



ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUILDING STRONGER SCHOOLS TODAY

School System Operating Models  
and Flexibility Options  
Workshop  
September 13, 2014

# Welcome and Introductions

# Who is in the Room?

- Parents
- Teachers
- Students
- Administrators
- Community organizations
- Business owners
- Homeowners

Attended a previous Stakeholder Conversation?



# Why Are We Here Today?

- Review Themes from Community Stakeholder Conversations
- Review the APS Profile, Where APS is Now and Where We Want to Go
- Explore Innovation Through Flexibility: The Impact of Waivers
- Review Composition, Process and Lessons Learned from the Advisory Committee
- Take a Deeper Dive into Operating Models and Flexibility Options
- Hear About Next Steps

# Agenda and Presenters

Review Stakeholder Themes

Clara Axam

APS Profile, Where We Are Now  
and Where We Want to Go

Angela Smith

Innovation Flexibility and Waivers

Laura Lashley  
Angela Smith

Advisory Committee Update and  
Lessons Learned

Operational Models and Flexibility  
Options Deep Dive

Laura Lashley  
Angela Smith

Next Steps

Angela Smith

# Let's Agree To

- Listen to understand
- Release the need to be right
- Regard all perspectives as valid
- Share the Air
- Respect the need for one conversation
- Honor our time together
- Muzzle your cell phone

# State of Georgia Requirement

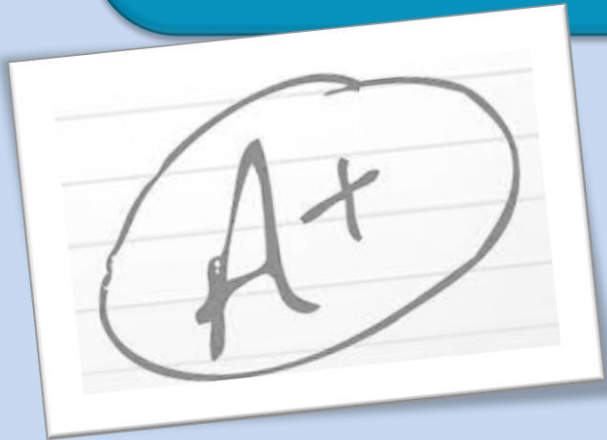
**No later than June 30, 2015 each local school system must notify the Ga DOE that it will operate as:**

1. An Investing in Educational Excellence School System (IE<sup>2</sup>)
  2. A Charter System
  3. A Status Quo School System
- *Optionally* a local school system may request the GADOE to become a System of Charter Schools or a System of Charter Clusters.



# Why Are We Doing This?

Improving Student Academic Results





# Stakeholder Themes

## Stakeholders want to:

- **Better understand how APS operates now...innovations, waivers, flexibilities?**
- **Better understand how the proposed models will impact current practices, protocols etc.**

# Stakeholder Themes

- **Better understand waivers, specifically:**
  - **What waivers does APS currently have and what savings result?**
  - **How do current waivers support innovation and flexibility?**
  - **What waivers would APS want to pursue?**
  - **What flexibility might result from pursuing a particular waiver?**

# Stakeholder Themes

- **Explore the experiences of other districts in implementing the various models**
- **Be informed on the evidence that any of the proposed models work better than the current operating model of APS**
- **Understand what the APS administration believes the best model is and why**

# Stakeholder Themes

- **Affirm the District's readiness to plan, adopt or execute any of the Operating Models**
- **Clarity about control and accountability under any of the Models**
- **More information about the impact of any of the Operating Models on the options to be a System of Charter Schools or a System of Charter Clusters**

# Stakeholder Interests and Concerns

## Interests

- Interest in the time line and community input process for APS's decision on flexibility options
- Readiness of the district to plan, to adopt and/or execute the chosen model
- Desire to understand APS's current use of waivers and the corresponding financial savings
- Hopeful for Better Schools
- Excitement regarding Shared decision-making
- Interest in how different models will affect district and school operations

## Concerns

- How does each model align with or impact our current operating model?
- June 2015 deadline to make a big decision
- Want APS to lead and make a decision on the model prior to community engagement
- Potential for Layoffs and Job Loss
- Concern over IE2 School Takeover/Consequences/Sanctions for failing to meet goals
- Concern over Loss of central control of district operations
- Concern over loss of resources without waivers in status quo model
- What will this mean to my classroom or school? What will this mean to my department?
- What does the research say about the models ability to improve student achievement?

