

Task Force on Charter School Funding Timing Interim Report

Task Force Members: Tommie Reece, Chair – Greenville County School Board, Keith Ray, Vice Chair – Greenville County School Board, Dr. Bob Nash, Chair – Greenville Tech Charter High School, Stuart McAlister, Chair – Brashier Middle College, Alex Martin, Assistant Superintendent for Special Centers, Pam Mills, Greenville County Schools Legislative Liaison, Greg Abel, Principal – Langston Charter, and Brenda Humbert, Principal – Fuller Normal.

The task force recognizes the central issue to be a problem with funding that hampers the ability of charter schools and other public schools to have timely financial resources when they experience significant growth in enrollment. Specifically, we are aware that when charter schools are approved with a predetermined plan for increasing enrollment over the first few years of operation (e.g., adding a grade per year over a five year period) and when school districts experience significant growth, funding for growth does not flow to the schools until after the 45th day attendance count and several months of information processing, meaning that dollars do not arrive at the schools until January.

The Greenville County Board of Trustees is committed to providing quality educational opportunities for all public school students in the district. This task force was authorized by the Board to explore ways to ensure that the district's charter schools receive timely funding as they implement approved student enrollment increases. This effort affirms the Board's commitment to its mission of ensuring excellence in the governance of a quality education program for all public school students including students enrolled in Charter Schools sponsored by the School District by analyzing needs, establishing policies, allocating financial and other resources and monitoring progress.

Therefore, after meeting and discussing these concerns with representatives of the State Department of Education and with Senator Mike Fair, chair of the Greenville County Legislative Delegation, the task force recommends that the Greenville County Schools Board of Trustees take the following actions:

1. Request that the State Department of Education establish a process which will allow them to transfer funding based on the current year's enrollment by Sept. 10.
2. Request that the General Assembly adopt legislation which would distribute state funding for charter schools at the beginning of each fiscal year, and would include funds for projected enrollment increases according to their approved charter.

3. Request that the Greenville County Legislative Delegation consider a budget proviso to distribute funding for projected enrollment growth in charter schools and school districts at the beginning of each fiscal year.
4. Monitor the progress of the above recommendations on a monthly basis.
5. Reconvene the task force no later than March 1, 2008, to determine the progress of interim report recommendations, evaluate the availability of funding for Charter Schools projecting significant enrollment increases in accordance with their approved charters for the 08-09 school year, and produce its final report.