood education</li> <li>• Examples of improvements made to education program and delivery models based on results of program effectiveness evaluations</li> <li>• Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> <li>• List of support services available to students</li> </ul>	3.0
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Description of IEP process</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Description of referral process</li> </ul>	3.0



**Opportunities for Improvement****Indicator**

1. Maintain a modern, fully functional technology infrastructure; modern, updated equipment; and a qualified technical support staff to meet the teaching, learning, and operational needs of all students and staff throughout the system.

4.6

The External Review Team reviewed the district's strategic plan, Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) plan, and technology plan, interviewed district and school staff with technology responsibilities, and observed technology equipment at the schools. A district plan to continue purchasing technology equipment for use by staff and students and their plan to in-service staff on incorporating students' use of technology in the curriculum is essential in maintaining the district's purpose and direction.

In order for students to be prepared for success at the next level, their ability to use electronic devices and software programs for learning and research and development is imperative.

***Standard 5: The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.***

Systems with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

**Standard 5**

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief description of technology or web-based platforms that support the education delivery model</li> <li>• Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local or school assessments on student learning and school performance</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Brief description of learning management systems or data management systems that support the effective use of student assessment results, school effectiveness, and district effectiveness</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free</li> </ul>	3.0
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of data used to measure the effectiveness of the district systems that support schools and learning</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• District quality control procedures that monitor schools in effectively using data to improve instruction and student learning</li> <li>• List of data sources related to district effectiveness</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Professional learning schedule specific to the use of data</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Policies and written procedures specific to data training</li> </ul>	2.0
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Policies and procedures specific to data use and training</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Student surveys</li> <li>• Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Evidence of student readiness for the next level</li> <li>• Evidence of student growth</li> <li>• Evidence of student success at the next level</li> </ul>	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District quality control procedures for monitoring district effectiveness</li> <li>• Accreditation Report</li> <li>• Survey results</li> <li>• Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>• District quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, systems that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>• Observations</li> <li>• Examples of district marketing tools and websites that cite student achievement results or that make promises regarding student achievement</li> <li>• Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	3.0

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

### ***Indicator***

1. Establish procedures to ensure that all professional and appropriate support staff are regularly and systematically trained and assessed in a rigorous professional development program related to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.

5.3

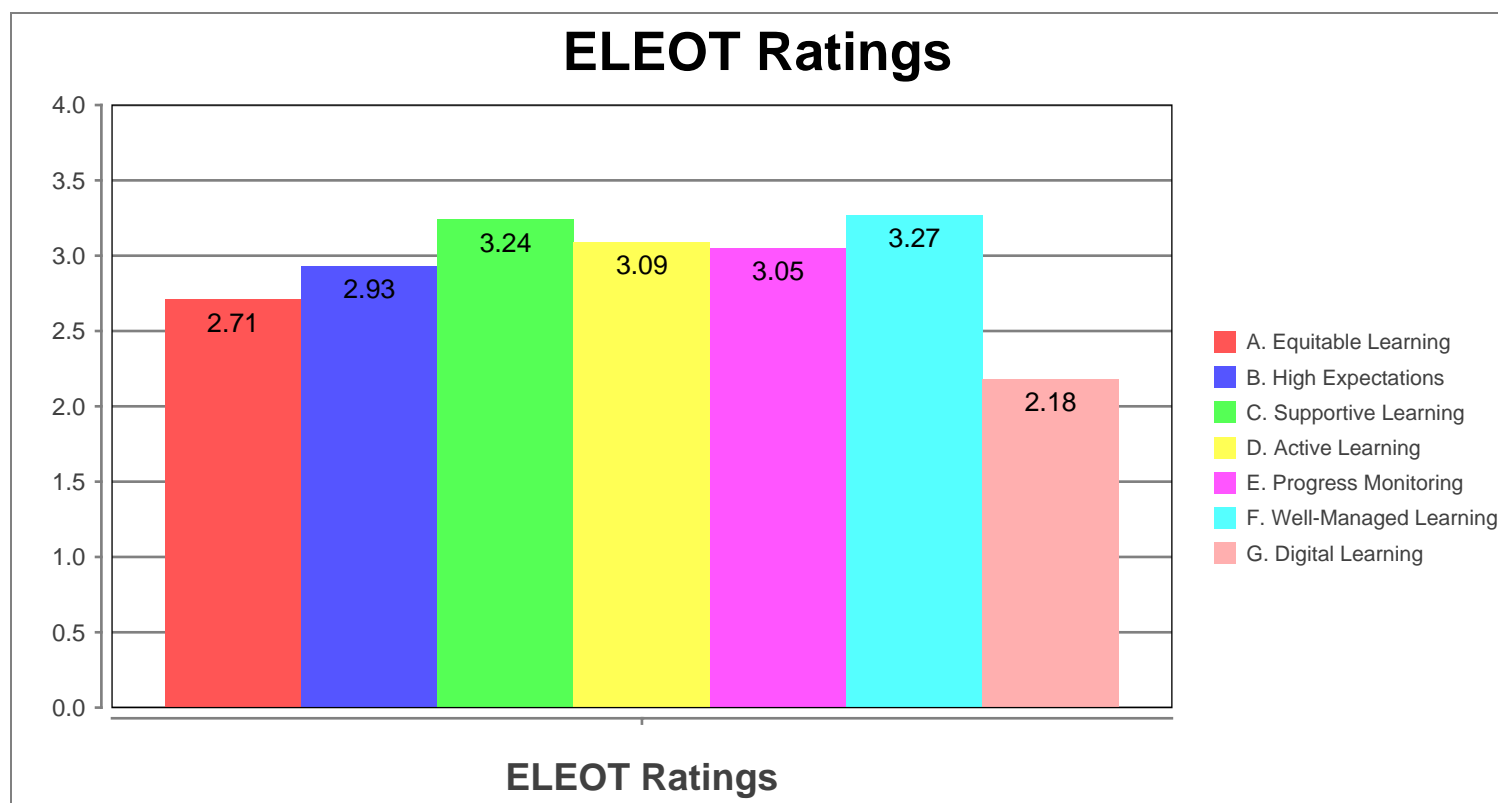
Interviews with district and school leaders and the review of artifacts revealed that not all professional and appropriate support staff were regularly or systematically trained to evaluate, interpret, and use data. Interviews and a review of artifacts and documentation revealed that some meeting agendas included a review of data and some professional development regarding analyzing data has been provided. However, there is no evidence that indicates a systematic professional development program for all staff that relates to evaluation, interpretation, and the use of data currently exists.

