

2016



# LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TEAMS HANDBOOK



ATLANTA  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE OF CHARTER SYSTEM SCHOOLS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) became a charter system on September 25, 2015 to increase student achievement and improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. APS's charter contract is effective July 1, 2016. A key component of operating as a Georgia charter system is the establishment of Local School Governance Teams at the 71 APS neighborhood schools. Local School Governance Teams are also known as LSGTs and/or GO Teams.

GO Teams work with school leadership and the community to help determine the long-term direction of the school, design innovative solutions to increase student achievement, and serve as school ambassadors to the local community.

This handbook document outlines the governance guidelines, procedures, conflict of interest requirements, and code of conduct for all GO Teams formed in Atlanta Public Schools. All APS GO Teams shall operate in accordance with the requirements of this handbook at all times.





## II. LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TEAMS GUIDELINES

### ARTICLE I: NAME, LOCATION, AND PURPOSE

**Section 1.1. Name.** The name of the entity is Local School Governance Team. It is hereinafter referred to as “GO Team.”

**Section 1.2. Governance.** Atlanta Public Schools consists of two (2) governance levels:

- (a) The Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools retain ultimate oversight and accountability for the district, its operations, and all student achievement results. The Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools retain and exercise system-level governance and maintain responsibility for setting all system-wide policies, procedures, curriculum, adoption of required best practices, and the management of human resources and personnel decisions. The Superintendent delegates authority for the management of the Local School Governance Teams (GO Teams) to the Office of Policy & Governance, in accordance with regulation BBFA-R(1) Local School Governance Teams.
- (b) GO Teams exercise school-level governance delegated by the APS Superintendent of Schools by helping to set the long-term direction of their school as well as to design and implement school-level innovations that are responsive to their local school needs.

**Section 1.3 Support.** APS will provide three types of governance support.

1. The APS District Support Team will provide strategic direction and will manage the implementation of all aspects of the charter system.

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2. The Office of Policy and Governance will provide direct oversight, training, and support to all GO Teams. This includes, but is not limited to, the elections process, training, policy development, the school-based solutions process, compliance processes, and resolving disputes. The Office of Policy and Governance will issue the GO Teams (Local School Governance Teams) Handbook at least annually and update it as needed. The official version of the GO Teams Handbook will reside on the Atlanta Public Schools website.
3. The APS Central Administration will support all district schools through system-wide planning processes, managing data systems that drive decision-making at the local school and system level, providing instructional support aligned with the curriculum, setting the system budget and fiscal structures and allocating resources to schools, and ensuring resources and infrastructure such as facilities, transportation, nutrition services, and technology are available and effective. The Central Administration is responsible for managing system-wide compliance with all federal programs.

**Section 1.4. Non-Discrimination.** The GO Team will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status in accordance with applicable federal or state laws in electing or appointing GO Team members or any other GO Team action. The GO Team will conduct all activities in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal anti-discrimination laws.

## **ARTICLE II: LOCAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TEAMS MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES**

**Section 2.1. GO Team Operations.** The GO Team operates under the control and management of the Atlanta Public Schools Board of Education and will follow Board of Education policies and procedures unless a waiver is granted.

**Section 2.2. Powers.** Upon successful completion of APS GO Team certification (see section 2.14), the GO Team has the authority to fulfill the following responsibilities.

- (a) Approve the school strategic plan and updates and monitor its implementation
- (b) Develop innovative ideas for school-level flexibility through the School-Based Solutions process
- (c) Provide input into school-based curriculum selection and accompanying instructional materials
- (d) Give feedback on and approve the annual school budget recommendations

- (e) Make suggestions regarding school operations decisions that support the school strategic plan
- (f) Participate in the selection of a new principal, in the case of a vacancy
- (g) Offer annual feedback on principal performance to the Associate Superintendent

These basic responsibilities align with the following areas of decision-making authority as identified in the APS Charter System Contract and the Charter Schools Act of 1998: personnel decisions, financial decisions, resource allocations, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations.

**Section 2.3. Additional Responsibilities.** The GO Team is also responsible for the following duties:

- (a) Communicate GO Team work to stakeholders, including students, parents, community members, faculty, and staff
- (b) Participate in an annual assessment of the GO Team's performance and results
- (c) Meet a minimum of six times each fiscal/school year (July 1 - June 30), beginning July 1, 2016.
- (d) Abide by state Open Meetings and Open Records laws

**Section 2.4. Membership.** The GO Team has the following membership structure:

- (a) Three (3) parents/legal guardians elected by the parents/legal guardians of the school.
- (b) Three (3) non-supervisory instructional staff elected by the full-time employees of the school.
- (c) Two (2) community members nominated by the principal and approved by the voting GO Team members. Full-time Atlanta Public Schools employees are not eligible to serve in community member seats on GO Teams. There will be no exceptions.
- (d) One (1) Swing Seat member nominated by the principal or the elected GO Team members and approved by the remaining voting GO Team members. Swing Seat nominations may be teachers, instructional support staff members, parents, business partners, and general interest community members.
- (e) One (1) student appointed by the principal based upon input from the team (voting on the school strategic plan and school-based solutions only; at high schools only).
- (f) The principal serves as an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the GO Team.
- (g) For schools with multiple campuses or student enrollment over 1,200 students, an Assistant Principal or Program Administrator may serve as an additional ex-officio (non-voting) member of the team.

GO Team members may request to alter the membership structure of the GO Team through the School-Based Solutions process. (See Part III. PROCEDURES for information on GO Team elections and School-Based Solutions)

**Section 2.5. Qualifications.** Each GO Team member must meet the following criteria to maintain eligibility to serve.

- (a) All voting members of the GO Team are subject to a level 2 background check. The school district will determine if the background check is satisfactory for service. See [Regulation GAK\(1\)-R\(1\) Criminal Background Check](#) for more information.
- (b) All voting members of the GO Team must be in good standing with the school and the district.
- (c) Parent/guardian members must be the legal parent/guardian on record of a child attending or that will attend the school during at least ½ of the term of service.
- (d) A parent/guardian member may also be an employee of the school or the district.
- (e) A non-supervisory instructional staff member may also be a parent/guardian of a student at the school.
- (f) Community members are individuals who are invested in the school or the neighborhoods it serves in some way. Community members may be representatives of existing or new partner organizations, alumni, or concerned, engaged citizens. A community member may also be the parent/guardian of a student at the school.
- (g) Only one family member per household may serve on the same GO Team at any given time.
- (h) No person may serve on more than one GO Team at any given time.
- (i) Each GO Team member must be at least eighteen years of age, with the exception of student representatives on the high school GO Teams.

If at any time a member does not meet the above qualifications, the member will be ineligible to continue service and will be replaced. See Section 2.8 Vacancies.

**Section 2.6. Performance of Duties.** It is the responsibility of each GO Team member to perform his or her responsibilities faithfully, carefully, and with good intentions. All members of the team (including the principal) must be diligent and must hold each other accountable through being prepared for meetings, participating in discussions, asking questions, and holding high expectations for themselves and others.

Additionally, each GO Team member will:

- (a) Participate in mandatory training as required for service on the GO Team, including the required orientation training for certification. See Section 2.14 for Certification Requirements.
- (b) Attend 75% or more of the scheduled GO Team meetings within their elected term. A GO Team member who fails to attend 75% of GO Team meetings, or misses three consecutive meetings, may be removed from the GO Team.
- (c) Be an ambassador for the school by being willing to interact on a regular basis with the school community. This may include attending school or district meetings or events.

**Section 2.7. Code of Conduct.** Each member of the GO Team must abide by the GO Team guidance regarding conflict of interest, code of ethics, confidentiality, gifts and solicitations, and any additional Code of Conduct guidance set forth which affect the GO Team. Details on the Code of Conduct can be found in Part IV CODE OF CONDUCT.

