



System Charter FAQ

Will my child still attend the same school?

The charter will not impact attendance zones.

Why consider charter district status?

1—It could accelerate us toward our vision of becoming one of the top 10 community school districts in the nation. 2—It could offer us increased instructional and operational flexibility and local control 3---It could position the district for funding and recognition 4—System charters match CSD's Strategic Plan goals.

Will the charter be used to re-segregate students?

No. School demographics would not change based on the charter. School reform models already in place (Expeditionary Learning Schools, International Baccalaureate) would continue.

Will this be a hindrance to students applying to college?

No. High school students can still earn a diploma, take the SAT, and work with guidance counselors on college applications. Students at Chamblee High School (charter began December 14, 2000) have successfully matriculated to colleges for the past 6 years.

What would be the impact on future bond and SPLOST referendums?

The system charter would not impact the possibilities of future bond and SPLOST referendums. However, possible legislation that would change property tax (House Resolution 900) would have a monumental impact on CSD schools.

Would this affect our participation in athletics, particularly the Georgia High School Association?

No. We would remain a member of the GHSA and continue to compete in Georgia.

Why does this timeline seem so short?

The timeline is accelerated because the legislation was passed at the end of the 2006-07 legislative session (June 30, 2007). The Department of Education released guidance to school districts in early September.

Why not wait until next year?

We do not know what the future holds for this option. The window of time is now. There are advantages and disadvantages for being one of the first. We believe that being one of the initial districts would place us in a position to help shape future policy about public education and particularly funding of education.

When can the public voice their opinions?

The public could hear about this possibility and voice their opinions at input sessions on September 25, 7 pm; September 26, 12 noon; October 16, 6:30 pm at the Central Offices at Westchester. Two public hearings will take place on October 3 and 8 at 6:30 pm. They can also access documents related to the system charter at the district website (<http://www.decaturofdecatur.ga.us>) and use email (charter@csdecaturofdecatur.org) to share feedback).

What would happen to current teachers?

CSD does not anticipate changing any salaries or benefits due to the system charter. Teachers would continue to be paid from the state salary scale (with local supplements), participate in the State Health Plan and state retirement systems, and earn tenure.

What will happen to tuition students?

CSD will continue to accept tuition students based on established policies.

What is the length of a charter?

Initial charter is five years. Revisions can be made each year.

Are there any district charters in Georgia? In the United States?

Since the System Charter Act became law in July, no Georgia school districts have become charter systems yet. A charter school district in California (http://www.kingsburg-elem.k12.ca.us/district_info.html) self-reports as being a charter school district since 1996, one of ten charter systems in the United States.

So public input stops November 1?

CSD will continue to hold opportunities for input after submitting the charter application but must submit the charter application by November 1, 2007 in order to be considered for system charter status for the 2008-09 school year.

Would the mission change at all?

Our mission remains: City Schools of Decatur seeks to challenge every student to succeed by providing a rigorous, engaging, and authentic learning experience delivered by highly qualified, caring adults in safe and inviting schools.

How might operations change?

We do not anticipate many of the operations functions of CSD to change. In the future, charter status would allow us to explore other ways to organize benefits and salaries.

How might the budget change? What might happen if we don't pursue district charter status?

The budget and budget process would remain the same for CSD. However, possible legislation that would change property tax (House Resolution 900) would have a monumental impact on the quantity and quality of services in CSD.

Would the Board composition change? Would they still be elected officials?

The 5-member Board would remain the governing body of CSD. The election process would remain in tact.

Will the waiver be used to hire uncertified teachers?

It is not the intent of the charter to hire uncertified teachers. CSD commits to hire the most highly qualified and effective teacher for each student.

What happens to students with disabilities and students that are gifted?

All CSD students would continue to be served under the charter.