



GCSA Weekly Update

Dear Jeniffer,

We know that you are excited about being off for a week or two, but before you go, we wanted to remind you about the annual conference in January.

GCSA is proud to offer 50 Teacher Scholarships to the 2008 Annual Conference. These scholarships include conference registration, and 2 nights hotel. Please call our office for additional information.

GCSA - NEWS & EVENTS

Kevin Johnson

Keynote Speaker on January 25th
Georgia Charter Schools Association 6th Annual
Conference

Kevin Johnson is a twelve-year veteran of the National Basketball Association. Johnson spent nearly his entire career with the Phoenix Suns, a career spanning 735 regular season and 105 playoff games. During his storied career, Johnson was named to the All-Star team three times, received a gold medal in the 1994 World Championship games with the "Dream Team II", and holds a NBA Finals' single game record for minutes played (62) when the Suns defeated the Chicago Bulls and Michael Jordan in triple-overtime in Game 3 of the 1993 series. During the 1996-97 season, Johnson became only the sixth player in league history to amass 11,500 points, 6,000 assists, 2,000 rebounds and 1,000 steals.



Kevin Johnson was born March 4, 1966 in Sacramento, California and attended Sacramento High School where he starred in both basketball and baseball. Johnson was raised in the Oak Park neighborhood of Sacramento, an economically disadvantaged area which is confronted by many of the social ills affecting inner cities across America such as drugs, gangs, teenage pregnancy and high unemployment. Early on, Johnson made a commitment to Oak Park resolving to assist the community in areas of need.

In the summer of 1989, Johnson founded St. HOPE Academy ("SHA"), a nonprofit after-school educational program located in the heart of Sacramento's Oak Park neighborhood. SHA's initial purpose was to tutor young people and provide them with the opportunities for educational, social and spiritual growth to assist them to one day become leaders in their communities.

In October 2001, Johnson's newest nonprofit corporation, St. HOPE Public Schools ("SHPS"), was formed to create and operate charter schools in Oak Park. On August 4, 2003, in partnership with the Sacramento City Unified School District, SHPS opened PS7, an elementary charter school that currently offers a rigorous curriculum for nearly 400 children in grades K-8. On September 2, 2003, SHPS opened five autonomous small schools on the Sacramento High School (Sac High) campus. Sac High, Johnson's alma mater and the second oldest public high school west of the Mississippi, had experienced years of neglect and underperformance prior to SHPS' intervention. SHPS now provides opportunities to learn to more than 1,300 students at Sacramento High School who are enrolled in either the School of the Arts, School of Business and Communications, School of Law and Public Service, and School of Math, Engineering and Health Sciences.

In April of 2006 Johnson was recruited by a community-based national campaign called STAND UP to be their national spokesperson. The campaign was initiated to address America's education crisis and it receives substantial support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. As part of the kick-off to the STAND UP campaign, Johnson and Bill and Melinda Gates appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* on April 12, 2006 encouraging a national call to action for all parents, teachers, administrators and students to STAND UP and demand excellent high schools that prepare students to succeed.

In response to the airing of that show, Johnson was asked to come to Harlem in New York City by a group of parents who were unsatisfied with the operation of their charter school. Shortly thereafter, the New York City Department of Education entered into a historic partnership with St. HOPE Academy to help revitalize the Choir Academy of Harlem, a struggling 500-student K-12 public school. This marked the first expansion for St. HOPE Academy outside of Oak Park and paves the way for a new St. HOPE operated charter school in Harlem by the 2008-09 academic year.

In addition to also being selected as one of the "15 Greatest Men on Earth" by *McCall's Magazine*, Johnson has received the NBA's J. Walter Kennedy Citizenship Award, the Good Morning America Award from *Sports Illustrated*, the "Most Caring American" award by the Caring Institute and, in 1997, Johnson was inducted into the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame in Boise, Idaho. In 2002, Johnson was admitted to the Master of Theological Studies Program at Harvard Divinity School, but elected to defer enrollment until a later date so that he could focus on revitalizing his inner-city neighborhood.