**Section 2.8. Vacancies.** Vacancies on the GO Team must be filled by a temporary replacement member. The replacement member will be nominated by the principal and appointed by a majority vote of the remaining GO Team members. The GO Team must appoint a replacement member to fill the unexpired term of the removed/resigned member no later than 60 days from the departing GO Team member's removal or resignation. The replacement member will fill the vacancy until the position's regularly scheduled election, at which time the replacement member will be eligible for election or appointment through the regular election/appointment processes. Replacement members must fill the same eligibility requirements for the vacant position, and all rules for GO Team member participation must be followed.

**Section 2.9. Resignations.** A GO Team member may resign at any time. Such resignation must be expressed and submitted to the GO Team's Chair in writing unless waived by majority vote of the remaining GO Team members. The GO Team's acceptance of the resignation will not be necessary to make it effective.

**Section 2.10. Removal.** Any voting member may be removed from the GO Team for lack of attendance (see Section 2.6), not performing GO Team duties, loss of eligibility (see Section 2.5), or for being in violation of the Local School Governance Teams Code of Conduct.

- (a) If any member is determined to be deliberately negligent of GO Team responsibilities, a GO Team member may make a motion that a member be recommended for removal from their GO Team. Following an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the GO Team members present at the GO Team meeting, the GO Team Chair will notify the District Support Team of the recommendation for review. The District Support Team will recommend the GO Team's next course of action.
- (b) The District Support Team may also recommend the removal of a member or members of a GO Team if an investigation shows that removal is warranted. The Superintendent shall approve all recommendations from the District Support Team to remove a member of a GO Team.

**Section 2.11. Compensation.** All GO Team members will serve voluntarily and will not receive any compensation for their service as GO Team members. Employees who volunteer to serve are committing to attend GO Team meetings scheduled outside the work day. As volunteers, GO Team members may be expected to participate in some GO Team activities during the summer months when school is not in session and on other dates outside of the teacher contract year. GO Team members will not be reimbursed for

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expenses related to routine GO Team meetings and service, including mileage, meeting expenses, or other expenses incurred as a result of that service.

**Section 2.12. GO Team Assessment.** On an annual basis, the school system will conduct a formal assessment of the GO Team's performance which will include a self-evaluation of the GO Team. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate how well the GO Team is fulfilling its purpose, duties, and responsibilities.

**Section 2.13. Accountability.** In such circumstances when the GO Team is unable to fulfill its duties and responsibilities, the Superintendent retains the authority to require specific school-level interventions, to revoke any and all approved School-based Solution requests; and to dissolve the current GO Team. Such actions do not require the support of the GO Team.

**Section 2.14. GO Team Certification.** The GO Team must earn certification in order to exercise its responsibilities. Certification requires:

- (a) Successful completion of GO Team training requirements by each voting and non-voting GO Team member;
- (b) A satisfactory Level 2 background check by each voting GO Team member who is not an APS employee (employees must maintain APS background check requirements for employment); and
- (c) Compliance with GO Team election, appointment and assessment processes as defined in this handbook.

**Section 2.15. GO Team Certification Renewal/Retention.** In addition to the completion of annual training requirements for each GO Team member, the GO team as an entity must meet certification requirements. This entails the annual compilation and submission of evidence of successful governance in the following areas:

- (a) Approving and monitoring of the school strategic plan and its implementation
- (b) Providing input into and approval of the annual school budget recommendations
- (c) Participation in the APS annual assessment of the performance/results of the GO Team
- (d) Conducting open meetings and maintaining documentation of such meetings
- (e) Ensuring that all GO Team seats are filled via open and inclusive processes

This evidence will be included in the annual GO Team Assessment conducted by the school system. Based on this assessment, APS will either renew the GO Team's certification or require school-level interventions to bring the GO Team into compliance with these requirements.

**Section 2.16. School-based Solutions.** The GO Team is responsible for managing the School-Based Solutions process at their school. Details about the School-based Solutions process is found in Part III PROCEDURES.

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## ARTICLE III: GO TEAM MEETINGS

**Section 3.1. Meetings.** Regular meetings of the GO Team will be held at least six times per year at such times and places as the GO Team will determine. All GO Team meetings must be held outside of school instructional hours to protect student instructional time and employee work hours. Such meetings are subject to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law (as applicable and amended from time to time), which include:

- The meeting time, date, and location must be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting (at school and on school website). Standard practice for APS GO Teams will be for schools to post regular meeting notices at least seven days before the meeting.
- The meeting agenda must be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting (at school and on website). Standard practice for APS GO Teams will be for schools to post regular meeting notices at least seven days before the meeting (at school and on school website). Draft form is acceptable for agendas posted a week prior to the meeting.
- A meeting summary of attendees and actions as well as approved minutes from the previous meeting must be posted within two (2) business days after the meeting (at school and on school website).
- Draft meeting minutes from the previous meeting must be provided to the GO Team within 20 days after the meeting for review prior to the next scheduled meeting (note: not posted, just provided to GO Team members).

**Section 3.1.1 Work Sessions.** GO Teams may have up to four work sessions in a calendar year. Work Sessions provide members the opportunity to meet in order to delve into complex issues, discuss solutions and finalize agendas. Work sessions may be held immediately prior to a regular meeting or may be held at other times as established by a

majority vote. These meetings are typically less formal and are often used for information gathering. There are no formal votes taken. These work sessions are subject to the Open Meetings Law. Work session attendance does not count toward the official attendance duties for GO Team members.

- The work session time, date, and location must be posted at least 48 hours before the meeting (at school and on website).
- The work session agenda must be posted 48 hours before the meeting (at school and on website). Draft form is acceptable.
- The work session meeting summary must be posted within two (2) business days (at school and on website).

**Section 3.1.2 Emergency Meetings.** With the approval of the District Support Team, an emergency meeting of the GO Team may be held outside of the regular meeting schedule at the request of the District Support Team, the principal or the GO Team chair to discuss and/or give input into unexpected, urgent matters of school-wide importance. No votes or action may be taken in an emergency meeting of the GO Team. Public notice for emergency meetings must be posted and communicated as soon as practicable after the need for a meeting has been identified, in accordance with the Open Meetings provisions in state law. A meeting summary must be posted on the school's website within two (2) business days of the meeting.

**Section 3.2. Notice.** At the first meeting of the GO Team each school year, the team shall adopt a meeting schedule for the entire year and post it accordingly. The GO Team secretary or his/her designee will remind each GO Team member in writing of the time and location of the meeting at least one week in advance of each regular GO Team meeting. Notices of regularly scheduled GO Team meetings will be posted publicly in the school and on the school's website, and provided to the public via all appropriate school communication channels as required by the Open Meetings Act (See Section 3.1). Each notice will state the date, time, and location of the meeting and the general nature of the topics that will be discussed and the decisions that will be made.

**Section 3.3. Quorum.** At any meeting of the GO Team, the presence of five (5) voting members will be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. No proxies will be allowed. When a vote is required, the GO Team will make decisions by majority vote in all matters except where otherwise indicated in the GO Team Handbook. The acts of a majority of GO Team members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present will be the acts of the GO Team, except where otherwise indicated.

After a quorum is established at the physical location, a GO Team member may participate in the meeting by teleconference if necessary due to reasons of health or absence from a reasonable commuting range. No GO Team member shall participate by teleconference more than twice per calendar year unless emergency conditions or the written opinion of a

physician or health professional that reasons of health prevent the member's physical presence.

**Section 3.4. Public Comment.** Opportunities for public comment shall be provided at least four (4) times in a school/fiscal year and noted on the meeting agenda. Public comment opportunities are available for GO Teams to hear from interested members of the community. GO Team members will not provide responses or engage in direct conversation during meetings. Each GO Team may determine a consistent method for receiving public comments and for parents and other citizens to sign up to address the team, provided that the team offer at least 20 minutes of time to the public to make comments, when available, and that the public receive at least 2 business days' notice of the protocol for signing up to speak.

