

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

### DCSD Checklist

The petitioning Druid Hills Cluster schools collectively will operate the charter under the name Druid Hills Charter Cluster, Inc. (hereinafter “Druid Hills Charter Cluster” or “DHCC”), a Georgia non-profit corporation. The primary contact and school representative authorized to execute the contract with the DCSD is Matthew S. Lewis, current officer of the DHCC and chair of the Druid Hills High School (“DHHS”) Council. His contact information is:

[matthew.s.lewis@me.com](mailto:matthew.s.lewis@me.com) and 678-595-3681.

### DCSD Q1 – Grade levels

The DHCC will serve Grades K-12 in the following schools:

**K-5:** Avondale Elementary, Fernbank Elementary, Laurel Ridge Elementary, McLendon Elementary

**K-6:** Briar Vista Elementary

**6-8:** Druid Hills Middle

**9-12:** Druid Hills High

In addition, while pre-K is not covered under this Petition, the DHCC will seek continuation of the existing pre-K programs at the five elementary schools with the appropriate DCSD department.

### DCSD Q2 – Charter Term

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2067.1(b), the DHCC respectfully requests an initial term of five (5) years for its charter.

### DCSD Q3 –Mission; State – Motivation for Cluster

The DHCC supports the legislative intent of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2061 to raise student achievement through academic and organizational innovation as described herein.

The Druid Hills Charter Cluster will develop college and career ready students by providing continuous learning pathways for students from K-12. These pathways will provide a

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

choice of learning models with rewarding instruction, an authentic assessment process, and environments that value parent, teacher, and community contributions to the education of all children.

The DHCC will provide community-based oversight and schoolhouse level management for its seven schools. The DHCC's governing board (the DHCC Board of Directors), Cluster Administrative Officer (CAO), and school principals will oversee and manage curriculum, operations, personnel, and finances, with the benefit of additional guidance from seven School Leadership Councils. This organizational structure will ensure that decisions are timely, relevant, made by stakeholders of the Cluster, and that students will receive a seamless education in a model fitting their learning style throughout their K-12 experience. The organizational structure will, by its nature, allow constant bi-directional flow of information so that all decisions are made with current information and the broadest possible perspective.

### **DCSD Q4 and State – Innovations; Rationale, Legislative Intent, Accountability for the Cluster**

The DHCC will improve student performance by offering integrated K-12 learning pathways delivering International Baccalaureate (IB); Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM); Advanced Placement (AP); and Montessori choices to parents and educators in order to be most responsive to diverse learning styles.

Today, many students find themselves under-served by a generalized approach to education. By establishing a manageable, but diverse set of learning pathways, the DHCC offers choices that enable a best-fit solution to individual student learning needs and styles. Innovatively integrating these learning pathways, the DHCC approach focuses on learning as a necessary lifelong skill and follows student progress from K-12, eliminating the losses that

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

occur in transition from level to level in a generalized system. By maintaining community-based decision making over the financial resources on a per student basis, the DHCC, with the guidance of its Cluster Financial Officer (CFO), will more efficiently deliver dollars to the classroom, thus providing enhanced resources management and, ultimately, a more individualized approach. Managing staffing decisions at the Cluster level will ensure those hired and retained share the mission of the DHCC, have the skills to serve students effectively, and are personally invested in the DHCC.

Moreover, by focusing on the entire K-12 learning process, the DHCC creates a uniform means of assessing progress across grade levels. Transitions from one grade level to the next are consistent and measurable as curricular planning and assessment are coordinated. The DHCC will demonstrate measurable improvement in student achievement over the same school performance levels for the prior year; and measurable improvement in student achievement in the aggregate over the same school groups and subgroups in the County at large.

Examples of academic, financial, and operational autonomy and innovations are listed below:

<b>ACADEMIC AUTONOMY &amp; INNOVATIONS</b>	
<b>Innovations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning pathways: STEAM, IB, Montessori</li> <li>• Implementation of Common Core aligned with pathways</li> <li>• K-5 school choice</li> <li>• Aligned instructional materials and professional development</li> <li>• Authentic assessment and use of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Cluster-wide for benchmarking, monitoring, &amp; accountability</li> <li>• Expanded services for gifted students</li> <li>• Extracurricular offerings aligned with pathways, student/parent interest, and staff talents</li> <li>• Graduation requirements meet state requirements but waive the additional PE requirement established by the DCSD to allow for additional remediation for identified students</li> <li>• Coordinated support services aligned with Cluster population and needs</li> <li>• Calendar and daily schedules aligned to Cluster needs and instructional programs</li> </ul>

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modified discipline cycle</li> <li>• Pathway specific pacing guides</li> <li>• Field trips selected by Cluster</li> <li>• Placement of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be conducted through established criteria using data to drive decision making</li> <li>• Additional academic interventions, including scheduling preferences and remediation for entering 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be available for those not passing math/ELA of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade CRCT, who are more than 2 years behind, or who are administratively promoted</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits of Flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous learning approaches provide consistency for students, better tracking of curriculum, instructional success, and areas of improvement, and meet the learning styles of a variety of students</li> <li>• School choice available to all parents in order to better meet their child's learning style or family needs</li> <li>• Authentic assessment is more child-centered, relevant, and tied to learning outcomes; MAP testing is norm-referenced, provides data in more useful formats to drive instruction, reduces the amount of testing needed and frees up instructional time</li> <li>• Expanded gifted programming - teaching more broadly provides for differentiation to more students demonstrating giftedness in ways not captured in state testing; gifted training builds capacity in educators</li> <li>• Relevant extracurricular offerings aligned with pathways extends learning time and meets varying interests and abilities</li> <li>• Reducing the district mandated PE requirement provides time for additional remediation in core content areas to support remedial learners and to better ensure core competencies are met and students graduate</li> <li>• Coordinating student services (i.e., social work) allows students to be monitored and supported throughout their K-12 experience and concerns to be addressed in a timely manner</li> <li>• Modified calendars provide for increases in instructional time, implementation of pathways, and opportunities for vertical and horizontal planning and teaming</li> <li>• Raises the bar on student discipline and provides for a consistent application of process related to discipline; develops a consistent culture across the Cluster</li> <li>• Pacing guides developed by the Cluster ensure alignment with Common Core and pathway, which will enable differentiation for students and ensure standards are met and exceeded</li> <li>• Field trips and "goings out" are an integral part of the learning experience and increase both interest, relevance, and exposure for students</li> <li>• Students with additional supports in 9<sup>th</sup> grade will be better set up for entry to Cross Keys or similar program and to meet graduation requirements and basic competency in subject matter</li> </ul>
<b>FINANCIAL AUTONOMY &amp; INNOVATIONS</b>	
<b>Innovations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial autonomy over Cluster budget and resource allocation</li> </ul>

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

<b>Benefits of Flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring of a Cluster Financial Officer meeting state credentialing requirements</li> <li>• Allows school and pathway specific funding for curricular, extracurricular, and instructional needs</li> <li>• Increases the amount of dollars getting to the classrooms through efficient use of funds</li> <li>• Funds “best fit” solutions at the classroom level and provides for experimentation with new models when appropriate</li> <li>• Allows for staffing better aligned to the pathways and needs of each school and the Cluster as a whole</li> <li>• Provides for transparency for parents, teachers, and the community over expenditures and revenue streams</li> <li>• Builds bonds and a shared community by engaging all stakeholders in the process</li> <li>• Provides for salary scaling for Cluster staff including school-level decision making rewards for exceptional academic performance within acceptable economic parameters</li> </ul>
<b>OPERATIONAL AUTONOMY &amp; INNOVATIONS</b>	
<b>Innovations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance by an autonomous board of qualified stakeholders</li> <li>• Attendance policies modified</li> <li>• Information technology systems selected based on functionality, efficiency, and need</li> <li>• Student: teacher ratios defined by the Cluster</li> <li>• Cluster selected transportation provider, which may include DCSD</li> <li>• Cluster selected food service provider, which may include DCSD</li> <li>• Grievance and conflict resolution policies defined by the Cluster’s Board of Directors</li> <li>• Employment by the Cluster’s non-profit corporation, DHCC</li> <li>• Intentional engagement of parents and community</li> <li>• Healthy Schools Program implemented including healthier foods for staff and students, a wellness plan, and movement integrated into school-wide programming</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits of Flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides for decision making at the school-level by stakeholders that are aligned to the specific needs of the Cluster schools and the DHCC community</li> <li>• Increases student attendance, learning time, and creates an efficient and consistently implemented process for managing attendance</li> <li>• Integrates service provisions (i.e., social work) more directly and in a more timely fashion</li> <li>• Creates greater efficiencies in record keeping, reporting, and better utilization of data</li> <li>• Defines student: teacher ratios appropriate for each pathway, grade level, and based on the Cluster’s budget, which may be modified to decrease class size</li> <li>• Cluster selected transportation provider allows for decision making that takes into account needs of the Cluster, utilization, routes, efficiency, school choice in K-5, and cost specific to serving the Cluster.</li> </ul>

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cluster selected food service provider allows for decision making that takes into account needs of the Cluster, utilization, healthy and tasteful options, efficiency, and cost specific to serving the Cluster.</li><li>• Grievance and conflict resolution policies allow revisions to align with the Cluster’s organizational structure and to ensure due process for staff and students</li><li>• Employment by the Cluster provides better alignment with Cluster priorities, pathways, and expectations related to quality teaching, leadership, and auxiliary services. Further it provides for the development of creative and competitive compensation packages to attract and retain high quality staff</li><li>• Healthier students and staff increases attendance, lowers obesity rates, and raises academic achievement</li></ul>
--	--

The Cluster is uniquely situated to implement the charter based on:

- High levels of staff and community engagement and buy-in into the charter concept;
- 5 elementary schools with diverse populations, some with experience with the proposed models;
- Alignment with DeKalb County’s strategic plan and RT3 plan

The Cluster concept is innovative in the state and nationwide, and based on emerging best practices. For example, a case study by Public Impact in April 2010 found that there are seven critical areas of autonomy needed to raise achievement. These are: freedom to develop a great team; freedom to change curriculum and classroom structure; financial freedom; freedom to define a unique school culture; freedom to manage teachers; autonomy in scheduling; and freedom to focus on education. See <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/resource/free-lead-autonomy-highly-successful-charter-schools>.

Moreover, the critical role of autonomous boards is the subject of nationwide focus as part of the governance “portfolio strategy” for school districts. See [http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/pub\\_portfolio\\_governance\\_feb13.pdf](http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/pub_portfolio_governance_feb13.pdf); see also <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key->

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

[research/Documents/5-Redefining-and-Improving-School.pdf](#) (focusing on the reasons for, and success with, localized governance models in districts); <http://www.crpe.org/publications/inside-charter-schools-unlocking-doors-student-success> (emphasizing necessity of exercising the autonomy given to improve achievement).

### DCSD Q5 - School's Curriculum

DHCC will fully implement the Georgia Common Core Performance Standards, and as appropriate and beneficial, will integrate and align other instructional pathway related curricula, such as STEM or STEAM standards, IB standards, Montessori, and AP.

### DCSD Q6 - Unique Program Elements

**International Baccalaureate (K-12) Overview.** The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) offers its international education programs to more than 1,000,000 students across 144 countries. The IBO defines "international education" according to the following criteria.

- Developing citizens of the world in relation to culture, language and learning to live together;
- Building and reinforcing students' sense of identity and cultural awareness;
- Fostering students' recognition and development of universal human values;
- Stimulating curiosity and inquiry in order to foster a spirit of discovery and enjoyment of learning;
- Equipping students with the skills to learn and acquire knowledge, individually or collaboratively, and to apply these skills and knowledge accordingly across a broad range of areas;
- Providing international content while responding to local requirements and interests; and
- Encouraging diversity and flexibility in teaching methods.

**IB Current Offerings.** DCSD currently has seven schools that have earned IB authorization for one of IB's three programs: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP), and another two schools in candidacy. Four of these seven IB-authorized schools are within the Druid Hills cluster: DHHS

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

(currently DP-authorized for grades 11-12), DHMS (MYP), and Avondale and Fernbank Elementary Schools (PYP). These schools share the mission and commitment of IB's quality international education.

In a cluster-wide survey of stakeholders, respondents were broadly supportive of IB, with a majority ranking it among their top three preferred instructional pathways. At schools currently offering the model, stakeholder support was similarly strong: 59% of DHHS respondents ranked it in their top three preferences; 62% of DHMS respondents did the same; and 60% of Avondale and 69% of Fernbank respondents did so. DCSD and these schools have made significant investments in training and authorization. With such broad support from stakeholders and a strong alignment with DCSD's college and career ready focus, the Cluster will continue IB at these four schools, and seek MYP authorization for grades 9-10 at DHHS.

**IB Benefits.** IB produces students who are inquirers, thinkers, principled, balanced, knowledgeable, communicators, open-minded, and reflective. According to the IBO, externally commissioned research related to the programs include the following outcomes:

- Students in the PYP and the MYP outperformed non-IB peers across multiple domains;
- IB students tend to perform better than matched comparison groups in performance;
- IB performance in high school is a significant predictor of college achievement;
- IB students earn a higher attainment of college diplomas;
- Ratings of high school students on academic, behavioral and emotional engagement were higher in IB students.

**IB Delivery.** The IB programs value and consistently implement high standards. Programming focuses on teaching students to be critical thinkers, reflective, and to be creative and globally-minded. IB provides extensive professional development and collaborative opportunities among IB teachers and leaders, statewide, nationwide, and worldwide. The IB programs offer criterion-referenced internal and external assessments to ensure that the programs



## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

are being implemented with fidelity, and producing the highest level of student achievement possible. Supporting the IB Standards and Practices for all programs, delivery of IB includes the following:

1. The IB philosophy is promoted, understood and evident in all aspects of the school community.
2. The school's leadership and administrative structure ensure the implementation of the programme(s) through a leadership team and a programme coordinator. Professional development and curriculum planning processes are mandated across all levels of the programme.
3. The IB philosophy is embedded in the Common Core Performance Standards in that their teaching, learning, and assessments also reflect the philosophy and core values of IB, including collaborative planning, the importance of language acquisition, learning how to learn, academic honesty, and trans-disciplinary learning.

### **Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) – (K-12) Overview.**

Although there is a long history of the interaction of the sciences with the arts, STEAM is a new acronym that has emerged over the last decade. Some of the main themes of STEAM are fostering innovation, the need for twenty-first century skills, and divergent and convergent thinking. The arts curriculum is now seen as essential to helping children express STEM concepts and in facilitating innovation. As U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, has observed, "For today's students to be the innovators and economic leaders of the future, they will need to have experiences as musicians and dancers, painters and sculptors, poets and playwrights — in short they will need to be creative innovators who will build our nation's economy for the future." (PCAH, 2011, at 3.) Similarly, Georgia has undertaken a significant STEM initiative

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

with the goal of STEM-certifying 300 schools. As State School Superintendent John Barge said, “We must do everything we can to help fill the void of STEM professionals in Georgia's labor market by tapping into students' passions for science, technology, math and engineering.” (Georgia Dep’t of Education, Race to the Top Communications, May 2013.) That need is especially pronounced here in metro Atlanta, and DCSD rightly has recognized this need by identifying STEM as a key initiative in its RT3 endeavors.

There is extensive stakeholder support for STEAM cluster-wide. Similar to IB, a majority (here, 56%) of cluster-wide respondents ranked STEAM among their top three choices of instructional pathways. Some of the highest levels of support came from Laurel Ridge, with 66% of respondents placing in their top three, and 62% of McLendon respondents ranking it among their top three instructional choices. Therefore, the DHCC intends to offer STEAM as a K-5 instructional pathway at Laurel Ridge and McLendon Elementary Schools, and as non-Montessori pathway choice at Briar Vista.

**STEAM Current Offerings.** DCSD currently uses RT3 funds to expand and integrate STEM into current curriculum to meet the following goals, as aligned to the 2012-2017 Excellence in Education Plan:

**Goal 1:** Create student centered learning environments that empower students to become innovators and technology proficient problem solvers to gain 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Student Achievement and Success);

**Goal 2:** Provide high quality K-12 STEM professional learning for administrators, teachers, and counselors (Excellence in Leadership and Personnel);

**Goal 3:** Engage partnerships that allow schools and industry to connect the school district in improving students’ STEM-career opportunities (Engaging Stakeholders and Partnerships).

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

The goals above, with the addition of the Arts component, demonstrate that the DHCC's intention of offering a K-12 STEAM pathway is directly aligned with and supportive of DCSD's strategic plan.

