

Community questions/comments asked regarding the charter petition

Sorted by category

Timeline and Process

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
10.08.07	Are we moving so fast because of chances to get funding?		No, we just conformed to the original schedule and adjusted after the extension.
9.25.07 10.03.07 10.04.07 10.08.07 10.16.07 <u>11.27.07</u>	Why rush this?		Questions answered at meeting: timeline is beyond our control. However, we choose to move forward due to the fit between CSD goals and tenets of system charter law. Being one of the first has distinct advantages.
10.08.07 <u>11.27.07</u>	Once it is submitted, can it be changed? <u>Would the certification portion of the charter be up for modification?</u>		Question answered at meeting: the DOE charter division will have dialogue with us regarding revisions before the petition goes to the State BOE
10.08.07 10.08.07	How will BOE measure the progress of this charter and how frequently? If we strip away the accountability to the state, how will we ensure accountability?	Quantitative targets already included in petition. See response #20.	
10.04.07	How would the district and the students/teachers be measured in terms of success? What goals would there be in place to measure against?	The most recent draft of the charter details the measurable goals set for the charter. See response #20.	
10.03.07	What is the timeline?	The timeline was changed by the Department of Education. More input sessions were added. See response #52.	
10.03.07	How will charter transition next summer with teachers? Principals? Local school councils?	The ad hoc governance group developed specifics about how the first year will differ for school leadership teams and the System Charter Leadership Team. See response #63.	
10.03.07	Where is the chance for the community to respond to the petition?	The timeline is outlined in the most recent draft of the charter. See response #52.	Question answered at meeting: in-face and electronic means of providing feedback

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10.03.07	Why does this have to go through now? Why not a year from now?		Question answered at meeting: urgency generated by being the first to participate in something new; can lead rather than follow
9.17.07	When will all the hearings be announced?		Question answered via email: hearings were announced as soon as they were set officially with a public meeting notice. The notices were sent out over various distribution lists and electronic means. They were also advertised on the Westchester sign.
10.05.07	Many significant details [of the petition] will be determined after the November ballot. How will the final plan be open to public review? Will there be another ballot to approve it?		Question answered over email that drafts will be available electronically and a community ballot is not part of the process, only BOE approval.
10.08.07 10.03.07	Is there an abort button? What happens if charter fails?	Legal provided verbiage related to exiting to include in the most recent draft of the charter petition. See response #73.	
9.29.07 10.03.07 10.08.07	Would we revert back to a public school system if we stopped being a charter?	School Board attorneys have reviewed and approved the procedures fore exiting charter status. See response #73.	Question answered via email: keep in mind that we would remain a public school system, albeit a charter public school system.
10.16.07	Will the school attorneys answer the questions prior to the decision by the Board on October 29 as to what happens if the charter fails?	School board attorneys reviewed the document and detailed the process for exiting the charter if need be. See response #73.	
9.27.07	In reviewing the timeline of the application, why does it state that Oct. 22 the Board "passes" the resolution for application of a District charter even before the public hearings have been held (which are scheduled for October 3 and 8)? Is the intention for the Board to just sit through these public hearings having		Question answered via email: Thank you for pointing out the planning grant date of Oct. 22. We submitted the planning grant quite early in the process. After listening to public input, we delayed the Board meeting until October 29. Regarding the wording of "passes," we

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	already decided to pass the resolution?		used that language in the planning grant to (hopefully) assure the readers of that application that the grant has a chance of passing. In the Powerpoint presentation (produced later), the wording on slide 14 states "Board considers approval of submission of petition." That is a better representation of what they will do. Again, thank you for pointing out those differing messages.
9.23.07	How long ago did the process begin?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the timeline. See response #52.	Question answered via email linking the FAQ, a Power Point presentation, and the planning grant application.
10.08.07	Who is on the charter commission?		Commitment made at the meeting to share those names when asked by the public.
10.08.07	What things will we phase in over time?	The most recent version of the charter includes a phase in plan. See response #8.	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>What do other district's applications and process look like?</u>		<u>Other school districts do not have their charter drafts available electronically at the time of this writing.</u> <u>Process in another school district looks similar, although less time for public input and revisions following the input sessions.</u>
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>What happens if the city annexes in from here to Avondale, have to change grade spans, inherit Forest Hills, etc.?</u>		<u>Question answered at meeting: Each year the district will submit a detailed annual report. In addition, any changes that need to made will be approved by the Board.</u>