# **APS Profile**

## **Where APS Is Now and Where We Want to Go**

# Fast Facts

- How many learning sites does APS have?
- How many teachers are in our district?
- How many students do we support?
- What does CCRPI stand for?
- Can you name the 3 operating models?

# APS Profile

## Learning Sites

- 106 Learning Sites and Programs
- 91 are Title I Schools

## Teachers

- 3,813

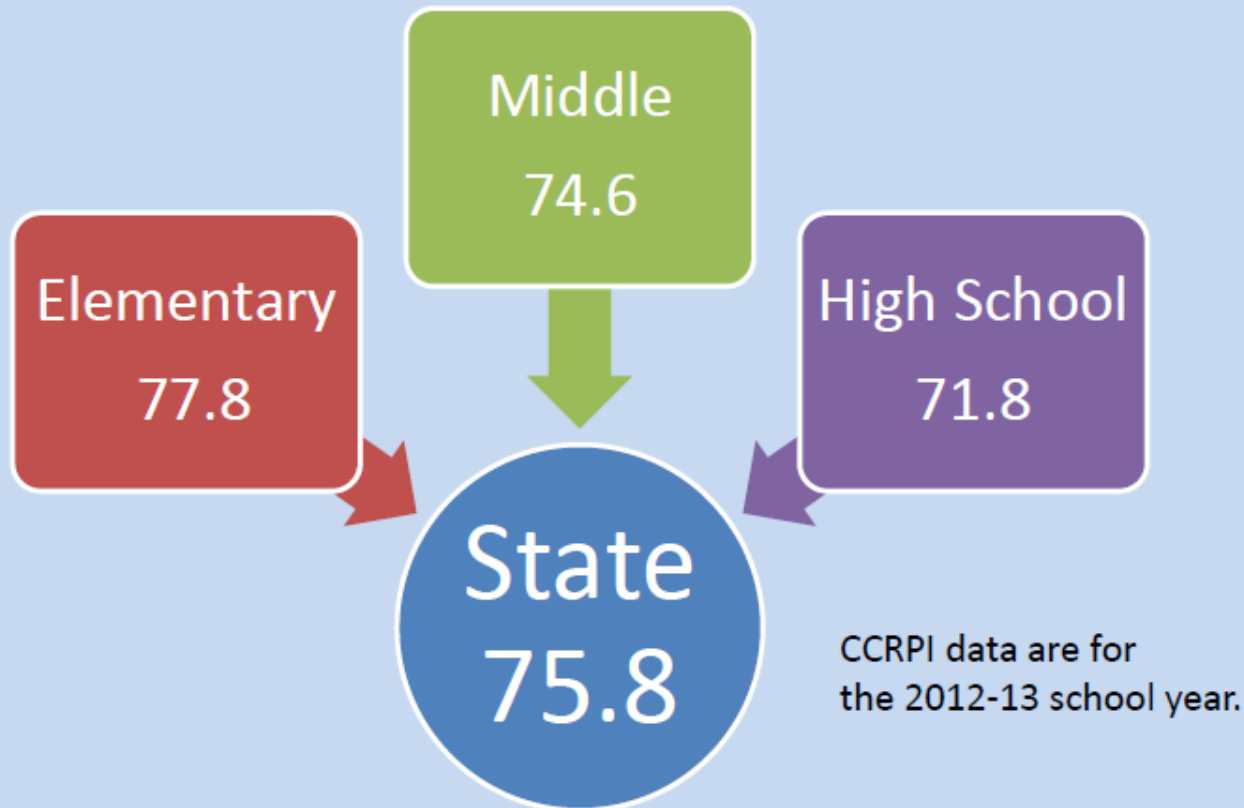
## Students

- Approximately 50,000
- 77% Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals
- 10% Special Needs