Additionally, according to recent DCSD publications, that DCSD has two elementary schools (Henderson Mill and Hightower) that have received STEM certification, and another twenty-five schools pursuing STEM certification. The DHCC wishes to be an additional partner in, and an integral part of, these DCSD efforts to fund and implement high quality STEM programming.

**STEAM Benefits.** The critical need for, and value of, STEM as a focal point in elementary and secondary education is well-recognized, as set out above. A STEAM model, properly executed, can bring all those STEM benefits to students, and more. (*See* Graziano, 1999 (showing "improved spatial-temporal-reasoning skills" in students who studied music, thereby facilitating learning of mathematical concepts); Tishman, 1999 (finding observational skills obtained from viewing art paintings were transferrable to observing science experiments); Catteral, 2006 (linking higher SAT scores to students involved in arts, music, orchestra and band).)

The DHCC believes that similar to the results and observations found in these studies and others, a STEAM model will bring about significant gains in the holistic development of students, including:

### **Academic Outcomes**

- Higher achievement in reading and writing
- Students receiving arts-integrated math instruction outperform control groups in mathematic computation, application and comprehension
- Students who engage in arts-integrated

### **Cognitive Outcomes**

- Development of critical thinking skills "essential for applying knowledge and visualizing solutions"
- Development of abstract reasoning and problem solving skills
- Development of imagination, creative

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

instruction have significant gains in IQ, grades and performance on standardized tests

- Increase attendance and reduce dropout rates

thinking skills, adaptability, flexibility, originality, and abstractness

### Personal Outcomes

- Healthy expression and self-regulation of emotions
- Increased engagement in learning
- Increased motivation
- Improved self-concept
- Improved self-confidence

### Social and Civic Outcomes

- Increased capacity for collaboration and teamwork
- Increased participation in social and community issues and contribution to community economic and civic growth
- Develop leadership skills

**STEAM Delivery.** The DHCC will serve as a leader in DeKalb County and throughout the State in bringing best practices to its application of STEAM. Arts education is no longer a luxury, but a necessary step in promoting new ways of thinking, sparking creativity and imagination, thereby leading to innovation. The Cluster's STEAM pathway will offer horizontal and vertical planning among teachers, transdisciplinary instruction, and transformative community and business partnerships to serve the full college-and-career spectrum of students. Essential to the DHCC's implementation and delivery of STEAM will be significant professional development for teachers transitioning to the model, with an emphasis on increasing the number of teachers with math and science endorsements. The cluster's fine arts faculty will become an integral part of collaborative planning in STEM subjects, such that students will see a greater incorporation of the arts in their general education classrooms. Teachers will be afforded the opportunity for onsite and offsite training, including observation of other successful STEAM settings. The implementation plan will include benchmarking other successful STEAM models such as Charles R. Drew Charter School, Amana Academy, and Hightower Elementary.

**Montessori (K-6) Overview.** The Montessori Method has been applied as a unique educational methodology for students through the sixth grade for over 100 years, and more than 7000 schools worldwide are estimated to serve students using the methodology. Montessori has

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

several key characteristics that are well-aligned with the overall values and philosophies of the Cluster:

- student-driven inquiry and choice from among a broad range of options;
- constructivist, hands-on, discovery- and inquiry-based approach;
- specialized instructional materials;
- large blocks of learning and application time;
- alignment of professional development, pedagogy, lessons, and materials;
- mixed-age classrooms.

Both DCSD and Briar Vista Elementary — as one of only three DCSD schools offering Montessori — have invested great time, resources, and training into the program. Moreover, in the DHCC stakeholder survey, 68% of Briar Vista respondents ranked the Montessori pathway as among their top three preferences. In addition, analysis of test scores comparing Montessori with non-Montessori has shown higher outcomes in Montessori students. For these reasons, the DHCC will continue to offer Montessori at Briar Vista and expand to its originally-designed upper reach to the sixth grade.

**Montessori Current Offerings.** As mentioned above, DCSD currently offers the Montessori option at three elementary schools (Huntley Hills in Region 1 and Midway in Region 3), none of which currently offers the Montessori through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. There are approximately six other private, tuition-based Montessori schools in DeKalb County.

**Montessori Benefits.** There are a number of benefits with the Montessori model as outlined below:

### **Self Management**

- Self-paced learning
- Self-directed choices of content
- Self-evaluation/metacognitive skills
- Prepared environment
- Appropriate self-directed movement
- Self-correcting materials so students work independently

### **Social**

- Collaboration, cooperation, conflict resolution, and respect
- Emphasis on grace, courtesy and practical life skills.
- Emphasis on respect for the natural world and the school environment
- Respect for the human experience

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

- Acceptance of responsibility

### Research

- Developmentally appropriate research skills
- Library research skills
- Field research skills

### Thinking

- Enhanced concentration skills
- Improved cognitive abilities
- Developed critical thinking skills
- Higher achievement scores on standardized tests

### Communication

- Encourage work related dialogue
- Learn to give and receive constructive criticism
- Learn to speak well, write well, and read well
- Learn careful and attentive listening skills at all levels
- Technology integrated into everyday class work assignments

**Montessori Delivery.** Montessori classrooms consist of children with a three-year age range based on their psychological development. They naturally support the development of community as well as leadership skills. In a Montessori environment, peer mentoring is widely practiced. Authentic Montessori “Primary” classrooms include children ages 3 through 5. While three and four-year olds are outside the scope of this Petition, the benefits that accrue to long-term student outcomes when there is greater intervention in early childhood education warrant further exploration by the DHCC and DCSD in the future into an age three-through-6<sup>th</sup> Grade offering. “Lower Elementary” classrooms group students ages 6-9 years old (coinciding with Grades 1-3) together. “Upper Elementary” serves students ages 9-12 years old (coinciding with Grades 4-6). Allowing 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the program to remain at Briar Vista via charter waivers will enable students to complete what Montessori refers to as the “second plane of development.”

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

With respect to daily life in a Montessori pathway, program lessons in all disciplines are aligned with Common Core. Classroom environments do not include desks in rows. Lessons are provided through a variety of constructs: individualized lessons, small group, and three part lessons to introduce new concepts and to facilitate mastery of content. “Going Out” opportunities are embedded in everyday learning activities. Self-pacing is a major tenant of the Montessori methodology. Self-directed learning fosters student creativity and innovation. Students learn accountability and self-tracking by keeping a work journal. Teachers are known as guides, and have an intentionally unobtrusive role. Arts and creativity are integrated into everyday class work and assignments.

As is the case with DHCC’s other pathways, both vertical and horizontal planning across the curriculum is highly valued. Professional development for new teachers will include utilizing an experienced teacher mentor, onsite and offsite Montessori training that introduces and reinforces the delivery of lessons, and other activities. Professional development for experienced teachers will include a strong focus on teacher collaboration, onsite and offsite observations, and other development that broadens, deepens and extends the teacher’s knowledge base.

**Advanced Placement (9 – 12) Overview.** The College Board outlines the curriculum and administers annual tests in thirty-four subjects, modeled upon comparable college courses and aligned with college level standards. The assessments are developed and scored by a national committee comprised of university faculty members and experienced AP high school teachers. Most U.S. universities and colleges award course credit to students who score a minimum prescribed score on an AP exam. AP teachers create course syllabi, which are

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

reviewed and must be approved by College Board (through the AP Course Audit Process) in order for the courses to be certified as AP.

**AP Current Offerings.** Today DHHS offers 13 of the 29 AP Courses offered by DCSD including: Calculus AB; Calculus BC; English Literature and Composition; European History; Human Geography; Macroeconomics; Music Theory; Physics B; Psychology; Spanish Language and Culture; Statistics; Studio Art: 2D Design; and Studio Art: Drawing. In the DHCC stakeholder survey, 42% of cluster respondents ranked the AP as one of their top three instructional choices, and 52% DHHS respondents did the same. This model is one in which significant training and resources have already been invested, and thus, DHCC will continue to offer it.

**AP Benefits.** One of the most important factors for college admission is rigor of coursework. With the possible exception of IB, universities recognize AP as the pinnacle of rigor in high school coursework. Taking several AP classes gives a student an advantage in the admission process, as well as the chance to earn course credit at a price far lower than the typical cost at a 4-year university. And, quite simply, AP work is essentially college-level work, which eases the transition from high school to college for students interested in pursuing higher education.

**AP Delivery.** AP emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving, analysis, and synthesis for both the learning process and demonstration of learning (assessment). These priorities should be encouraged and emphasized in classes and at ages prior to a student's enrollment in an AP class (primarily in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades). Cluster pathways all focus on developing these skills, and thus, are a natural pathway to the AP option in high school. One valuable resource that College Board offers is training in vertical teaming and establishment of pre-AP curricula.



## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

Another natural consequence of the AP model is horizontal teaming, in which lessons overlap among multiple disciplines. Collaboration both vertically and horizontally is a key principle valued by the Cluster model. Effective professional development opportunities exist and are currently used by the high school, but will be expanded to more high school teachers and possibly to middle school teachers.

**Common Threads Among Pathways.** All pathways are complementary to one another and share several common threads, which are aligned with values expressed in the stakeholder survey consisting of over 800 responses:

- Student centered
- Integrated curriculum
- Hands-on learning
- Cooperative learning
- Focus on literacy
- Focus on high expectations for all learners
- Focus on metacognition and reflection
- Focus on learning as a process along a continuum
- Increased level of rigor
- Higher order thinking skills emphasize

A more complete alignment of instructional pathway common threads may be found in the Appendices.

### **DCSD Q7 – Class Size; State – Teacher-to-Student Ratios**

The DHCC is committed to student and teacher ratios that are as low as sustainably possible to enable teachers to truly differentiate instruction. Targeted class sizes also make possible implementing the hands-on instructional methodologies common throughout instructional pathways adopted by the Cluster. Stakeholders were surveyed regarding desired class size, and these responses (also filtered by teachers' responses) as well as state funding earned based on ratios were all considerations. Targeted class sizes the Cluster seeks are set out below.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

Grade Span	Targeted Class Size
K-2	17-19
3-5	22-24
6-8	24-26
9-12	25-27

### DCSD Q8 and State – Gifted and Talented Students

The DHCC is committed to providing an enriching learning environment that supports and develops the gifts and talents of all students. The DHCC currently has the following population of students qualified for the state’s Gifted Program from most recently published data:

Druid Hills HS	Druid Hills MS	Avondale ES	Briar Vista ES	Fernbank ES	Laurel Ridge ES	McLendon ES
7.5%	21.3%	4.3%	9.2%	36.0%	16.5%	4.7%

The general perspective of stakeholders is a call for greater rigor and providing appropriate, differentiated instruction for all learners, including meeting the needs of the gifted population. DHCC will continue to serve gifted students and will follow and comply with state laws, rules, and regulations related to serving these students including identification, eligibility, testing, placement and instructional delivery. Based on current requirements, the DHCC will identify students who are eligible for gifted education services, following the eligibility requirements defined in SBOE 160-4-2-.38. The identification process for gifted learners will be disseminated to school personnel, parents/families, students, and the community at large in a clear, comprehensive, and accessible manner. The DHCC will employ the multiple-criteria (mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation) for student identification. Any person with knowledge of a student’s abilities may refer a student for consideration for gifted education services or students who score at specified levels on a norm-referenced test shall be considered

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

automatically. The DHCC equitably will include English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, economically disadvantaged, and minority students in the Gifted Program.

DHCC will waive district guidelines related to staffing and process in order to ensure fidelity of implementation needed to fully apply the gifted program in a manner consistent with the needs of the Cluster and each school's instructional pathway. Waivers of staffing and process may include selection of state approved gifted models that may differ from the standard delivery model(s) provided by the DCSD.

In addition to the state-approved and funded Gifted Program, the Cluster will expand the focus of gifted learners into the general education classroom, funded from the operational budget, to include students who may demonstrate specific gifted and talented traits that may not qualify for the state approved and funded Gifted Program. Methods for identifying giftedness for general education students will include a greater focus on non-traditional methods such as performance-based assessments, non-verbal ability tests, creativity tests, student portfolios, and creative products. In addition, traditional methods will also be incorporated and will include the use of quantitative data from both formative and summative assessments, but focus on domain specific areas rather than general gifted abilities. Use of non-traditional methods for identifying gifts and talents will support a broader population of students, including low-income and minority, and ensure teachers provide differentiated instruction to foster these gifts and talents. The Cluster's desire is to meet every child where they are and to ensure that specific gifts and talents of all students are identified and nurtured.

For both the state funded program and expanded gifted support in the general education classroom, the DHCC will ensure that each school's program is based upon accepted research and educational theory or principles; is reasonably calculated to implement the educational

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

theory effectively; and produces quantifiable results showing that gifted learners are excelling in their area(s) of strength. Curriculum and instruction will be adapted, modified, or replaced to meet the needs of all gifted learners. The state funded Gifted Program will have documented differentiated curriculum per state guidelines. Intentional differentiation for all students in both instruction and assessment will be implemented across the Cluster. Teachers will, in order to ensure student mastery: use state and national standards to align, expand, and implement advanced curriculum; consistently use a variety of ongoing student assessment data based on readiness, interests, and learning profiles to develop flexible groups and tasks; ensure instructional pacing is flexible; and utilize resources designed to specifically address the needs of gifted learners, including critical and creative thinking, problem-solving activities, and social and self-awareness.

Teachers providing services in the state approved and funded Gifted Program will be properly endorsed according to the Georgia PSC requirements and will carry a clear renewable Georgia teaching certificate. The Cluster will make gifted endorsement for regular education teachers a priority to build capacity to address the unique gifted and talented abilities of students in the regular education classroom setting as well and to ensure that expanding gifted services are implemented with fidelity.

### **DCSD Q9 – Extracurricular Activities and Auxiliary Educational Activities**

The DHCC will continue current offerings at each school with an effort placed on expanding and enhancing those offerings aligning with the instructional pathways. By way of example, to align with its STEAM pathway, the Cluster will explore robotics programs. There also will be an effort placed on expanding those offerings valued according to the DHCC

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

stakeholder survey. A list of current offerings and those closely aligned to the pathways may be found in the Appendices.

DHCC will continue to offer a variety of K-12 extracurricular activities. The Cluster will develop sound, well-accepted policies related to these activities. The DHCC will continue DHHS's membership with the Georgia High School Association and all rules for eligibility in sports will apply. The DHCC will continue to build partnerships with organizations such as Emory University, the Michael Carlos Museum, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Fernbank Science Center, among others, to provide meaningful field trip experiences for its students that are aligned with each of the instructional pathways.

### **DCSD Q10 and State - High School Requirements**

Druid Hills High School will follow state graduation requirements pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.47 related to credits or units to be earned and the completion credentials to be awarded. However, the DHCC will waive additional DeKalb County School System PE requirements for students identified as remedial and allow for additional core math or ELA remedial classes to support students in achieving competency in core academic areas required to graduate and be college and career ready.

In accord with a solid plurality of survey respondents, the DHCC may add a graduation requirement for all students related to community service (which already exists for IB Diploma candidates) that would align with the DHCC mission and better prepare our students to be active citizens.

### **DCSD Q11 and State – Curriculum**

The DHCC will implement with fidelity the Georgia Common Core Georgia Performance Standards through purposeful integration of instructional pathway learning models as described

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

in Q6. Specific information pertaining to alignment with CCGPS and other relevant curricula for each instructional pathway is outlined below. Supporting documentation and demonstration of alignment with Common Core may be found in the Appendices and are also noted in the List of Sources.

### DCSD Q12 – State and Federally Mandates Services to Students with Disabilities

The Cluster currently services a diverse population, including all categories of Students with Disabilities:

<b>Druid Hills HS</b>	<b>Druid Hills MS</b>	<b>Avondale ES</b>	<b>Briar Vista ES</b>	<b>Fernbank ES</b>	<b>Laurel Ridge ES</b>	<b>McLendon ES</b>
I - 1.7%	I - 2.8%	I - 0.4%	I - 0.3%	I - 0.4%	I - 0.2%	I - 0.2%
II - 0.7%	II - 0.8%	II - 0.4%	II - 1.0%	II - 0.1%	II - 0.7%	II - 0.6%
III - 3.0%	III - 3.0%	III - 1.2%	III - 2.5%	III - 2.0%	III - 6.2%	III - 3.2%
IV - 0.3%	IV - 0.5%	IV - 0.4%	IV - 0.2%	IV - 0.3%	IV - 1.0%	IV - 0.4%
V - 0.5%	V - 0.5%	V - 0.7%	V - 1.0%	V - 0.7%	V - 3.0%	V - 0.6%
<b>Total – 6.2%</b>	<b>Total – 7.6%</b>	<b>Total – 3.0%</b>	<b>Total – 5.1%</b>	<b>Total – 3.6%</b>	<b>Total – 11.2%</b>	<b>Total – 5.0%</b>

DHCC will serve students with disabilities in compliance with all State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations related to serving students with Special Needs, including but not limited to: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. DHCC may, however, waive any district guidelines relating to staffing and to process in order to ensure fidelity of implementation needed to comply with federal and state mandates.

