



# Georgia Charter Schools Association Newsletter

**November 2007**

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Save The Date!

## **Save The Date!**

### **Georgia Charter Schools Association Annual Conference**

**January 24 - 26,  
2008**

(See information in the "GCSA -  
News & Events" section of this  
newsletter)

**Dear Jeniffer,**

Welcome to our new way of information you about Georgia's charter school information. Please click the subscribe button at the end of the newsletter so that we can continue to keep you informed.

## **GCSA - NEWS & EVENTS**

### **Georgia Charter Schools Association**

5th Annual Conference  
Marietta Conference Center & Resort  
Marietta, GA

January 24 - 26, 2008

**Register before November 30th to get  
Lower Early Bird Rates!**

The Georgia Charter Schools Association is pleased to announce that the 5th annual Georgia Charter Schools Conference will be held January 24-26, 2008 at the Marietta Conference Center & Resort in Marietta Georgia.

For Online Registration and Hotel Reservations: [Conference Registration](#)

## **Quick Links**

[Our Website](#)  
[Conference  
Registration](#)  
[School Choice](#)

:: 404-460-9992

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

### **KEVIN JOHNSON - JANUARY 26**

We are excited to announce that former Phoenix Suns, NBA All-Star and Founder of St. HOPE Public Charter Schools in Sacramento, California **Kevin Johnson** will be our keynote speaker on Saturday January 26.

### **IAN JUKES - JANUARY 25**

A former teacher, administrator, writer, consultant and university instructor **Ian Jukes** works extensively with school districts, businesses, community organizations and other institutions to help shape preferred futures. Ian will be our keynote speaker on Friday January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Other Conference highlights include over 35 breakout sessions covering topics on:

- student assessment,
- facility financing,
- board governance,
- GA DOE sessions - and much much more.

*There will also be special teacher-focused workshops and networking sessions and all attendees will have the opportunity to earn PLU credits for professional development.*

For more information, call Conference Registration Services at 800-280-6218 or email [conference2008@gacharters.org](mailto:conference2008@gacharters.org)

## Charter News

### Charter Schools Awarded Facilities Grant

The charter public schools listed below have been designated to receive Facilities Grant funds by Georgia's State Board of Education. These schools demonstrated substantial facilities needs and their requests are in alignment with the intended purpose of the statute. The total grant amount if approved by GA DOE is \$2,200,000.

#### Grant Awardees:

International Community School	K-6	Start Up	DeKalb County	\$180,000
Brighten Academy	K-8	Start Up	Douglas County	\$160,000
KIPP WAYS	5-8	Start Up	Atlanta City	\$150,000
KIPP South Fulton	5-8	Start Up	Fulton County	\$150,000
Fargo Charter School	K-3	Start Up	Fargo County	\$150,000
TECH High School	9-12	Start Up	Atlanta City	\$140,000
Amana Academy	K-8	Start Up	Fulton County	\$140,000
Walton Career Academy	10-12	LEA Start Up	Walton County	\$100,000
Baconton Community Charter School	K-12	Start Up	Mitchell County	\$90,000
Dooly County High School	9-12	LEA Start Up	Dooly County	\$70,000
Chattahoochee High School	9-12	LEA Start Up	Chattahoochee County	\$60,000
DeKalb Path Academy	5-8	Start Up	DeKalb County	\$60,000
University Community Academy	K-8	Start Up	Atlanta City	\$40,000
Oglethorpe Charter School	6-8	Start Up	Savannah-Chatham	\$28,000
Destiny Academy of Excellence	9-12	Start Up	DeKalb County	\$20,000
Lake Oconee Academy	K-12	Start Up	Greene County	\$20,000
Lewis Academy of Excellence	K-5	Start Up	Clayton County	\$20,000
Jenkins-White	K-5	Conversion	Richmond County	\$12,000
Imagine International Acad. of Mableton	K-8	Start Up	Cobb	\$10,000

#### State Chartered Special Schools:

Odyssey Charter School	K-5	St. Sp. Charter	Coweta County	\$280,000
CCAT	6-12	St. Sp.	Bulloch County	\$240,000

		Charter		
Mountain Education Center	9-12	St. Sp. Charter	Intergovernmental	\$80,000

### Funding source: State Funds

Grant Period: July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

Budget Period: July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008

## 2007 No Child Left Behind - National Blue Ribbon Charter Schools of Excellence

The U.S. Department of Education recently honored schools named 2007 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools at an awards ceremony in Washington, DC. Two of Georgia's charter public schools, *International Studies Elementary Charter School* in Albany and *Walton High School* in Marietta were among the schools honored. Blue Ribbon awards are given annually to both public and private elementary, middle, and high schools that are academically superior or that make dramatic gains in student achievement. Altogether, 287 schools were formally honored at the ceremony.