## **ARTICLE IV: GO TEAM OFFICERS**

**Section 4.1. Titles.** The GO Team will have a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

**Section 4.2. Election and Term of Office.** Each officer will be elected from among the voting GO Team members at the first meeting of each new fiscal year for APS. Non-voting members (principal and students) may not serve in any officer position. Each officer will serve for a term of one year, and may be eligible for one additional term of one year in the same office. Each officer will serve until a successor is elected and qualified, or until said officer resigns or is removed from office. No officer may hold more than one position at the same time. Only one GO Team member may occupy an officer position at any time.



**Section 4.3. Duties and Responsibilities.** Officers will have the duties and responsibilities belonging to their office, including those that follow:

### **GO Team Chair Responsibilities**

**Purpose:**

The GO Team Chair is the leader of the GO Team and presides at all meetings of the GO Team.

**Key Responsibilities:**

**General:** Ensures the effective action of the GO Team in governing and adhering to its governance guidelines and procedures. Acts as the representative of the GO Team as a whole if needed between meetings of the GO Team. The Chair will have a full and equal vote as afforded to all GO Team members.

**Procedure and Planning:** Works with the principal and the GO Team to determine the meeting agenda and works with all standing and ad-hoc committees to ensure committee work is shared with the GO Team.

**GO Team Meetings:** Leads and facilitates GO Team meetings by making sure that the agenda is closely followed, ensuring that every member has the opportunity to participate in discussions, and that the GO Team uses proper decision-making procedures. The Chair also ensures that all GO Team members understand those decision-making procedures through monitoring that members have completed the orientation process and through regular discussion of those procedures.

**Local School Governance Team Evaluation:** Ensures that the GO Team has opportunities to reflect regularly on how well it is meeting its responsibilities to the school, in part by working with the Office of Policy and Governance to participate in the annual GO Team Assessment.

**Staff Oversight, Compensation, and Evaluation:** The Chair has no oversight or governance role with regard to staffing of the school, nor does the GO Team.

**Public Relations and Communications:** Defers to the principal as the spokesperson for the school.

**Elected By:** Voting GO Team members

**Length of Term:** One-year term as Chair, eligible for one additional term as Chair. A Chair may not serve more than two one-year terms.

***Time Commitment:*** An average of six to eight hours per month as Chair.

***Reports To:*** GO Team members.

***Qualifications:***

- A commitment to the school and its values and an understanding of the school's objectives, organization, and services
- Knowledge of, and ability to work with, the broader school community
- Ability to understand concepts and articulate ideas
- Willingness to learn facilitation skills and provide balanced leadership

***GO Team Vice-Chair Responsibilities***

***Purpose:***

The GO Team Vice-Chair assists the GO Team Chair in providing leadership to the GO Team, and presides at all meetings of the GO Team in the absence of the Chair. The Vice Chair will have full and equal vote as afforded to all GO Team members.

***Key Responsibilities:***

***General:*** Ensures the effective action of the GO Team in governing and adhering to its governance regulations, policies, and procedures. The Vice-Chair acts as the representative of the GO Team in the absence of the Chair.

***Procedure and Planning:*** In the absence of the chair, works with the principal and the GO Team to determine the meeting agenda, and works with all standing and ad-hoc committees to ensure committee work is shared with the GO Team.

***GO Team Meetings:*** Leads and facilitates GO Team meetings in the absence of the Chair.

***Local School Governance Team Evaluation:*** Ensures that the GO Team has opportunities to reflect regularly on how well it is meeting its responsibilities to the school, in part by working with the Office of Policy and Governance to participate in the annual GO Team Assessment.

***Staff Oversight, Compensation, and Evaluation:*** The Vice-Chair has no oversight or governance role with regard to staffing of the school, nor does the GO Team.

***Public Relations and Communications:*** Defers to the principal as the spokesperson for the school.

***Elected By:*** GO Team members

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***Length of Term:*** One-year term as Vice-Chair, eligible for one additional term as Vice-Chair. A Vice-Chair may not serve more than two one-year terms.

***Time Commitment:*** An average of one to two hours per month as Vice-Chair.

***Reports To:*** GO Team members.

***Qualifications:***

- A commitment to the school and its values and an understanding of the school's objectives, organization, and services
- Knowledge of, and ability to work with, the broader school community
- Ability to understand concepts and articulate ideas
- Willingness to learn facilitation skills and provide balanced leadership

**GO Team Secretary Responsibilities**

***Purpose:***

The GO Team Secretary is responsible for communicating regarding GO Team meetings and documenting the work and decisions of the GO Team. The Secretary will have a full and equal vote as afforded to all GO Team members.

***Key Responsibilities:***

***General:*** Ensures the effective action of the GO Team relative to Robert's Rules of Order, the Georgia Open Meetings and Open Records laws, and the GO Team's governance guidance, covenants, and procedures. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the GO Team complies with Georgia Open Meetings and Records laws by ensuring the required documents and information are posted on the school website and at the school. See Section 3.1.

***GO Team Meetings:*** The Secretary ensures that all GO Team members understand those decision-making procedures that are in place for the GO Team through an annual orientation to and discussion of those procedures. The Secretary also ensures that GO Team meeting agendas and materials are sent to the GO Team at least one week prior to each GO Team meeting.

***Staff Oversight, Compensation, and Evaluation:*** The Secretary has no oversight or governance role with regard to staffing of the school, nor does the GO Team.

***Public Relations and Communications:*** Defers to the principal as the spokesperson for the school.

**Elected By:** GO Team members

**Length of Term:** One-year term as Secretary, eligible for one additional term as Secretary. A Secretary may not serve more than two one-year terms.

**Time Commitment:** An average of three to five hours per month as Secretary.

**Reports To:** GO Team members.

**Qualifications:**

- A commitment to the school and its values and an understanding of the school's objectives, organization, and services.
- Knowledge of, and ability to work with, the broader school community
- Willingness to learn about and ensure GO Team compliance with Robert's Rules of Order and Georgia's Open Meetings and Records laws
- Organization skills and an ability to adhere to deadlines

**Section 4.4. Removal of Officers.** Any officer of the GO Team may be removed for lack of attendance, loss of qualification eligibility, or for violation of the GO Team Code of Conduct by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the GO Team members then in office present at any meeting of the GO Team after notice to all GO Team members of that purpose. The GO Team will appoint a new officer to fill the unexpired term of the removed officer within sixty (60) days of the removal, but preferably by the next meeting immediately following the removed officer's departure. See Section 2.8 to 2.10.



## ARTICLE V: GO TEAM COMMITTEES

**Section 5.1. Establishment.** The GO Team may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the voting GO Team members, establish such committees as the GO Team will deem necessary or advisable. All such committees will have and may exercise such powers and authority to support the work of the GO Team as delegated by the GO Team. No committee will perform the full duties and responsibilities, or stand in the place of, the GO Team. The principal or his/her designee shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees. GO Team Committees are subject to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Laws. See Section 3.1.

**Section 5.2. Standing Committees.** During year one (1) of GO Team implementation (2016-2017), Standing Committees are optional. Beginning in year two (2) of GO Team implementation (2017-2018), the GO Team will have a standing Family Engagement & Communications Committee and may create other standing committees as the team sees fit with the advice of the Office of Policy & Governance.

**Section 5.2.1 Family Engagement & Communications Committee.** The Family Engagement & Communications Committee keeps the community informed of matters within the GO Team's area of responsibility, including progress on the school's strategic plan, budget, and School-Based Solution proposals. The Family Engagement & Communications Committee will participate in an annual meeting for the school community, led by the principal, to provide a report on the school's performance. This committee will also be responsible for gathering input from the school community about School-Based Solution proposals to be submitted by the GO Team, or any major school initiatives or changes that would require public comment.