DHCC will make the following modifications to staffing and to process in implementing Special Education Services within the Cluster schools: The Lead Teachers of Special Education (LTSE) serving the middle and high schools will be retained (1 per school); LTSEs positions at the elementary level will be reallocated to increase the frequency of services; and LTSEs will be dedicated to serving within DHCC. These modifications will ensure compliance, improve

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

timeliness of service, and reduce overburdened case management loads. DHCC also plans to create a dedicated staff position, or portion of a position, at each school to support the Student Support Team structure and process outlined by the Georgia Department of Education. Duties will include collecting and organizing student data, observing in classrooms, coordinating SST meetings, and leading SST related staff development. Additionally, DHCC will adopt universal screeners to facilitate more timely movement of students into Tier 2 (RTI) and the beginning of the SST process. The addition of universal screeners also will ensure integrity and use of data in decision-making. The addition of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test also will be used with the RTI process. DHCC plans to increase the number of School Psychologists serving the Cluster and School Psychologists will be dedicated to the Cluster schools only. This staffing modification will increase the amount of time psychologists are present in the schools, improving the timeliness of administration of assessments for placement. A Cluster SPED Coordinator will oversee Cluster LTSEs and coordinate services with DCSD as appropriate and relevant to ensure compliance. This modification will improve efficiency of coordination of services between elementary, middle, and high schools as students matriculate, and will ensure seamless coordination of services and proof of compliance with the DCSD and other applicable agencies.

DHCC schools will continue to utilize state and district adopted forms as well as technology systems. Each student will be instructed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and will have access, to the extent that it meets LRE criteria, to any instructional pathway offered in the Cluster. Offering choice of instructional pathways will enhance opportunities for students to learn with their peers via a method most conducive to their learning style, and as an outcome, will raise achievement of students with disabilities. The Cluster will continue serving students with disabilities with an array of delivery models and supports including, but not limited to:

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

addition of accommodations and modifications of instructional delivery; support in general education settings (i.e., personnel supports such as paraprofessionals, interpreters, or itinerant teachers); direct special education services (consultative services, collaborative services, co-teaching services, support from an itinerant teacher); and other placement options such as Special Education pullout classes and self-contained classrooms.

DHCC would like to continue all current SPED programs offered at schools within the Cluster and will maintain a relationship with DCSD to offer service for qualifying students in the district. These programs include, but are not limited to, Visually Impaired and Orthopedically Impaired services provided at Laurel Ridge. Funding to support these programs will continue uninterrupted. If a determination is made that the LRE for a DHCC student falls outside the Cluster, a representative of DCSD will be invited to IEP meetings to determine appropriate placement.

All SPED-related positions will be staffed by certified as Highly Qualified teachers according to provisions set forth by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Staff will participate in compliance-related professional development offered by the DCSD, as well as Cluster specific staff development.

### DCSD Q13 and State– State and Federal Mandates Related to English Language Learners

DHCC currently services a diverse population of English Language Learners:

Druid Hills HS	Druid Hills MS	Avondale ES	Briar Vista ES	Fernbank ES	Laurel Ridge ES	McLendon ES
1.9%	1.5%	1.6%	4.0%	1.2%	1.0%	5.4%

The cluster-wide stakeholder survey revealed that a high value is placed on diversity within the Cluster. DHCC will honor the rich cultural and linguistic representation in the community by making effective and sensitive ESOL instruction a priority. DHCC will continue



## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

to serve English Language Learners (ELLs) and will follow and comply with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations related to serving ELLs including identification, screening, eligibility, testing, placement, instructional delivery, services, assessment, and exit. However, DHCC will waive district guidelines related to staffing and process in order to ensure fidelity of implementation needed to comply with federal and state laws and rules. Implementation of the ELL program will occur with the following modifications to staffing and process:

Screening of students will be done during the enrollment (post-lottery) process to ensure ELL students can be identified and supported as soon as practicable and to better meet their instructional needs. The Home Language Survey (HLS) will include three questions in the registration packet and eligibility for placement testing will be determined if any answer is not English:

- (1) What is the student's first language?
- (2) What language does the student use at home?
- (3) What language does the student use most often?

DHCC will continue to use the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) or any other state adopted instrument. Eligibility for ESOL program will apply for scores of 1.0-4.9. Students with EL-active (English Learner) status will receive support through several delivery options appropriate for the student as defined below. Assessment of progress will be conducted in January and February using the state adopted instrument (currently WIDA-ACCESS). A student who scores 1.0-4.9 on any tier will continue services the following year. Students with scores of 5.0 or higher become EL monitored. After 2 years receiving ELL services, students are no longer classified as ELL.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

DHCC plans to have a dedicated staff position designated as the ESOL Coordinator/Title III Director to work with ESOL teachers and to coordinate documentation and services for all seven schools in the Cluster. Additional responsibilities will include:

- school assignments of ESOL teachers and hiring recommendations;
- coordinating and reporting FTE counts;
- serving as liaison to State and DCSD;
- budgeting and finances (including local and Federal funding for Title III);
- purchasing related to Title III federal funding;
- ACCESS system control;
- training for testers;
- professional development for ESOL and General Education teachers;
- arranging for translators and/or interpreters for meetings and for translation of documents;
- organizing and funding parent training and parent support opportunities;
- annual collection and submission of Title III documentation of the program; and organization of the state monitoring visit.

The creation of this staff position will improve communication between the Cluster and non-English speaking community members, and will ensure compliance with state and federal mandates and communication with DCSD. This position will report to the CAO. ESOL staff will have appropriate credentialing such as ESOL endorsement to serve the ESOL population. ESOL staff will participate in compliance related professional development offered by the DCSD and will participate in Cluster specific professional development. The DHCC will utilize state and district adopted forms and technology systems pertaining to ESOL.

Students qualifying for ESOL services will have access to the instructional pathways offered in the Cluster and will continue to be served via an array of delivery models to ensure a balance maximum support and general education participation:

- **Sheltered English Class** – class with other ELLs to learn the English language;
- **Content-Based Class** – English is taught through a content area;
- **Pull-Out Class** – ELLs removed from scheduled class to receive ELL support; and/or
- **Push-In services** – general education class with an ESOL teacher present to support ELLs.

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

Parents may continue to waive language support if they choose. Partnership with Culture Connect, a local non-profit that provides interpretation and mentoring services has been established to support the ESOL population of the Cluster.

### **DCSD Q14 – State and Federally Mandates related to Supplemental Education Services**

Pursuant to Georgia’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) waivers and their associated, regulatory, administrative and reporting requirements, DHCC will continue to provide supplemental educational services (SES) to students attending identified Title 1 Priority and Focus Schools via the DCSD established Flexible Learning Program (FLP). This program was initially to be offered for three years beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. DHCC will continue to offer the existing FLP through the 2014-2015 school year. After the 2014-2015 school year, DHCC reserves the right to design a Flexible Learning Plan for any Cluster school designated a Title I Priority or Focus School. The FLP will be an alternative supplemental academic intervention that allows flexibility in designing an extended learning program. The program will be tailored to the needs of academically at-risk students in a school in order to provide additional assistance for students to achieve proficiency in relation to the state academic content standards, particularly in the areas of language arts and math. Students attending identified Title I Priority and Focus schools may qualify for receiving FLP instructional services per federal and state rank order guidelines. All FLPs will meet requirements of the ESEA waivers with regards to regulatory, administrative and reporting requirements.

### **DCSD Q15 –Remediation Services**

Below is the most recently published data regarding the population of students served in the Cluster in the Early Intervention or Remedial Education Programs. The Cluster is committed

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

to supporting the needs of these students to assist them in mastering state standards and reaching their fullest potential.

Druid Hills HS	Druid Hills ES	Avondale ES	Briar Vista ES	Fernbank ES	Laurel Ridge ES	McLendon ES
None reported	None reported	41.4%	17.3%	9.7%	12.6%	35.6%

Remedial services are a critical part of the Response to Intervention framework for the Cluster as a Tier 2 intervention. The DHCC will provide remediation for students pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01 as follows: DHCC will continue to serve remedial education students and will follow and comply with state laws, rules, and regulations related to serving these students including identification, eligibility, testing, placement and instructional delivery. The Cluster will follow the state processes for identification of remedial students per Early Intervention and Remedial Education Program guidelines including, but not limited to:

### K-5

- Georgia Pre-K work samples
- Retained kindergarten students demonstrating levels noted as “Not Yet Demonstrating” or “Emerging” in the English Language Arts and/or math Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)
- EIP Checklist
- Portfolios or Performance Based Assessments
- CRCT test results in level 1, Does Not Meet, in reading or math
- MAP test results below the 35<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Student Support Team documentation and recommendation
- Other local assessments

### 6-12 (2 or more)

- Student Support Team documentation and recommendation
- Documented low performance in math or reading
- Retained students
- Eligibility under Chapter A of Part 1 of Title 1
- Inability to verbally express ideas or to write or dictate a meaningful sentences
- MAP test results below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile
- CRCT scores in Level 1, Does Not Meet, for grades 6-8 and “Does Not Meet” or “Failed” for grades 9-12 in reading, language arts or math
- Eligibility according to the IEP for SPED students who are not served through SPED for deficiencies

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

DHCC will waive district guidelines related to staffing and process in order to ensure fidelity of implementation needed to fully implement the programs in a manner consistent with the needs of the Cluster and each school's instructional pathway. Waivers of staffing and process may include selection of state approved gifted models that may differ from the standard delivery model(s) provided by the DCSD or seeking approval by the state for a model unique to the Cluster. Staff serving the EIP program will be highly qualified in reading, language arts and/or math.

Instruction of remedial students will follow research-based methods proven to raise achievement, particularly in at-risk, below grade level students. Some examples may include but not be limited to: previewing, questioning, corrective instruction, tutoring, nonlinguistic representations, graphic organizers, cues, simulations, summarizing, and note-taking.

Specific instructional materials to support the remedial education programming will be procured to ensure teachers have the resources needed to adequately instruct. Data demonstrating progress will be frequently collected and used to drive instructional planning for students and to assess growth and progress towards attaining mastery of state standards. Students attaining grade level will be exited from the EIP or REP program, per state guidelines.

Finally, the Cluster will collect data and report requirements information for EIP and REP according to Georgia Department of Education guidelines. Furthermore, it will count special education students in EIP data collection if a special education student was assigned to a **regular** education teacher all-day and participated in EIP. However according to state guidelines if a special education student was assigned to a **special** education teacher all day and participated in EIP, this student **will not** be included in the EIP data collection.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

If this same student is assigned to a special education teacher part of the day, this student could be included in data collection during a segment not served by the special education teacher.

### DCSD Q16 and State– Performance Based Goals and Objectives

Academic goals and measures were determined by analyzing each school’s performance (meets and exceeds rates and proficiency) in each grade level, subject area, and subgroup. Trend data were determined for each school. Overall cluster trends and aggregate goals and objectives were established. Organizational goals and measures were established to ensure the Cluster meets its mission, implements its instructional programs with fidelity, and provides governance practices to ensure fiscal stewardship, sustainability, high academic achievement, and stakeholder satisfaction. Goals are in the public interest as they are:

- specifically tied to raising achievement and ensuring organizational efficiency and fiscal stewardship;
- can be measured using public data;
- attainable as they are tied to trend data and implementing instructional plans with fidelity;
- relevant as they are aligned with the district’s strategic direction, inclusive of state and federal accountability requirements, and aligned with the Cluster’s mission, organizational model, and instructional pathways;
- time bound and established for each year of the charter term; and
- based in quantitative data over three years (see Appendices).

### ACADEMIC GOALS:

#### **Academic Performance Goals**

*Instructions: Below you will find the goals and measures that will become part of your charter contract. This chart gives you the opportunity to propose percentages based on your knowledge of your anticipated population. Please note, the Department does not guarantee adoption of proposed percentages. Additionally, this chart allows you to provide a cluster specific goal and several measures. Please complete the gray boxes for each corresponding goal/measure. Once you have completed a box, please make the cell green to indicate completion. If a goal/measure does not apply or you do not wish to provide additional measures, please do not complete the gray box and leave the cell gray.*

#### **Goal 1**

**Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

<p><b>The Charter Cluster will perform above the level that would place it on the Priority Schools list, the Focus Schools list, or the Alert Schools list. The Charter Cluster will also meet all targets (currently CCRPI and State Performance Targets), as defined by Georgia state requirements and the state's waiver of No Child Left Behind, subject to any amendment, waiver or reauthorization thereof. Students will demonstrate proficiency and improvement over prior years' performance.</b></p>	
<p><b>Measure 1</b></p>	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the Charter Cluster will meet or exceed all State Performance Targets and all other statewide-accountability requirements as established by the Department each year for all content areas of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), the End of Course Test (EOCT) and the graduation rate.</p>	
<p><b>Measure 2</b></p>	
<p>If in any year of the charter term, less than 100% of cluster schools fail to meet or exceed a State Performance Target in any subject, each year thereafter the school(s) that failed to meet or exceed the State Performance Target shall increase the percentage of students scoring Meets or Exceeds in that subject area by 10% each year until 100% of cluster schools Meet or Exceed all State Performance Targets.</p>	
<p><b>Measure 3</b></p>	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of students in the cluster who meet or exceed state standards on each content area of the CRCT will be greater than the State or local district Average, whichever is higher, by at least __ % in all subjects in all grade levels.</p>	<p>2%</p>
<p><b>Measure 4</b></p>	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of students in the cluster scoring in the exceeds category on the CRCT in all grade levels and subject areas will exceed the baseline average* by __%.</p>	<p>2%</p>
<p><i>The cluster will establish a baseline using up to three (3) years of data from like assessments. The rationale for this method is that it is more reliable to use trend data, with like assessments, rather than one year of data to establish baseline data.</i></p>	
<p><b>Measure 5</b></p>	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of charter cluster students scoring in the meets or exceeds category on the End of Course Test (EOCT) will be greater than the State or local district Average, whichever is higher, by at least __ % in all subjects in all grade levels.</p>	<p>2%</p>
<p><b>Measure 6</b></p>	
<p>During each year of the charter term, the percentage of charter cluster students scoring in the exceeds category in all subject areas on the EOCT will exceed the baseline average* by __%</p>	<p>2%</p>
<p><b>Measure 7</b></p>	

**Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

Based on two years of cohort graduation rate baseline data, the cluster will meet or exceed the prior year's graduation rate by 3% each year of the charter term.	3%
<b>Goal 2**</b>	
<b>The Charter Cluster will demonstrate proficiency and improvement on national norm-referenced assessments</b>	
<i>**Please complete this section if your school plans to offer a norm referenced test.</i>	
<b>Measure 1 - for ITBS</b>	
The percentage of students who meet or exceed annual growth goals in the national percentile value on the ITBS assessment will increase by __% each year* of the charter term.	n/a
<b>Measure 2 - for ITBS</b>	
The percentage of students with __ years or more of growth as determined by the Grade Equivalent value on the ITBS will increase by __% each year	n/a
<b>Measure 3 - for MAP</b>	
The percentage of students who meet or exceed their RIT growth targets on MAP testing, as developed by NWEA will increase by __% each year* of the charter term.	3%
<b>Goal 3 - grades 9-12</b>	
<b>The Charter School will demonstrate post high school readiness.</b>	
<i>Must complete at least 2 measures.</i>	
<b>Measure 1</b>	
If in any year of the charter term, the Charter Cluster fails to meet or exceed State Performance Targets for graduation rate, each year thereafter, the Charter Cluster shall reduce the percentage of students not graduating by an amount equal to 10% of the difference between the cluster's current graduation rate and 100%.	
<b>Measure 2</b>	
__% of graduates will score at least a 23 out of 36 on the composite ACT or at least 1600 out of 2400 on the combined SAT	%
<b>Measure 3</b>	
__% of graduates will score Meets or Exceeds on the Georgia High School Writing Test	95%
<b>Measure 4</b>	
__% of graduates will complete a pathway within their program of study	%
<b>Goal 4 - grades 6-8</b>	
<b>The Charter Cluster will demonstrate high school readiness.</b>	
<b>Measure 1</b>	
__% of student will score Meets or Exceeds on the Grade Eight Writing Assessment	80%
<b>Goal 5 - grades K-5</b>	
<b>The Charter Cluster will demonstrate middle school readiness.</b>	



**Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

<b>Measure 1</b>	
__% of student will score Meets or Exceeds on the Grade Five Writing Assessment	80%
<b>Goal 6</b>	
<b>The Charter Cluster will increase participation in academic pathways offered in grades K-12.</b>	
<b>Cluster Specific Measure 1</b>	
<b>For each year of the charter term, the number of students who participate in the International Baccalaureate program will increase by 15% for all grade levels.</b>	
<b>Cluster Specific Measure 2</b>	
<b>For each year of the charter term, the number of students who participate in STEAM programs will increase by 15% for all grade levels.</b>	
<b>Cluster Specific Measure 3</b>	
For each year of the charter term, the number of students taking Advanced Placement exams will increase by 3%, and the number of students score a 3 or higher will increase by 2%. The number of students taking AP courses will increase each year by 25 students for all AP offerings combined.	

**ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS:**

Goal 1. The DHCC will have a highly trained governing board (Board of Directors) that ensures academic achievement, fiscal stewardship, and legal and regulatory compliance.

Measures:

1. The Board will attend quarterly trainings in the first year of operations on effective charter school governance practices conducted by a state approved provider.
2. All Board members will complete eight hours of documented formal or informal training on effective governance practices for charter school boards each year of the charter. A state approved charter provider will facilitate formal trainings.
3. The charter will document new board member orientation and training for every board member transition.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

Goal 2. The DHCC will provide strong fiscal stewardship and efficient use of public funds to ensure that the Cluster's mission is met and the Cluster remains financially sustainable.

### Measures:

1. The Cluster will invest 70% or more of public funding to instructional programs and delivery of pathways.
2. The Cluster will earn an unqualified audit with no significant findings each year.
3. Each year the Cluster will ensure continuous enrollment of students and employment of staff by obtaining no less than 80% satisfaction rates on annual stakeholder surveys.

Goal 3. The DHCC will ensure its instructional pathways are implemented with fidelity by a highly qualified and effective staff.

### Measures:

1. Each year, the number of teachers earning relevant endorsement certificates through the Professional Standards Commission in their respective pathway (i.e., math, science for STEAM, AP/IB, etc.) will increase by 3% over baseline.
2. The schools designated to serve the STEAM instructional pathway will earn school or program STEM certification within 3 years, and certification will be maintained throughout the charter term.
3. The schools designated to serve the IB instructional pathway will maintain IB authorization, and MYP authorization for Grades 9-10 will be obtained within 3 years.

The Cluster will focus on continual reflection, monitoring, and improvement and will employ the following practices to ensure charter goals and objectives are successfully achieved:

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

- Annual school improvement planning processes with School Leadership Teams, including input of all stakeholders;
- Quarterly general Cluster meetings hosted by Board and CAO to discuss progress and needs.
- Annual strategic planning processes by the Board with School Leadership Teams providing input of their stakeholders.
- Monthly and periodic monitoring (as appropriate to the data available) by the Board via:  
  
a report provided by the CAO including achievement data, enrollment, discipline, and other relevant topics; and financial reports provided by the CFO including balance sheet, income/expense statement, and budget versus actual.

### DCSD Q17-19 and State- Waiver Requests

The DHCC acknowledges that it is subject to the control and management of the DeKalb County Board of Education, as provided by the terms of this charter and in a manner consistent with the Constitution, and is expected to abide by and enforce the general rules and regulations governing all public schools to support the safety, welfare and educational success of all students. However, as a charter petitioner, certain policies, rules, regulations and provisions of Title 20 may be waived for DHCC schools for the purposes of implementing the Cluster model, raising student achievement, and/or increasing fiscal efficiency and effectiveness in operations, which also impacts the instructional program. The Cluster shall comply with all provisions of the Charter Schools Act and related laws, rules, and regulations applicable to public charter schools. The Cluster desires the broad flexibility from law, rule, and regulation permitted by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(a) but understands that DCSD is disinclined to authorize charter schools

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

using broad flexibility, and thus, Q19 provides specific enumeration of laws, rules and regulations relevant to ensuring the Cluster can implement its charter with fidelity to raise student achievement and to be good stewards of public funds. The waivers requested by the DHCC are required to implement innovations outlined in Q4 and objectives set forth under Q16. Q4 provides some illustrative examples of the waivers to be employed and how this ties in to the Cluster plan and is in the public interest. Stakeholder work groups and the DHCC Organizing Committee evaluated every applicable Title 20 law, state board rule, and DCSD policy and regulation to determine those that warranted a waiver request. This evaluation and supporting rationale were consolidated into the Waiver Requests found in the Appendices. All waiver requests support the plan to raise student achievement through innovations in governance, instruction, operations, and finance.

Title 20		State Board of Education Rules		DeKalb County Board of Education Rules			
20-2-60.	20-2-504	160-1-3-.04	160-4-8-	AD	EEC	GBQ	IE
20-2-85	20-2-520	160-4-2-.07	.15	AEA	GAD	GBRI	IE-R
20-2-86	20-2-694	160-4-2-.11	160-5-1-	AEA-R(0)	GAD-R(1)	GBRI-	IFA
20-2-153.	20-2-695	160-4-2-.12	.02	AF	GAE(2)	R(1)	IFA-E(2)
20-2-154	20-2-696	160-4-2-.31	160-5-1-	BBFA	GAE(2)	GBRL	IFA-R
20-2-154.1	20-2-735	160-4-2-.36	.08	BH	GAE(2)-	GBRL-	IFA-R(1)
20-2-159.4	20-2-736	160-4-2-.46	160-5-1-	BHA	E(1)	R(2)	IFA-R(2)
20-2-167	20-2-751.3	160-4-2-.47	.10	BHC	GAE(3)	GBS	IFBGA
20-2-168.	20-2-758	160-4-2-.48	160-5-1-	CA	GAE(3)-	GBU	IFBGA-
20-2-188	20-2-850	160-4-4-.01	.15	CGA-R	E(1)	GBU-	R(1)
20-2-200	20-2-851	160-4-4-.10	160-5-1-	CGB	GAEB	E(1)	IFBGB
20-2-201	20-2-852	160-4-8-.05	.18	CGBA	EEE	GBU-	IFCB-E(1)
20-2-210	20-2-853		160-5-1-	CGD	EGA	R(1)	IFCB-E(2)
20-2-211	20-2-923		.22	CGE	EGAA	GBR	IFCB-R
220-2-21	20-2-930		160-5-1-	CGI	GA	GBRB	IGB
20-2-212.5	20-2-942		.36	CI	GAAA	GCA	IH
20-2-214	20-2-943		160-5-3-	CI-R(1)	GAEB-	GCA-R	IH-R
20-2-214.1	20-2-944.		.08	CJ	E(1)	GCB	IHE
20-2-216	20-2-945		160-5-3-	CN	GAEB-	GCD	IHE-R
20-2-220	20-2-946		.11	CN-R	R(1)	GCE	IHEA-R
20-2-230	20-2-947		160-5-4-	DC	GAG	GCI	IHEB-
20-2-284	20-2-962		.08	DCA	GAG-E(1)	GCR	R(0)

**Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

20-2-290	20-2-1000	160-5-6-	DCL	GAG-R	GCRA	IHF(6)
20-2-294.	20-2-1010	.01	DE	GAGC	GCRB-R	IHF-E(10)
20-2-390	20-2-1071	160-8-1-	DFE	GAGC-	GCRD	II-R(1)
20-2-395	20-2-1113	.01	DFK	R(1)	GDB	IJ
20-2-396	20-2-1160		DFL	GAHB	GDD	IJA
			DG	GAJ	GDE	IKI
			DG-R	GAK	GDI	IKI-R
			DIE	GAK(1)	GDRB-R	JBCC
			DJ	GAL	IC	JCD
			DJAA	GAM	ICFA	JD
			DJC-R	GAMA	IDA	KEB
			DJCB	GANA	IDA-R(1)	KG
			DJE	GBA	IDA-R(3)	KG-R(1)
			DJE-E(1)	GBA-R	IDA-R(4)	KIB-R
			DJE-R(1)	GBB	IDA-R(5)	KJ
			DJEG	GBBA	IDB	MFB
			DK	GBC	IDBA	MK
			EC-R(0)	GBD	IDCA	MK-R
			ED	GBE	IDCA-R	
				GBI	IDCF	
				GBKA	IDCF-	
				GBO	R(1)	
					IDF	

**DCSD Q20 and State – Student Performance Data**

To establish baseline student performance data for the initial year of the Charter, data will be analyzed from both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessment results. DHCC will collect scores from the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) or End of Course Test (EOCT) from each school as appropriate. The percentage of students in the “Meets” and “Exceeds” categories by grade and subject at each school will serve as the baseline for goal setting in subsequent years. Additionally, DHCC will analyze subgroup CRCT or EOCT data, including; SWD, ED, and LEP, as well as racial/ethnic data consistent with ESEA reporting guidelines, to establish a performance baseline for those student populations.

In addition, DHCC will administer the norm-referenced assessment known as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to all students in grades K-12 during the first month of school.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

Data from this initial administration will be used to establish a baseline upon which MAP goals for subsequent years of the charter will be set to demonstrate student growth.

Furthermore, at the time of this application, it appears that the national assessment in development to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) known as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will eventually replace the CRCT and the EOCTs as the State mandated assessment tool in reading, ELA, and mathematics for grades 3-12. In that case and at that time, PARCC scores will be collected from each of the Cluster schools at the appropriate subgroup levels and analyzed to calculate a performance baseline and student performance goals to replace CRCT and EOCT goals for the remaining years of the charter term. All baseline data, with the exception of PARCC data, shall be submitted to DCSD no later than November 15, 2014.

The charts below represent the formative and summative assessment and accountability measures that will be in place for DHCC students by grade level. Additional measures may be required per IEPs or for LEP students.

Formative Assessments	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Informal regularly occurring checks for student understanding	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for Reading, Mathematics, Language, and Science			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAP Primary	X	X											
Online Assessment System (OAS)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Instructional Unit Reviews / Educator Workbook Assessments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Online Assessment Tools (i.e. STAR Reading & Math, Accelerated Reader)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				

Formative Assessments will be administered in grades K-12 at each DHCC schools as a means of gauging progress both formally and informally to guide instructional decisions in real

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

time. Formative assessments also will be used to measure teacher effectiveness and fidelity of curriculum implementation. The formative assessments selected for use in the DHCC align tightly with all instructional pathways at the different Cluster schools.

Summative Assessments	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Criterion Referenced													
Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)				X	X	X	X	X	X				
End of Course Tests (EOCT)										X	X	X	X
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), to replace CRCT and EOCT				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)	X												
Norm referenced													
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for Reading, Mathematics, Language, and Science			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
MAP Primary for core math and reading knowledge	X	X											

The CRCT, EOCTs, and likely in the future, PARCC, are part of Georgia’s Single Statewide Accountability System, and administration of these standardized assessments is required by the State and the DHCC will comply with administration of this criterion referenced test. MAP testing functions as both a formative and summative norm-referenced assessment due to its tri-annual administration (fall, winter, spring) and the real-time way in which results are made available, so the Cluster will utilize this instrument as well.

### [DCSD Q21-22– Measures of Student Improvement & Monitoring; State – Benchmarking Growth](#)

DHCC will monitor and demonstrate student improvement by benchmarking growth on measures of school wide performance, teacher performance, and individual student

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

improvement. At the school level, growth will be measured annually by the State mandated College & Career Ready Performance Indices (CCRPI) of each of the schools in the Cluster. To serve as evidence of a teacher's instructional impact on student learning in non-tested areas, DHCC will follow State Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) as mandated but reserves the right, within the constraints of the Single Statewide Accountability System, to develop or select SLOs that align with the instructional pathways and curriculum maps utilized by the Cluster. SLOs will be pre and post measures used to determine student learning toward the student learning objectives, and can be used as evidence of the ten TAPS components of Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). In addition to these mandated growth measures, DHCC will administer ongoing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to benchmark student growth over the course of the school year. MAP testing is a collection of computerized adaptive assessments used to determine each student's instructional level and to measure academic growth throughout the school year, and from year to year, in the areas of Reading, Language and Mathematics. Assessments are administered three times a school year, and because teachers will have immediate data to inform their instruction to meet the needs of all students, MAP data can be used for instructional mapping, monitoring, and planning, differentiated teaching, and as data points for Response to Intervention and Student Support Team. MAP tests are norm referenced and will align with all instructional pathways being implemented in DHCC. MAP data will be provided by principals to the CAO for the purpose of monitoring and reporting to the Board of Directors the progress of charter performance goals.

### **DCSD Q23-24–Accountability Provisions & Assessment Guidelines; Working with System**

The DHCC will take intentional action to comply with accountability and assessment provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 20-14-30 through 20-14-41. Examples include but are not limited to:



## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

- Providing for appropriate levels of intervention for students at risk of not meeting state standards through activities such as tutoring, mentoring, remedial services, summer school, or specific research based-instructional practices. Similarly, the Cluster will provide appropriate levels of intervention for students needing enrichment such as differentiating instructional levels to provide more rigor or modifying assessment methods or expectations.
- Collecting appropriate data, analyzing it both in the aggregate and disaggregated, and utilizing the data to inform instructional practices, and providing data requested by the district to support statewide reporting mandates and to support DCSD's strategic planning for the district and oversight of the Cluster.
- Adopting a promotion and retention policy that ensures that students are prepared for success at the next level and implement the policy with fidelity.
- Adopting a cluster-wide, nationally-normed instrument called the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to monitor progress.
- Complying with any state performance audits conducted of DeKalb County schools and make data and stakeholders available for such audits.
- Continuing to strive to raise achievement and close the achievement gap by using data from statewide assessments such as CCRPI to set goals and action plans for improvement.

DHCC likewise will comply with federal accountability requirements, and participate in all mandated statewide assessments. DHCC shall adhere to all assessment guidelines and procedures as outlined by the State Assessment Handbook, the State Accommodations Manual, and other state and local guidance on assessment. DHCC will participate in any required test administration training held by DCSD.

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

### **DCSD Q25– Testing Calendar; State – Working with Local System on Administration**

The proposed Cluster Calendar for the 2014-2015 includes testing information and is provided in the Appendices. The DHCC will administer all state mandated testing in accordance with the DCSD’s testing calendar. The Cluster’s MAP testing dates will follow the proposed MAP timeline found in the Appendices.

### **DCSD Q26 and State – Attendance Zone**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2062, the DHCC attendance zone, and each attendance zone of the seven schools contained within the Cluster, shall first consist of the DCSD defined zone as of the date of this Petition is filed with DCSD. Those schools and their defined zones are: Avondale Elementary, Briar Vista Elementary, Fernbank Elementary, Laurel Ridge Elementary, McLendon Elementary, Druid Hills Middle School, and Druid Hills High School. Secondly, as space allows and following requirements for a public random selection process, DHCC may serve students in DCSD’s attendance boundaries. An attendance zone map may be found in the Appendices.

### **DCSD Q27-29 and State– Admissions and Enrollment & Priorities; Marketing and Recruitment**

The Cluster will enroll any student who resides in the attendance zone specified herein and who submits a registration. If the number of registrants who reside in the attendance zone does not exceed capacity of a school, additional students shall be enrolled based on a random selection process conducted through a public lottery.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

Proposed Timeline	Proposed Enrollment Activity
December – January	Publish enrollment information (dates, times, attendance zone registration forms and lottery forms) at the schools and on the website(s)
February	Registration forms, including lottery applications due
End of February – Early March	DHCC lottery held for each school with capacity
May	Registration packets due

It is the intent of the DHCC to provide choice options for elementary school students within the Cluster attendance zone, based on the instructional pathways, as space at a school permits. The Cluster shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133 and shall not charge tuition or fees to its students, except as may be authorized for local boards. The Cluster shall comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066 and shall not discriminate on any basis prohibited by law, including, but not limited to: sex, race, religion, national origin, sexual persuasion, aptitude or disability.

A student may withdraw without penalty from a Cluster school at any time and enroll in another public school within the local system pursuant to policies of DCSD. A student who is suspended or expelled from a DHCC school as a result of disciplinary action taken by the Cluster may enroll in another public school within the local system if, following DCSD policy, the student would not otherwise have been suspended or expelled.

Forms related to registration and enrollment that conform to requirements set forth in the State Board Rule and Guidance is located in the Appendices.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(B), the Cluster will allow the following enrollment priorities:

1. A student previously enrolled in a Cluster school prior to conversion to charter status.
2. A sibling of a student enrolled in any of the DHCC schools.
3. A student whose parent or guardian is serving on the DHCC Board or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee of or at a DHCC school.
4. A student who resides in the charter attendance zone (DeKalb County).