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Waivers

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
10.08.07	Class size concerns	Class size section revised in charter to	
10.03.07	When will class size ranges be available?	include ranges and place decision-making	

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	How will this affect class size? How will it affect # of course offerings at DHS?	responsibility with School Leadership Teams. See response #11.	
10.16.07	Could you develop principles that would guide how the waiver would be applied?	Guiding principles are being developed and will be included in the final draft to be presented to the Board in November. Guiding principles may include the following: What impact will the proposed waiver have on students? On teachers? On families?	
10.03.07 10.08.07 10.18.07 10.26.07 11.27.07	I don't want uncertified teachers teaching my kids. I wish CSD would consider uncertified teachers for all positions, e.g., Emory/GSU/Georgia Tech professors to teach DHS courses. Please do not use charter as a way to hire uncertified, not highly qualified teachers.		Based on public input at every information session, there is great concern about hiring uncertified teachers. CSD has historically enjoyed a rich pool of highly qualified candidates. After the first year of the charter, we will reconsider this choice.
10.9.07 11.13.07	Support for hiring uncertified teachers.		Based on public input at every information session, there is great concern about hiring uncertified teachers. CSD has historically enjoyed a rich pool of highly qualified candidates. After the first year of the charter, we will reconsider this choice.
11.27.07	SLTs should review and approve any exemptions from waivers (not just class sizes)	The most recent draft of the charter more clearly articulates that the School Leadership Teams have this authority and responsibility. See response #62.	

Funding

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
10.08.07	What are plans for targeting fed funds?		Question answered at meeting: each federal grant will be taken individually as

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			it becomes available.
10.08.07	Are they [federal funds] for capital expenses? Operational?		Question answered at meeting: usually operational and instructional expenses. Capital funds are generally only available to start-up charter schools.
10.08.07	Is this funding in addition to our funds or will we lose other funds? Will the per pupil allocation continue?		Question answered at meeting: CSD would not lose state funding if selected to be a system charter
10.08.07 <u>11.27.07</u>	Accountability – worried about past inequities School budget – concerned that they will become inequitable <u>Are there any checks and balances so that if funding was afforded to one school for a particular program to make sure that one school doesn't receive more funding than another school to keep funding equal?</u>	Already addressed; individual accountability goals set for each school as well as continued budget allocations. See response #20.	<u>The system maintains a process to manage grants, which is a check and balance on possible funding inequities.</u>
10.03.07	Where do you (TVS) get your optimism for funding?		Question answered at meeting: federal grants available to charters continue to be developed; local, state, and federal experts
10.08.07 10.04.07 10.03.07 10.16.07	If we get extra money, and the money stops when we have started something great, what then? Reconfiguration was driven by finances – how will charter change finances? How will charter change funding? Many of the suggestions discussed (e.g., longer school day, additional teachers for special needs kids) will cost more money. Where will this funding come from?		Question answered at meeting: charter funds will always be spent considering sustainability (i.e., professional learning, technology, materials); federal funds mostly
10.16.07	How will funding be transparent?	School Leadership Teams will be privy to	

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		financial allocations and the decision-making behind each allocation. See response #54.	
10.24.07	I don't believe that the answer provided in the section for maximizing spending at the school level (page 66) addresses the point (which I read to be directing funds at the school level versus at the central office/system level)	The most recent draft of the charter petition has clarified this section. See response #54.	
10.08.07	What impact will this have on bond money and SPLOST?		Question answered at meeting: the charter does not affect bond and SPLOST.
11.27.07	Will the charter grant funding be affected if any school doesn't make AYP?		Question answered at meeting: no, funding is only reconsidered if the goals of the charter are not met and the state Board of Education wishes to reexamine the feasibility of the charter.