The Outreach & Communications Committee will be chaired by a member of the GO Team designated by the GO Team chair.

The Outreach & Communications Committee will be composed of the Committee Chair, the principal (or his/her designee) and at least one (1) additional member of the GO Team. The principal (or his/her designee) will be a non-voting member of this committee. The GO Team may add additional non-GO Team members to serve on the Outreach & Communications Committee. No more than six (6) people may serve on the committee.

**Section 5.3. Ad-hoc Committees.** The GO Team may create, at its discretion, ad hoc committees of team members, parents, staff, and community members to assist in developing and reviewing school procedures and programs in support of the school's strategic plan. Such advisory committees shall operate for a finite time frame.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. GO Team Elections**

GO Team member elections will be decided by a secret ballot of parents/guardians of children attending the school and of school employees.

The inaugural year of a school's GO Team will be considered a "planning year" during which time the school will hold their first GO Team elections, and newly elected/appointed GO Team members will attend training and complete the certification process.

Initial terms during the planning year election cycle will be staggered to ensure continuity. Therefore, members will serve either a two- or three-year term during the start-up period. Candidates for GO Team positions will determine which seat to run for based on the length of the term they desire to fill and declare their interest in running for that specific position accordingly.

## **B. Planning Year Term of Office**

The planning year will include the election and establishment of the inaugural GO Team and will run from March 14 to June 30, 2016. GO Team members elected or appointed during a GO Team's inaugural year will serve staggered terms that include the planning year in addition to a two- or three-year term of office. The initial election of GO Team members for the planning year will include elections for both two-year terms and three-year terms (candidates will choose to run for either a two-year or three-year slot) to allow for a staggered rotation of members. Each member is then eligible to serve for one additional term if elected/appointed and still eligible.

<b>Initial Term</b>	<b>Term Beginning Date</b>	<b>Term Ending Date</b>
Two years	March 15, 2016	February 28, 2018*
Three years	March 15, 2016	February 28, 2019*

\*exact date may change based on election schedules in 2018 and 2019

Student members will not participate in the planning year.

In the planning year during the inaugural year of the GO Team, the following elections and appointments will take place to establish a staggered rotation:

- Parent Representatives:
  - Two (2) parent/guardians with a two-year term
  - One (1) parent/guardian with a three-year term
- Non-supervisory instructional staff representatives:
  - Two (2) non-supervisory instructional staff with a two-year term
  - One (1) non-supervisory instructional staff with a three-year term
- Swing Seat Representative:
  - One (1) with a three-year term
- Community Representatives:
  - One (1) community member with a two-year term

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- One (1) community member with a three-year term

### **C. Subsequent Terms of Office**

With the exception of the student members, all GO Team members serving after the GO Team's inaugural election/appointment process will serve a two-year term of office. No member will serve more than two consecutive terms. No member will serve more than two consecutive terms by shifting to another GO Team member category or role. Terms will be staggered so that there is at least one parent, non-supervisory instructional staff, community member, and student (as applicable) elected/appointed each year. The term of office will begin March 1 and end February 28.

Student representatives (high school only) will serve one-year terms, from August through May of the school year in which they are participating. Students may serve a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms.

### **D. Election Timeframe and Candidate Registration**

With the exception of the planning year, elections/appointments will be held in the winter prior to the end of the school year.

In the fall of the year, the district will begin advertising candidate registration in October – December. All candidates are responsible for declaring candidacy within this window of time. After the GO Team candidate declaration window is closed, no candidates will be allowed to register for the upcoming election. All candidates are strongly encouraged to print a copy of the final registration page and retain a copy for their records. Candidate verification will be conducted after the candidate declaration window is closed. Candidates will receive an email notifying them of the verification window. During the candidate verification window, candidates must verify the following candidate profile information- name, school, term, candidate picture (optional) and candidate bio information. If the candidate finds an error in their candidate profile, they must notify the GO Team office before the verification window closes. If the candidate finds an error on their profile after the verification window closes, candidate profile will remain as it was submitted.

### **E. Election Procedures for Parent/Guardian Representatives**

The Office of Policy and Governance will manage the election process. Ballots will be tabulated by an unbiased external vendor.

Parents/guardians with at least one child enrolled in an APS neighborhood school will receive one vote per household, as identified by the student information system, Infinite Campus, for the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians with children enrolled in multiple schools will receive one vote in each school in which they have a child enrolled.

The election will be conducted via an online process in which each eligible voter can log in to cast a ballot. Alternatively, an eligible voter may also cast his/her vote at a station designated at the school during the voting period.

The voting period will be no less than one calendar day and no more than seven calendar days. Notice of the voting period will be published prior to the voting period in school publications, notices sent home to families, and/or listed on the school's website.

Results of the election will be published on the district's website no later than 10 days after the closing date of the voting period.

#### **F. Election Procedures for Non-Supervisory Instructional Staff Representatives**

The Office of Policy and Governance will manage the election process. Ballots will be tabulated by an unbiased external vendor.

Regular, full-time school employees will be eligible to vote for non-supervisory instructional staff representatives at their worksite. Each employee in the school will have one vote. The election will be conducted via an online process in which each school employee can log in to cast his/her ballot. Alternatively, a school employee may cast his/her vote at a station designated at the school during the voting period.

The voting period will be between one and seven calendar days for non-supervisory instructional staff positions. Notice of the voting period will be published in school publications, notices sent to non-supervisory instructional staffs via e-mail, and posted on the school's website.

Results of the election will be published on the district's website no later than 10 days after the closing date of the voting period.

#### **G. Procedure for Community Member Nominations and Approvals**

Each GO Team will have two community representatives. The community representatives will be nominated by the principal and approved by the voting members of the GO Team. For the inaugural confirmation meeting, the principal will call a meeting of the elected members of the GO Team to present the list of nominees for community representative. The GO Team will approve the community representatives by a majority vote of the elected parent and staff GO Team members then in office.

In subsequent years, both elected and appointed GO Team members currently in office will consider and approve the principal's nominees for community representative seats.

#### **H. Procedure for Selection of Student Representatives on High School GO Teams**

High school GO Teams will have one student representative with limited voting responsibilities. Because the student will not participate in the planning year, the selection of students for the inaugural GO Team will occur after the other members of the GO Team

have been selected. The principal will appoint the student member. Criteria for selecting a student member are:

- The student representative must be currently enrolled in the school.
- The student representative may be the president of the elected student government organization, the highest ranking position from a non-elected student organization (e.g., National Honor Society, Beta Club, Sports Organization), or meet other criteria determined via feedback from the members of the GO Team.
- There will be no restriction on the grade level of the student serving.

## **I. Procedures for After the GO Team Elections Window Has Closed**

**Embargoed Election Results** - The Office of Policy and Governance reserves the right to embargo elections results for five (5) business days after the elections window closes. During this time, elections results may be available to principals, the District Support Team and winners of each contest.

**Elected Candidates Stepping Down before the Formal Public Announcement** - Elected GO Team members who choose to step down before the elections results are released to the public will be replaced with the candidate who received the next highest number of votes cast in the same contest.

**Runoff Elections** - A runoff election will be conducted when two candidates running for the same term receive the same number of votes during the initial election, and a winner is not apparent. The runoff election window will be defined by the Office of Policy and Governance and communicated to the public. Runoff elections will utilize the online voting system. The same guidelines used in the initial election will apply for the runoff election. The candidate with the most votes will win the runoff election.