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

### **DCSD Q30 and State - Recruitment and Diversity**

The DHCC will endeavor to educate the public regarding the mission, academic programs, achievement outcomes, and enrollment information to raise awareness about the Cluster via website, social media, traditional media, listserv updates, and will actively participate in community-based events throughout DeKalb County and engage civic organizations throughout the county as well.

### **DCSD Q31- General Provisions Regarding Student Discipline**

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to protect instructional time and secure the safety and well being of students, staff, and visitors; and to promote a positive learning environment across the Cluster. The starting point of the Cluster's discipline policy is the DeKalb County School System Code of Conduct. This will be adopted as part of the Cluster's discipline policy. Additionally, the Cluster will develop procedures and interventions, as well as a due process policy that will be aligned with Cluster mission, discipline philosophy, and organizational structure.

The Cluster's discipline philosophy is based on Positive Discipline. Key elements of this philosophy include promoting intrinsic motivation, and caring and respectful communities that enhance achievement. Research has shown that extrinsic incentives (rewards and punishments) can decrease intrinsic motivation, so the intent is to decrease their use where feasible. Some of the characteristics of Positive Discipline, which are linked to student success, are: involving all faculty, students, and parents in problem-solving; viewing school as a place to experience success (both academic and social); dealing with and focusing on causes, rather than symptoms, of problems; emphasizing positive behaviors; using consequences that are appropriate and relevant to infractions; and having a Principal who is a strong leader. These are not only

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

important components that will be adopted in the Cluster's approach to discipline, but are also key inputs in the overall culture of the Cluster. The Cluster will comply with all state due process procedures regarding student discipline and dismissal.

Students with special needs will be disciplined in compliance with federal due process procedures in the case of suspension or expulsion more than 10 days (manifestation determination), "special circumstances" related to weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, and due process, or other matters covered under federal law. The Cluster will collaborate with DCSD to ensure discipline is handled appropriately for these students.

The Cluster will work with the Department of Safe Schools and Student Relations in matters pertaining to the Code of Conduct, ensuring due process, safe school planning, and initiatives such as the district-wide Bullying Awareness Campaign.

### **DCSD Q32 and State Grievance Policy and Procedure**

Detailed, drafted procedures for staff, student, and parent grievances may be found in the Appendices. The procedures address definitions, available remedies, failure to meet time periods and the ability to extend appeals to the DeKalb County Board of Education and the State Board of Education, the role of meeting facilitators in keeping order and establishing times for meetings and hearings, representation and collective bargaining, costs for proceedings and other costs, and reprisal.

### **DCSD Q33 through 35 - Personnel**

A main tenet of the Cluster is to drive responsibility and accountability for individual school operations to the school level and minimize centralized services to only critical support areas that benefit from economies of scale or uniformity. The Cluster's view is that a high level of Principal and School Leadership Team autonomy, combined with sound policies and

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

procedures developed by the DHCC Board, will direct responsibility and accountability to the school level while creating a unified standard throughout the Cluster. The Cluster believes this marriage of democratically determined policy and local control will catalyze improvements in teacher effectiveness and student performance cluster-wide.

In order to realize these goals, the DHCC seeks autonomy and accountability over its organizational structure and HR-related policies, procedures, and resources within the Cluster.

Autonomy over HR-related policies, procedures, and resources would require:

- employment by the DHCC of all school or cluster-wide employees;
- differing levels of centralization or decentralized HR-related resources and policies from DCSD structure; and
- flexibility in the compensation structure (salary, bonuses, etc.), staff/student ratio, professional development/training standards, tenure, and resource allocation.

Thus, it is the DHCC's intention that Principals, supported by their School Leadership Teams and the CAO, will have control over personnel decisions at the school level to best align instructional resources with curriculum and the classroom. The benefits of innovation provided through personnel management in this manner is outlined in Q4. To assess support for this structure, the Cluster conducted an online survey of faculty and staff, presented two open meetings for faculty and staff about the Cluster serving as employer, and published the presentations and FAQs on the website. In response to the online survey, 72% of responding employees expressed approval of the DHCC as employer. Another 11% indicated at the time that they would be comfortable with the proposition if some key questions related to salary, benefits, and retirement were answered. These presentations, FAQs, and survey results are provided in the Appendices. In requesting waivers from state and local laws, policies, and procedures related to personnel, DHCC makes the following assurances:

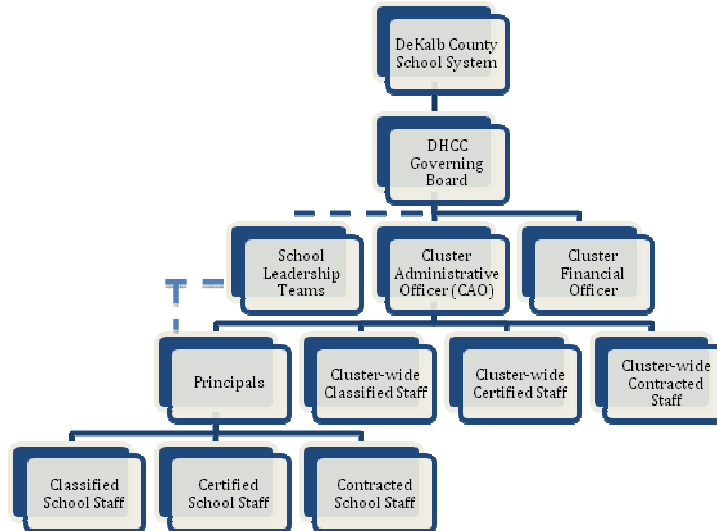
## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

- Job descriptions comparable to those in other public schools will be made available for open positions. Initial job descriptions are included in Appendices (See Q 61 for roles and responsibilities for cluster-level and school-level governance and management);
- The Cluster will adopt a comprehensive set of human resources policies that are compliant with federal and state laws and regulations including, but not limited to: the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as applicable, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and Equal Employment Laws related to discrimination (civil rights, equal pay, disability, and age), child labor, drug free workplace, worker's compensation, privacy, jury duty, and military service. Policies waived by the district are noted in the Appendices and will be replaced with comparable policies aligned with the organizational structure of the Cluster;
- The Cluster will utilize a payroll service to ensure taxes and other employer compensation responsibilities are met;
- The CAO or designee will review and approve the payroll register monthly;
- See Q40 regarding Health Benefits;
- See Q41 regarding Staff Qualifications, Recruitment, and Hiring Practices.
- The Cluster will provide contracts to staff (sample draft is included in the Appendices). In preparation for the initial year (FY2014), Cluster contracts will be offered prior to DCSD contracts being issued;
- Upon offering Cluster contracts, the DHCC will provide to all personnel relevant information and documentation related to transfer under DCSD policy in the event any employee requires or desires transfer to a DCSD school or location outside the Cluster. As public school employees authorized under the jurisdiction and authority of the DeKalb

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

County Board of Education, employees will retain standing in DCSD related to tenure, salary step, transfer of sick/personal time, and sick leave bank participation.

### Cluster's Proposed Organizational Structure



### DCSD Q36 and State - Fingerprinting and Background Checks

The Cluster shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1 relating to fingerprinting and criminal background checks. In addition to all personnel mandated by law to receive a criminal background check, any substitute, volunteer, or contracted personnel working directly with students shall also be fingerprinted and background checked.



## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

### DCSD Q37- Indemnification and Insurance Requirements

The DHCC is committed to providing adequate insurance coverage to protect employees, board members, students and visitors of the Druid Hills Charter Cluster. The Cluster will seek to adopt the DCSD's policies, where applicable and other policies related to insurance requirements for the Cluster and other risk management provisions.

**Liability Insurance.** The DHCC will adopt DCSD policy EGD for employees and board members, supported by O.C.G.A § 20-2-990 regarding liability insurance. Liability insurance will be paid by the DHCC. In addition, the DHCC will procure a comprehensive general liability policy (CGL) including Products and Completed Operations, or equivalent coverage, to include the contractual obligation of the DHCC for any liability assumed hereunder.

**Errors and Omissions Insurance.** The DHCC will secure adequate Errors and Omissions protection for Board members. The insurance will be paid by the DHCC. The DHCC will procure Educators Professional Liability Insurance (Errors and Omissions) in the amount of \$1,000,000 per Insured per Wrongful Act and \$3,000,000 in the annual aggregate per Insured for all Wrongful Acts.

**Property Insurance.** The DHCC will adopt DCSD policy and procure Risk Property Insurance in sufficient amounts to cover the replacement cost of all structures and contents to their full value for property owned or leased by the DHCC. Policy(ies) shall be endorsed to name DCSD as a Loss Payee as their interest may appear. Deductible or Self-Insured Retentions shall not exceed \$250,000 per claim.

**Bus Insurance.** The DHCC will seek to contract bus service through the county or through a state compliant provider. The cost of insurance will be negotiated in the contract and paid in whole or in part by DHCC. In the event that the Cluster uses its own bus transportation, the

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

Cluster will procure insurance coverage from an outside agency approved to do business in the State of Georgia. Minimum coverage levels of: \$5,000,000 for interstate transport and \$100,000/\$500,000/\$50,000 for intrastate transport will apply per Georgia DOE mandate.

**Auto Liability Insurance.** The DHCC will maintain adequate auto insurance for any vehicle approved for school business. A Business Auto Policy to include, but not be limited to, liability coverage on any owned, non-owned and hired vehicle used by the DHCC or DHCC personnel in the performance of this Agreement and their operations.

**Workers Compensation Insurance.** The DHCC will maintain adequate Workers Compensation insurance. The DHCC will adopt DCSD policy EGAA. Workers Compensation Insurance will be in the amount of the statutory limits established by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia. The DHCC shall have the ability to self-insure its required Workers Compensation coverage if it is an approved self-insurer in the State of Georgia.

**Theft Insurance.** The Cluster will procure insurance to safeguard against theft of Cluster-owned property. Crime and Fidelity Insurance in the amount of \$500,000 per loss subject to a deductible of not more than \$10,000 per occurrence covering Employee Theft and Dishonesty, Forgery or Alteration, Theft of Money and Securities, Robbery or Safe Burglary, Computer Fraud, and Money Orders and Counterfeit Currency.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(5), the DeKalb County Board of Education is included as an additional insured. The DHCC shall hold harmless, defend, and indemnify the DeKalb County School District, the DeKalb County Board of Education, its members, officers and employees for every liability, claim or demand arising out of any act or omission by the DHCC, its Board of Directors, officers, or employees in their capacity as the same.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

### DCSD Q38 and State- Transportation

Provision of choice among pathways is a key innovation of the Cluster initiative, and provision of transportation to ensure all students can exercise choice is a priority. In considering choice and placement of pathways among the elementary schools, transportation was included in the analysis. That analysis also included inputs from transportation experts with Cliff, the Emory University-sponsored shuttle system. Based on that analysis, the DHCC has determined that it feasibly could offer transportation in an efficient and economical manner — either through contract with DCSD or a comparable vendor — to families exercising choice among elementary school pathways. In the first year of charter, the DHCC will work collaboratively with DCSD’s Transportation Department to offer efficient bus routes among the elementary school choices. It is the intent of the Cluster to provide parents with a choice of instructional pathways in close geographic proximity, thus ensuring route efficiency. A map showing distances between elementary schools and various school choice configurations is included in the Appendices.

For these reasons, the DHCC seeks waivers that will allow it to investigate, evaluate, and act upon transportation vendor alternatives in the future while complying with all applicable laws governing the transportation of public school students. This level of autonomy allows DHCC to accomplish several objectives: ensure the cost efficiencies, which will allow the Cluster to reallocate funds to priority areas, such as instruction; and eliminate, in whole or in part, unnecessary routes, and school and bus transitions thereby ensuring efficient and environmentally-protective transportation routes. In requesting waivers from state and local laws, policies, and procedures, DHCC makes the following assurances should it act upon the waiver in the future:

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

- Licensing will be required through the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, or other state approved certifying agency – both documented and verified, as required by O.C.G.A. §40-1-100.
- Suppliers must demonstrate adequate insurance of bus services documented, and the Cluster will verify the documentation.
- Both intra and interstate buses will meet Georgia specifications for bus size, type, and use. The Cluster will ensure this is documented and verified.
- The DHCC will partner with the DCSD Department of Transportation and/or the Loss Control Department at the GaDOE to ensure carriers are approved to transport public school students. The list will be evaluated annually for compliance.
- A thorough pre-qualification process for suppliers will follow GaDOE's Charter Bus specifications and recommendations.

### **DCSD Q39 and Food Service Compliance**

The cluster-wide survey of stakeholders revealed that 57% of respondents expressed interest in pursuing outside providers for food service, with many comments sharing the desire to improve the quality and healthfulness of school meals. It is therefore a priority of DHCC to make changes that will result in the provision of healthful, tasty, cost-efficient meals. The DHCC is partnering with the Alliance for Healthier Generation/Healthy Schools Program and plans to develop school-based plans that will align with their Healthy Schools Program Framework. Information related to the Alliance and the framework may be found in the Appendices. For these reasons, the DHCC requests waivers from state and local laws, policies, and procedures which will allow the Cluster to effectively and efficiently provide food service to students in the Cluster. However, because of the complex nature of school food service, the

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

DHCC has determined that during the initial year of the charter, DHCC desires to contract with DCSD for continuation of food services. During this interim time, the DHCC will work with food service experts, in alignment with the Healthy Schools Program Framework, to thoroughly research and develop Nutrition and Health Programs that ensure the highest quality and healthiest meals and programming can be provided in a fiscally sustainable manner. In requesting waivers from state and local laws, policies, and procedures, DHCC makes the following assurances:

- DHCC will comply with all federal and state mandates related to provision of food service for public school students;
- DHCC will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and provide meals for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch using federally established criteria;
- DHCC will offer meals that meet federally specified nutritional requirements and follow record keeping and claims procedures required by the USDA;
- DHCC will maintain Food Service Permits and mandatory State Health Inspection Scores and make these available for inspection by DCSD upon request;
- DHCC will ensure documented and verified insurance by all food service providers;
- DHCC school kitchens will be maintained to code in collaboration with the DCSD Department of School Nutrition;
- DHCC will select quality food service companies with full DHCC Board approval of any subcontractors for services;
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) and a copy of any Vendor Contract will be provided to the State School Nutrition Program Office for review and confirmation that it follows federal guidelines;

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

- DHCC will follow a rigorous Pre-Qualification process for food service vendors that includes, but is not limited to:
  - a) Full disclosure of business information (i.e., name(s), years in services, locations of units, disclosure of non-compliance communications from state or federal agencies within last 24 months);
  - b) Subjection to Board of Health Inspections a minimum of twice annually to maintain compliance with NSLP policy;
  - c) Disclosure of all subcontractor information including providers of equipment or vendors;
  - d) Clearly defined procedures for the provision of meals and snacks that are in compliance with federal and state mandates regarding: maintaining and reporting Free and Reduced lunch documentation; addressing allergens; sustainability considerations; portioning; vendor selection and documentation; sanitation; and training;
  - e) Disclosure of any membership with trade organizations;
  - f) Evidence of all food service worker qualifications and safety precautions such as fingerprinting and background checks;
  - g) Established rates for service whether per meal or another method of calculation;
  - h) Proof of adequate levels of insurance;
  - i) Evidence of meal and service standards compliance, including compliance with federal and state nutrition standards;
  - j) Appropriate sanitation and maintenance.

### **DCSD Q40- State Health Benefit Plan Participation**

The DHCC will offer competitive compensation and benefits, including health care, to its employees. As a result, the Cluster plans to provide the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP),

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

pursuant to O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-880 and 20-2-910, and manage the administration in coordination with the State Health Benefit Office. In response to data collected in the employee survey, the DHCC reserves the right to adopt a comparable plan in the future if staff interest, cost efficiency, and increased benefits can be achieved.

### **DCSD Q41- Staff Qualifications, Recruitment and Hiring Practices and Procedures**

The DHCC seeks complete autonomy in all employment and human resources matters as the employer of record. The Cluster will ensure comparable DCSD policies, procedures, and standards in all areas including treatment, qualifications/credentials, placement, compensation, and evaluations for Cluster employees. Specifically, the DHCC will make every effort to recruit and hire the most qualified and effective employees to support organizational goals and objectives. Best practices will be researched and implemented to ensure employees are hired and promoted solely on the basis of their qualifications for the job to be filled and that a fair and equal employment opportunity exists for all employees and job applicants regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status or disability.