Governance

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
10.08.07	School council role and governance	Entire section revised. An ad hoc governance group convened to problem solve this key section. See responses #60-73.	
10.08.07	With increased responsibility at local school council, how will you insure quality people on the council? Is it already hard to get people to serve? How will local school council be supported? Will principals be overburdened?	The ad hoc governance group wrestled with these questions. Their guidance is included in the most recent draft of the charter petition. See responses #60-73.	
10.08.07	Will BOE set performance goals outside of NCLB, state, national goals – if so, will they get training?	Our intention is to train School Leadership Teams. See response #63.	Question answered at meeting: BOE approves goals but instructional staff and school level teams set goals
10.08.07	Does state board establish rules, regulations, etc. to monitor charter?		Question answered at meeting: Department of Education has adopted a

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			state board rule for this purpose (State BOE rule IEB)
10.08.07 11.27.07	Elections for local school council will need more attention	The most recent charter petition draft more completely addresses elections. See response #60.	
10.08.07	Local school councils will need to do a better job of reaching out to constituents How will we get more quality people to serve on SLTs?	The most recent charter petition draft more completely addresses the importance of informed elections at the school level. See responses #60 and 63.	
10.08.07	Concerned to have complete strangers on council	The most recent charter petition draft addresses this concern by leaving the decision about “extra” members on the governing council at the school level. See response #63.	
10.08.07	Think about makeup of councils – diversity. Maybe elections aren’t the best way.	The most recent charter petition draft addresses this concern by charging the school leadership teams with striking a “balance” with membership. See response #63.	
10.16.07	Do certificated teachers on the SLTs have to work at that school?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the School Leadership Team composition more completely. See response #63.	
10.08.07	By-laws – what is mechanism for changing? Who gets to trigger the change?	Governance model revised to include a System Charter Leadership Team with specific functions. See response #65.	
10.08.07	Who accepts by-laws from SLTs?	System Charter Leadership Team added as a response to create consistency in by-laws between SLTs.	
10.03.07	What governance model will be used to make sure there is a link between school board and school councils?	System Charter Leadership Team added as a response to various public comments and questions. See response #65.	
10.03.07 10.16.07	Flexibility can be controversial (day length, class size) – how will this be balanced?	System Charter Leadership Team added to balance system implementation of the charter. See response #65.	

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	What would be the oversight mechanism for changes that could be made?		
10.03.07	Will local school councils be provided with administrative (clerical) support?		Question received at meeting and will be considered if funding becomes available.
10.16.07 10.08.07	How would decisions on changes to schools (curriculum, etc.) be made? Would there be different curricula for each elementary school? What things have to come to the school Board?	Curriculum remains a system function under the governance section. K3 schools in particular would continue to use ELS as their school reform model and use the GPS/QCC as their curriculum. See response #62 for a detail of which group has decision-making responsibilities for which concepts/issues.	
10.16.07	Where are the position descriptions? (School Leadership Team officers)	The System Charter Task Force will develop position descriptions. See response #65.	
10.16.07	Where is the organizational chart?	The most recent charter petition draft includes a diagram detailing the relationship between the superintendent and each governing body. See response #71.	
10.24.07 11.27.07 10.08.07	If a Board policy changes during the duration of the charter, which policy does the system follow? Who has the ultimate authority?	The School Board will retain authority over policy decisions. See response #62.	School Board attorneys have determined that policy set by the School Board remains in effect for the school district during the duration of the charter. As the School Board updates policy during the duration of the charter, the most current policy will guide the system.
10.29.07	Members of the School Leadership Team shall include: (5) A member of the Central Office Leadership Team who serves in a non-voting advisory capacity. This individual will serve as a liaison between the school and the system.	Question answered over email: This addition has received mixed reviews, but most folks are in agreement that it is a necessary step toward a systemic implementation of the charter. See response #65.	

