

## **Opportunity School District ballot proposal Frequently Asked Questions**

The DeKalb County School District is offering the following information about the Opportunity School District ballot proposal to be considered by voters on Nov. 8, 2016.

**Q: What is the Opportunity School District (OSD)?**

A: The Opportunity School District is a proposed state level bureaucracy that will be created to take over schools that have scored “60” or below on Georgia’s College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) for three consecutive years.

**Q: Who or what would lead the OSD?**

A: The OSD is a plan that would grant special powers to a new superintendent answering directly and only to the governor. Although a new statewide level authority, the OSD superintendent is not required to or expected to work in concert with the current elected State Superintendent of Schools.

**Q: Would the OSD become law?**

A: The OSD will be enacted and legitimized by an amendment of the Georgia State Constitution. This constitutional amendment will be voted on by the public as a referendum that will appear on the ballot when the country goes to the polls to vote on Nov. 8, 2016.

**Q: Would my school become part of the OSD?**

A: Schools will be added to the list for control by the OSD as early as Jan. 1, 2017. Once selected, a school will remain under the supervision of the OSD for a minimum of five consecutive years. If a school earns a rating above 60 on the CCRPI for three consecutive years, it will be released from the OSD. The maximum term a school will remain under the supervision of the OSD is 10 years.

**Q: How would DCSD be impacted?**

A: Presently, DCSD has 26 schools that are OSD-eligible. However, 15 of those schools are within five points of becoming off the list due to improving student achievement. Three schools have already earned their way off the OSD list – Columbia Elementary, Salem Middle School and Towers High School.

**Q: Would I have input about my school if becomes part of the OSD?**

A: Without any consultation with the local community, the OSD superintendent is empowered close down any school, reorganize staff, fire and replace teachers and principals at will, transfer any school to the State Charter Schools Commission, or direct local school boards to make changes at an OSD schools via private contract.

**Q: Does DCSD already support struggling schools?**

A: Yes. Through its Horizon Schools program, 10 schools have been designated for a complete school redesign built on intensive turnaround support. Notable supports include establishing special reading and math initiatives, personalized learning plans for students in all OSD eligible schools, weekly tutorial programs and additional STEM programs.

**Q: Does the state Department of Education already support struggling schools?**

A: Yes. The Office of School Improvement and School Turnaround at the GaDOE already provides the lowest performing schools with special funding and support. At present, local communities have the ability to influence how such special funding can be better targeted for measurable outcomes.

**Q: Would there be local control of taxpayer-funded assets and facilities?**

A: The OSD gives the state control over local tax dollars and local facilities for OSD campuses. Acquired assets such as textbooks, technology, media resources, instructional equipment, and all other resources will all be controlled by the OSD at the discretion of the OSD superintendent. The OSD will be empowered to contract out any maintenance and repair of school buildings, but the local board and the local community will continue to be responsible for extensive repairs and capitol expenses.

***NOTE: This information was provided, in part, by the Georgia School Boards Association***