## **J. GO Team Election Campaigning Guidelines**

- Schools may conduct candidate forums that provide equal access to all candidates using the approved GO Team candidate forum resources.
- Go Team Candidates may not collect or accept financial donations to support their election bid.
- Schools may conduct voter drives that encourage all voters to vote during elections.
- GO Team candidates may distribute campaign flyers, emails and texts outside of the school's instructional day – prior to or after school are acceptable times to distribute campaign material.
- No Atlanta Public Schools (APS) resources may be used for individual campaigning activity. For these purposes, Atlanta Public School resources include, but are not limited to:

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- APS letterhead and logos, GO Team letterhead and logos, and individual school letterhead and logos;
- Office supplies;
- Office space and other facilities;
- Photocopiers, telephones and faxes;
- District Email, District/school websites, etc.; and
- Employee work time.

## **K. GO Team Assessment**

The purpose of the GO Team assessment is to identify those areas of GO Team operations that are working well and those that may need improvement. The GO Team assessment speaks to the GO Team as a whole, not to individual members. It is the evaluation process of the overall effectiveness of the GO Team as a decision-making group. Each GO Team member agrees to submit an objective, honest assessment survey regarding GO Team performance at least once per year, and to carefully consider the assessment results provided by the Office of Policy and Governance. Failure to participate in the GO Team assessment may result in revocation of approved School-Based Solutions and/or the removal of the GO Team.

## **L. Media Relations**

GO Team members will not make statements, provide information for distribution, or provide background information to any media source unless specifically directed to do so by the principal and/or a representative of APS.

## **O. Feedback on Principal Performance**

Associate Superintendents will evaluate the principal's performance in each school. Associate Superintendents will ask the GO Team for feedback on the principal's performance during that evaluation process, which will take place annually beginning in the GO Team's first full year of service.

## **L. School-Based Solutions Process**

The GO Team is responsible for managing the School-Based Solutions process at its school. The intent of School-Based Solutions ("SBS") is to improve student achievement through academic and/or organizational innovation. The GO Team must be certified to engage in the SBS process.

SBS requests are strategic proposals designed to allow the school to operate in dramatically different ways. SBS requests may require waivers from district policy or procedures or state law, regulations, or policy. A successful SBS proposal to the district must align with the school's strategic plan, provide evidence of sound research or

indicators of the proposal's likelihood of success, and address critical factors around the plan's implications on budget, personnel, operations, etc.

The GO Team manages all SBS proposals and may engage in the development after GO Team certification and approval of the school's strategic plan. After development, all SBS proposals must undergo a 20-day public comment period organized by the GO Team, be approved by a two-third majority vote of the GO Team, and must receive the recommendation of the school's Associate Superintendent before being submitted to the Office of Policy and Governance for the final review and approval or denial by the Superintendent.

Standards, guidance, and training for the SBS process will be provided annually to GO Teams and posted on the district's website.

## **IV. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GO TEAM MEMBERS**

### **A. Conflict of Interest**

A conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest is prohibited. The GO Team will adhere to these Conflict of Interest provisions.

1. No GO Team member will use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges, advantages, or employment for himself/herself or any other individual or organization.
2. No GO Team member will act in his or her official capacity in any matter in which he or she has a personal or business interest, or any matter in which his or her relative has a personal or business interest.
3. No GO Team member will use, or knowingly allow to be used, his or her official position or any information not generally available to the members of the public which he or she receives by reason of his or her official position for the purpose of securing financial gain for himself or herself, any of his or her relatives, or any business organization with which he or she is associated.
4. No GO Team member will accept a monetary fee or honorarium for a speaking engagement, participation in a seminar, discussion panel, or other activity that directly relates to the official duties of the GO Team.
5. No GO Team member represents individual students, student groups, or groups of employees in their GO Team deliberations and decision-making.
6. Any GO Team member that has a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest on a matter before the GO Team must recuse himself/herself from the discussion and voting on that matter.

As used in this code, the word "relative" shall mean an individual who is related to the GO Team member as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, grandfather,

grandmother, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, any other relative living in the household of GO Team member, a person who is engaged to be married to the GO Team member or who otherwise holds himself/herself out as, or is generally known as, the person whom the GO Team member intends to marry or with whom the GO Team member intends to form a household, or any other natural person having the same legal residence as the GO Team member.

## **B. Gifts & Solicitations**

To avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict, GO Team members will not directly or indirectly accept, solicit, receive or agree to receive any gift, rebate, benefit, favor, service or other thing of value from any vendor or prospective vendor of APS or the school or from any other person or company doing or seeking to do business with APS or the school. Exceptions are: food and/or beverage consumed at an occasional meal or event; food, beverage or expenses associated with normal and customary business or social function or activity; promotional items distributed to the general public or employees, an award, plaque, certificate, memento or similar item given in recognition of the GO team member's civic, charitable, political, professional or public service; any gift with a value less than \$50, or items given for the use and benefit of students of APS or the school.

## **C. Code of Ethics**

The GO Team should operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible, and to that end, the GO Team will adopt this Code of Ethics. Each member of the GO Team agrees that he or she will:

### **I: General Governance Structure:**

1. Honor the established APS chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the principal, Associate Superintendent or the Office of Policy and Governance, or other office as appropriate, consistent with the established APS chain of command.
2. Not undermine the authority of the school's principal or intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the principal or school administration, including such functions as hiring, transferring or dismissing employees, or any other personnel management matter.
3. Consider the needs of all students in the school in deliberations and decision-making. GO Team members will not advocate for the needs of individual students or student groups in conflict with the overall needs of the school or the needs of the lowest performing student groups. .
4. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of children attending the school.
5. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups.

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6. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and the Atlanta Board of Education and all court orders pertaining to the System.

## **II. Governance Practices:**

1. Work with other GO Team members to abide by the GO Team governance guidance and procedures.
2. Make decisions on GO Team matters only after discussion at publicly held GO Team meetings.

## **III. School and Community Relations:**

1. Seek regular and open communications among the GO Team and students, school employees, and the community.
2. Communicate to the principal expressions of public reaction to school procedures and school programs.

## **IV. GO Team Meetings:**

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called GO Team meetings (see “GO Team Member Expectations”).
2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the GO Team agenda.
3. Work with other GO Team members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at GO Team meetings.
4. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of discussions and other matters pertaining to the GO Team and the school.
5. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the school as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.
6. Express opinions before votes are cast, but after the GO Team vote, abide by and support all majority decisions of the GO Team.

## **V. Relationship with Principal:**

1. Use reasonable efforts to keep the principal informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the GO Team may bring to the GO Team.
2. Work with the principal to ensure prudent and accountable uses of school resources.
3. Provide fair and honest feedback on the performance of the principal to the Associate Superintendent within established district procedures.

## **VI. Financial Interest:**

1. Refrain from using the position of GO Team member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the school.

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## **VII. Conduct as GO Team Member:**

2. Devote sufficient time, thought and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the GO Team.
3. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing education and training.
4. Communicate in a respectful professional manner with and about fellow GO Team members.
5. Take no private action that will compromise the GO Team, school administration, the school or APS.
6. Refrain from using the GO Team position to gather information on individual student academic performance or disciplinary matters, non-supervisory instructional staff/staff evaluations, and any other formal or informal documentation on any individually identifiable student, non-supervisory instructional staff, or staff. There should be no discussion on matters related to individual students, non-supervisory instructional staffs, or staff by GO Team members in the course of GO Team responsibilities.
7. Maintain confidentiality of sensitive, confidential information shared in the process of conducting the work of the GO Team.
8. Participate in all required training programs developed for GO Team members by APS or the State Board of Education.
9. File annually with APS a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.
10. Abide by Georgia law and APS practices for mandatory reporting of child abuse. If a GO Team member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, the member will report that abuse to the principal within 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause.

## **D. Confidentiality/Access to Personal Information**

Any information regarding economic status, academic program or service participation, achievement or behavior of individual students is federally protected, deemed confidential, and under no circumstances is such student information accessible to any GO Team member. Any information regarding individual employee performance or personnel action is considered confidential and under no circumstances is such personnel information accessible to any GO Team member.

