

GCSA NEWS AND EVENTS

Tuesday May 23rd

8:30 – 3:00

Morning Conference & Members' Meeting

COST: \$10.00 – GCSA Members / \$15.00 – Non-members

Title: ***Financing the Acquisition
Construction & Renovation of Charter Schools***

Description: This session will discuss financing options available for capital improvements to charter schools, including the acquisition and construction of new facilities, acquisition and renovation of existing facilities, and leasehold improvements for new and existing schools.

Title: ***Working with Community Interests in Building Facilities***

Description: Schools can and do become the center of the community. The workshop will give an overview of how to effectively engage a community in your project at the planning stage and show how ongoing community relationships enrich a neighborhood school.

The **GCSA Members' Meeting** is an annual meeting of Georgia Charter Schools Association members. The GCSA Member's Meeting is open to all charter public school representatives, though voting is restricted to members only. The meeting is a time for GCSA and member schools to conduct business while updating members on current GCSA programs and services and receiving input from school representatives. Member schools will be voting on new GCSA Board members and approving any GCSA bi-law revisions.

Please call or email Andrew Lewis at 404-460-9992 / alewis@gacharters.org for additional information.

Student Membership - As GCSA begins to plan for the upcoming year, we are looking for teachers and students to serve on our student events planning team. The planning team will meet starting in mid September, 2006. We will meet approximately six times in the fall at lunch or after school. We are looking for assistance with our state-wide competitions in the following areas: ***Student Forum, Arts, Music, Science and Writing Competitions***. School participation will be based on payment of the student membership fee, invoices will be sent to schools in July 2006.

Principals' Meetings – GCSA held the 2nd quarterly principals' meeting on April 14th. Approximately 15 principals were in attendance, including representatives from two newly approved schools – Ms. Dell Perry of Unidos Dual Language & Mr. Ben C. Jakes of Destiny Academy of Excellence. After a presentation by Promethean; a company offering charter schools an interactive whiteboard system, GCSA updates were given by Shannon Spann, GCSA Member Services Director, Suttiwan Cox, Director for [DeKalb PATH Academy](#), gave information she received from a school evaluation meeting, legislative updates were given by Phil Andrews, GCSA Executive Director, Marketing & Communications updates were given by Andrew Lewis, GCSA Director of Development & Communications, and finally, and closing remarks were given by Beverly Schrenger, Charter School Office Education Specialist with GADOE. As many of you already know, Beverly is leaving her current position to go to another division with the DOE. We celebrated with cake & ice cream during the last few minutes of the meeting & then presented Beverly with flowers.

Authorizer Luncheon – GCSA held its first charter school authorizer luncheon on March 31, 2006. The purpose of the luncheon was to discuss the High Quality School program and to have open dialogue about our efforts to support charter school operators and petitioners. There were five (5) districts represented at the meeting, and we are hopeful that future meetings will bring more authorizers.

Fielding University/Georgia State University/Kennesaw State University partnerships –If you are interested in the Leadership & Principal-ship programs at [Fielding University](#) & G.S.U or PLUs for teachers at Kennesaw State University, please contact Shannon Spann at (404) 460-9992 or sspann@gacharters.org for info on the GCSA partnership discount.

Insight Reading Academy- On April 6, 2006, Shannon Spann, GCSA Member Services Director, met with Jerry Morton, Senior National Sales Consultant for McGraw-Hill/Wright Group. He expressed an interest in facilitating week long training institutes for charter school teachers. If you have teachers interested in participating in a teacher institute, please contact Shannon Spann at (404) 460-9992 or sspann@gacharters.org.

Sub-Committee Update - The Start up Sub-Committee, a group comprised of start up school principals who meet quarterly to discuss charter school issues, held its first meeting on March 29, 2006. Attendees shared a lot of helpful information from their respective districts and also provided valuable comments. GCSA invites any member schools interested in serving on this committee, the Conversion Schools Sub-Committee or if you are interested in attending a meeting, please call Shannon Spann at (404)460-9992 or sspann@gacharters.org.

