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?

Atlanta Public Schools
Building Stronger Schools Today
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
Laura Lashley

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
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 (IE²)
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:
  o What waivers does APS currently have and what savings result?
  o How do current waivers support innovation and flexibility?
  o What waivers would APS want to pursue?
  o 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

<table>
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<th>Interests</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interest in the time line and community input process for APS’s decision on flexibility options</td>
<td>How does each model align with or impact our current operating model?</td>
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| Readiness of the district to plan, to adopt and/or execute the chosen model | June 2015 deadline to make a big decision  
| Desire to understand APS’s current use of waivers and the corresponding financial savings | Want APS to lead and make a decision on the model prior to community engagement  
| Hopeful for Better Schools                                               | Potential for Layoffs and Job Loss                                                                                                        |
| Excitement regarding Shared decision-making                              | Concern over IE2 School Takeover/Consequences/Sanctions for failing to meet goals                                                           |
| Interest in how different models will affect district and school operations | 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

State 75.8

Elementary 77.8

Middle 74.6

High School 71.8

CCRPI data are for the 2012-13 school year.
Where Are We Now?

College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) - Atlanta

Elementary 67.1

Middle 65.4

High School 59.2

APS 65.3

CCRPI data are for the 2012-13 school year.
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
- Elementary: 77.8
- Middle: 74.6
- High School: 71.8
- State: 75.8

College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) - Atlanta
- Elementary: 67.1
- Middle: 65.4
- High School: 59.2
- APS: 65.3

CCRPI data are for the 2012-13 school year.
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.
**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

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**Strategy Logic Model**

If We... & Then...

- **Academic Program**
  - Effectively deliver a rigorous standards-based curriculum with ongoing feedback
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**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
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Board of Education Rules</th>
<th>School Day/School Year, Middle School Program Criteria, Class Size, Minimum direct classroom expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Just some examples!)</td>
<td>Personnel Required, Mentor Teacher Program, Salary Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Career Education, Values &amp; Character Education, Work-based learning, Textbook Selections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What can’t we waive?

- Federal Law
- Health & Safety
- How we earn funding
- Non-educational State laws
- Civil Rights
- State mandated testing/accountability
- Conflicts of Interest/insurance
- Laws related to the concepts themselves
- Unlawful conduct
- Unlawful conduct
So, what is really possible, then?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customizing a school’s offerings (new arts program, language instruction)</th>
<th>Early Release for additional Professional Development</th>
<th>Hiring content experts for teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waiving Class size to allow for college-style delivery</td>
<td>Waiver of seat-time requirements to let students explore internships, dual enrollment, etc.</td>
<td>Non-traditional ELL or Gifted Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seat-time requirements adjusted for pacing of content/material</td>
<td>Course credit through content mastery (non-EOCT)</td>
<td>BYOD Technology initiatives/hybrid online classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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\(^2\) Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charter System</th>
<th>IE(^2) Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Broad flexibility waiver</td>
<td>• Specifically enumerated waivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide some examples, but not exhaustive list</td>
<td>• Justify each waiver with your plan for using it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Somewhat a Seat of your pants option</td>
<td>• Must include one of the <strong>Big Four</strong>: class size, expenditures, salary schedule, teacher certification</td>
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<td>• Very deliberate on front end</td>
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</table>
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
  o Deep Dive of Operating Models
  o Guest Speakers
  o Discussion/Activities
  o Community Input
• Lesson Learned
Operating Models and Flexibility Options
# What is an IE² 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 IE² 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

Timeline:
Completed: September 2012

Metrics of Success:
- Regulations approved by legal counsel
- 20 C1 Principals trained on regulations before Information Sessions

Cohort 1 Implementation website
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