GO Team members may be privy to confidential information not outlined above as a result of their position on the GO Team. Members may not disclose, divulge, or make accessible confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with the school system or the school to any person, including relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, other than to persons who have a legitimate need for such information and to whom APS has authorized disclosure. GO Team members will use confidential information solely for the purpose of performing services as a GO Team member. This procedure is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law.

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Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information pertaining to individual students, contractual relationships, prospective employees, future land purchases, or any other information the school district deems confidential.

Confidential information does not include any information that:

1. was rightfully within a GO Team member's possession prior to it being revealed as part of his/her affiliation as a member of the GO Team;
2. is or becomes generally known to the public at a later date by rightful means;
3. is released for disclosure by APS; or
4. is received in good faith by the GO Team member through a source other than APS.

GO Team members acknowledge that all confidential information is owned solely by APS and that the unauthorized disclosure or use of such confidential information could cause irreparable harm and significant injury to APS and/or individual schools, the degree of which may be difficult to ascertain. Accordingly, GO Team members will agree in writing that APS has the right to obtain an immediate injunction enjoining any breach of this section, as well as the right to pursue any and all other rights and remedies available at law for such a breach.

GO Team members must exercise good judgment and care at all times to avoid unauthorized or improper disclosures of confidential information. Conversations in public places, such as restaurants, elevators, and airplanes should be limited to matters that do not pertain to information of a sensitive or confidential nature. In addition, GO Team members should be sensitive to the risk of inadvertent disclosure and should, for example, refrain from leaving confidential information on desks or otherwise in plain view and refrain from the use of speakerphones to discuss confidential information if the conversation could be heard by unauthorized persons.

At the end of a GO Team member's term in office, he or she will return, at the request of APS, all documents, papers, and other materials, regardless of medium, that may contain or be derived from confidential information in his or her possession.



## V: CLUSTER ADVISORY TEAMS (CAT)

**Section 5.1. CAT Operations.** The CAT operates under the control and management of the Atlanta Public Schools Board of Education and will follow Board of Education policies and procedures unless a waiver is granted.

**Section 5.2. Powers.** Upon successful completion of APS GO Team certification and election/appointment of GO Team members to the CAT, the CAT will have the authority to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- (a) Maintain and update a cluster-wide strategic plan
- (b) Review and provide feedback on School-based Solution (SBS) proposals that impact or involve the cluster
- (c) Respond to cluster-level support requests to enable a school to accomplish a specific goal or address a barrier to success
- (d) Support the health and function of GO Teams throughout the cluster
- (e) Build community-wide communication, engagement and advocacy
- (f) Encourage alignment and collaboration between charter and neighborhood schools
- (g) Promote cluster-wide collaboration, communication, engagement and advocacy

**Section 5.3. Additional Responsibilities.** The CAT is also responsible for the following duties:

- (a) Communicate CAT work to stakeholders, including students, parents, community members, faculty, and staff
- (b) Participate in an annual assessment of the Cluster's performance and results
- (c) Meet a minimum of three (3) times during each school/fiscal year
- (d) Abide by state Open Meetings and Open Records laws

**Section 5.4. Membership.** The CAT will have the following membership structure:

- (a) The principal or his/her leadership team designee from each neighborhood school
- (b) One (1) elected representative of each GO Team (elected by the GO Team annually when electing officers)
- (c) One (1) designated representative from each charter school with an enrollment focus area in the cluster
- (d) Up to three (3) cluster-wide community partners

CAT members can request to alter the membership structure of the CAT through the School-Based Solutions process.

**Section 5.5. Code of Conduct.** Each member of the CAT must abide by the GO Team Handbook guidance regarding conflict of interest, code of ethics, confidentiality, gifts and solicitations,

and any additional Code of Conduct guidance set forth which affect the CAT. Details on the Code of Conduct can be found in Part IV CODE OF CONDUCT.

**Section 5.6. Meetings.** Meetings of the CAT will be held at least three (3) times per year at such times and places as the CAT will determine. All CAT meetings must be held outside of school instructional hours to protect student instructional time and employee work hours. Such meetings are subject to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law and meeting notice requirements noted in Article III GO Team Meetings (beginning on page 12).

**Section 5.7. CAT Officers.** The CAT will have a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

**Section 5.7.1. Election and Term of Office.** Each officer will be elected from among the CAT members at the first meeting of each new fiscal year for APS. Each officer will serve for a term of one year. Each officer will serve until a successor is elected and qualified, or until said officer resigns or is removed from office.

No officer may hold more than one position on the CAT at the same time. Only one CAT member may occupy an officer position at any time.

**Section 5.7.2. Duties and Responsibilities.** Officers will have the duties and responsibilities belonging to their office, including those that follow:

### ***CAT Chair Responsibilities***

**Purpose:**

The CAT Chair is the leader of the CAT and presides at all meetings of the GO Team.

**Key Responsibilities:**

**General:** Ensures the effective action of the CAT in adhering to its advisory role.

**Procedure and Planning:** Works with the CAT to determine the meeting agenda.

**CAT Meetings:** Leads and facilitates CAT meetings by making sure that the agenda is closely followed, ensuring that every CAT member has the opportunity to participate in discussions, and that the CAT uses proper decision-making procedures.

**Elected By:** CAT members

**Length of Term:** One-year term as Chair, eligible for one additional term as Chair. A Chair may not serve more than two one-year terms.

**Reports To:** CAT members.

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### ***CAT Vice-Chair Responsibilities***

**Purpose:**

The CAT Vice-Chair assists the CAT Chair in providing leadership to the CAT, and presides at all meetings of the CAT in the absence of the Chair.

**Key Responsibilities:**

**General:** Ensures the effective action of the CAT in adhering to its advisory role. The Vice-Chair acts as the representative of the CAT in the absence of the Chair.

**Procedure and Planning:** In the absence of the chair, works with the CAT to determine the meeting agenda.

**CAT Meetings:** Leads and facilitates CAT meetings in the absence of the Chair.

**Elected By:** CAT members

**Length of Term:** One-year term as Vice-Chair, eligible for one additional term as Vice-Chair. A Vice-Chair may not serve more than two one-year terms.

**Reports To:** CAT members.

### ***CAT Secretary Responsibilities***

**Purpose:**

The CAT Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the CAT utilizes Robert's Rules of Order and follows Georgia Open Meetings and Open Records laws. The Secretary is also responsible for distributing meeting notices and meeting minutes in a timely manner.

**Key Responsibilities:**

**General:** Ensures the effective action of the CAT relative to Robert's Rules of Order and the Georgia Open Meetings and Open Records laws. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the CAT complies with Georgia Open Meetings and Records laws by ensuring the following documents and information are posted:

- Meeting time, date, and location at least seven days before the meeting
- Meeting agenda seven days before the meeting
- Meeting Summary of Actions and approved minutes from the last meeting within two business days after the meeting
- Provide draft meeting minutes to the CAT within 20 days after the meeting (not posted, just provided to CAT members)

**Elected By:** CAT members

***Length of Term:*** One-year term as Secretary, eligible for one additional term as Secretary. A Secretary may not serve more than two one-year terms.

***Reports To:*** CAT members.

***Section 5.7.3. Removal of Officers.*** Any officer of the CAT may be removed for lack of attendance, loss of qualification eligibility, or for violation of the CAT Code of Conduct by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the CAT members then in office present at any meeting of the CAT after notice to all CAT members of that purpose. The CAT will appoint a new officer to fill the unexpired term of the removed officer within sixty (60) days of the removal, but preferably by the next meeting immediately following the removed officer's departure.