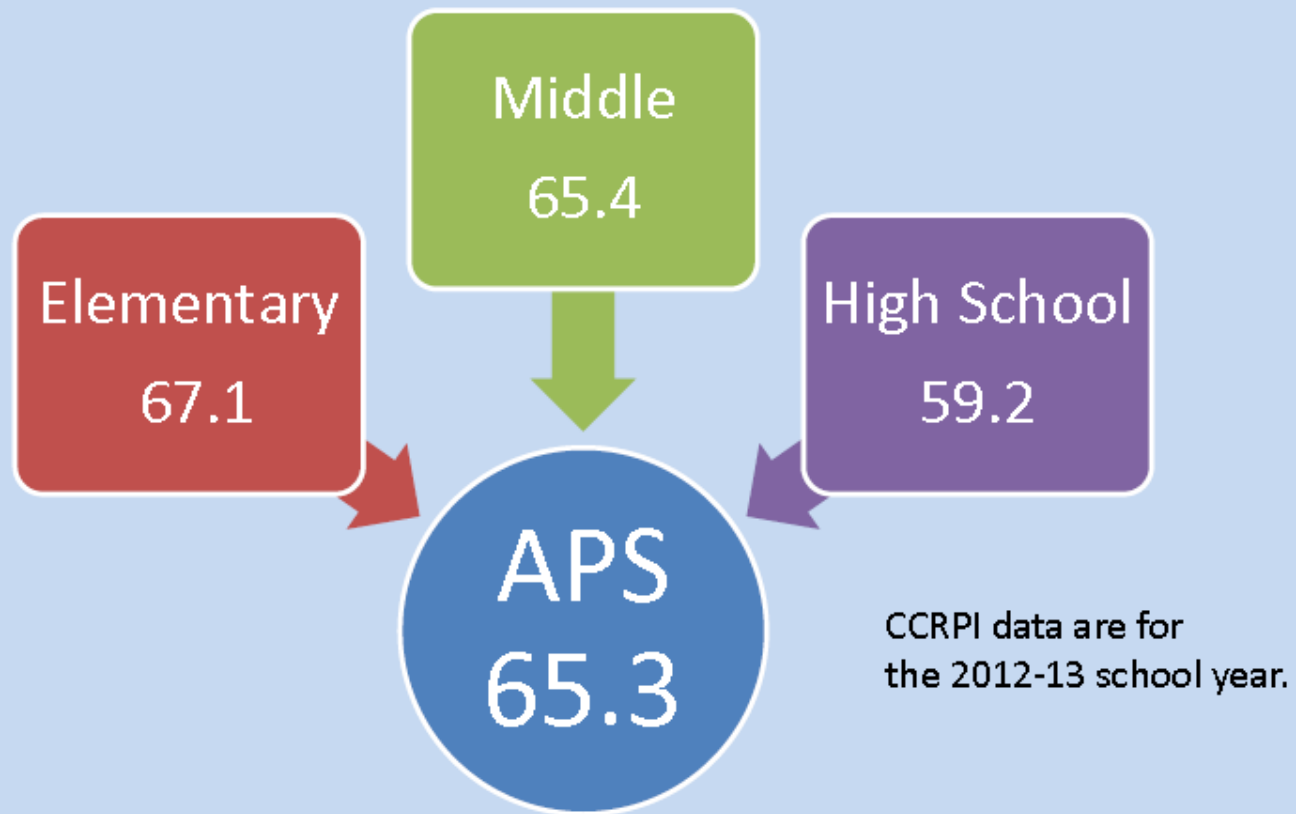
# Where Are We Now?

## College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) - State



# Where Are We Now?

## College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) - Atlanta



# Where Are We Now?

## Graduation & College Going

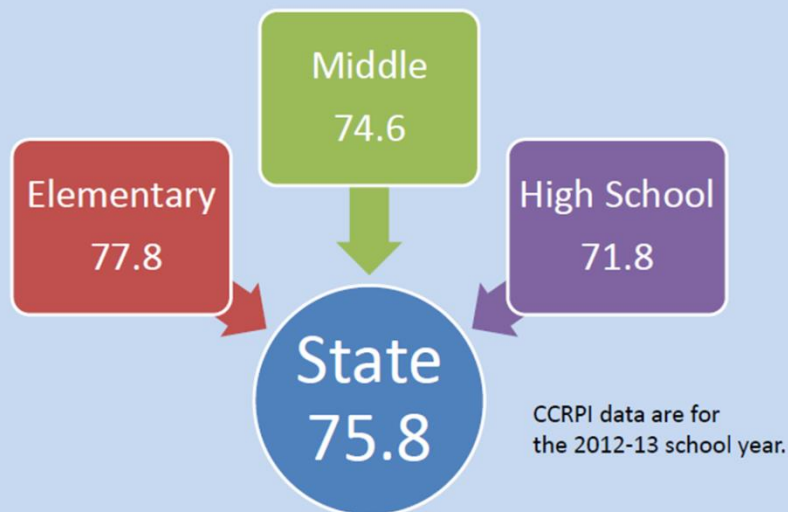
- In 2012, 51% of our students who entered grade nine four years earlier, graduated
- In 2013, 59% of our students who entered grade nine four years earlier, graduated (a percentage increase of 7.7).
- For the 2013 cohort, the state graduation rate was 71.5%
- Historically, 59% of our students who graduate, enroll in post-secondary institutions the next academic year.
- Only 47% of those students remain enrolled for a second year.