For information on the program and a complete list of the 2007 winners, visit: [Awards Programs](#)

## State Superintendent Cox Recognizes Charter School

*Fulton Science Academy* (FSA), a Start Up charter middle school in Alpharetta, GA was presented with two awards based on 2007 spring CRCT (Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests) results by State Superintendent Kathy Cox. Cox was joined by Fulton County Schools' Superintendent James Wilson who congratulated students and staff on their achievements. The two awards, the Platinum Award in the area of greatest gains in student achievement and the Silver Award in the area of highest student performance on a statewide basis, is a fulfillment of Fulton Science Academy's mission to provide an "environment to prepare the entire student body to their maximum potential". With over 2,100 public schools in Georgia, FSA is one of only seven recipients of these high-level awards in Georgia, and the only charter school. Tony Roberts, CEO for Georgia Charter Schools Association, said: "Fulton Science Academy has demonstrated the best of the best in education. These awards acknowledge the results of their innovation, parental involvement, committed school leadership, flexibility, and strong commitment to student achievement which are the hallmarks of an excellent charter school." Kenan Sener, Principal of the FSA, said: "this is certainly a team effort and I thank each and every student, teacher and parent at FSA for this great achievement." More information on FSA can be found on their website at: [Fulton Science](#).

## International Community School, A Title I 'Distinguished' School

*International Community School*(ICS), a Start Up charter school in DeKalb County School System has been identified as 2007-2008 Title I Distinguished Schools. The national recognition, authorized in Section 1117 of *the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, acknowledges schools that meet or exceed Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three or more consecutive years and have not been on the Unsafe Schools Choice Option (USCO) list within the last two years. ICS has been selected as one of the state's two National Title I Distinguished Schools. AYP data indicated that the ICS 'significantly closed the achievement gap between student groups.' ICS was evaluated on the basis of providing exemplary school effectiveness in the areas of teaching and learning based on the state curriculum, use of research, student opportunities, Title I program coordination, research-based professional development and established partnerships with families and community members.

## **Social Studies came alive for Atlanta charter school eighth-graders.**

They celebrated their graduation with a trip to Ghana, a West African country they only knew from their lessons. Community donations made it possible for more than 30 *KIPP WAYS Academy* students and their chaperones to set out on the journey. While visiting the African continent, they met Ghana's first lady, visited a rainforest and climbed a mountain. Students visited the slave dungeons where some of their ancestors were held four centuries ago, a moving experience. **CNN Video:** [CNN Video](#) **CNN Article:** [CNN Article](#)

## **GCSA CEO Visits Georgia's Charter Schools**

Georgia Charter Schools Association CEO, Tony Roberts, has taken great pleasure in visiting the charter public schools of Georgia. "As I have visited the charter public schools across the state, I am astounded by the innovative learning environments these schools are providing for the students of Georgia. The charter schools of Georgia are empowering parents with opportunities to find quality choices in public K-12 education." The purpose of Tony's visits is to meet charter school leaders across the state and to reveal that Georgia's charter public schools are providing quality alternatives in public education for the families of Georgia. Georgia Charter Schools Association is currently setting up school visits for those schools Tony has not visited to date.

## **GCSA Continues to Work with Georgia Policy Makers for an Alternative Authorizer for Charter Schools**

Georgia Charter Schools Association continues to work with Representative Jan Jones in support of her bill, House Bill 881 (HB 881). HB 881, which would establish the Georgia Charter Schools Commission, would allow for an alternative authorizing body for charter schools. As Start Up charter schools have been baselessly denied by local school district in recent months, HB 881 would provide an independent, nonbiased body for charter school petitioners in hostile school districts. The third open meeting to discuss HB 881 will on November 30, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in room 403 of the Capitol. This will be the last opportunity for public comments on HB 881 concerning reform of Georgia's method for Charter School creation and administration before the sub committee takes up the legislation for its consideration and vote at its first meeting in January.

