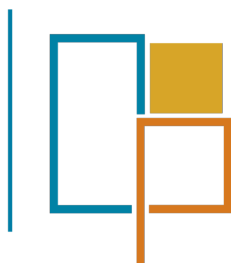




ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS



Office of Charter
+ Partner Schools

2026 START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL CYCLE

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Submit entire petition via Dropbox or Google Drive to Shonda Goldsmith at shonda.goldsmith@apsk12.org no later than 4:00 PM Eastern on Friday, February 13, 2026

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PETITIONER TIMELINE: 2026 START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION CYCLE

2026 START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL PETITION CYCLE

Petitioner's Letter Of Intent Due to Atlanta Public Schools*	November 20, 2025
Petitioner's Workshop	December 16, 2025
Petition Due by 4 pm*	February 13, 2026
Notice of Completeness	February 20, 2026
Applicant Interviews	Week of March 23, 2026
Letter(s) of Clarification	By April 2, 2026
Atlanta Board of Education Action (Tentative)	May 4, 2026
Letter(s) of Approval or Denial Sent to Petitioners (Tentative)	By May 11, 2026
Atlanta Board of Education Action on Clarification Re-Submittals (Tentative)	June 1, 2026
Resubmitted and Approved Petitions Submitted to State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia	By June 30, 2026

**** Only petitions from those individuals who filed a letter of intent with Atlanta Public Schools by the November deadline and who meet the February deadline for petition submissions will be reviewed for completeness.***

INSTRUCTIONS

THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELCOMES QUALIFIED CHARTER SCHOOL PETITIONERS INTERESTED IN SERVING THE CHILDREN OF ATLANTA.

LETTER OF INTENT

Petitioners are required to submit a letter of intent to Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and the [Georgia Office of Charter School Compliance](#) by November 20, 2025. Without exception, individuals who do not have a letter of intent on file with APS by this deadline will not be eligible to submit a petition for the 2026 Start-up Petition cycle. It is the petitioner's responsibility to submit a letter of intent to the Georgia Office of Charter School Compliance. See the applicable state guidance for any questions.

DEADLINE

Complete petitions for the 2026 Start-up Charter School Petition Cycle must be delivered via Dropbox or Google Drive to Office of Charter + Partner Schools, Project Manager, Shonda Goldsmith no later than 4:00 p.m. on February 13, 2026. No exceptions will be made to this deadline.

COMPLETENESS OF PETITION

Failure to submit a timely and complete petition will serve as grounds to deny a petition. A notice indicating completeness or incompleteness of submitted charter petitions will be sent to all applicants within one week of the submission deadline. All requested content must be included, and all formatting guidelines must be followed in order for a petition to be considered complete. Petitioners will be provided with a written status of their petition indicating whether the petition was rejected or moved on to the next phase of the cycle.

APPLICANT WORKSHOP

The Office of Charter + Partner Schools offers an informational workshop for charter applicants. All applicants who file a letter of intent will be notified by email of the date and time. Attendance is not a prerequisite for charter petition consideration, but strongly encouraged.

APPLICANT INTERVIEW

The Start-Up Charter School Petition Cycle is a rigorous process and petitions will be reviewed for program innovation, a demonstrably effective curriculum and academic plan, solid financial planning, depth and breadth of community support, evidence of strong academic leadership, an effective board and carefully designed accountability measures.

An applicant who has submitted a complete and satisfactory petition by the deadline may be scheduled for an applicant interview. Although the entire applicant team need not be present, it is recommended that all key board and leadership members attend, including the proposed school leader and board chair. A maximum of eight applicant team members may attend the interview.

Those applicants not scheduled for an interview will receive notification and a formal denial letter within 90 days of submission, as required by state law. If applicants have received neither an invitation nor a notice of recommendation for denial within 90 days of submission, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the Office of Charter + Partner Schools to obtain their status information. Please note that dates are subject to change.

SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT GOALS AND NON-ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE GOALS

The school agrees to have its academic, financial, and organizational performance measured using the APS Performance Framework metrics. Decisions regarding renewal, probation and closing will be based upon the school's results, as defined by the framework in effect for each year of the charter term. This framework is used only as an example and the most current framework will be used to determine each charter school's performance on an annual basis.