# Where Are We Now and Where Do We Want To Go?

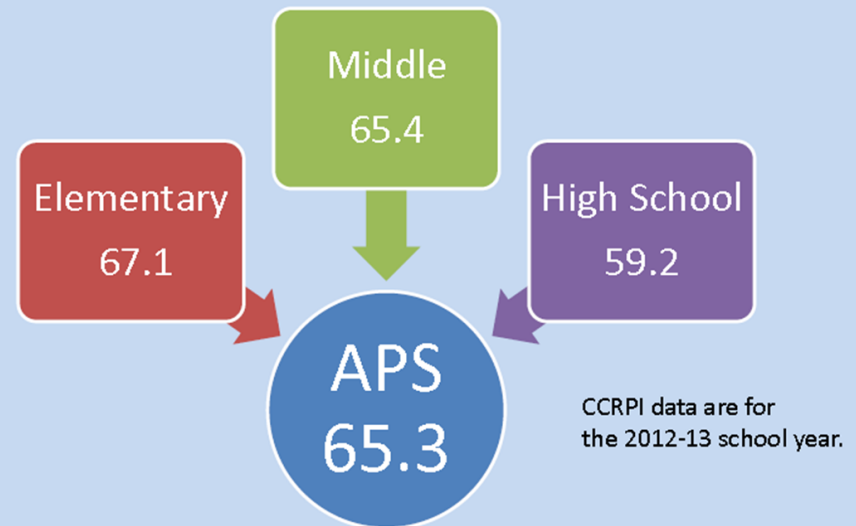
## Graduation

- In 2013, 59% of our students who entered grade nine four years earlier, graduated
- Our long-term goal is to increase our graduation rate to 90%

## College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) - State



## College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) - Atlanta



# Two Minute Turn and Talk

What does the data tell us about student performance?

Where are we making progress?

Where do we need to improve?

*For two minutes, turn to your neighbor and discuss the data you just reviewed.*

# Vision and Mission

- Vision (Draft): A high-performing school district where students love to learn, educators work to inspire, parents are engaged and the community has trust in the district.
- Mission (Draft): Through a caring culture of trust and collaboration, every student will be ready for college and career.

# Strategy Logic Model

If We...

&

Then...

Academic Program

Effectively deliver a rigorous standards-based curriculum with ongoing feedback

Invest in holistic development of the diverse APS student body

Our students will be well-rounded with the necessary academic skills

Talent Strategy

Get and keep the best talent at APS

Continually develop our people and appropriately reward and compensate

We will retain a team of employees who are capable of advancing student achievement

Systems & Resources

Invest and continually improve operating systems and processes

Prioritize resources based on needs

We will improve efficiency while also making strategic decisions using data

Culture

Foster a caring culture of trust and collaboration

Engage and consistently communicate and do what we say

We will have engaged stakeholders invested in the APS mission and vision

**Every Child:  
College  
and  
Career  
Ready**

# Choosing an Operating Model/Flexibility Option that Best Fits APS



# Innovation through Flexibility

*What's really possible?*

*Presented by*

Laura Lashley, Esq.

Senior Policy Advisor

Education Law Group

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP

[Laura.Lashley@nelsonmullins.com](mailto:Laura.Lashley@nelsonmullins.com)

## *What do we really mean by “flexibility”?*

---

Basically, “flexibility” refers to the measured amount of freedom earned by districts to operate outside of the educational framework established by the state.

# Okay, what do we *specifically* mean by “flexibility”?

---

- **A district or school’s ability to waive, i.e., not observe:**
  - ❖ **A large amount of Georgia’s education code (located in Title 20);**
  - ❖ **State Board of Education Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures;**
  - ❖ **Department of Education Policies and Procedures**
  - ❖ **Local Board of Education Rules, Policies, and Procedures**

# *So, what's inside the 499 pages of Title 20?*

---



Duties of  
Actors

How to  
earn/spend  
your money

How to  
treat  
children  
legally

Program  
Mandates

# State Board of Education Rules & Regs = Prime Waiver Country

---

---

State  
Board of  
Education  
Rules

School Day/School Year, Middle School  
Program Criteria, Class Size, Minimum  
direct classroom expenditures

---

(Just some  
examples!)