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	Comment: Some people may balk at this suggestion but I think it is a very good idea.		
10.24.07	SLT electing body (page 72) - states certified teachers but given the waiver on certification envisioned shouldn't the language be expanded to include 'and other qualified classroom teachers under the provisions of this charter' or some such?		CSD posits that certified teachers are the right choice for this group; at least at the onset of the charter.
9.20.07	The planning grant does not detail how school councils would change. Do you have some verbiage I could read about those changes?	The most recent draft of the petition details the governance structure. See responses #60-73.	Question answered via email with specific verbiage from a draft that was current at the time.
10.04.07	What kind of parent participation/involvement should be required with a charter school as a kind of support system and checks and balances for the school board/administrators?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the governance structure. See responses #60-73.	
10.16.07	SLT vacancies (page 72) - realistically given the school calendar, a 135 day or less remainder in the term may be appropriate for unfilled vacancies (September 30 less 90 days would put this at June 30 - the middle of the summer making any such interim election difficult at best - 135 days places it at mid-May while schools are still in session)	The most recent draft of the charter petition (version 17) clarifies this process to make it more manageable for School Leadership Teams. See response #63.	
10.08.07	Where does the citizenry get redress?	The most recent version of the charter articulates the purposes of the System Charter Leadership Team, which includes an ad hoc function to handle conflict.	
10.08.07	What does the charter law say about who needs to be on the governing council? Can someone outside the school serve on	The most recent draft of the charter articulates the composition of the teams. See response #63.	Question answered at meeting: the law does not indicate the exact composition of the governing council.

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	the SLT?		
10.08.07	May a parent or teacher serve on multiple teams?	The most recent draft of the charter articulates that a parent or teacher may only serve on one team. See response #63.	
10.08.07	This kind of leadership will be different for principals. How will they be prepared?	The most recent draft of the charter commits to a training regiment for School Leadership Teams, which includes principals. See response #63.	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>The System Charter Leadership Team should meet more often and include core central office staff members.</u>	<u>The most recent draft of the charter uses these ideas in response #65.</u>	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>A General Assembly should be convened of all School Leadership Team members.</u>	<u>The most recent draft of the charter uses these ideas in response #65.</u>	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>On the elections for SLTs, how will this allow parents that are transitioning from one school to another to participate in the new school and have a voice as to who's elected to the leadership team?.</u>		<u>For the first year, the electing body will not be families that are transitioning; rather it will be the current electing body. However, the candidates for the SLT must have a child in that particular school for the first year of their term.</u>
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>Let's say class size issues in 1st grade happen again as they did this year, can a school decide we're going to hire more paras without it going through the current system?</u>		<u>Question answered at meeting: If the school has financial resources that allows it to make this decision, it is permissible under the charter. In addition, district staff will continue to monitor enrollment and provide the necessary instructional staff to meet the goals of the charter.</u>
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>How do the principals feel about the SLTs?</u>	<u>The most recent draft of the charter includes professional learning for principals and SLTs.</u>	<u>Question answered at meeting: Principals know this governance will look different. They have requested specific and ongoing professional learning.</u>

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Operations

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10.08.07	Tenure for teachers	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the plans around retaining teacher tenure. See response #62.	
10.08.07 11.27.07	Will I have to pay more?		Question answered at meeting: tax assessments are separate from the charter petition
10.03.07	Could one school go till 5 pm and another until 1 pm?	Board of Education retains authority to make decisions that affect more than one school and affect transportation. See response #62.	
10.08.07	Will teachers remain in retirement systems?	The most recent draft of the charter includes a commitment to staying with the retirement systems for CSD employees. See response #40.	
9.26.07	Will transportation be provided?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the continuation of a partnership with Dekalb County Schools for transportation services. See response #43.	

Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction, and Professional Learning

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
10.08.07	Will this require additional training for teachers?	Entire section called "Professional Learning" added to petition. See response #10.	
10.03.07	How will this affect the Honors program at RMS and DHS?	More specific information about gifted education was included in the most recent draft of the charter petition. See response #13.	
10.04.07	What about standardized testing? While I'm not Bush-ish, I do feel there should be a way to know if our students are merely improving year over year or are maintaining standards of excellence as	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the assessment system posed for the charter. See response #25.	