PETITION FORMAT

The petition shall be submitted adhering to requirements set forth in the Atlanta Public Schools Petitioner Guidelines for 2026. Petitioners must meet the following requirements. Each petition shall:

- ☐ include signed APS Assurance signature pages
- ☐ include Conflict of Interest Forms for all Founding and Governing Board Members *(if identified)*
- ☐ answer all requirements following the outline as it appears on the following pages of the petition
- ☐ include a table of contents
- ☐ not exceed a maximum of 100 single-sided pages, not including attachments/appendices, for the APS addendum. *State application page limit is not included in this total.*
- ☐ have all appendices labeled and numbered
- ☐ include signed Charter Funding Agreement
- ☐ one (1) electronic copy in Microsoft Word format *(appendices may be in .pdf format)*
- ☐ include table of contents links for any attachments/appendices
- ☐ include a copy of the [Georgia Office of Charter School Compliance New Charter School Application](#)

Please follow the APS Required Petitioner Narrative Outline, addressing each requirement as thoroughly and clearly as possible in the sequence in which they appear. The petitioner is responsible for addressing all requirements in the petition as described by state and local documents. All state requirements are available from the Georgia Department of Education website, including Charter School Law, Charter School Rule, and Guidance. Local requirements are contained within GaDOE Guidelines and in the Atlanta Board of Education policy on Charter Schools - IBB. The petitioner may attend the APS informational workshops offered and should call the APS Office of Charter + Partner Schools with any questions about the process.

Note: Petitioners will be required to follow APS directions regarding corrections, revisions, amendments, etc. Coordination of final documents and required electronic formats will be at the discretion of APS.

Please direct any questions to: Office of Charter + Partner Schools

Matt Underwood, Executive Director

Telephone: 404-802-2815

Email: matthew.underwood@atlanta.k12.ga.us

Shonda Goldsmith, Project Manager

Telephone: 404-802-2793

Email: shonda.goldsmith@atlanta.k12.ga.us

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM: INCLUDE IN APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS: Each founding and/or governing board member, the proposed school leader, CFO/Business Manager must complete a COI form. If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, please provide a substantive explanation on a separate sheet of paper, label explanations with the number of the corresponding question and attach explanations behind the corresponding COI form in Appendix A.

1. Do or will you or your spouse have any contractual agreements with the proposed charter school? Yes__ No__
2. Do or will you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family have any ownership interest in any educational service provider (ESP) or any other legal entity contracting with the proposed charter school? Yes__ No__
3. Did or will you or your spouse lease or sell property to the proposed charter school? Yes__ No__
4. Did or will you or your spouse sell any supplies, materials, equipment or other personal property to the proposed charter school? Yes__ No__
5. Have you or your spouse guaranteed any loans for the proposed charter school or loaned it any money? Yes__ No__
6. Are or will you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family be employed by the proposed charter school, its ESP or other contractors? Yes__ No__
7. Did you or your spouse provide any startup funds to the proposed charter school? Yes__ No__
8. Did or do you or your spouse, or other member of your immediate family, have ownership interest, directly or indirectly, in any corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity which would answer “yes” to any of the questions 1-7? Yes__ No__
9. Does any other board, group, or corporation believe it has a right to control or have input on votes you will cast as a founding member or member of the Board? Yes__ No__
10. Do you currently serve as a member of the Board of any public charter school? Yes__ No__
11. Do you currently serve as a public official? Yes__ No__
12. Have you, your spouse, or any member of your immediate family applied to establish or participated in the establishment of a charter school? Yes__ No__
13. To the best of your knowledge, are there situations not described above that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest between you and the proposed charter school, or which would make it difficult for you to discharge your duties or exercise your judgment independently on behalf of the proposed charter school? Yes__ No__

Signature:	School Role:
Legibly Printed Name:	Date Signed:
Name of Proposed Charter School:	

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS START-UP CHARTER SCHOOL ADDENDUM

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Describe your school’s instructional technology plan, ensuring that all students and teachers are prepared to use technology as a tool for learning.