By implementing a rigorous staff development program, the staff will become more effective in the evaluation, interpretation and use of data, which will benefit all students.

## Learning Environment

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



## Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	4.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	4.0
Equity of Learning	4.0



## Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators; they provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the External Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	4.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

## Individual Institution Results

AdvancED requires internal and external stakeholders from each individual institution within the system to evaluate their institution on the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools, student performance, and stakeholder feedback. The following table provides the results of those self-analyses. Higher scores indicate higher perceived performance on each of the measures. The range of possible scores for each of the institutions within the system are 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing).

Institution	Indicator Averages	Questionnaire Administration	Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	Assessment Quality	Test Administration	Quality of Learning	Equity of Learning
Blue Ridge Elementary School	2.85	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
East Fannin Elementary School	2.91	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Fannin County High School	3.36	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0
Fannin County Middle School	3.24	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
West Fannin Elementary School	2.64	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.0

# Conclusion

## ***Summary of the External Review***

***In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.***

The External Review Team met virtually on April 22, 2014, to begin a preliminary examination of the district's Internal Review report and determine points of inquiry for the on-site review. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts and interviewed members of the community, the school district, and school board members. Team members arrived on Sunday, May 4, 2014 and concluded their work on May 7, 2014 with an Exit Report, presented to district leadership and school board members. Institution leaders carried out the Internal Review process, as outlined in the AdvancED protocol and in keeping with the designated timeline. Stakeholders, including staff, parents, and community members were candid and open in their responses to External Review Team members.

On Tuesday, the team divided into groups and visited all schools within the district. A total of 52 Effective Classroom Observations were completed, using the Effective Learning Classroom Observation Tool (ELEOT™). During the External Review, the team interviewed a total of 268 stakeholders, including: 21 district and school administrators, 5 school board members, 72 teachers, 6 support staff, 49 students, and 115 parents/community members. All stakeholders, including members of the district leadership team, as well as building level administrators, were well prepared, open, and forthright in their communications with the team.

Each of the schools in the Fannin County School District conducted an Internal Review, consisting of a review of the AdvancED Standards and Indicators, Stakeholder Feedback, and Student Performance Diagnostic, followed by the completion of an Accreditation Report. The External Review Team found that all reports were thoroughly completed with fidelity, and with sufficient information for the team to complete their work. Evidence to support the ratings on each of the AdvancED standards was provided to the team electronically prior to the visit, with additional evidence and artifacts provided on-site and at the district office. All evidence was also made available for the team's use during evening work sessions.

***Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.***

The Fannin County School System operates under governance and leadership that promotes and supports student performance and system effectiveness. The Fannin County Board of Education (BOE) implements policies and practices which clearly support the system's purpose and direction and the effective operation of the system and its schools. Direct evidence of this can be found in the system's desire and goal to continue as a Georgia School Board of Distinction. There are policies and practices that provide requirements, direction for, and oversight of fiscal management at all levels of the system. The BOE has made it clear that certain practices, such as Academic Coaches and Parent Liaisons, are powerful commodities that, despite current budget restraints, are worthy of being protected because of the impact that they have on student performance.