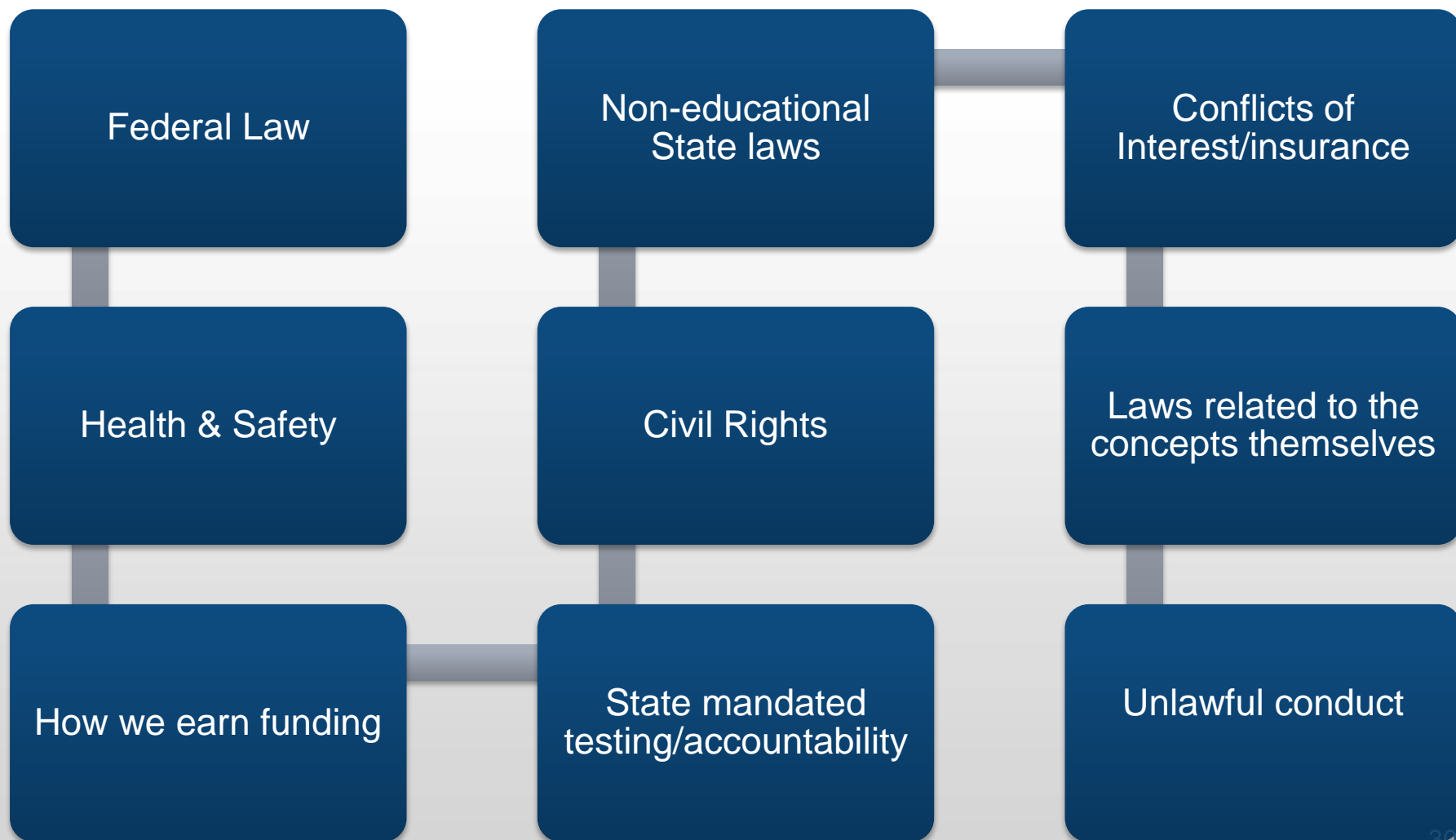
Personnel Required, Mentor Teacher  
Program, Salary Schedule

---

Career Education, Values & Character  
Education, Work-based learning,  
Textbook Selections

---

# What can't we waive?



# So, what is really possible, then?

Customizing a school's offerings (new arts program, language instruction)

Early Release for additional Professional Development

Hiring content experts for teachers

Waiving Class size to allow for college-style delivery

Waiver of seat-time requirements to let students explore internships, dual enrollment, etc.