PAGE _____

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

1. Describe the charter school’s core values and the type of unique culture the school aims to develop. Explain the strategies the school will employ to develop a positive culture that is supportive of students, faculty, and families.
2. APS requires its charter schools to adopt the district’s code of conduct and appeals process for the general student population and students with special needs. Please describe how you will ensure effective implementation of the code of conduct at your school.
3. Describe your school’s bullying policy; according to the Georgia Department of Education’s Bullying Law O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4. What will you do, specifically, to convey the “No-Tolerance” policy to parents, students and school staff? Please describe, step-by-step, the actions that will be taken should a student, parent, or staff member suspect that bullying has occurred?
4. Describe provisions for providing students with counseling services and health services.

COMMUNITY & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

It is the expectation of the Atlanta Public Schools and the Atlanta Board of Education that petitioners with an interest in chartering within the district have strong and broad community support within the cluster and the surrounding geographic area within which the school intends to locate.

Strong community support includes letters of support from:

- 1) the Neighborhood Planning Unit(s) where the school intends to locate and/or adjacent NPU(s) that would include the prospective attendance boundaries of the school,
- 2) neighborhood associations within or adjacent to the neighborhood in which the school intends to locate, and
- 3) businesses, organizations, faith-based entities, and civic groups which operate in and around the school’s neighborhood.

A petitioner must have secured letters of support within at least 2 of the aforementioned areas above to be considered viable.

Petitions must include evidence of community outreach to be considered viable. Additional supporting documents include a record of local community outreach such as: an operating school’s waitlist,

signatures from prospective families, programs from community outreach events, letters from community leaders and partner organizations and other evidence of the petitioner's time and resources spent in educating the community about the charter school and gathering input regarding community needs.

1. Provide a list of organizations that have committed to partnering with your school and explain the potential nature of the partnerships. Include letters of support from your partners. All partnerships listed in the petition must have letters of support.
 - a. Describe the steps you have taken to develop any strategic partnerships and your plans to further develop additional partnerships.
 - b. Explain how the partnerships will be utilized, before, during or after school.
 - c. Describe how the partnership will benefit the students, parents/family and/or staff.
 - d. If the partner will be involved during the school day, explain how the partner's program will be integrated into the school program (these should be included in the Appendix).
2. Describe how parents, members of the community and other interested parties will be involved in the school after approval, including governing board involvement.
3. Describe your family engagement program and include what academic, social, emotional learning opportunities will be provided.
4. In what ways will the school build partnerships with local community entities to support academic goals of the school i.e., early learning centers, libraries, recreation centers, etc?

GOVERNANCE

PAGE _____

The Atlanta Board of Education reserves the right to require fingerprinting and background checks of the founding and/or charter school board members.

1. How often will the board meet?
2. How will the public be notified of meetings?
3. Describe plans of how the board of directors will prepare and submit an annual report related to the school's academic progression by November 1 of each year in compliance with the Charter School Act of 1998 and related rules to the Atlanta Board of Education and Georgia State Board of Education.

CONTRACTS WITH EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS OR OTHER CHARTER PARTNERS

PAGE _____

If the charter board intends to enter into a contract with an education management organization (EMO), education service provider (ESP), profit or non-profit, or any third-party entity to manage the charter school describe

1. How will the proposed charter school board resolve any conflicts with the entity?
2. How will the charter school survive if the relationship between the board and the entity is terminated?

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial Documents

1. What financial documents and statements will the school regularly produce? Who will prepare them? How often? Who will review them and for what purpose?

The Atlanta Public Schools requires a bond amount of \$1 million.

1. Describe plans to procure and maintain a Crime/Fidelity Bond covering all persons receiving or disbursing funds during the entire length of the charter.

BUDGET

For the projected budget, use the Estimated Petitioner Earnings Worksheet. Please note that this is only an estimate, actual funding levels will either be more or less than this amount and depend not just on extrinsic factors (tax revenues, QBE allotments, austerity measures), but intrinsic factors (student characteristics, school programs, teacher training and experience). Please use the budget instructions and templates provided through the Georgia Department of Education website to complete the questions below.

1. Provide a monthly cash flow projection detailing revenues and expenditures for the charter school's first two (2) years of operation and for the year prior to opening (Year 0).
2. Provide contingency cash flow spreadsheets projecting revenues and expenditures that assume one-half (1/2) of the projected student enrollment for the first two (2) years of operation. ***All budgets should be included in the Appendix.***
3. Provide a detailed budget narrative that explains **all** budget assumptions. As part of your budget narrative detail the following:
 - a. A contingency plan addressing a budget shortfall due to lower than anticipated student enrollment, higher than expected personnel costs, underestimated costs of technology maintenance and any other costs that could cause potential operational complications.
 - b. Explain how the school will make certain sufficient funds are available to cover any special education costs incurred (include with Appendix).