All applicants will be required to fill out an application and provide references. A web-based HR and applicant tracking system, such as AppliTrack (<http://www.aspexsolutions.com/default.aspx>) will be leveraged to facilitate candidate applications and management of documentation and records. Online applications will be established for all positions, and all positions will be advertised on the DHCC website.

Teachers and paraprofessionals in the Cluster will meet federal and state requirements for Highly Qualified (HQ) Status, and HQ status will be determined based on methods and tools authorized by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Certification may be waived if HQ status is met and maintained in order to attract content area experts as appropriate into the

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

field of education to serve in courses where content expertise would add to the rigor and relevance (i.e., marketing, accounting, trade courses, biology, physics, etc.). Special Education teachers and teachers requiring endorsements will have a clear and renewable teaching certificate. All Title I schools will follow any additional federal mandates related to certification. Qualifications for other staff will be set forth in job descriptions. Examples of Cluster job descriptions for positions may be found in the Appendices.

The DHCC will continue to follow the state salary schedule and a minimum of the DCSD supplement for certified staff. Classified staff will continue to be paid on the local salary schedules. The Cluster retains the right to provide additional compensation or to alter how compensation is calculated as long as the state base and district supplement are maintained.

Lastly, the DHCC will, as mandated, assess performance using Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) and Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) tools and mandated processes, but reserves the right to include additional, charter or Cluster specific measures to ensure achievement of the mission and that goals are met. Assessment of all personnel will include a variety of both formative and summative measures including: observations, reflections, surveys, and the LKES and TKES required tools/evidence. Identified personnel needing improvement will be provided a Professional Intervention Plan (PIP) with SMART goals and other supports such as professional development opportunities, observation time in effective classrooms, and a mentor or coach. A sample PIP being considered by the Cluster may be found in the Appendices.

While maintaining autonomy in employment matters is a main tenet of this conversion charter, the Cluster will adhere to current DCSD policies, procedures and standards in all areas regarding the status of district employees to include treatment, qualifications/credentials,



## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

placement, compensation, and evaluations should the DCSD refuse to grant the Cluster autonomy as the employer of record.

### **DCSD Q42- Location of New or Existing Facilities and Building Modifications**

The DHCC will utilize the currently existing and currently planned facilities and grounds of: Avondale Elementary, 10 Lakeshore Drive, Avondale Estates 30002; Briar Vista Elementary, 1131 Briar Vista Terrace NE, Atlanta 30324; Fernbank Elementary, 157 Heaton Park Drive NE, Atlanta 30307; Laurel Ridge Elementary, 1215 Balsam Drive, Decatur 30033; McLendon Elementary, 3169 Hollywood Drive, Decatur 30033; Druid Hills Middle School, 3100 Mt. Olive Drive, Decatur 30033; and Druid Hills High School, 1798 Haygood Drive NE, Atlanta 30307. In addition, during the construction of the currently planned rebuild of Fernbank Elementary, the DHCC will utilize the portions of the facilities and grounds of the former Avondale Middle School, 3131 Old Rockbridge Road, Avondale Estates 30002, previously designated by DCSD.

The DHCC anticipates that the currently existing and currently planned facilities and grounds will meet capacity requirements throughout the initial five-year term of the charter. The DHCC has no other plans at this time for acquisition or modification of these facilities or grounds. However, any future acquisition or modification will be conducted in collaboration with DCSD and will be compliant with all applicable zoning and building codes, health and safety laws, ADA compliance, site selection processes, and construction processes according to state and local requirements. Similarly, as part of DCSD, each of the facilities and grounds utilized by the DHCC will continue to be eligible for, and participate in, all SPLOST IV projects previously identified by DCSD, any SPLOST IV or other SPLOST projects identified by DCSD in the future, and any capital outlay plans and funding allocations. With respect to maintenance

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

of these facilities or grounds that is beyond the scope of responsibilities of on-site custodial staff, the DHCC will contract with the DCSD for continuation of such services. Moreover, the DHCC will work collaboratively with the DCSD to ensure that compliance with all health and safety codes, and accessibility requirements for public school students continue to be met.

### **DCSD Q43- Future Facility Use**

The DHCC recognizes that any facility intended for student or staff use other than those identified in Q42 above will be subject to approval by the DeKalb County Board of Education and the Georgia Department of Education prior to occupancy or use.

### **DCSD Q44- Documentation of Lease Agreement**

As a Cluster of conversion charter schools, the DeKalb County Board of Education will continue to own the facilities identified in response to Q42 and that the DHCC will utilize and occupy. Under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068.2(h), the DHCC and DCSD shall cooperatively negotiate the terms of use of these facilities and shall memorialize those terms in a Facilities Lease Agreement. According to that same section of Title 20, because the facilities identified are currently existing and used as public schools, none of the terms negotiated and memorialized may include a rental or leasing charge or fee to the DHCC for use of the facilities. Furthermore, that agreement will reflect the requirement under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068.2(e) that the local board is “required to renovate, repair, and maintain the school facilities of charter schools in the district to the same extent as other public schools in the district if the local board owns the charter school facility.” Thus, prior to the commencement of the DHCC in August 2014, the DHCC shall submit the following documents to the DCSD:

(a) Documentation of Lease Agreement. The DHCC shall negotiate with the DCSD and memorialize lease agreements for the facilities that will house the DHCC schools.

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

(b) Certificate of Occupancy. The DHCC and DCSD shall ensure that current Certificates of Occupancy are in place for the facilities to be used.

(c) The DHCC shall prepare a safety plan for each facility in accord with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185, which plans shall be submitted to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. *See also* Q46.

### **DCSD Q45- Certificate of Occupancy**

Certificates of occupancy currently exist for the facilities to be used by the DHCC, other than the rebuild of Fernbank Elementary. With respect to obtaining a certificate of occupancy for that rebuild, the DHCC will assist the DCSD in any way needed.

### **DCSD Q46- Safety and Health Requirements**

As a Cluster of conversion charter schools, the DHCC will continue to meet relevant local and state health and safety policies, rules, and regulations in the same manner they were satisfied pre-conversion. The DHCC is not requesting, and recognizes that it may not request, to waive any applicable law related to health and safety. The DHCC acknowledges that, in collaboration with the DCSD, it must meet all codes for sanitation, fire, construction, stability, temperature, ventilation, and suitability of physical space. The DHCC will follow all state and local mandates and guidelines related to safety processes and drills and documentation and reporting thereof. The DHCC will grant access to local health and fire department officials for inspection of the premises or operations of its schools for purposes of ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of students and employees pursuant to Georgia Statutes and National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code, N.F.P.A. 101. The DHCC also recognizes that it is subject to all federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes relating to civil rights, insurance, the protection of physical health and safety of students, employees, and visitors,

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

conflicting interest transactions, and the prevention of unlawful conduct. The DHCC further acknowledges that it must submit and/or update its school safety plans in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185, to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) for approval, and that such GEMA-approved plans must be received by the DCSD prior to July 1, 2014 and on required dates mandated by the DCSD thereafter. The DHCC will ensure that those plans include specific guidelines and processes to prevent unauthorized persons from entering buildings used by the DHCC.

### **DCSD Q47- Site Selection Form**

Because the schools included within the DHCC currently exist, the site selection form is not applicable to this Petition.

### **DCSD Q48 and State- Community Involvement in Developing Petition**

Out of a shared desire to integrate a diverse set of learning pathways for measurable improvement in student achievement, the DHCC initiative was born. From this, a 14-member Organizing Committee, appointed by the School Councils of Avondale Elementary, Fernbank Elementary, Laurel Ridge Elementary, McLendon Elementary, Briar Vista Elementary, Druid Hills Middle and Druid Hills High formed and facilitated the charter petition process.

Public Organizing Committee meetings were held every two weeks and open to the public, for the purposes of information sharing, discussion, votes on group recommendations, Q&A from the audience, and audience input. For specific planning, six separate working groups with 100+ registered and active volunteers, including educators, parents and community members, actively researched, planned and formulated decisions on a weekly basis. These meetings also were open to the public and included information sharing, discussion, formulation of recommendations, and as visitors attended, Q&A and community input. Additionally, a

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

hundred or more community members assisted intermittently on specific topics. In an effort to keep the larger and diverse community informed and involved, multiple meetings were held at every school as well as churches and apartment complexes. These meetings were conducted in both English and Spanish to share the working groups' progress, answer questions, and obtain community input. A comprehensive survey also developed in both English and Spanish was distributed in paper form and electronically to obtain input about the values, priorities, and desires of parents, teachers/staff, and community members. To obtain valuable input from staff on key initiatives in the charter, a comprehensive survey was developed to obtain insight into their values, priorities, and desires as well as feedback on the proposed plan for the Cluster as an employer. The surveys generated more than 800 responses on the stakeholder survey and nearly 100 responses on the employee survey. These survey results were used to drive decision making for the working groups. Additionally, technology was utilized in the form of an interactive website ([www.druidhillschartercluster.org](http://www.druidhillschartercluster.org)), social media (<http://www.facebook.com/DruidHillsCharterCluster>), and LiveText, a collaboration and project management tool, to both provide and receive information to and from stakeholders related to meetings, work progress, research and Cluster data and progress. Over the summer, a smaller working group of 17 parents, educators, and community members aggregated the work group plans and recommendations developed over the preceding four months and shared the task of drafting this Petition.

This charter cluster initiative has received broad support from a wide range of stakeholders in the cluster community, as evidenced by the commitment of time and level of collaboration by so many. A number of letters of support from parents and partners may be found in the Appendices, and represent an additional expression of support.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

### DCSD Q49 and State- Continuing Involvement of Parents and the Community

Prior to the charter's implementation, stakeholders will be involved largely by establishing implementation teams at each school. These teams will consist of parents, teachers, staff, and administrators who will have extensive decision-making authority over school-level financial priorities, instruction, and operational decisions for the specific purpose of implementation of the charter. Parents and community members are eligible to serve on the DHCC Board of Directors and may participate on board committees and subcommittees. Parents will have multiple opportunities to be included in school level decision-making processes as well throughout the charter term through involvement on School Leadership Teams, PTA/PTO/PTSA organizations, committees, subcommittees and in other ways determined by the School Leadership Teams. *See* the Description of Governance section for more details related to School Leadership Teams.

Title I eligible schools also will involve parents in school activities in a variety of ways, including paper and electronic surveying in order to better serve the particular needs of various parent populations. Results of these surveys will be shared with parents of students eligible for Title I at the first Title I Parent Advisory Council meeting held at each local Title I eligible school. With parental input, teachers funded by Title I will plan and allocate funds for family engagement activities, workshops, and information meetings scheduled throughout the school year. In conjunction with the first PTA/PTO/PTSA Open House meetings, parents will be provided with information about Title I programs being implemented at their schools. Parents of participating students eligible for Title I will be invited to serve on their local school's Title I Parent Advisory Councils. One parent and one teacher from each school's Title I Parent Advisory Council will serve on the district Title I Parent Advisory Council so that input and information will be disseminated both to and from parents in the community.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

Parents whose schedules do not allow them to serve or participate in the aforementioned capacities will be encouraged to attend open house events, parent teacher conferences, fundraising activities, and to meet with their school principal(s) during regularly scheduled open office hours at each school. Technology will be utilized to encourage participatory processes: school email distribution lists, community email distribution lists and social media. Emphasis will be placed on developing a Parent Engagement Model that includes:

- Focus on not only volunteering, but also active engagement in schooling (conferences, presentations, field trips, etc.);
- Focus on incentivizing parent and community presence and engagement;
- Intentional planning around education related to the importance of involvement, particularly within cultures that are not accustomed to actively engaging in schooling;
- Utilization of community resources to promote education for parents and emphasize the importance of their presence in the school and engagement in its mission.

A Shared Commitment Compact has been drafted to facilitate and support the strongest possible partnership between the home and school. The Shared Commitment Compact may be found in the Appendices.

The Cluster will strive for balanced participation of stakeholders on the DHCC Board, as well as on school and board subcommittees such as: academic, governance, fundraising, community outreach, etc. Allowing for vertical and horizontal teaming and sharing of ideas at the school and Cluster level by teachers, administrators, and auxiliary staff is a priority of the DHCC. Therefore, these opportunities have been written into the school's calendar. The Cluster also will hold quarterly meetings to allow School Leadership Teams and other stakeholders to interact productively with the DHCC Board on matters of importance to each of the schools, to discuss cluster-wide matters, to discuss progress aligned with charter objectives, and to allow input by stakeholders. Surveys, interviews, and subcommittee participation allow additional opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the school and Cluster improvement and strategic

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

planning processes. Additionally, events (community-building and otherwise) may be held throughout the school year that will require the support of parent and community volunteers.

The DHCC has established and will continue to establish formal relationships with non-profit entities, colleges, universities, and the business communities within and around the Cluster area. Many businesses and organizations will serve as Partners in Education and support the schools and Cluster through the sharing of time, resources, and expertise, all aimed at enhancing instructional programs as well as increasing operational and financial efficiencies. Several examples of these partnerships may be found in the Appendices. These partners will meet with the CAO and Principals in advance of each school year to discuss goals and to strategically match resources with needs. Parents and business representatives will be invited to participate on any number of the different advisory subcommittees established by the DHCC Board and School Leadership Teams.

### **DCSD Q50- Fiscal Plans and Autonomy, Demonstration of Fiscal Feasibility and Controls**

DHCC requests full autonomy over finance including budgets, financial policies and procedures, and compliance with federal, state and local financial reporting requirements. DHCC will follow generally accepted accounting principles, and is committed to ensuring fiscal stewardship of funds and budgeting aligned with its mission and vision. DHCC will comply with the Local Units of Administration Manual as it pertains to charter schools.

The DHCC Board of Directors will be responsible for approving fiscal policies and guidelines. These policies and guidelines shall address the following:

Procedures for receipts, which will outline processes to be followed upon receipt of money or non-monetary goods to ensure these resources are recorded and deposited properly, including receiving, depositing, recording and reconciling cash.



## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

Procedures Related to Bids, which will provide for bid processes that are transparent and protect the integrity of the bid process itself and stewardship of public funds.

Procedures for Disbursements, which will provide an appropriate manner of disbursement of funds to ensure only authorized individuals have access to account information and are positioned to withdraw funds. Such policies will include procedures for vendor set-up and management; processing/approving purchase orders; processing invoices; and processing operating checks.

Procedures for School Activity Accounts, which will establish how schools within the Cluster will handle cash receipts, disbursements, and provide safeguards against theft and misappropriation.

Procedures for Payroll, which will detail how payroll is calculated and disbursed, thereby helping to ensure that relevant federal, state, and local laws are followed. Such procedures also will include verification of payroll registers, methodology for setting up new employees, making payroll changes; processing payroll checks; and verifying payroll monthly.

Investment policies and procedures, which will outline how the Cluster may invest its resources and the safeguards to monitor investment decisions, including identification of investable assets vs. projected cash flow; timelines for investment portfolio; risk assessment; liquidity requirements; and diversification strategies.

Examples of controls to ensure appropriate stewardship of public funds include, but are not limited to, policies and documented practices related to:

Receipts: sequential/pre-numbered receipts; segregation of duties between individuals receiving money (via mail or in person) and individuals posting to the general ledger; separation between receiving money and depositing money; established number of days

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

acceptable to hold receipts; established maximum amount of cash that can be held in vault; requiring receipt books/spreadsheets for each person (sponsors, bookkeepers, teachers, etc.) receiving cash and require verification methods.

Disbursements: Clear identification and protections with respect to signatory authority; maintenance of sequential check log; review of voided checks and voucher or reimbursement packages; pre-disbursement approval processes; password protection and maintenance for all hardware with the capacity to affect disbursements; check stock secured in a locked vault; review of new vendors; segregation of responsibilities between different employees for vendor set-up and vendor disbursements.

School Activity Accounts: Cash Disbursements: Require prior approval of expenses by appropriate personnel; Principal signing check is an acceptable approval of purchase, if it indicates the acceptance of responsibility for the validity of the purchase. When accepting responsibility, Principal should review the voucher package for accuracy prior to signing check; provide extracurricular sponsors and others periodic updates of the expenses recorded in applicable accounts; absolute prohibition on checks payable to cash.

Payroll: Thorough review of initial input; sequential log of employee numbers; redundant review of sample monthly salaries; pay adjustments must be approved/reviewed by CFO; external calculations of employee salaries reviewed by CFO; payroll reports comparison to initial salary calculations; review of new employees added; CAO or CFO approval; distribution of checks by personnel external to payroll; review of exception reports.