Member Services Update

"High expectations for success will be judged not only by the initial staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the organization's response when some students do not learn."
-Larry Levotte, Renowned Educator

CHARTER NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

School Teaches Arabic, Appreciation of Diversity

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
04/05/06

The Amana Academy, a tuition-free, public Fulton County charter school in Roswell, is believed to be the only elementary school in Georgia to offer Arabic language studies. Principal Shereen Salam is quick to point out that Amana Academy is not an Arab or Muslim school. "A firm command of Arabic is only one of our mission statements," she said. Salam wants the school to appeal to mainstream students. She believes that immersing children in a diverse environment at a young age is the best way for them to understand and appreciate other cultures, and helps to bridge cultural barriers.

To View this article, click: <http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/northfulton/stories/0405arabic.html>

Unidos Dual Language Charter school approved by state BOE

Clayton County News
04/18/06

The state's first dual-language charter school has cleared its last official hurdle and will open in August in Hendrix Drive Elementary School in Forest Park. The Georgia Board of Education has approved the charter petition for Unidos Dual Language Charter School for a five-year term from Aug. 1 through July 31, 2011.

To view the entire article, please click: http://www.news-daily.com/local/local_story_108000509.html

Fulton Science Academy

Eighth grade student Cory Friedman attended the 58th annual Georgia State Science and Engineering Fair at the University of Georgia in Athens over the spring break. He represented FSA with his computer project "How Can a Robot Mimic Human Emotions?" On April 10, 2006 Cory received the 1st place award in the Computers category in the Jr. Division of the State Science Fair. He also earned two specialty awards for his project. Cory received the Georgia Tech School of Electrical and Computer Engineering Award and the Scientific Atlanta Achievement Award for the use of Technology in Scientific Research. Congratulations to Cory and to FSA on this great achievement. To see Cory: http://www.fultonscience.org/files/GA_ScienceFair2006.pdf

Amana Academy won a coveted visit from **SeaWorld** after collecting about 12,384 aluminum cans for Newell Recycling Center's Nationwide Recycling Challenge. SeaWorld Orlando and Busch Gardens in Tampa educated the children on a variety of animals including a lemur, Harris Hawk, American Alligator on Wednesday, April 19th.

SeaWorld's program focuses on the importance of recycling and the effects litter has on different animal habitats. "This exciting day is an example of how we are achieving one of our core missions," explained **Principal Shereen Salam**.

Dr. Kathy Harwood and the students of **Charter Conservatory for Liberal Arts & Technology (CCAT)** invited Mrs. Richardean Golden Anderson, Director of Charter Development at Georgia Charter Schools Association to speak at their "Black History Program in February. Mrs. Anderson emphasized the importance of each one as a "Special Planted Seed" on Earth, and why it is so important that we honor each other with respect and love. CCAT is one of three State-Chartered Schools in Georgia. A recent article in the January 2006 issue of "Statesboro", described CCAT as follows: "It's just that this "different" small school is uniquely equipped to think and teach out of the box. That's why they've graduated 92% of their high school seniors-all them with college prep degrees-and 77% of them have gone on to post-secondary education. Small pebbles don't make big splashes, but sometimes their ripples reach the most remote of shores. The good work being done at CCAT has touched every corner of Bulloch County. Students go there for a variety of reasons, but most of them stay because they thrive."

CHARTER NEWS FROM AROUND THE NATION

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America – National Charter Schools Week
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/04/20060426-7.html>

"All of us—from the federal government to the states to the districts to schools—must do a better job of reaching out to inform parents about their options. This law calls on us to pony up and live up to our responsibilities. And when we don't, there's a day of reckoning. We must empower parents to demand more from our schools."