Non-traditional ELL or Gifted Programs

Seat-time requirements adjusted for pacing of content/material

Course credit through content mastery (non-EOCT)

BYOD Technology initiatives/hybrid online classes

# Innovation at Every Level of the District

## District-level innovations

- Personnel reform
- Creative budgeting
- District-wide initiatives

## School-level innovations

- Curricular offerings
- Interventions geared towards certain issues
- Operational efficiencies that work for a specific community



# Flexibility in a Charter System vs. IE<sup>2</sup> Model

## Charter System

- Broad flexibility waiver
- Provide some examples, but not exhaustive list
- Somewhat a Seat of your pants option

## IE<sup>2</sup> Model

- Specifically enumerated waivers
- Justify each waiver with your plan for using it
- Must include one of the **Big Four**: class size, expenditures, salary schedule, teacher certification
- Very deliberate on front end

# APS Current Waivers

Currently APS uses the following waivers:

- Class Size
- Quality Basic Education Expenditure Control (QBE)
- Minimum Direct Classroom Expenditure (65% Rule)

# Advisory Committee Panel

# Advisory Committee Panel

- Composition of the Advisory Committee
- Process/Format of Advisory Committee Meeting
  - Deep Dive of Operating Models
  - Guest Speakers
  - Discussion/Activities
  - Community Input
- Lesson Learned

# Operating Models and Flexibility Options

# What is an IE<sup>2</sup> system?

## Definition

- A local district that has a performance contract with the SBOE (State Board of Education) granting the district freedom from specific Title 20 provisions, SBOE rules, and GaDOE (Georgia Department of Education) guidelines

## Facts & Features

- Contract is between the district and the SBOE
- GOSA (Governor's Office of Student Achievement) role: target-setting and performance monitoring
- District gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability

## Relative Advantages/ Disadvantages

- Flexibility to innovate
- Financial savings possible from waivers
- Loss of governance over schools that fail to meet performance targets after five years

## Federal/State Compliance

- Must comply with all federal laws and regulations
- Must comply with all state laws, rules and regulations not waived by the IE<sup>2</sup> contract

# What is a status quo system?

## Definition

- A local district that has elected not to request increased flexibility in exchange for increased accountability and defined consequences and opted to remain under all current laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures

## Facts & Features

- No performance contract
- No freedom from Title 20, State Board rules, or Department guidelines
- No waivers unless extraordinary circumstances

## Relative Advantages/Disadvantages

- No change is required
- No financial savings from waivers

## Federal/State Compliance

- Must comply with all federal laws and regulations
- Must comply with ALL state laws, rules and regulations

# Waivers for Status Quo Systems

- Status Quo Systems can receive Class Size waivers in the event that it can demonstrate a hardship pursuant to a waiver request
  - “Substantial hardship” is defined as a significant, unique, and demonstrable economic, technological, legal, or other type of deprivation to an individual or local education agency (LEA) requesting a variance or waiver which impairs the ability to continue to successfully meet the requirements of educational programs or services to its students



# What is a charter system?

## Definition

- A local district that has an executed charter from the SBOE granting it freedom from almost all of Title 20, SBOE rules, and GaDOE guidelines

## Facts & Features

- Charter is a contract between district and SBOE
- District gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability
- Distributed leadership process

## Relative Advantages/ Disadvantages

- Flexibility to innovate
- Financial savings possible from waivers
- Additional per-pupil funding in QBE if appropriated
- School level governance required

## Federal/State Compliance

- Must comply with all federal laws and regulations
- Must comply with all state laws, rules and regulations that cannot be waived (e.g., health and safety)

# What is School Level Governance?

Superintendent develops recommendations to the LBOE *without* school level input

Superintendent incorporates school level input into recommendations to the LBOE

## School Level Governance

- Decision-making authority in personnel decisions (People)
- Decision-making authority in curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations (Time)
- Decision-making authority in financial decisions (Money)

The Goal

## 2. Professionalize Governance Councils



School Governance Council  
Handbook: Governance Regulations  
and Procedures

**Cohort 1 Implementation**

...and your school's framework will ensure that you have the necessary resources to implement the handbook. The handbook is available in both print and digital formats. You can access the handbook at [www.fultoncountyga.gov/school-governance-council](#).

The handbook is available in both print and digital formats. You can access the handbook at [www.fultoncountyga.gov/school-governance-council](#).

**Local Cohort 1 Implementation Needs & Resources**

...and your school's framework will ensure that you have the necessary resources to implement the handbook. The handbook is available in both print and digital formats. You can access the handbook at [www.fultoncountyga.gov/school-governance-council](#).

**School Governance Council Checklist - Takeup**

...and your school's framework will ensure that you have the necessary resources to implement the handbook. The handbook is available in both print and digital formats. You can access the handbook at [www.fultoncountyga.gov/school-governance-council](#).