The Fannin County BOE protects, supports, and respects the autonomy of system and school leadership to accomplish goals for improvement in student learning and instruction and manage day-to-day operations of its schools. By defining roles and responsibilities while respecting these roles, the BOE has built a system of respect and genuine teamwork that has positively impacted student performance. All leaders and staff throughout the system align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the system's purpose. The culture of the Fannin County School System is characterized by collaboration and a strong sense of community.

System communication is a key factor in the success of the Fannin County School System. Leaders consistently communicate effectively with appropriate and varied representatives from stakeholder groups, provide opportunities for stakeholders to shape decisions and solicit feedback and respond to stakeholders, work collaboratively on system and school improvement efforts, and provide meaningful leadership roles for stakeholders. These efforts result in active stakeholder participation, positive engagement within the system and its schools, and a strong sense of community and ownership.

The Fannin County School System is committed to providing an equitable and challenging learning environment for all students. The school's administration supports the instructional program by providing Academic Coaches at every school. Student data are gathered from common assessments, i.e., Study Island, USA Test Prep, and Star Enterprise and analyzed by the Academic Coaches, teaching staff, and administrators. These data are used to place students in Response to Intervention (RtI) tiers. Multiple sources of data are collected; however, not all data collected are being used to the fullest extent to support improved learning for students.

Interviews with school and district leaders revealed that a primary focus of the district's professional learning opportunities have been centered around providing differentiated learning opportunities for students. The ELEOT™ classroom observations revealed glimpses of differentiated learning opportunities for students being implemented in some classes; however, evidence of this practice being consistently implemented in all schools across the district was not evident.

The district continuously monitors and supports the improvement of instructional practices. Instructional walk-throughs are frequently administered by district personnel, building administrators, and the School Improvement Team members.

The system is in the beginning stages of implementing a formal process for collaborative learning communities. Some efforts have been made to begin this process. The team was unable to find evidence of effective Professional Learning Communities (PLC) that met on a regular basis, formally as well as informally, to collaborate and promote productive discussions regarding student learning or conditions which support student learning. Collaborative learning communities should be established to examine student work to improve instructional practices, system effectiveness, and student performance.

A potential induction program for new teachers and employees was discussed in the superintendent's presentation. A program should be developed that is consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning.

The degree to which parent and community stakeholders are active and take interest in the Fannin County School System is impressive. It was apparent from the overwhelming response that the External Review Team received

from parents and community members that the school system and its schools serve as an influential hub of the Blue Ridge community.

The Fannin County School System employs a balanced student assessment program. This program is consistent across the system. At the elementary level, the schools employ the STAR reading and math computer based program to test students, in order to determine which students need assistance in these areas. At the middle school level, schools use Study Island and the Online Assessment System (OAS) as tools to help identify students that need help in specific academic areas. At the high school level, the district uses USA Test Prep to assist in identifying student academic needs. The elementary and middle schools also use CRCT (Criterion Reference Competency Test) score results to identify students in need of support. Each school has an Academic Coach that helps analyze student achievement data and assists teachers in implementing new teaching strategies.

School level stakeholder interviews and a review of evidence revealed that teachers were well trained in the interpretation, evaluation, and use of data. The team found no evidence, however, to indicate that appropriate support staff were regularly trained in this area. During classroom observations, support staff were observed working with small groups of students at various grade levels. At times, it was difficult to distinguish the teacher from the support staff member in the classroom. This is a compliment to the professionalism and degree to which support staff are used in the instructional process across the district. In light of how support staff are utilized, it is important to also train appropriate support staff in the interpretation, evaluation, and use of data.

A recurring theme which the team observed was the importance of relationships throughout the district. Observations revealed the establishment of welcoming and inviting environments evidenced by the comments and actions of students, teachers, staff, board members, and community members. Students reported that they felt welcomed, accepted, and respected by teachers, staff, and administrators. Teachers at all levels were described by parents and students as caring, compassionate, and excellent educators. An essential element to the strength of relationships in the district is the clear set of expectations established for respectful interactions and communications set by the board of education and superintendent. The school board clearly functions to create policy and provide support, while district administration is clearly functioning to carry out the goals of the board and ensure that operations are efficient and effective. This trust between elected board members and professional staff and administration is exemplary in Fannin County Schools and provides the platform for relationships based on mutual respect and united purpose and direction.

***During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.***

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which he/she has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed, and where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and if feedback is provided, and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation.

External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale where 4=very evident, 3=evident, 2=somewhat evident, and 1=not observed.

The following information provides a summary of the multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT. The results of the 52 classroom observations which the team conducted using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) provided insights into teaching and learning in classrooms within the district. The team used these results to confirm, refute, substantiate, and/or validate data gathered from other sources including reports, interviews, meeting minutes, surveys, and resource materials.

