

Information for Charter Petitioners

What Is a Charter School? A charter school is a public school of choice that operates under the terms of a charter, or contract, with an authorizer, such as the state and local boards of education or the Georgia Charter Schools Commission. Charter schools receive flexibility from certain state and local rules in exchange for a higher degree of accountability for raising student achievement.

Who May Apply? A private individual, a private organization, or a state or local public entity may submit to the Richmond County Board of Education (LBOE) a written proposal ("Application" or "Petition") to establish a charter school in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Charter Schools Act of 1998 (Code of Georgia Annotated §20-2-2060 *et seq*), the State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-4-9-.05 and its accompanying Guidelines, as well as the policies and procedures of the Richmond County Board of Education.

Charter Schools Must Be in the Public Interest. The Richmond County Board of Education supports student achievement and reviews all charter applications for evidence of schools that can provide unique, innovative, high quality, research-based and standards-driven learning opportunities for students *beyond* what the Richmond County School System currently provides.

Prior to approving a charter school application, the Richmond County Board of Education must be convinced that the application presents a sound plan for improving student performance at a cost less than or equal to the per-pupil allocation at other Richmond County School System schools with similar populations. The charter applicant must demonstrate the ability, financial resources, expertise, and other resources necessary to manage successfully all aspects of a charter school.

Information Regarding Submission of a Charter Application: Information regarding the submission of charter applications is provided below in the various website links to the pertinent information.

[RCSS Board Policy IBB](#)

[Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.05](#)

[Charter Applications - Information and Sample Forms](#) [Please use the Application Forms found on this link to apply.]

[Sample Letter of Intent](#)

Submission Timelines: Charter applications should be submitted in accordance with the timelines established in the chart below.

Type of Charter	Letter of Intent Due to Local Board and SBOE	Petition Due to System Designee	Local Board Action Required By Date	Petition Due to Georgia Department of Education
Start-Ups	January 1	February 1	No later than May 1	August 1
Conversions	April 1	May 1	No later than August 1	November 1
Renewals	April 1	May 1	No later than August 1	November 1

Submission Directions: Letters of Intent and Completed Charter School applications should be submitted within the above timelines to: **Mr. Brian Hadden, School Options Program Specialist, Richmond County Board of Education** via email: haddebr@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us. If you have problems with submissions, please contact Mr. Hadden at 706-826-1000 Ext. 5242

Application Requirements and Review: A charter application submitted for consideration by the Richmond County Board of Education must include all charter petition requirements established by the Charter Schools Act, the Georgia Department of Education and the Richmond County School System.

Applicants/Petitioners are advised to pay careful attention and follow all instructions in the application. The applicant's responses need to have sufficient detail so that the reviewers can reasonably ascertain that the applicants have an in-depth knowledge of what will be expected from the school should the application be approved and a charter granted.

Each application/petition is reviewed and evaluated based on several factors including program innovation, a demonstrably effective curriculum and academic plan, solid financial planning, depth and breadth of community support, carefully designed accountability measures, evidence of strong academic leadership, and an effective governing board with meaningful bylaws. If a proposed school or school location is determined not to be in the public interest due to these factors or others, the Richmond County Board of education has the authority to deny the petition.

Local Board Review and Decision

- After receipt and review of charter applications, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2064(b), the Local Board **shall by a majority vote approve or deny a petition no later than ninety (90) days after its submission** unless the petitioner consents to extend that period.

- **If the Local Board denies a charter petition,** it shall within sixty (60) days provide to the charter petitioner and the SBOE a written explanation setting forth its reasons for denial and a list of deficiencies in the petition. A denial does not prevent a petitioner from resubmitting a revised petition that addresses the deficiencies cited in the denial.
- **If the Local Board approves a charter petition,** it shall within thirty (30) days provide the approved petition along with the required State application to the Georgia Department of Education for review by the SBOE.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop and enforce administrative regulations needed to ensure compliance with State law and requirements of the Georgia Department of Education.

Note: Home study programs or schools, sectarian schools, religious schools, private for-profit schools, or private educational institutions not established, operated or governed by the State of Georgia are prohibited by law from submitting charter petitions.