## **New Website Provide Resource for Choice Supporters**

GCSA wants to call your attention to a new website which will expand the opportunity for more families to have quality educational options through charter schools. My School, My Choice - Georgia ([www.georgiaschoolchoice.com](http://www.georgiaschoolchoice.com)) will provide all persons who want to expand school choice in Georgia with valuable resources that can be used to raise awareness and rally support all across the state.

## **Charter School Competition Pushing Some Districts to Create School Choice Plans**

Struggling local districts across the country, which are facing chronic poor performance or competition from public charter and private schools, are turning to "school choice plans" to encourage enrollment. The DeKalb County school system near Atlanta just adopted a choice plan, and the Cambridge school system in Massachusetts has seen academic gains since it adopted one six years ago. Under the DeKalb plan, the district has

six regions. Students zoned to their nearest school can attend it, or parents can pick their top choices for other schools in their region. Then their name then goes into a lottery, and names are pulled at random based on the number of seats available. In Cambridge, the system adopted school choice as a strategy to encourage enrollment and increase equity. "We are in a consumer-driven area," said Cambridge school system spokesman Justin Martin. "If parents don't have choices, (many) have the means to go to private and charter schools. We are very cognizant of that."

<http://www.macon.com/198/story/177433.html>

## **Floyd County gets \$3.2 million grant for charter academy**

A 16,000-square-foot automated manufacturing training center will be built using a \$3.2 million grant approved for the Floyd County College and Career Academy slated to open next fall. Floyd County Schools officials applied for the grant in September as part of their charter school initiative, which is still pending approval by the state board of education. "This will be a state-of-the-art facility used by high school and Coosa Valley Technical College students," said Craig McDaniel, president of CVTC, which is partnering with Floyd County Schools to create the career academy.

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/680/public/news851783.html>

## **Decatur Eyes District-Wide Charter**

Decatur school officials are hoping to go where no other system in Georgia has gone before. They want to become a district-wide charter school. Individual schools, such as Tech High, have grown in popularity in communities yet have faced uphill battles against school boards that have fought the moves. Now, a school board can move to make its entire system a charter. "We value the work we're doing," said assistant superintendent Dr. Thomas Van Soelen. "We think that the structure of district charter might help us continue this work. We joke that don't fit with anybody. We are urban but small. We are small and not rural."

[http://www.11alive.com/news/education/article\\_education.aspx?storyid=104447](http://www.11alive.com/news/education/article_education.aspx?storyid=104447)

## **State Board of Education: Rule, Guidance, Application information**

The State Board of Education enacted a new Charter Schools Rule in September, along with Guidance, both of which are now posted at: [www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea\\_charter.aspx](http://www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_charter.aspx). The new Guidance sets forth a uniform state deadline for letters of intent. Accordingly, for any Start Up schools planning to open in fall 2009, the petitioner must submit a letter of intent to the district and Department of Education no later than Feb. 1, 2008. The GA DOE has new charter school applications can be found at: [www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea\\_charter.aspx](http://www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_charter.aspx). Please ensure that any petitions received this year comply with the new application requirements.

## **GCSA PARTNERS WITH ARTHUR J. GALLAGHER PROVIDING BUSINESS INSURANCE FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS OF GEORGIA**

Georgia Charter Schools Association is proud to announce our partnership with Arthur J. Gallagher, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest and #1 public-entity broker in the world to provide the charter public schools of Georgia with Liability Package & Workers' Compensation Insurance. This unique partnership, modeled after the partnership between California Charter Schools Association and Arthur J. Gallagher is specific to the needs of charter public schools.

Benefits include:

- *Ensure you have appropriate insurance coverage for your school*
- *Save money* (California program saved the average school 20-30%)
- *Keep you school safe* to prevent accidents and losses

Numerous charter schools in Georgia took advantage of the program during the GCSA Annual Conference. We encourage you to speak Brandon Hensley, Assistant Vice President for the Atlanta Arthur J. Gallagher local offices. Brandon can be reached at 678-393-5231 or at [brandon\\_hensley@ajg.com](mailto:brandon_hensley@ajg.com).

You can get more information about the program from their website at [Charter Safe](#).

## Georgia Charter Schools 5th Annual Conference

January 24 - 26, 2008

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