**School Governance Council Checklist - Ongoing Plan Office**

...and your school's framework will ensure that you have the necessary resources to implement the handbook. The handbook is available in both print and digital formats. You can access the handbook at [www.fultoncountyga.gov/school-governance-council](#).

**Fulton County Schools**  
Where Students Come First

**Be Seen by Your School Team**

**Vote!**

Cohort 1 Implementation website

### Timeline:

Completed:  
September 2012

### Metrics of Success:

- Regulations approved by legal counsel
- 20 C1 Principals trained on regulations before Information Sessions

## Role of the School Governance Council

1. Approve the school **strategic plan**
2. Approve the **annual budget**
3. Request flexibility from District for **innovation**
4. **Participate in hiring** of the Principal, when vacant
5. Provide annual **feedback** on Principal performance

# Members of the SGC

1 – Principal (non-voting)

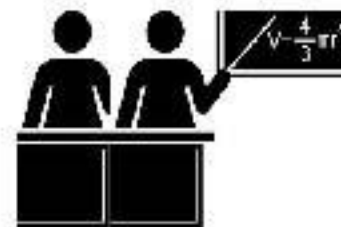
3 – Parents/Guardians (elected)

2 – Teachers (elected)

2 – School Employees (appointed)

2 – Community Members (nominated)

+ 2 – Students (HS only; non-voting)



10 Member Council (ES, MS)

12 Member Council (HS)





# Deep Dive Time

Comparison	IE2	Charter System	Status Quo System	System of Charter Clusters	System of Charter Schools
<b>Definitions</b>	District has performance contract with SBOE that grants flexibility from specific Title 20 provisions, SBOE rules & GaDOE guidelines	District has charter contract with SBOE that grants broad flexibility from almost all of Title 20, SBOE rules & GaDOE guidelines	District has formally rejected all flexibility options & opted to remain under current laws, rules, regulations, policies, & procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clusters apply to become charter clusters</li> <li>- Each cluster includes a high school &amp; its feeder schools</li> </ul>	Schools apply to become charter schools
<b>Contract Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contract is between district &amp; SBOE</li> <li>- System gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</li> <li>- GOSA monitors performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The charter is a contract between district &amp; SBOE</li> <li>- System gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No performance contract</li> <li>- No district flexibility from any Title 20, SBOE rules, or GaDOE guidelines</li> <li>- No waivers unless natural disaster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual charter contracts between each high school cluster, district &amp; SBOE</li> <li>- Each cluster gains autonomy &amp; flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individual charter contracts between each school, district &amp; SBOE</li> <li>- Each school gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Relative Advantages/Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility to innovate upfront</li> <li>- Financial savings possible from waivers</li> <li>- Loss of governance over schools that fail to meet targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility to innovate as we go</li> <li>- School-level autonomy &amp; accountability required</li> <li>- Financial savings possible from waivers</li> <li>- Additional QBE funding if appropriated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No formal application required</li> <li>- Loss of current waivers</li> <li>- financial impact from lost waivers</li> <li>- No financial savings from waivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cluster-level autonomy &amp; accountability required</li> <li>- Financial savings possible from waivers</li> <li>- Decision making is cluster-based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial savings possible from waivers</li> <li>- Federal Charter School Implementation Grants available</li> <li>- Decision-making is school-based</li> </ul>
<b>Length of Contract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial contract term is 5 years</li> <li>- Contract may be renewed if performance goals are met for three consecutive years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial contract term is 5 years</li> <li>- Contract status reviewed annually, based on student performance</li> <li>- Subsequent term may range from 5 to 10 yrs.</li> </ul>	No Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial contract term is 5 years</li> <li>- Contract status is reviewed annually, based on student performance</li> <li>- Subsequent term may range from 5 to 10 yrs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial contract term is 5 years</li> <li>- Contract status is reviewed annually, based on student performance</li> <li>- Subsequent term may range from 5 to 10 yrs.</li> </ul>