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>District has performance contract with SBOE that grants flexibility from specific Title 20 provisions, SBOE rules &amp; GaDOE guidelines</td>
<td>District has charter contract with SBOE that grants broad flexibility from almost all of Title 20, SBOE rules &amp; GaDOE guidelines</td>
<td>District has formally rejected all flexibility options &amp; opted to remain under current laws, rules, regulations, policies, &amp; procedures</td>
<td>- Clusters apply to become charter clusters</td>
<td>- Individual charter contracts between each high school cluster, district &amp; SBOE</td>
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<td>- Each cluster includes a high school &amp; its feeder schools</td>
<td>- Each school gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract Relationships</td>
<td>- Contract is between district &amp; SBOE - System gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability - GOSA monitors performance</td>
<td>- The charter is a contract between district &amp; SBOE - System gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</td>
<td>- No performance contract - No district flexibility from any Title 20, SBOE rules, or GaDOE guidelines - No waivers unless natural disaster</td>
<td>- Individual charter contracts between each high school cluster, district &amp; SBOE - Each cluster gains autonomy &amp; flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</td>
<td>- Individual charter contracts between each school, district &amp; SBOE - Each school gains flexibility to innovate in exchange for increased academic accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Advantages/Disadvantages</td>
<td>- Flexibility to innovate upfront - Financial savings possible from waivers - Loss of governance over schools that fail to meet targets</td>
<td>- Flexibility to innovate as we go - School-level autonomy &amp; accountability required - Financial savings possible from waivers - Additional QBE funding if appropriated</td>
<td>- No formal application required - Loss of current waivers - Financial impact from lost waivers - No financial savings from waivers</td>
<td>- Cluster-level autonomy &amp; accountability required - Financial savings possible from waivers - Decision making is cluster-based</td>
<td>- Financial savings possible from waivers - Federal Charter School Implementation Grants available - Decision-making is school-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Contract</td>
<td>- Initial contract term is 5 years - Contract may be renewed if performance goals are met for three consecutive years</td>
<td>- Initial contract term is 5 years - Contract status reviewed annually, based on student performance - Subsequent term may range from 5 to 10 yrs.</td>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>- Initial contract term is 5 years - Contract status is reviewed annually, based on student performance - Subsequent term may range from 5 to 10 yrs.</td>
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## Deep Dive Time, cont’d.

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<td></td>
<td>- Must comply with all state laws, rules &amp; regulations not waived by IE2 contract</td>
<td>- Must comply with all state laws, rules &amp; regulations that cannot be waived (e.g., health &amp; safety)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility &amp; Title 20</strong></td>
<td>System seeks specific waivers – <strong>must</strong> include 1: class size, expenditure control, certification, salary schedule</td>
<td>System <strong>must</strong> provide examples of how flexibility permitted by Charter Schools Act will be utilized</td>
<td>Waivers to be granted only in case of a natural disaster</td>
<td>Individual Clusters <strong>must</strong> state how flexibility permitted by Charter Schools Act will be utilized/Provide examples of how relief from Title 20 will be utilized</td>
<td>Individual Schools <strong>must</strong> state how flexibility permitted by Charter Schools Act will be utilized/Provide examples of how relief from Title 20 will be utilized</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School-Level Governance</strong></td>
<td>System <strong>may opt to</strong> maximize school-level governance as part of plan or retain LSAC advisory authority</td>
<td>System <strong>must</strong> grant substantial autonomy &amp; maximum school-level governance &amp; decision making</td>
<td>Local board of education maintains governance</td>
<td>System <strong>must</strong> grant substantial autonomy &amp; maximum school-level governance &amp; decision making to clusters</td>
<td>System <strong>must</strong> grant substantial autonomy &amp; maximum school-level governance &amp; decision making to schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiscal Impacts</strong></td>
<td>- Possible savings through flexibility</td>
<td>- Possible savings through flexibility</td>
<td>No savings through flexibility</td>
<td>- Possible savings through flexibility for clusters</td>
<td>- Possible savings through flexibility for individual schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Regular QBE funding with less state expenditure controls</td>
<td>- Regular QBE funding with more local school system expenditure controls; Possible $87 per pupil supplemental funding</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Regular QBE funding with more local expenditure controls; Potential federal charter school implementation grants for each school; district receives funds to distribute</td>
<td>- Regular QBE funding with more local expenditure controls; Potential federal charter school implementation grants for each school; district receives funds to distribute</td>
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*Note: 'IE2' refers to the specific contract or system being discussed.*
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| **Performance Evaluation** | - Performance must meet contract & exceed state & previous system performance  
- Must meet federal & state measures | - Performance must meet contract & exceed state & previous system performance  
- Must meet federal & state measures | - Student performance must meet all federal & state accountability measures | - Cluster performance must meet contract & exceed state averages & previous system performance  
- Must meet federal & state measures | - Schools performance must meet contract & exceed state averages & previous system performance  
- Must meet federal & state measures |
| **Consequences**         | - Non-performing schools can convert to charter, or be operated by another system or entity | - Charter revoked for non-performance; flexibility loss  
- Revert to status quo if non-performing | N/A | - Charter revoked for non-performance; flexibility loss  
- Become part of charter system or IE2 if charter lost | - Charter revoked for non-performance; flexibility loss  
- Become part of charter system or IE2 if charter lost |
| **Other Features**       | 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 |
| **Requirements**         | - Innovations/use of waivers planned out in application  
- Must be approved by School Board at public meeting  
- Strategic plan  
- System must conduct public hearing to share plan | - Must be approved by School Board at public meeting  
- Strategic plan  
- System must conduct public hearing to share plan | - System must conduct public hearing to provide notice of intent to select Status Quo  
- Board of education must sign statement that system selected Status Quo | - Plan must be approved by (1) Individual Cluster, (2) Local School Board at public meeting and (3) SBOE | - Plan must be approved by (1) Individual Schools, (2) Local School Board at public meeting and (3) SBOE |
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