Jamaica, N.Y. — U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings

delivered the above remarks at the school choice forum at the Greater Allen Cathedral in Jamaica, N.Y. She discussed public school choice options and tutoring under the No Child Left Behind Act and America's Opportunity Scholarships for Kids proposed by President Bush. Spellings's speech is available at: www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/04/04052006.html

Charter schools serve more underprivileged, minority, and at-risk youth than do conventional public schools, a fact confirmed in **Center for Education Reform's "Annual Survey of America's Charter Schools."** The view this report, please click: http://www.edreform.com/upload/cer_charter_survey.pdf

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools 2006 issue brief, titled "Stunting Growth: The Impact of State-Imposed Caps on Charter Schools," identifies states with legislated limits on charter school growth and documents the impact these laws have on families seeking high quality public schools. According to the Alliance:

- In 2002-03, 39% of charter schools reported having a waiting list, averaging 135 students. If the charter movement could accommodate all of those students today, its population would be 20 percent larger and could fill 700 new charter schools!
- Seven states place a cap on the number of new charter schools that may open per year;
- Four states limit the number or percentage of students in charter schools

The U.S. Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative

Registration has opened for its free summer workshops: <https://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/About.asp>. Due to overwhelming feedback and high demand, Teacher-to-Teacher will be offering more workshops for teachers this summer than ever before - 14 in all!

Registration is on a first come, first-served basis and space is limited!

The workshops will be held across the country from June through August and will target specific grade levels and content areas.

General Summer Workshops in Georgia: June 12-13, Atlanta, Teachers of Grades K-8

Registration and professional development sessions are free-of-charge. Meals and refreshments will be provided during scheduled workshop activities, but participants will be responsible for their own transportation and lodging expenses. Teachers may be able to earn professional development credit through their district or state for participation in a Teacher-to-Teacher free summer workshop.

For more information and registration, please visit: <https://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/About.asp>. Registration is on a first come, first-served basis. Space is limited.

Charter Fact- From 1999 to 2005, the number of charter schools nationwide grew from 1,680 to 3,625. As of 2005, the five states with the most charter schools—California, Arizona, Florida, Ohio, and Texas—accounted for over half of the number of charter schools in the nation, with a combined total of 1,903 schools. -Education Week.org

HELPFUL RESOURCE INFORMATION

Smaller Learning Communities Program

The Charter School Program (CSP) encourages charter schools considered LEAs in accordance with their State law and regulations to work in consortium with other charter school LEAs in addition to their state charter associations and resource centers and charter authorizers in addressing the purpose of the **Smaller Learning Communities Program** (SLC). The purpose of the SLC program is to promote academic achievement through the creation or expansion of small, safe, and successful learning environments in large public high schools to help ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to make successful transitions to college and careers.

An LEA may form a consortium with another LEA and submit a joint application for funds. The consortium must follow the procedures for group applications described in 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129 in EDGAR.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Deborah Williams, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W241, Washington, DC 20202-6200. Telephone: (202) 205-3783 or by e-mail: deborah.williams@ed.gov

The Five Dysfunctions of Charter School Boards

Brian Carpenter, Executive Director for National Charter Schools Institute explores the dysfunctions found in Charter School Boards, and how to improve performance by helping board members understand these dysfunctions.

To view the article:

http://www.nationalcharterschools.org/uploads/pdf/resource_20060308114658_Five%20Dysfunctions%20of%20School%20Boards--v6%20as%20of%201-30-06.pdf

Getting Your Message Out – Media Training 101

Gary Larson, Vice President of Communications, California Charter Schools Association says, “Staying on message is key to dealing with the media”. But is your school adequately prepared to tell your story to the news media? Learn basic tips on creating a media action plan and getting your school’s positive message out to local news sources, tips on how to communicate with all forms of media, including television and radio news sources. This resource, provided by Gary and CCSA will allow you to more accurately devise your media campaign.

To access this resource: <http://www.gacharters.org/documents/GettingYourMessageOut-Handout.pdf>

Making Headlines: A Look at Best Practices

Gary Larson, Vice President of Communications, California Charter Schools Association says, “practice, practice, practice is the mantra for dealing with the media”. The more you interact with the media and learn from the experience, the sooner you’ll become the next media guru. This resource will feature examples from state associations and school leaders who share proven strategies for getting positive charter school messages in print.

To access this resource: <http://www.gacharters.org/documents/MakingHeadlines-ALookatBestPractices.pdf>