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	<p>compared with other districts. While not wanting our kids to be studying more for tests than preparing for life -- I think we all want some assurances that there will be some way to measure the kids along the way... that is appreciable by parents, colleges, etc.</p>		
10.15.07	<p>Concerning the M.A.P. tests listed on page 55, what percentage of children in grades 1-8 in the US take the M.A.P. tests? What is the distribution of districts using these tests across states that typically score at the top of standardized tests in these age ranges, such as Iowa, and states that are at the bottom, such as Georgia? What is the distribution of districts using these tests across districts that typically score well and those that do not?</p>		<p>Question answered over email: We do not have a national percentage of students that take MAP assessments. However, we know that 2,000,000 students in 46 states currently take MAP assessments. We have not analyzed the extent of MAP testing as compared to state assessments in other states.</p>
10.15.07	<p>On page 11 there is a reference to an agricultural education system. Can you elaborate on this? I have not heard anything about this before, and it does not seem to be followed up by other details in the proposal. We have 2500 students, and we can only do so many things well. Please explain the motivation behind this. Where is the land to promote agricultural studies? Where is the staff to promote agricultural studies? What will the cost of this be?</p>		<p>Question answered over email: The name for Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education in Georgia includes each of those components: Career, Technical, and Agricultural. It does not mean that we would be adding any programs in specifically agricultural education. However, that is the name of the funding sources and courses from the state Department of Education.</p>

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10.16.07	I also wanted to ask what the Ben Franklin Academy model was -- is it based on the same principles as the Ben Franklin Academy located on Clifton Road near Emory University?		Question answered over e-mail with specifics about our partnership with BFA.
10.24.07	How will IB for All be determined whether it will be implemented at DHS?	The most recent version of the charter petition articulates the possibility of IB for All at DHS. See response #10.	This question is not addressed in the charter because this would be a function of the SLT. The instructional team leaders from DHS have begun conversations about the concept for IB For All, in conjunction with the necessary addition of a Ben Franklin-esque environment. If the district charter is approved, it is likely that the SLT will enter the conversation, researching and weighing the benefits of this framework.
9.17.07 10.15.07	How will gifted programming change?	Question answered via email with specific verbiage from charter petition. See response #13.	
10.29.07	<p>2 -5: Targeting higher order thinking, research, problem solving and organizational skills</p> <p>Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will serve identified gifted students only. • Limited class size. • Teacher must have gifted endorsement. <p>Comment: Does this mean that gifted classes will be smaller while classes serving other students could be at maximum or above or is this a pull-out class?</p>		Question answered over email: Correct. This is the current requirement for students labeled gifted. Because gifted is considered an exceptionality, smaller class sizes must be used to instruct them in order to receive state funding.
10.29.07	Page 54 - 55 – Comment: Can MAP be used to replace any existing tests? The	The most recent version of the charter petition articulates the entire assessment	Question answered over email: MAP would replace ITBS and possibly DRA

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	addition of 2 standardized tests (MAP & NOELLA/STAMP) seems to mean more time spent on testing and less on instruction.	system. See attachment #25.	testing at the K5 levels.
10.08.07	Who is the anonymous donor? (Ben Franklin partnership)		Question answered at charter: the anonymous donor's name has not been revealed.
10.01.07 10.03.07	How will charter help kids close gap (especially ESS)? How will it affect ESS? Will students be shipped off?	Charter petition outlines services for students with disabilities. See response #15.	
9.17.07	Can all the IB implementation work continue with this effort toward charter?	IB implementation outlined in the most recent draft of the charter petition. See response #10.	Question answered via email that the charter would assist with IB implementation.
10.08.07	Would this allow us to have a lecture hall of 60 and have small groups?	The most recent version of the charter asks for a waiver from seat time requirements at the high school level; thus, a seminar structure could meet some students' needs.	
10.08.07	Can students at the middle school earn Carnegie units for Spanish?		Question answered at the meeting: it is not currently a policy in Decatur for middle school students to earn Carnegie units before their freshmen year. It would not take charter to enact this practice.
10.08.07	Will there be a particular theme?	The most recent draft of the charter includes more information about the school reform models used at each site. See response #10.	

