

Charter District Petition Community Engagement Session

Towers HS – 09/02/2014

Community Member #1

- Will there be a survey after all of the community input is gathered?
 - *(Comment)* Wrap-around services are needed (i.e. mental health services).
 - *(Comment)* There needs to be an increase in the personnel that works directly with the students.

Community Member #2

- Where are we going to get the people to serve on the local governance teams?
 - Is there going to be training? If so, will it come from inside or outside of the district?
 - Will there be parameters in place to ensure there is not a conflict of interest?

Community Member #3

- *(Comment)* We have to make sure that we don't have what happened with local school councils.
 - *(Comment)* We need quality unbiased people to serve on these teams.

Community Member #4

- *(Comment)* It appears we are putting the "cart before the horse". It should be optional for schools that do not wish to become charter schools.

Community Member #5

- Who is sponsoring Charter Schools?
 - Who are the companies involved with the Charter Schools?

Community Member #6

- How will the Charter System affect the student/teacher ratio?
 - Will this impact the quality of teachers that are in the classroom?

Community Member #7

- *(Comment)* There are too many underperforming schools in the district.
 - *(Comment)* We need to give the schools the money needed so that students can be successful.

Community Member #8

- How will the district determine the performance indicators dealing with the GA Milestones assessment?
 - How will the lottery process for magnet/theme schools change as a result of Charter System status?
 - Will there be working sessions for parents?

Community Member #9

- How many schools have functional local school councils?
 - Will schools have two councils (school councils and local governance teams)?
 - Are there plans for the district to ensure there are functional governance teams?

Community Member #10

- Will magnet and theme schools not have local governance team input?
 - Can the meetings not take place during the day? We have working parents that cannot attend during the day.

Community Member #11

- *(Comment)* Every American child should learn a 2nd language, and every foreign child should learn English.
 - *(Comment)* There needs to be a focus on wellness (restroom concerns). Can students participate on local governance team committees to assist with addressing restroom concerns?

Community Member #12

- How do we know that we will have principals that have the vision to be innovative and run the schools effectively?
 - *(Comment)* We will have re-segregated schools and the “haves and the “have not’s”.
 - What is going to make academic performance better?

Community Member #13

- *(Comment)* We have to hire quality principals.

Community Member #14

- Are funds tied to Charter status if a school no longer has charter status?
 - Can the principal only select two people on the local governance team?
 - How is this program going to help the students?

Community Member #15

- What effect will being a Title I School have on the Charter System status?
 - How do we know that the funds will be used equally?

Community Member #16

- What will moving to a Charter System do for the students that reside in the Towers community?
 - How will this impact the attendance lines for Towers High School?

Community Member #17

- *(Comment)* There is too much money at the Central Office.
 - *(Comment)* Ineffective principals are allowed to stay and are passed around from school to school. Will the local school governance teams have a say in getting rid of ineffective principals?
 - Why would the State approve the Charter System in DeKalb when the district denied the Druid Hills Charter Cluster?

Community Member #18

- *(Comment)* If you have the same concerns (i.e. councils, attendance lines and principals), what is going to be different?
 - *(Comment)* Five years is too long for renewal, too much time for things to go wrong and we won't be able to recover from them.
 - What is going to change on the South side of the district?

Community Member #19

- Will schools be able to become year-round schools?
 - If the petition is approved, when would it become effective?
 - With local autonomy, will schools have a say in the curriculum?
 - Would teacher's pay and work hours remain the same?

Community Member #20

- Can the comments be made available prior to each meeting?
 - *(Comment)* The meetings need to be held at six o'clock instead of 2:30 in the afternoon.
 - Do we have the option of starting this up in a phased in approach?
 - What happens if the school district does not meet the goals within the five year period?
 - Will AdvancedEd still be involved?
 - *(Comment)* Be careful about the local governance teams.
 - Can there be a calling post for parent participation?

Community Member #21

- Has the district looked at other Charter Systems for options and application ideas?
 - What will be the impact on school discipline?

Community Member #22

- *(Comment)* I have been in favor of charter schools, more money goes to the classrooms of charter schools.
 - How does going to a Charter System ensure that more money goes to the local school?

Community Member #23

- How will this help schools on "Alert" status?
 - Will there be training for administrators and local governance teams?
 - What can the district do to engage more parents in this process?

Community Member #24

- How will this affect our Special Education student population?

Community Member #25

- Can we look at the high failure rates on the Advanced Placement exams?
 - How will the Charter System address this issue?

Community Member #26

- Who is going to make up the local governance teams?
 - How long will they serve?
 - Who will they include?
 - How will they function?
 - If ineffective, how long will the community have to endure them?

Community Member #27

- Is charter status more of an administrative process than a governance process?
 - *(Comment)* There should be more high achievers programs in the district.

Community Member #28

- *****Will there be a formal document that details what can and cannot be waived?***

Community Member #29

- Will we pursue another option if the charter petition is not approved?

Community Member #30

- *(Comment)* Handouts are needed that include the pros and cons of Charter Systems.

Community Member #31

- What is the data/evidence that Charter Systems improve student achievement?

Community Member #32

- *(Comment)* Parental involvement is essential to successful schools.

*****Comments/questions that are in bold and italicized were highly emphasized***