# Deep Dive Time, cont'd.

Comparison	IE2	Charter System	Status Quo System	System of Charter Clusters	System of Charter Schools
<b>Federal/State Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must comply with all federal laws &amp; regulations</li> <li>- Must comply with all state laws, rules &amp; regulations not waived by IE2 contract</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must comply with all federal laws &amp; regulations</li> <li>- Must comply with all state laws, rules &amp; regulations that cannot be waived (e.g., health &amp; safety)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must comply with all federal laws &amp; regulations</li> <li>- Must comply with ALL state laws, rules &amp; regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must comply with all federal laws &amp; regulations</li> <li>- Must comply with all state laws, rules &amp; regulations that cannot be waived (e.g., health &amp; safety)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must comply with all federal laws &amp; regulations</li> <li>- Must comply with all state laws, rules &amp; regulations that cannot be waived (e.g., health &amp; safety)</li> </ul>
<b>Flexibility &amp; Title 20</b>	System seeks specific waivers – <b>must</b> include 1: class size, expenditure control, certification, salary schedule	System <b>must</b> provide examples of how <b>flexibility</b> permitted by Charter Schools Act will be utilized	Waivers to be granted only in case of a natural disaster	Individual Clusters <b>must</b> state how <b>flexibility</b> permitted by Charter Schools Act will be utilized/Provide examples of how relief from Title 20 will be utilized	Individual Schools <b>must</b> state how <b>flexibility</b> permitted by Charter Schools Act will be utilized/Provide examples of how relief from Title 20 will be utilized
<b>School-Level Governance</b>	System <b>may opt to</b> maximize school-level governance as part of plan or retain LSAC advisory authority	System <b>must</b> grant substantial autonomy & maximum school-level governance & decision making	Local board of education maintains governance	System <b>must</b> grant substantial autonomy & maximum school-level governance & decision making to clusters	System <b>must</b> grant substantial autonomy & maximum school-level governance & decision making to schools
<b>Fiscal Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible savings through flexibility</li> <li>- Regular QBE funding with less state expenditure controls</li> <li>- District receives funds to distribute (as it does now)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible savings through flexibility</li> <li>- Regular QBE funding with more local school system expenditure controls; Possible \$87 per pupil supplemental funding</li> <li>- District receives funds to distribute (as it does now)</li> </ul>	No savings through flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible savings through flexibility for clusters</li> <li>- Regular QBE funding with more local expenditure controls; Potential federal charter school implementation grants for each school; district receives funds to distribute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible savings through flexibility for individual schools</li> <li>- Regular QBE funding with more local expenditure controls; Potential federal charter school implementation grants for each school; district receives funds to distribute</li> </ul>

# Deep Dive, Cont'd.

Comparison	IE2	Charter System	Status Quo System	System of Charter Clusters	System of Charter Schools
<b>Performance Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance must meet contract &amp; exceed state &amp; previous system performance</li> <li>- Must meet federal &amp; state measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance must meet contract &amp; exceed state &amp; previous system performance</li> <li>- Must meet federal &amp; state measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student performance must meet all federal &amp; state accountability measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cluster performance must meet contract &amp; exceed state averages &amp; previous system performance</li> <li>- Must meet federal &amp; state measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools performance must meet contract &amp; exceed state averages &amp; previous system performance</li> <li>- Must meet federal &amp; state measures</li> </ul>
<b>Consequences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-performing schools can convert to charter, or be operated by another system or entity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charter revoked for non-performance; flexibility loss</li> <li>- Revert to status quo if non-performing</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charter revoked for non-performance; flexibility loss</li> <li>- Become part of charter system or IE2 if charter lost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charter revoked for non-performance; flexibility loss</li> <li>- Become part of charter system or IE2 if charter lost</li> </ul>
<b>Other Features</b>	Flexibility proportionate to performance goals	Emphasis on parent/ community involvement & school level governance	N/A	Emphasis on parent/ community involvement, including maximum school and cluster level governance	Emphasis on parent/ community involvement, including maximum school level governance
<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Innovations/use of waivers planned out in application</li> <li>- Must be approved by School Board at public meeting</li> <li>- Strategic plan</li> <li>- System must conduct public hearing to share plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must be approved by School Board at public meeting</li> <li>- Strategic plan</li> <li>- System must conduct public hearing to share plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- System must conduct public hearing to provide notice of intent to select Status Quo</li> <li>- Board of education must sign statement that system selected Status Quo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan must be approved by (1) Individual Cluster, (2) Local School Board at public meeting and (3) SBOE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan must be approved by 1) Individual Schools, (2) Local School Board at public meeting and (3) SBOE</li> </ul>





*Questions?*

# Next Steps

- Review input and feedback from stakeholders
- Advisory Committee to outline advantages and disadvantages for each of the model
- Advisory Committee to outline possible courses of action
- Superintendent to review information from Advisory Committee
- Board to review information and make decision regarding next steps