Various

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10.08.07	What is the reason for wanting charter?	The draft of the charter outlines the reasons. See responses #6 and #10.	Question answered at meeting

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10.08.07	Would charter status protect us from being absorbed by Dekalb?		Question answered at meeting: The question was asked within the context of HR 900.
10.08.07	What gives you (TVS) reason to pause on this direction?		Question answered at meeting: that people won't read the whole petition.
10.03.07	How will my third grader experience change?		Question answered at meeting
10.03.07	How will charter affect the kids at the housing authority? Will everyone who lives here have to apply?		Question answered at the meeting: enrollment for CSD does not change. Programs will improve.
10.03.07	If it goes to sales tax (reference HR 900), can you charge a fee to each resident?		Question answered at meeting: system charters must remain public schools and available to all without fee or prerequisite eligibility requirements.
10.03.07	Rationale in charter schools – is this an experimental model? Do charter schools outperform public schools?		Question answered at meeting: students are not experiments. Charter schools have outperformed other public schools in Georgia.
10.03.07	How is failure measured?	Question answered at meeting: Goals have quantifiable results and will be reported every year. State Board of Education reads and weighs system report to ascertain failure or continuation of the charter. See response #20.	
10.03.07	Will a satellite program be allowed for a diploma or certificate?		Question answered at meeting: Not at this time, but the charter can be revised each year.
10.16.07	What objective data show (prove) that students do better in charter schools than traditional public schools?		Question answered at meeting: referred to most recent (2006) GA DOE independent review of charter schools. Charter schools outperform traditional public schools.
10.03.07	Why should a small school system want		Question answered at meeting: We are not

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	to be an experimental system?		experimenting with children or their education. We choose to use research-based strategies and programs to test for the greatest impact. In regard to being one of the first system charters in Georgia, we may be part of future decision-making regarding education.
10.08.07	How are you going to fix kids who lose under the charter system?		Question answered at meeting: We do not see any kids losing under the charter. The charter is designed to offer them <u>more</u> opportunities to succeed.
10.16.07	Does CSD administration feel it has captured all the improvement opportunities created by the major restructuring of three years ago? Will charter status enhance or distract from the financial reallocations driven by that change?		Question answered at meeting: Continuous improvement is our standard. Monies will continue to be allocated in equitable ways.
10.16.07	How were the enrollment numbers at the beginning of the petition developed?		Question answered at meeting: using historical enrollment data and recent trends, enrollment estimates were made.
10.24.07	Reference to PTA organizations might be more accurately expanded to reference PTO/A as well as athletic booster and band parent associations.	The most recent draft of the charter petition reflects these changes. (various responses)	
10.24.07	The word “council” appears in the document in places and is confusing.	The most recent draft of the charter petition only uses “council” when required by the application. (various responses)	
10.08.07	Can we call them something else rather than councils?	<i>School Leadership Teams</i> were coined as a response to this request. See response #62.	
9.17.07 10.03.07 10.08.07	How would extended day for elementary students work?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the possibility of after school services for interested and eligible	

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10.29.07		families. This would not be required for all students. See response #10.	
9.18.07 10.03.07 10.05.07	Do students have to live in City of Decatur?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the tuition policy. See response #32.	Question answered via email: tuition procedures would remain the same.
9.18.07 10.12.07	Would tuition rates change?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the tuition policy. See response #32.	Question answered via email and phone: tuition rates are set every year using a state formula.
9.19.07 10.01.07	What happens to current tuition students?	The most recent draft of the charter petition details the tuition policy. See response #32.	Question answered via email and phone: tuition procedures would remain the same. Current tuition students must re-apply each year.
9.29.07	What happens if we don't make the goals?	Quantitative targets already included in petition. See response #20.	Question answered via email that the state BOE reviews each charter school's annual report and considers progress made toward the goals.
10.03.07 10.08.07	How will we measure "top 10" in the nation?		Question answered via email and in a meeting: Boston Consulting Group worked with CSD during the strategic planning process to determine comparable school districts nationwide and related metrics.
10.04.07	Is the community interested?		Question answered over email: CSD has received positive input from parents and community members that do not have students in CSD schools.
10.04.07	Are we "needy" enough?		Question answered over email: charter systems do not have eligibility criteria.
10.04.07	I've got a question about the administrative costs. What additional personnel will we need to deal with this charter?		Question answered over email: we have envisioned what a system charter would need in terms of administration and are confident that we could manage with our current structure.
10.15.07	On page 25, there is mention of career plans for 6-8th grade		Question answered over email: Recent work from both national school

