What it Means to be a Georgia Charter System

A new vision for a new day in public education.
Introduction

Welcome to Marietta City Schools (MCS), a Georgia Charter System and an International Baccalaureate World School District!

As the school system of choice for families, we encourage high levels of student achievement using the most innovative teaching methods. In June 2008, the State Board of Education approved MCS as one of Georgia’s first Charter Systems. Our school system includes seven K-5 focused-learning elementary schools, a grades 3-5 science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) magnet school, a sixth grade academy, one middle school, and one high school. Sawyer Road Elementary, currently our district’s conversion charter school, operates under a separate state charter.

Charter System status is just one of the many strategies we have implemented to help accomplish our uncompromising mission to prepare each of our students through academic achievement for life success.
What does it mean to be a Georgia Charter System?
The Georgia Charter Systems Act, signed in 2007, allows entire school systems to convert to charter status. A Charter System is not a group of charter schools; rather, the district has a charter, or contract, with the State of Georgia to increase student achievement. Simply put, Charter Systems have increased flexibility to operate beyond state mandates and make adjustments in staffing, teaching methods, and management in exchange for higher accountability. While adhering to state curriculum, Charter Systems are permitted to utilize leading-edge educational programs and are given resources to implement these ideas. Our initial charter period is five years.
Why did we choose to become a Charter System?
Georgia Charter Systems are all about increasing student achievement through pioneering teaching practices and sound management. One of our goals is to increase our high school graduation rate 20% by 2013. In addition, we have rigorous goals above the state requirements for all students in grades 1 through 8. The increased flexibility we have as a Charter System allows our administration, teachers, school board, community members, and parents to share in determining the best methods for reaching those goals. In exchange for increased flexibility, we are held to a higher level of accountability based on performance objectives specified in our charter.
How does our Charter status affect student learning?

How are students affected?
Students benefit greatly from being a part of a Charter System! For example, we are able to offer elementary school choice and focused learning environments. We can allocate teaching staff to best meet our students’ needs, and we can modify seat-time requirements to include non-traditional learning experiences.

Marietta City Schools is in constant pursuit of other instructional innovations, and we are currently exploring:

- Small learning communities in high school
- Hybrid models of instruction (classroom, Web-based, and practical)
- Web-based assessment tools
- Individualized learning profiles
- Digital student portfolios
- Emerging career pathways.
How does school governance change?
MCS Charter System schools use the local school council as the framework of an expanded governance Board referred to as the School Governance Team (SGT). The SGT is entrusted with the responsibility of providing input, making recommendations, and rendering decisions regarding various aspects of the instructional program of the school and the school’s operational scheme. SGTs replace existing School Councils at all schools, with the exception of Sawyer Road Elementary, currently a conversion charter school.
Enrollment

All students who reside within Marietta City are eligible to attend our schools. Specific application procedures for the elementary choice program and the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics are available on our Web site, [www.marietta-city.org](http://www.marietta-city.org).

For more information

Dr. Emily Lembeck, Superintendent of Marietta City Schools, gives additional insight regarding the benefits of Charter System status in a short video presentation available on our Web site. There, you will find more details about our school district and our Charter System activities.
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