The CFO will present financial reports (*i.e.* balance sheet, income and expense, and budget versus actual) to the DHCC Board for review and discussion each month. DHCC will procure a Crime/Fidelity Bond covering all persons receiving or disbursing funds and will maintain this

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

bond in the amount of \$1 million for the full term of the Charter. A Conflicts of Interest Policy, detailed in the Appendices, will be adopted.

DHCC will not procure or attempt to procure the services of an Educational Management Organization. DHCC understands the responsibility of the DHCC Board for oversight of finance and facilities planning (in collaboration with the DCSD). To this end, the Cluster will comply with DCSD requirements for financial reports, including but not limited to a monthly budget status report, monthly cash reports, and quarterly statements. Further, the Cluster understands that it is subject to the DCSD's internal Audit Department.

### **DCSD Q51 and State - Budget, Fiscal Plans, & Autonomy; Fiscal Feasibility & Controls**

The Cluster's projected five-year budget may be found in the Appendices. The DHCC Fiscal year shall be July 1 – June 30, and will utilize the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations. DHCC will utilize the state's Chart of Accounts and the adopted Budget will comply with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-171. The Cluster's flow statements will show receipts and disbursements on a monthly basis along with beginning and ending balance and will demonstrate that the Cluster has adequate resources to pay its expenses throughout the year. The Budget for DHCC will be based on sound, conservative, documented assumptions and will be aligned with the school's mission and vision. Proposed budgets will be based on projected enrollment based on historical data of Cluster schools' demographics. The annual DHCC budget will include legal defense funds, legal representation, Crime/Fidelity Bond and other insurance, fingerprinting and background checks, among other items required by the DCSD. The DHCC Board will approve all budget and cash flow statements; furthermore, the receipts and disbursements on the cash flow statement will be consistent with the amounts in the budget. Any services contracted for by DHCC, including those contracted for with DCSD, will be detailed in contracts as required by DCSD. All

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

contracts between DHCC and DCSD will be approved by the DHCC Board and legal counsel and be reviewed by the DHCC Board annually for compliance.

### **DCSD Q52- Annual Financial Audit**

DHCC will obtain an annual independent audit by a Georgia licensed Certified Public Accountant in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b). The financial reporting format shall be in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The audit report will be provided to the DCSD within 90 days of the fiscal year end. Further, DHCC will comply with the state and local October 1 or other mandated financial audit deadline at DHCC's expense each year. DHCC understands that any significant audit findings may result in termination of the charter after review of the audit report by the DCSD Finance Department.

### **DCSD Q53- Chief Financial Officer (Cluster Financial Officer)**

The DHCC Cluster Financial Officer (CFO) shall be responsible for formulation and modification of policies and guidelines for fiscal management and control. DHCC will select its own Cluster Financial Officer meeting credentialing requirements pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(7) (Bachelors Degree or higher in business, accounting, from an accredited college or university and a minimum of 4 years experience in a field related to finance or business, or documented experience of 10 or more years in the field of business or finance).

### **DCSD Q54- Student Recruitment and Maintaining Enrollment**

As a conversion charter, DHCC will obtain its students from the existing enrollment of the attendance zone. Historical enrolled student populations at each school within DHCC are available and serve as reliable sources from which to model future student populations. Furthermore, the Cluster will track demographic shifts and increases/decreases in numbers in the district and Cluster attendance zone annually and utilize these trends for forecasting. DHCC will publish information about its charter on its website and through other social, electronic, and print

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

media outlets for those moving to or residing in the DeKalb County School District who may be interested in enrolling in a DHCC school should space allow.

### **DCSD Q55- Enrollment Count Determination**

DCSD will calculate DHCC's allotment based on the district's per pupil revenue and the DHCC schools' FTE count (school enrollment). School enrollment count shall be calculated as follows:

- Year 1: Initial funding will be based on March 2014 FTE count for each of the Cluster schools. Adjustment in funding to be made after October count and again at the midterm adjustment.
- Years 2-6: Funding based on FTE counts in October and March each year with midterm adjustment. Funding shall be made based on actual enrollment, except in the case of significant increase in enrollment pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068.1 and SBOE Guidelines for Charter Authorizers, Financing and Management.

### **DCSD Q56- Proposed Timeline for State and Local Funding**

The initial allotment of federal, state and local funds due to DHCC is to be provided by July 1, 2014.

### **DCSD Q57- Compliance with Federal Funding Reporting Requirements**

DHCC will ensure that mandates related to federal expenditure of funds will be followed and the Cluster will work collaboratively with the DCSD to ensure this. DHCC will comply with all federal monitoring requirements for schools receiving federal funds.

### **DCSD Q58- Securing Grants and Fundraising**

DHCC will regularly submit requests for additional funding from local, state, and federal sources, as well as corporations, individuals, foundations, philanthropic groups, and other sources. DHCC understands its responsibility for use and administration of federal, state, local,

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

and private grant funds or donations. Further, the Cluster understands its responsibility for repayment of any loans or demands for the repayment of grant funds obtained by the Cluster. Any grants received by DHCC will be administered in accordance with the terms of the grant. Oversight for grant administration will be coordinated by the CFO and CAO, and the DHCC Board will receive and review quarterly grant status updates. DHCC's budgets aligned with this Petition are based solely on guaranteed public revenue derived from m currently published enrollment counts for each school. Any additional funds earned through grants, fundraising or private donations will be used to enhance current programming in accordance with the terms of the grant(s). If the Cluster should cease operation as a charter, any grant funds or loan proceeds shall be distributed in accordance with the terms of the grant or loan. The DCSD shall not be responsible for repayment of any grant or loans to the DHCC.

### **DCSD Q59- Governing Boards or School Councils**

As provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85, an autonomous governing board that shall govern all decisions related to instruction, human resources, finances, and operations for the Cluster shall govern the DHCC (the DHCC Board). The Board will operate in accordance with the DHCC's articles of incorporation, bylaws, non-profit requirements, and applicable Georgia open meetings laws. The members of the DHCC Board shall serve in a voluntary capacity and will not be paid for their service. However, members of the Board may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred related to board service. The DHCC Board shall advance the goals of the DHCC by providing the governance function, which encompasses legal responsibilities, academics, fiscal health, planning, policy-making, fiduciary obligations, and by carrying out its statutory responsibilities associated with operating the charter Cluster in an efficient and ethical manner. Specifically, the Board shall govern the Cluster by setting policy and approving all budgets and

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

significant transactions. The Board also will be instrumental in building additional community and philanthropic support for the Cluster. The Board will provide oversight of the Cluster Administrative Officer and will provide oversight and ultimate responsibility for achievement of the charter's goals and objectives. Board members will all be fingerprinted and have criminal background checks at the beginning of each new term. All new board members will be communicated to the DCSD and updated with Georgia Secretary of State by way of corporate annual registration.

### **DCSD Q60- Board Control and Management**

The DHCC will be subject to provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 *et seq.* (Open Public Meetings) and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et seq.* (Inspections of Public Records.) in a manner consistent with the Charter Schools Act of 1998, as amended, and in accordance with the Constitution of the State of Georgia.

### **DCSD Q61 and State- Governing Board Roles, & Composition; Duties, Responsibilities,**

#### **Training**

#### **Cluster Level Governance and Management:**

The DHCC Board shall have governing and policy-making authority for the Cluster. It will review and utilize various forms of academic, financial, and demographic data for decision-making. The DHCC Board's responsibilities and duties include, but are not limited to:

- Negotiate, when applicable, and ensure proper compliance with, and execution of, the terms of the Charter (the contract);
- Ensure that the DHCC meets its mission, vision, and performance objectives outlined within the Charter;
- Conduct itself in accordance with its duly-adopted bylaws;

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

- Develop and monitor the DHCC's annual budget, and oversee the fiscal health of the Cluster, including approving fiscal expenditures beyond individual school allocations;
- Hire, monitor, develop, and support the CAO and evaluate his or her performance, and provide for succession pathways and/or plan for Cluster leadership;
- Hire the Cluster Financial Officer and monitor, support, and evaluate the performance of such CFO;
- Establish and maintain all policies governing the operation of the DHCC;
- Maintain in good standing accreditation of the Cluster by an applicable, permitted accrediting organization, and facilitate and support school-level authorizations or certifications from outside entities such as, but not exclusively, the International Baccalaureate Organization;
- Ensure that the DHCC adheres to applicable local, state, and federal law, regulation, and policy;
- Hold the CAO and the CFO accountable for the academic and fiscal sustainability and success of the DHCC;
- Render final approval regarding personnel, including hiring and termination, based upon the recommendation of the CAO, in consultation with Principal(s);
- Render final approval of school improvement plans, based upon the recommendation of the CAO, in consultation with Principal(s);
- Hear and act upon student, parent/guardian, and employee grievances, where policy requires;
- Negotiate and enter into contracts with outside entities for goods or services;
- Provide legal and risk-management oversight for the Cluster;
- Provide support to the DHCC for additional fundraising, marketing, and other services as needs arise, and coordinate cluster-wide fundraising from sources other than state and local



## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

government (e.g., federal charter school grant program, philanthropic foundations dedicated to innovation and excellence in public K-12 education);

- Hear and render decisions on issues brought to the Board's attention and within the Board's scope of authority;
- Advocate on behalf of the DHCC by working to establish partnerships with community organizations, institutions of higher education, governmental agencies, nonprofit entities, and corporate entities that support education through noncommercial relationships;
- Develop the DHCC's strategic plan, and assess progress with respect to that plan;
- Ensure open, ample, and meaningful communication with all facets of the Cluster community and act as ambassadors for the Cluster in the broader community.

The DHCC Board of Directors shall be comprised of a minimum of seven (7) members and no more than eleven (11) members. During the initial term or any term thereafter and in the manner provided by the DHCC bylaws, the Board may expand its membership as a means of integrating and strengthening community partnerships or achieving other goals consistent with the DHCC's mission. Upon approval of this Petition, the Board shall be comprised of seven members, and the initial term of four members shall be three years, and the initial term of three members shall be two years. At the conclusion of each initial term, all subsequent terms shall be for two years each. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. All members must have an identifiable and articulable interest in the Cluster. The DHCC CAO shall serve as a non-voting, ex officio member of the Board. No other person currently employed by the DHCC or employed by or within any of the seven DHCC schools may be eligible to serve on the Board. Of the four members whose initial term will be three years, one of these members must have served on the statutorily required committee charged with conducting the pre-filing community

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

vote (the DHCC Organizing Committee); one member must have significant experience in elementary education; one member must have significant experience in middle school education; and one member must have significant experience in high school education. Of the remaining three members whose initial term will be two years, those members must have experience and expertise in one or more of the following areas: legal, finance, development, or general business or organizational management.

Prior to commencement of any term following the initial terms of the seven Board members, each School Leadership Team will appoint one person – either a parent or legal guardian with a child enrolled in that school or a full-time, school-based employee to serve on a Nominating Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Board’s Committee on Directors) that will be responsible for publicizing the need for, soliciting, identifying, recruiting, and screening candidates for Board service. The DHCC Board’s Committee on Directors shall consist of no fewer than five (5) members of the Board who will be responsible for conducting the process that will result in nomination of future members of the Board. Those future members shall be elected by majority vote of the then-existing Board. In recruiting members of the Board, the Nominating Committee must strive to seek candidates from each Cluster school who are representative of the Cluster community and who possess at least one of the identified skills and backgrounds that will benefit the governance and operation of the DHCC. The initial proposed Board members reflect, and the subsequent Nominating Committee shall work to nominate individuals with:

- A dedication to the vision and mission of the DHCC, and a commitment to advocate for the DHCC’s mission and potential both within the Cluster and in the broader community;
- A willingness to volunteer for one or more board committees and the ability to contribute appropriate time and energy necessary to follow through on assigned tasks;

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

- An ability to work professionally within a team structure, including dialoguing and deliberating on critical issues;
- An ability to think critically, strategically, and objectively about issues concerning the Cluster as a whole and any constituent school;
- Consummate respect for the teaching profession and a firm understanding that the overarching goal of conversion to charter status is to allow teachers the flexibility to teach, collaboratively and creatively, as they know best, so that children on every point of the achievement spectrum may reach his or her highest potential;
- An unwavering commitment to the belief that all children deserve a high quality public education that is engaging and invigorating, and that facilitates within them the opportunity to achieve their full potential; and
- The ability to contribute a diverse set of skills, experiences, and knowledge to the governance of the Cluster.

Within the Board, officer positions shall be filled by an election by the full Board, and all officers will serve for a term of one year with the opportunity for reelection. Officer positions to be filled are: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Each board member will participate in governance trainings both quarterly (initial year) and annually (subsequent years). Subject matter will include but is not limited to director training, professionalism, conflicts of interest, compensation, mentoring, education, and similar subject. Training avenues may include in-boardroom training, webinars, classes and conferences as available through GCSA, UGA, National Council of Nonprofits and Board Source among other reputable organizations. Please refer to Q69 for additional details.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

To avoid conflicts of interest all current and future board members will be required to sign and comply with the DHHC conflict of interest policy found in the Appendices.

The grounds for removal of a board member from office shall be:

- (a) Death or disability rendering him or her incapable of carrying out the responsibilities of the position;
- (b) Resignation in writing and submitted to both the Chair (or Vice-Chair if the resigning member is the Chair) and the CAO;
- (c) After notice and hearing with opportunity to present witnesses and/or other evidence, a determination by a majority vote of eligible members that a violation of the Board's ethics or conflict of interest policies or a crime of moral turpitude has occurred;
- (d) If a plurality of Board members feels a Board member is not fulfilling his or her obligation to the Cluster through fulfillment of the responsibilities set forth above or who has missed three or more of the Board's monthly meetings within a calendar year, then that Board member shall be contacted by the Board chair, reminded of his or her responsibilities and asked to re-commit to their fulfillment of responsibilities.

Following this reminder and recommitment, if the Board still feels that the member is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities, a vote on the individual's membership will be conducted at a special meeting called for this purpose. If a majority is in favor, the board member will be removed.

With respect to Cluster-level management, job descriptions for the CAO and CFO may be found in the Appendices.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

### **School Level Governance and Management: Principals and School Leadership Teams**

Each school shall expand the reach of parent engagement by augmenting and strengthening what has been known as the Local School Council, into an entity that will be referred to as the School Leadership Team. The School Leadership Team differs from the current school councils required by state law in the following ways:

- (a) Intent. The School Leadership Teams shall retain decision-making authority, not advise.
- (b) Composition. The School Leadership Teams will have more autonomy to determine their own composition.
- (c) Leadership. The School Leadership Teams will determine their own leadership in voting for their chair.

In the operation of the Cluster, the School Leadership Teams (SLTs) will meet at a designated time, as set forth in its bylaws, but at least four times per year. For each meeting, an agenda will be structured, similar to those developed for the DHCC Board meetings, and will include items for spotlight, discussion, and action by the SLT. In addition, time for comments from the school community will be included on the agenda for each meeting. Minutes will be maintained and meetings will be advertised. The agenda and supporting materials will be available to the community within the same timeframe that the Board uses. The chair of the School Leadership Team may call special sessions. These sessions are also subject to the same transparency requirements as regularly scheduled DHCC Board meetings. School Leadership Teams shall adhere to the open and public meetings act and inspection of public records requirements as outlined in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, *et seq.* and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70, *et seq.* These requirements shall be addressed in the bylaws. The School Leadership Teams will have the right to set the dates and times for their meetings as set forth in the bylaws. The DHCC will assist the schools by publishing and publicizing the meeting times. All meetings will be publicized and agendas created using the same timeline as the Board.

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

The duties of the School Leadership Team shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Recommend personnel for submission to the Principal for hire;
- Determine use of funding (as per formula based on enrollment) in technology and instructional materials;
- Develop, approve, and monitor the continuous school improvement planning process (multi-year plan with annual reviews and updates that includes plans to foster student and teacher development);
- Review assessment data and use it for decision-making purposes;
- Assist with school accreditation, certifications, and improvement reviews and assessments;
- Gauge decision-making impact on students and staff in classes and as a school;
- Review and approve changes to its bylaws; and
- Recommend school needs to the DHCC Board during the annual budget process.

Annually, the Cluster establishes its operational budget based on enrollment. During the months of budget construction, the schools, with the assistance of their School Leadership Teams, determine necessary staff member units, professional learning activities, technological needs, instructional material requests, and other priorities.