Remember ...

The 6th Annual Georgia Charter Schools Conference will be held January 24-26, 2008 at the Marietta Conference Center & Resort in Marietta Georgia.

Ask us about the new scholarship program available to assist you to send a teacher to the conference!

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

CHARTER NEWS

Tax Tips for Exempt Organizations

The IRS recently changed its filing requirements for organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3). These changes affect almost all exempt organizations which are not normally required to file an annual tax return, Form 990.

In the past, the IRS did not require exempt organizations to file a tax return as long as its gross

revenues, grants, contributions, and other exempt income did not exceed \$25,000 during the year.

Many times when an organizing group is in the process of forming a **charter school**, they will have an attorney or accountant form a corporation and apply with the IRS to be treated as an exempt organization. During the period in which the organizers are planning the school and making an application for the charter, which can extend over several years, the organization typically does not exceed \$25,000 in gross receipts.

Now, beginning with 2007 tax periods, the rules have changed. All tax exempt organizations except churches are required to file Form 990 to report certain information electronically to the IRS even if they are under \$25,000 in gross receipts and would not normally be required to file a return. This filing requirement also applies to other exempt organizations such as PTO's and PTA's which have applied for exempt status. The penalty for not filing the form after a certain period is that the organization loses its tax exempt status.

Erwin & Johnson CPA, PC, specializes in assisting charter schools and other exempt organizations with formation, IRS matters, and other accounting issues.

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Implementation of Georgia's \$17 million Charter Schools Program Grant

Georgia received a \$17 million dollar Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant from the U.S. Department of Education to assist in increasing the number of high quality charter schools in Georgia. These funds will be granted out to eligible charter schools by the SBOE over the course of the next 3 year grant cycle. Eligible implementation grant applicants are those schools that:

1. Have recently been awarded a charter and
2. Have full time student enrollment.

The link to access the 2008 implementation grant information is now active and can be accessed via the GA DOE website at the above link. If you are eligible, please complete this application expeditiously. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Cayanna Collier-Good in the Charter Schools Division at CCollier@doe.k12.ga.us or 404-657-0515.

Q&A / ANDREW BROY, director of charter schools: Systems' change may help state innovate

12/16/07

Andrew Broy, director of the state Department of Education's charter division, is ready to explain how Georgia's move to charter school districts will work. He talks about Georgia as the only state in the nation with a charter system law that implements school-level governance requiring districts to innovate in each of their schools. In return for operating outside of some state rules and regulations,

charter districts must demonstrate their students have performed measurably better.

Decatur votes for charter school system

District would have greater freedom in return for demonstrated achievement

12/12/07

Decatur City Schools board members voted Tuesday night to make the city one of Georgia's first charter school systems. Their decision would go before the state Board of Education in March or April for final approval. It would go into effect next school year. The move follows a new state law that frees entire school systems, not just individual charter schools, from many standard laws and practices in exchange for demonstrable achievement. Decatur officials say their biggest change would be in governance. Schools would establish individual "leadership teams," giving parents and community members a bigger role in finance and program decisions. The system also wants to consider bonus pay for teachers for both school-level and classroom achievement.

Partnerships are basis for new charter school

12/11/07

Floyd County's new charter school Chief Executive Officer Frank Pinson said he expects the new charter to be approved by the state Board of Education early next year, and the academy will be committed to developing its curriculum around the needs assessment report. "We've had about 90 businesses respond to our needs assessment questions," Pinson said. "That really drives what we do. We're committed to providing a viable work force for our community."

HIGHLIGHT YOUR SCHOOL!

GCSA wants to highlight your school on the "new and improved" GCSA website, which will be launched very soon! GCSA would like you to forward a photo of your school building or a school sign with a short sentence which can be used as a descriptive caption. Please forward all photos to Andrew Lewis at alewis@gacharters.org.

Jeniffer Collins
Georgia Charter Schools Association

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