#### **Section 5.8. CAT Elections.**

In addition to the principal or his/her designee, each neighborhood school GO Team will elect one member of the GO Team to represent the school as part of the CAT. The CAT representative may hold concurrently an officer position on the school's GO Team. These elections will take place during the election of GO Team offices. Additionally, the principal or his/her designee of each charter school with an enrollment focus area in a given cluster may be a part of the CAT.

**Section 5.9. Procedure for Community Member Nominations and Approvals.** Each CAT will have up to three (3) cluster-wide community representatives. In the inaugural year, two two-year term cluster community representatives and one three-year term cluster community representative will be nominated by and approved by the members of the CAT (principals/designees and GO Team representatives). The CAT will approve the community representatives by a majority vote of the CAT members then in office. In subsequent years, both elected and appointed CAT members currently in office will consider and approve the nominees for community representatives to serve two-year terms.

## APPENDICES.

### APPENDIX A: Open Meetings Law

#### Open Meetings Act Summary

GO Teams are subject to the Open Meetings Act located at OCGA (Official Code of Georgia Annotated) § 50-14-1, et seq.

A meeting for the purposes of the Open Meetings Act is defined as a quorum of the members of the GO Team or any committee of its members at which any public matter, official business, or policy is to be discussed or presented, or at which official action is to be taken, or recommendations on any public matter, official business, or policy are to be formulated, presented, or discussed.

All meetings are open unless otherwise provided by law.

Regular meetings of the GO Team must have:

- Notice given to the GO Team members at least seven days prior to a meeting (OCGA § 20-2-86[f])
- The meeting time, date, and location must be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting (at school and on school website). Standard practice for APS GO Teams will be for schools to post regular meeting notices at least seven days before the meeting.
- The meeting agenda must be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting (at school and on website), and it must include all matters expected to come before the GO Team. Standard practice for APS GO Teams will be for schools to post regular meeting notices at least seven days before the meeting (at school and on school website). Draft form is acceptable for agendas posted a week prior to the meeting.
- A meeting summary of attendees and actions as well as approved minutes from the previous meeting must be posted within two (2) business days after the meeting (at school and on school website).
- Draft meeting minutes from the previous meeting must be provided to the GO Team within 20 days after the meeting for review prior to the next scheduled meeting (note: not posted, just provided to GO Team members).
- Regular meetings may be cancelled or postponed without notice.

**Note:** Failure to include an item on the agenda that becomes necessary to address during the meeting does not prohibit the GO Team from considering and acting upon the item.

GO Team meeting summaries must:

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- Be written and made available to the public for inspection within two business days of the adjournment of the meeting.
- Include the subjects acted on and the members present at the meeting.

GO Team meetings must have minutes that:

- Are promptly recorded and open to public inspection once approved as official by the GO Team no later than immediately following the next regular meeting of the GO Team;
- Include, at a minimum, the names of GO Team members present, the description of each motion or other proposal made during the meeting, names of those individuals making and seconding each motion or proposal, and a record of all votes taken and the results of those votes;
- Include the name of each person voting for or against the proposal, or abstaining from voting on the proposal;
- Are kept on file at the school office for anyone to request to review (OCGA § 20-2-86[l]); and
- Are sent to GO Team members within 20 days following each GO Team meeting (OCGA § 20-2-86[l]) for review. After review, the meeting minutes will be voted on and adopted at the beginning of the next GO Team meeting.

Visual and/or sound recording of GO Team meetings is permitted.

A meeting may not be closed in order to discuss whether or not to close a meeting.

### Violation of Open Meetings Act

1. Anyone knowingly and willfully conducting or participating in a meeting in violation of the Open Meetings act is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, punished by a fine not to exceed \$1000.00. Alternatively, a civil penalty may be imposed by the court in any civil action brought pursuant to this chapter against any person who negligently violates the terms of this chapter in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00 for the first violation. A civil penalty or criminal fine not to exceed \$2,500.00 per violation may be imposed for each additional violation that the violator commits within a 12 month period from the date that the first penalty or fine was imposed.
2. Superior courts have jurisdiction to enforce the Open Meetings law; the attorney general has the authority to bring law enforcement actions, criminal or civil.
3. If a superior court determines that a GO Team has not complied with the act, the court will—unless special circumstances exist—assess in favor of the complaining party reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs.

## APPENDIX B: GO Team Member Immunity

Duly elected and appointed members of APS GO Teams are afforded legal immunity for their voluntary service as GO Team members under Georgia state law (O.C.G.A. 51-1-20(a)). This immunity protects the GO Team member from any civil litigation based on actions taken as part of his/her official duties and responsibilities as a GO Team member as long as the GO Team member acted in good faith and within the proper scope of his/her role as a GO Team member.

Federal law also provides a source of immunity from legal liability for GO Team members due to their volunteer status. As long as the GO Team member's conduct in question did not occur due to willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of others, the GO Team member will be immune from liability for the action (42 U.S.C. 14501-14505).



## **APPENDIX C: CONTENT OF THE MINUTES**

### **GO Team Meeting Minutes should include the following information:**

- 1) The kind of meeting: regular or special;
- 2) The name of the school;
- 3) The date, time, and location of the meeting;
- 4) Names of all GO Team members present;
- 5) A list of agenda items;
- 6) All materials referenced;
- 7) Description of motions made;
- 8) Names of those making or seconding motions;
- 9) Results of votes;
- 10) Names of all persons voting for, against, or abstaining; (unless the vote is unanimous, in which case just state whether the motion passed or failed unanimously).
- 11) High-level summary of any discussion items
- 12) List of items for information 3

## SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA – WITH PUBLIC COMMENT

### **ABC Middle School GO Team Meeting Agenda – February 10, 2017 7:30 a.m.- 8:30 a.m.**

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*(This meeting allots time for public comment)*

#### **7:30 – 7:35 Call to Order**

Welcome

#### **7:35 – 7:55 Public Comment**

*(The Public Comment section can be scheduled at any point during the meeting but often will be schedule at the beginning or end. When scheduling public comment consider the time of your meeting and whether the public will be able to make it to the meeting in time for public comment or need to leave before public comment begins.)*

#### **7:55 – 8:15 Action Items**

Approval of Agenda  
Approval of Minutes from November 2016 GO Team Meeting  
Approval of 2017-2018 Budget Recommendations

#### **8:15 – 8:25 Discussion Items**

Upcoming Assessments – Milestones, NAEP, etc.

#### **8:25 – 8:30 Announcements and Adjournment**

## SAMPLE MEETING SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

### **Summary of Meeting Actions – November 1, 2016 GO Team meeting**

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All GO Team members were present for the November 1, 2016 GO Team meeting at ABC Middle School. (List GO Team members that were present and absent)

#### **Agenda Items and Actions** (The GO Team took action on the following agenda items)

Approved	Minutes from September 2016 GO Team Meeting
Approved	SBS Proposal – Russian
Discussion	State Assessment Results – Reading/ELA
Information	PTSA Board Meeting Minutes 6

## SAMPLE MEETING MINUTES

### **ABC Middle School – GO Team Meeting Minutes – November 1, 2016**

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Members present: Wayne Johns, Kent Smith, Kelley Manson, Tina Thomas, Reginald Richards, Phillip Phillips, Eddie Brown, Cher Davis, Arthur Astin, Tina Johnson

Members absent: None

The following items were on the agenda:

The meeting was called to order by Kent Smith at 7:35 a.m.

Kelley Manson moved and Reginald Richards seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Kent Smith moved and Tina Thomas seconded to approve the minutes of the January GO Team meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

The GO Team discussed whether to submit a Request for Flexibility proposal to add Russian to the third, fourth, and fifth grade curricula. Tina Thomas expressed final reservations about the cost and capacity of adding Russian to the school curriculum.

Phillip Phillips moved and Eddie Brown seconded to submit a Request for Flexibility proposal to add Russian to the third, fourth and fifth grade curricula beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 2.