RECRUITING AND MARKETING PLAN

1. Provide evidence that there is sufficient interest in your school to meet your requested maximum enrollment. Be sure to clearly and concretely convey the scope of community backing for the proposed charter school and its founding board. (Include in the Appendix).
2. Provide calendars for each year of the term which notates recruiting, registering, and admitting students.
3. If available, include a copy of your proposed parent/student handbook in the Appendix.

4. The Atlanta Board of Education policy on charter schools states that "...the Board welcomes charter petitioners who aim to serve student populations that reflect the diversity of the district". Describe what steps your school will take to pursue a diverse student body.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS

PAGE _____

SCHOOL STAFF

1. Describe the qualifications and attributes of an ideal teacher for the proposed school and how they will support the mission and effective student learning.
2. Provide a plan for ensuring that recruitment and selection procedures will reinforce these desired qualities in the school's faculty.
3. Describe your plans for developing and implementing an effective professional development program.
4. Detail how the evaluation system for teachers and administrators will support the school's mission and educational philosophy.
5. Explain how the principal's performance will be appraised and by whom.
6. Indicate the number of teachers and other professional and non-professional school staff, by position, to be hired for each year, inclusive of job descriptions.
7. Describe the school's plan for staffing special education and English Language Learners including necessary qualifications.
8. Describe the human resource policies governing processes for hiring, dismissal, compensation, and required fingerprinting and criminal record checks.
9. Describe provisions that will be made for all required staff to participate in the mandatory Teachers Retirement System (TRS) of Georgia.
10. State whether or not the charter school will elect to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan.
11. Include a copy of your school's organizational chart in the Appendix

LEGAL SERVICES

1. Identify the charter board's legal counsel including contact information: name, firm, address, telephone number. If the petitioner does not currently have legal counsel, provide a timeline for obtaining counsel prior to the proposed school's opening.

TRANSPORTATION

Charter schools are eligible for bus services from APS for local field trips at the same rate given to district-run APS schools and are required to follow reservation procedures.

A proportional share of transportation funding is provided to each school with eligible riders. If transportation shall be provided, the petitioner must include a statement that the transportation program will comply with applicable law.

While it is understood that you may be unable to provide an exact transportation plan without knowledge of your actual student enrollment, please be as specific as possible based upon your projected enrollment.

1. Describe plans, if any, for the school to transport students to and from school, include measures made for students who would not have their own means of transportation. Funding for the transportation plan(s) should be accounted for within the budget template.
2. Describe policies that will ensure transportation is not a barrier for students. If transportation will not be provided, demonstrate how transportation will not be a hindrance for all those who are eligible to attend.

FOOD SERVICES

Charter schools may contract with Atlanta Public Schools to provide food service. APS charter schools are responsible for providing APS-provided household survey forms for each student to determine free or reduced eligibility. The dissemination, collection, and submission of eligibility forms to APS for the purposes of determining the charter school's eligibility for Title I funds is required even if the charter school does not provide food service.

1. If not contracting with Atlanta Public Schools, provide a brief description of a proposed food service program and indicate if the school plans to participate in the National School Lunch Program through the Georgia Department of Education.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

APS charter schools are responsible for providing appropriate nursing services that comply with applicable laws relating to the provision of health-related services.

1. Describe the charter school's plan for managing and securing health related records and providing health related services, to include the dispersing of medications.

EXHIBITS

In addition to the exhibits required in the state application, please provide the following additional documents in the Appendices (*note: if any of the exhibits below were already included as a part of your state application, you do not need to submit an additional copy as a part of the APS addendum*). These documents are required to complete your Charter School Application Package. Label each exhibit utilizing the appropriate titles below.

- **Conflict of Interest forms** (*including explanation(s) if needed*)
- **Letters of partnership and support**
- **Board members, school leader(s), business manager/CFO résumés**
- **Organizational chart**
- **Budget Forms with narratives** (*placed behind the state budget template*)

- **Parent/student handbook**