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	students. Currently, those kids have weak writing skills and computation skills. Why are we focusing on career plans for 11-14 year olds? Shouldn't we be encouraging them to plan to go to college rather than encouraging them to select a career at that age?		counselors associations and scholars who study the achievement seem to indicate that helping students see and "claim" a career early on narrows the achievement gap and encourages students to stay in school. That certainly isn't to say that 11-14 year olds (or 11-18 year olds for that matter) won't change their mind several times in that time span, but the idea is to help them see a long-term value in their education.
10.15.07	On page 32, there is mention of the BOLD leadership club whose membership is limited to young men only. Do you think men are under-represented in the public or private sector and need special leadership training? If you are going to have a leadership club that excludes young women, the least you can do is to offer a leadership club for young women as well. This is ludicrous.		Question answered over email: BOLD is a leadership group that currently exists at Decatur High School. They are working on a parallel club for young women.
10.28.07	How will the charter have a strategic focus on effective teaching?	The most recent version of the charter petition commits to investigate and consider incentive awards at the school and individual levels. See response #8. In addition, instructional coaches and coordinators provide professional learning at the point of need for teachers. Finally, a new evaluation system will be developed for teachers and administrators.	
10.29.07	Page 21 – "...academic achievement of African-American and White students." Comment: Blacks is used	All references were made consistent in the most recent draft of the charter petition.	

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
	throughout the rest of the document. You should probably change this one reference to African-Americans.		
10.29.07	Extracurricular activities Comment: Shouldn't the minimum requirement for all of the activities listed be that the students are passing all classes? I feel this applies to sports in particular which tends to take more time than some clubs.		Question answered over email: For some students, the clubs and extracurriculars are what keep them interested in school. For these students, it can be a club that finally lights the fire that gets them moving toward earning a high school diploma. In that light, students are not allowed to represent CSD if they are failing, but they can participate in practices and meetings.
10.29.07	Page 35 – “Student/teacher ratios will be calculated using every teacher in the building.” Comment: I don't understand this phrase.		Question answered over email: Teacher:student ratios are calculated differently all over the country. We chose one method (which includes all teachers, not just "homeroom" teachers) and stated it outright.
10.29.07	Comment: This is a nit but “listserv” is actually a specific mailing list server and is misused in this context. School e-mail distribution list and community e-mail distribution list would be more appropriate.	The most recent draft of the charter petition consistently uses “distribution lists.”	
10.29.07	Page 64 – Comment: What role, if any, will the Decatur Education Foundation have in the charter district?	DEF would continue to be support for enrichment activities for students and teachers. See response #53.	Question answered over email: DEF would continue to be support for enrichment activities for students and teachers.
10.08.07	Will this be a hindrance to applying for colleges?		Question answered at meeting and in FAQ: colleges and universities accept students from charter schools.
10.08.07	What is the difference between incentive pay and merit pay?		Question answered at meeting: incentive pay is in addition to teacher's base pay. Merit pay fluctuates based on

Date asked	Question/Comment	Used in charter	Did not use in charter
10.08.07	Are we attaching ourselves to the right person at the state level?		performance. Question answered at meeting: charter system status is being pursued regardless of politics.
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>What would be the rules for students' discipline and dismissal, code of conduct, due process?</u>	<u>The most recent draft of the charter addresses this question in response #34.</u>	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>How schools will handle grievances from students, teachers, classified staff, parents?</u>	<u>The most recent draft of the charter addresses this question in response #35.</u>	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>Where is the description of plans and procedures PSC certification, state salary schedule adherence, fingerprint background check?</u>	<u>The most recent draft of the charter addresses this question in responses #36-37.</u>	
<u>11.27.07</u>	<u>Have you considered an identified staff for a classified employee?</u>		<u>The School Leadership Teams have the authority to add members, which could include a classified staff member.</u>