Motion by Phillip Phillips, second by Eddie Brown

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Kent Smith, Kelley Manson, Phillip Phillips, Eddie Brown, Cher Davis, Arthur Astin, Tina Johnson

No: Tina Thomas, Reginald Richards

The GO Team received a data packet (attached) from Principal Johns highlighting the school reading scores from the 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. The scores showed a downward trend over the three year period. The GO Team discussed the reading results. Mr. Johns shared the school's plan for increasing the reading scores through a reading buddy program initiated by the Governor's Office and an assigned reading mentor that will help our teachers develop additional strategies for struggling readers. Through this program, members of the Governor's staff will be assigned a buddy at the school and read with them once a week for 30-45 minutes.

The GO Team received a copy of the minutes of the September PTSA Board meeting for information.

Cher Davis moved and Reginald Richards seconded to end the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 a.m.

## APPENDIX D: SAMPLE PUBLIC COMMENT SCRIPTS

*The following are sample scripts for you to use as you open your GO TEAM meetings. We encourage you to use this sample language and adjust as appropriate for your specific school and meeting.*

### GO TEAM Script for Meeting with Public Comment

Good Afternoon:

This is the February meeting of the GO Team of ABC Middle School. The GO Team welcomes and encourages citizens to attend its meetings to become better acquainted with the programs of ABC Middle School and the role of the GO Team. This meeting is open to the public. Citizens are welcome to attend the meeting, but must refrain from interrupting or distracting the GO Team proceedings.

For those of you wishing to provide comment, there is time allotted on the agenda from 6p.m. – 6:20 p.m. The sign-up sheet is by the door. Each member of the public will have 2 minutes to speak at which time we will ask you to have a seat to allow others to speak. The Public Comment period is designed to gain input from the public and not for immediate responses by the GO Team to the public comment presented. At the end of the 20 minutes we will close public comment and move on to the next agenda item. If there are questions or information that you have for the GO Team, you may also contact one or more of the GO Team members after this meeting. You can find GO Team member contact information and meeting dates and agendas on the School Governance page of the ABC Middle School website.

### GO TEAM Script for Meeting with No Public Comment

Good morning/afternoon:

This is the February meeting of the GO Team of ABC Middle School. The GO Team welcomes and encourages citizens to attend its meetings to become better acquainted with the programs of ABC Middle School and the role of the GO Team. This meeting is open to the public. Citizens are welcome to attend the meeting, but must refrain from interrupting or distracting the GO Team proceedings. If there are questions or information that you have for the Council, you may contact one of the GO Team members after this meeting or plan to speak at one of the meetings that reserves time for Public Comment. You can find GO Team member contact information and meeting dates and agendas on the School Governance page of the ABC Middle School website.

## PUBLIC COMMENT TIPS

The GO Team meetings are open to the public. School and community stakeholders are welcome to attend the meetings to remain abreast of the work of the GO Team, but they may only participate in the meeting during the scheduled periods for Public Comment. GO Teams are encouraged to reserve time for Public Comment at some of their meetings and visibly indicate on the agenda if Public Comment will be allowed. Here are some tips for Public Comment:

1. The GO Team is not required to schedule time for Public Comment at every meeting. Public Comment should be scheduled for major action items (items that need a GO Team vote) that will require public input or need public buy-in (ex. An SBS proposal requires Public Comment). GO Teams should determine their meeting schedules for the year and decide which meetings will allow Public Comment.
2. Consider the schedule of the school community for those meetings that do allow Public Comment in order to give your community the chance to participate. This will help the GO Team determine whether to place time for Public Comment at the beginning of the agenda or at the end.
3. Set a specific time for your Public Comment period. For example, you could allot a 20 minute segment on the agenda for Public Comment and allow each member of the public to have 2 minutes to speak during that segment. At the end of the Public Comment period, the Chair should close Public Comment and move on to the next agenda item.
4. GO Team members should not respond during the Public Comment period. The Public Comment period is designed to gain input from the public – not for immediate responses by the GO Team to the public comment presented. The GO Team should listen attentively to all comment and take the summation of the comment into consideration when making decisions.
5. Remind the public that a scheduled Public Comment period on the agenda is not the only means for providing input. The GO Team should encourage the public to contact them via their APS email addresses. Emails sent to GO Team members about school concerns are also considered public comment. If there are urgent matters that need the GO Team's attention, the Family Engagement & Communication Committee can organize Information Sessions or separate Public Comment meetings to gather that information from stakeholders and share with the full GO Team.

## **APPENDIX F: GO TEAMS– FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is the role of the GO Team?**

The purpose of a GO Team is to provide parents, school staff, and community members with a leadership role in the management of the school. Go Teams operate under the control and management of the Board of Education. The GO Team is responsible for making decisions regarding the strategic direction of the school including:

- a) Approve the school strategic plan and updates
- b) Approve the annual budget recommendations and annual resource allocations
- c) Interface with the schools' Title I Committee (if applicable)
- d) Manage the School-Based Solutions process
- e) Participate in hiring the principal (in the case of a vacancy)
- f) Provide annual feedback (to the Associate Superintendent) on principal performance

GO Teams do not have the authority to:

- a) Hire the employees of the school
- b) Remove the principal from his/her position
- c) Set compensation levels for staff
- d) Set attendance boundaries/zones for students
- e) Discuss or make any decisions regarding individual students or employees.

### **2. Can principals make and/or second motions?**

Principals are not voting members and cannot make or second motions.

### **3. Tell me more about mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse. What is the DFACS contact information? Is the GO Team Child Abuse reporting requirement in effect at all times and in all locations? (for example: if a GO Team member sees a child being abused at Target, while shopping on a Saturday evening, is the GO Team member required to report the abuse?)**

GO Team members are required to report reasonable allegations of child abuse to the principal and the Fulton County Division of Family and Children Services. This requirement is situational and applies only in the context of your role as a GO Team member. The contact for the DFCS intake line is 1-855-422-4453.

APS will provide GO Team members with webinar training on mandatory child abuse reporting. The training takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Completion of the

training is required for all GO Team members who have not already done so in their role as an APS employee or volunteer.

**4. Please explain the different voting requirements. What constitutes a quorum? How many “yes” votes is a majority? How many “yes” votes is a 2/3 majority?**

Each **Elementary and Middle School** GO Team has **9 voting members**: 3 Parents/Guardians, 3 Non-Supervisory Instructional Staff, 2 Community Members and 1 Swing Seat Member. Principals are not voting members.

Each **High School** GO Team has **10 voting members**: 3 Parents/Guardians, 3 Non-Supervisory Instructional Staff, 1 Student, 2 Community Members and 1 Swing Seat Member. Principals are not voting members. Students will vote to approve the school’s Strategic Plan and School-Based Solutions requests.

	<b>Voting Requirement</b>	<b>Possible Actions</b>
<b>Quorum</b>	At least 5 voting members present	Have a meeting
<b>Majority</b>	Any majority of voting members once quorum established. At least:  3 affirmative votes from quorum of 5 voting members; or  4 affirmative votes with presence of 6 or 7 voting members; or  5 affirmative votes with presence of 8 or 9 voting members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approve Strategic Plan</li> <li>○ Approve Budget</li> <li>○ Establish Committees</li> <li>○ Request for School-Based Solutions</li> </ul>
<b>2/3 Majority</b>	6 affirmative votes from all voting members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remove voting GO Team member</li> </ul>

**5. Where can I find more information on the open meetings and open records laws?**

The Georgia Press Association has put together a summary of Georgia’s Open Meetings and Open Records laws and can be found by visiting: [Georgia’s Sunshine Laws](#)

If you have questions about your GO Team processes and following these laws, please contact the School Governance Coordinator at [Noletha.High@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:Noletha.High@atlanta.k12.ga.us) or 404-802-2885.

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