The environment with the highest rating was the Well Managed Learning Environment, with a rating of 3.27, suggesting that students understand and follow classroom rules and expectations, transition smoothly between classroom activities, and collaborate well with other students during student centered activities. Equally high was the Supportive Learning Environment, with a rating of 3.24, suggesting that students had a very positive attitude about their classroom and learning experiences, and were regularly provided with the support and assistance they needed to understand content and accomplish assigned tasks.

Although the district indicated that there was an intentional focus on the use of technology for deepening teaching and learning, ELEOT results for the Digital Learning Environment (mean rating = 2.18) indicated that although the technology infrastructure was in place, there was little observational evidence to indicate that this was being implemented consistently throughout the school district. There were some instances where students were observed using technology for the purpose of higher order learning, e.g., conducting research or solving problems. Many classrooms have implemented the use of technology through learning activities in classroom rotations. However, these practices were not consistent from school to school or even among classrooms within a particular school.

Two other items with the lowest ELEOT results focused on creating an environment of equitable learning opportunities, where students' progress is monitored and they are provided ongoing feedback. Associated with equitable learning, there was little evidence that students had differentiated learning opportunities and equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support. Additionally, in association with an environment of ongoing feedback, there was some evidence that students understood how their work was being assessed (through rubrics and other systems), but this was not found consistently throughout the district.

Members of the External Review Team would like to thank the staff, board of education, parents, students, and community members for the welcoming and cooperative environment created for the External Review visit. The team found all stakeholders to be forthcoming and honest in their assessment of the Fannin County Schools.

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review.

Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern;

and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 305

Teaching and Learning Impact: 290  
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 333  
(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 300  
(Standard 4)

The External Review team recommends that Fannin County Schools be accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for a five-year term of accreditation.

## Improvement Priority

1. Design and implement collaborative grading and reporting policies, procedures, and practices that are consistently used across all grade levels and courses.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.10 Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.

Description:

Interviews with stakeholders and a review of artifacts provided evidence that while there is a district grading policy, it lacks clearly defined criteria. The External Review Team found that this policy was not being implemented across the system and there was little evidence of how the policy was being communicated to stakeholders. Interviews with stakeholders suggested that there were inconsistent grading policies at individual school sites.

By ensuring that these policies, procedures, and practices are based on criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills, teachers across the system consistently use these grading and reporting policies, procedures, and practices, and they are regularly evaluated, the system will improve the reliability of the assessment and reporting of student learning.

2. Develop and implement a formal mentoring, coaching, and induction program focused on orienting new teachers and employees to the district.

Related Indicator(s) or Assurance(s):

3.7 Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Description:

The External Review Team found that an induction program for new teachers and employees needs to be developed that is consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning and the conditions that support learning. Evidence from interviews and documentation indicates that few school or district personnel are engaged in mentoring, coaching, and teacher induction programs for new and/or beginning teachers. Additionally, there was no evidence indicating the existence of continuous processes or protocols for informing staff members about the districts's values, beliefs, and practices about teaching, learning, and the conditions that support learning.

An induction program, rich with high expectations for all systems instructional personnel and staff, will ensure instructional improvement that is consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.



## **Addenda**

### ***The External Review Team***

**Lead Evaluator:**

Mr. Jerry Cooper

**Reviewer:**

Dr. Barbara J Remondini

**Team Member:**

Mrs. Pam Arrowood Carmichael

Dr. Chris Colwell

Mr. Michael Nelson

Ms. Valerie Sommerville

## ***Next Steps***

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the appropriate state, national, and/or international levels to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

## ***Celebrating Accreditation***

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

## ***About AdvancED***

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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## 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 Renewal 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 Fannin County School System (*name of school system*) located in Fannin 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;
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; and
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 Renewal Application, Assurances Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Fannin County Board of Education on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_.

Lewis J. DeWane  
Chair, Local Board of Education

1-10-2019  
Date

Missy Cat  
Superintendent, Local Board of Education

1/10/19  
Date

If a Charter is granted, Petitioners assure that the charter system's 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.

Lewis J. DeWane  
Chair, Local Board of Education

1-10-2019  
Date

Missy Cat  
Superintendent, Local Board of Education

1/10/19  
Date

FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education is the governing body of the Fannin County School District.

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education entered into a contract with the State Board of Education on or about July 1, 2015 for the operation of Fannin County School District as a Charter System;

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education recognizes the positive impact charter system status has had on increasing community engagement, student achievement, and flexibility throughout the Fannin County School District;

WHEREAS, the Fannin County Board of Education seeks to renew its charter system contract;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fannin County Board of Education authorizes the renewal of its charter contract with the State Board of Education and hereby submits the renewal petition and this Resolution to the State Board of Education for final approval.

Adopted this the 10th day of January 2019.

FANNIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

  
Board Chairperson

  
Superintendent