Members of the School Leadership Team shall include:

- (a) A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7 voting members, and always an uneven number of members. Subject to this requirement, the School Leadership Team shall define the number of voting and non-voting members it will have in its bylaws;
- (b) Of the total voting membership, at least three of the members must be parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school;

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

- (c) Of the total voting membership, at least two of the voting members shall be certified teachers who work at the school;
- (d) The school principal;
- (e) Of the total voting membership, at least one of the members shall not be a parent, guardian, or employee of the DHCC or DCSD. If this position is deemed impossible to fill by the School Leadership Team, a parent may be appointed by the School Leadership Team; and

In addition, members of the School Leadership Team may include:

- (a) Other members as specified in the team's bylaws, such as, but not limited to, students, staff, and representatives of school-related organizations. The other members of the SLT shall appoint such members. Selection procedures for these members shall be specified in the team's bylaws. Student members, if part of the composition, will be ex-officio members and may be required to abstain from personnel matters; and
- (b) An employee of the DHCC or DCSD may serve as a parent representative on the SLT of a school in which his or her child is enrolled.

The goal for each School Leadership Team is to strike a balance in terms of diversity, expertise, and the ratio of parent/employee voting members. The parent/employee ratio should be as even as possible, in that, no more than 49% of the voting member positions may be filled by employees of the DHCC or DCSD. Each SLT may add members at its discretion (subject to the 7-member maximum) in order to create a SLT that has the balance needed in order to make the best decisions for all students. No parent, teacher, community member or student may serve on multiple SLTs. Parent or legal guardian members of the SLT will be elected by a majority of votes of parents and legal guardians of students that will be enrolled in the school at the onset of

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

the member's term. Candidates for parent or legal guardian seats must have a child who will be enrolled at the school during the term for which the member will serve on the team. Certified staff members of the SLT will be elected by a majority vote of certified personnel who work at the school at the time of the election. The elected members of the team will appoint students and community or business leaders who serve on SLTs. Each SLT will develop bylaws (and the DHCC Board will draft sample bylaws, should any SLT desire to use such sample), which will address the SLT's internal governance procedures. SLTs will not incorporate or form any other business entity. SLTs cannot accept funds, including any money from a grant; however, SLTs can identify grant opportunities and work with the CAO and/or DHCC Board to submit a grant application.

Each school shall have an open nomination and election process prior to the start of each school year, to be completed by the commencement of classes. For the first year of the charter, elections will take place in the spring (Spring 2014) to allow for adequate professional learning time during the summer months. Each member will serve a two-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms except for the Principal, whose term shall be for so long as he or she remains Principal of the school. Terms for the parent, teacher and community member seats shall be staggered such that the initial term for some members may be less than two years, with the goal of always having a mix of both new and experienced members to ensure continuity and mentoring across each SLT. Current School Council members whose terms have not expired must participate in the election process in order to be considered as a member of the SLT. In the nomination process, potential School Leadership Team members will be required to execute a conflict of interest certification representing and warranting that they have been truthful in



## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

disclosing any conflicts of interest. The DHCC Board, prior to the commencement of the charter, will draft this conflict of interest certification.

After providing public notice at least two weeks before the meeting of each electing body, the Principal of each school shall call a meeting of electing bodies for the purpose of selecting members of the SLT. The electing body for the parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians eligible to serve as a parent member of the SLT, and the electing body for the teacher members shall consist of all certified personnel eligible to serve as a teacher member of the SLT. A student's parent(s) or guardian(s) shall collectively have one vote for each student enrolled in the school. The SLT shall specify in its bylaws the month in which elections are to be held and shall specify a nomination and election process. Prior to the election, the Principal and/or SLT shall provide social and electronic opportunities to communicate with possible candidates. For instance, a school may require candidates for School Leadership Team positions to participate in a forum.

The DHCC Board shall be committed to providing meaningful opportunities to promote parental and community engagement. It shall be the desire of the DHCC Board that the composition of the School Leadership Teams will be inclusive and diverse. Each SLT will make every reasonable effort and pursue every reasonable means to engage parents and community members so that a culturally sensitive environment exists in every school in the DHCC.

The officers of the School Leadership Team shall be a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. Officers of the School Leadership Team shall be elected by secret ballot by the team at the first meeting of the team following the election of School Leadership Team members. The officers of the School Leadership Teams shall hold office for the term specified in the School Leadership Team's bylaws. Any member of the School Leadership Team, unless otherwise

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

prohibited by its bylaws, may be selected to fill the position of chairperson, vice chairperson, or secretary. The vice chairperson shall, in the absence or disability of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be required by the team. The secretary shall attend all meetings, act as clerk of the School Leadership Team, and be responsible for recording all votes and minutes of all proceedings in the books to be kept for that purpose. The secretary shall give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the School Leadership Team and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the team. In the absence of the secretary of the School Leadership Team, the chair of the team shall appoint another member of the team to be the acting secretary for purposes of that meeting.

The most important requirement to be a member of the School Leadership Team is an honest desire and commitment to contribute to the educational experience and learning of all the children of the respective school. Given that, there will be a need for financial (accounting) or budgetary skills, organizational and/or administrative skills, interpersonal skills, legal and/or school regulation skills, educational experience and expertise, communications and/or community involvement skills, and planning and strategic skills. These skills are not required for any parent to be a member of a School Leadership Team. Rather, they may be used as each School Leadership Team examines their respective composition to ascertain whether they have the members they need in order to support the school.

The professional learning for School Leadership Team members will include, but not be limited to, discussion around the following topics: the SLT's authority, duties and responsibilities; boundaries surrounding that authority and fulfillment of those duties and responsibilities; decision-making processes; accountability; communication; leadership;

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

fiduciary obligations; and dispute resolution. The professional learning may be conducted by an outside agency.

To encourage and further facilitate the collaboration and K-12 continuity that the charter brings to the Cluster, SLTs from the Cluster schools will meet together occasionally during the school year. They may do this by combining their regularly scheduled meetings, or holding separately called special meetings.

Any member may withdraw from the School Leadership Team by delivering to the Chair of the SLT and the Principal a written resignation and submitting a copy to the secretary of the SLT. Should SLT members determine that a member of the team is no longer active in the team as defined by the bylaws of the team or in some other way in conflict with the Cluster's or school's mission and vision, the School Leadership Team may, by a majority vote, remove such person from the School Leadership Team, effective as of a date determined by the team.

The office of School Leadership Team member shall be automatically vacated under the following conditions:

- (a) If the member resigns;
- (b) If the member is removed as a member by a majority vote of the School Leadership Team for non-participation or violation of the school or Cluster policies;
- (c) If the member no longer has a child enrolled at the school.

An election within the electing body for a replacement to fill the remainder of an unexpired term shall be held within 30 days, unless there are fewer than 90 days left before the end of the school year, in which case the SLT will decide whether to fill the position before the end of the school year. Finally, with respect to management responsibilities or the school Principal, a job description for the Principal role may be found in the Appendices.

The following chart summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies:

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

DHCC Board of Directors	School Leadership Team
<p>The Board will continue to make decisions in the following areas and have final jurisdiction over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster-wide policies</li> <li>• Overall fiscal management (including but not limited to purchasing and contracting)</li> <li>• Final development and approval of the annual Cluster budget</li> <li>• Fiscal expenditures beyond the school's allocations</li> <li>• Legal oversight</li> <li>• Fair/non-discriminatory personnel practices</li> <li>• Cluster Strategic Plan, including overall goals and objectives of the Cluster</li> <li>• Final approval regarding school improvement plans</li> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• Curriculum and assessment</li> <li>• Overall safety/maintenance of buildings</li> <li>• School nutrition</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Decisions related to one school that will impact another school</li> <li>• Final approval regarding personnel including hiring and termination</li> <li>• Attendance zones</li> <li>• Appeals</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In consultation with the Principal, recommend personnel for submission to the CAO for hire;</li> <li>• Determine use of funding for school operations, other than capital expenses, personnel and benefits;</li> <li>• Develop, approve, and monitor the continuous school improvement planning process (three year plan with annual reviews and updates that include plans to foster student and teacher development);</li> <li>• Review assessment data and use it for decision making purposes;</li> <li>• Assist with school accreditation and improvement reviews and assessments, such as SACS or other certifying entities;</li> <li>• Review and approve the implementation of any state waiver within the School Leadership Team's purview</li> </ul>

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

### **DCSD Q62 and State - Parents and Community Members Involved in Governance**

Parents, community members, and other interested stakeholder may be nominated to serve on the DHCC Board or run to serve on a School Leadership Team. Q61 addresses these opportunities in greater detail.

### **DCSD Q63- Conflict Resolution between Local Board and Cluster**

The DHCC Board, Cluster Administrative Officer and all employees will strive at all times to resolve any and all conflicts in a respectful, collegial, collaborative, and productive manner. Whether any such conflict is between student and teacher, parent and principal, the DHCC and a vendor, or among colleagues at a school or on the DHCC Board, each and every one of these stakeholders is integral to the success of the DHCC and will be treated as such in resolving conflicts. The DHCC will rely upon its grievance policies for both employees and non-employees (parents, guardians, and students). The essence of these policies and the DHCC's philosophy toward conflict resolution is that respectful, non-adversarial resolution made at the point closest to the conflict provides the most meaningful and sustainable outcome for all involved. Thus, teachers and principals at each of the DHCC schools will be vested with the responsibility of resolving conflicts in a manner that respectfully acknowledges and understands the views and perspectives of the stakeholders involved, and at the same time does not adversely affect the interests of non-involved stakeholders or the interests of the DHCC as a whole. The Cluster Administrative Officer will be available, at all times, to facilitate and assist in any conflict resolution, where DHCC policies require or where the stakeholders involved believe such assistance will be helpful. Moreover, where the CAO believes it would be appropriate and lead to a better, more instructive outcome, the CAO, in consultation with the DHCC Board, may enlist the assistance of an experienced alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

professional. The DHCC also will make every effort to include among its professional development offerings to all employees, periodic live seminars or workshops on conflict management and resolution. If the CAO, in consultation with Principals, believes that such seminars or workshops would be beneficial to parents, guardians, and age-appropriate students, the DHCC may offer the same to those stakeholders as well.

### **DCSD Q64- Business Arrangements or Partnerships**

Below are examples of key partnerships that support the mission of the Cluster:

- Culture Connect
- DeKalb County School District
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation
- Emory University
- The Georgia Charter Schools Association
- Technology Association of Georgia (TAG-Ed)

To view complete lists and to see letters of support from established partnerships, please refer to the Appendices. In addition to these partnerships, the DHCC will proactively and continuously seek to build new partnerships that will enhance the IB, STEAM, Montessori, and AP instructional pathways toward college and career readiness, while increasing operational and financial efficiencies. As outlined in Q49, these partnerships may include institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations and the business communities within and around the Cluster area. Upon termination of any such partnerships or agreements, all records related to the same and in a school's custody shall be immediately transferred to the DHCC Board for secure document retention.

### **DCSD Q65- Certification of Incorporation**

Druid Hills Charter Cluster, Inc. ("DHCC") is organized and operated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Georgia pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(4). The corporation's sole function is the operation and support of the Druid Hills Charter Cluster of schools, and the corporation will not raise funds for any other purpose. DHCC's corporate

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

documents and bylaws may be found in the Appendices. Its Form 1023 seeking tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code will be provided as a supplemental Appendix upon filing.

### **DCSD Q66- Bylaws**

The DHCC's Bylaws are found in the Appendices.

### **DCSD Q67- Conflict of Interest Forms**

The DHCC's Conflict of Interest Policy and executed copies of DCSD's Conflict of Interest form for all founding members of the DHCC Board of Directors are found in the Appendices.

### **DCSD Q68- Governance Board Resumes**

Resumes or biographies for the inaugural Druid Hills Charter Cluster Board of Directors are included in the Appendices. The seven members are: Theresa Johnson-Bennett, Scott L. Bonder, Frederick "Fred" L. Daniels, Jr., Matthew S. Lewis, Kathleen Boyle Mathers, David G. Roberts, and Robert B. Thorpe.

### **DCSD Q69 and State - Governance Training, Recruitment & Retention Quality Board Members**

The Druid Hills Charter Cluster is committed to establishing and maintaining the most effective governing Board possible to ensure the achievement of the charter's mission, goals and objectives. To this end, the Cluster will ensure adequate and appropriate governance training and capacity building throughout the term of the charter.

The DHCC Board shall engage the services of the Georgia Charter Schools Association and/or other state approved/qualified vendors to provide board development and training

## Druid Hills Charter Cluster

services. During the first year of operations, the DHCC Board will participate in the following quarterly training workshops:

- Quarter 1: Fundamental Charter School Governance
- Quarter 2: Monitoring the Mission: Fiscal, Academic, and Operational Monitoring
- Quarter 3: Strategic Planning Part 1
- Quarter 4: Strategic Planning Part 2

After the inaugural year, the DHCC board will engage in a minimum of annual governance training to ensure compliance and full understanding of roles, responsibilities and best practices. The DHCC Board also will engage in more informal training such as reading literature, inviting expert speakers, and/or attending conferences and workshops pertinent to governance topics.

The DHCC Board shall maintain a pool of vetted candidates in the event a vacancy on the board occurs. If no list exists, the Board shall confer with School Leadership Teams to establish a sufficient pool of candidates. During the recruitment process, candidates will be made aware of responsibilities and commitments. A detailed description of responsibilities, commitments and other pertinent information should be presented to candidates who express interest in the position. The candidate must acknowledge and accept the roles and responsibilities set forth in the description before going further in the recruitment process.

The DHCC will ensure retention of board members by selecting candidates that have a vested, identifiable interest in the successful operation of the Cluster; providing adequate training for the fulfillment of responsibilities; providing clear and concise job descriptions detailing roles, responsibilities and terms of each board member; utilizing predetermined meeting/events calendars to ensure work/life balance; and providing opportunities for board evaluation to monitor effectiveness and efficiency. Moreover, the DHCC Board shall ensure proper training of new members, which shall include the following five pillars:

1. Fiduciary duties



## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

2. Charter Cluster components and obligations
3. Interpretation of financial reports and academic test results
4. Applicable federal, state and local laws
5. Transition of institutional knowledge of the Cluster

### **DCSD Q70- Governing Board's Role in Student, Parent and Teacher Grievances**

The role of the DHCC Board in grievance process is clearly outlined in Q32 and more fully articulated in the Appendices. In summary, the DHCC Board is the final appeals step for non-employee Cluster related grievances and the final Cluster step for employees before an employee may file a grievance with the charter Cluster's authorizers, the DeKalb County School Board and the State Board of Education.

### **DCSD Q71- Statement of Annual Report**

The DHCC shall provide an annual report to parents/guardians of students attending DHCC schools, the DeKalb Board of Education, and the State Board of Education. The DHCC shall make the annual report available to the community. The annual report shall indicate the progress made in the previous year in meeting the performance-based goals identified in the charter and include all state-mandated assessment scores and state-mandated accountability indicators. Further, the annual report shall comply with all reporting formats and shall be submitted by the date and time mandated by the state and district.

### **DCSD Q72- Legal Counsel**

Following approval of this petition, the DHCC Board will publish a request for proposals for specified legal services. Until that request is published and the Board makes its selection, however, the law firm of Ford & Finnerty LLC has agreed to serve as legal counsel for the DHCC. Terry Finnerty of the firm has reviewed this petition and certain, but not all, of its Appendices. Ford & Finnerty's lawyers are members in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia, and are admitted to practice before all Georgia State and Superior Courts, the Georgia

## **Druid Hills Charter Cluster**

Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court of Georgia, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, among others. Its offices are located at 1100 Peachtree Street, Suite 200, Atlanta, Georgia 30309.

### **DCSD Q73- Required Insurance/Indemnification Information**

The Insurance and Indemnity Clause statements may be found in the Appendices.

### **DCSD Q74- Required Insurance/Indemnification Information**

Each insurance policy required by the DeKalb County Board of Education for the Druid Hills Charter Cluster shall contain a statement that the DeKalb County Board of Education is included as an additional insured. The DHCC shall hold harmless and indemnify the DeKalb County School District, the Board of Education, its members, officers and employees for every liability, claim or demand upon the DHCC and the DHCC agrees to defend and indemnify the DeKalb County Board of Education in any action from the acts or omissions of the DHCC. Copies of each policy shall be provided to the DeKalb County Charter Schools Office prior to July 1, 2014.

Required insurance coverages are as follows:

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. General Liability        | d. Auto Liability        |
| b. Errors or Omissions      | e. Worker's Compensation |
| c. Property/Lease Insurance | f. Theft                 |

### **DCSD Q75- Appendices**

The DHCC has provided a number of items in the Appendices to provide greater detail and support for the contents of this Petition.

### **DCSD Q76 - DeKalb County Required Statements; State Assurances**

The required Statements and the State Assurances may be found in the Appendices.