



# Pathways to Chartering:

## Using School Improvement Grant Strategies to become a Georgia Charter School

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*"We will lead the nation in improving student achievement."*

# Outline

Charter School Basics

Types and Variations of Charter Schools

Three SIG Pathways to Chartering

Petition Process & Deadlines, Evaluation Criteria

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# History of the Charter Movement

1983 “A Nation at Risk”



1980s-90s School Reform Movement



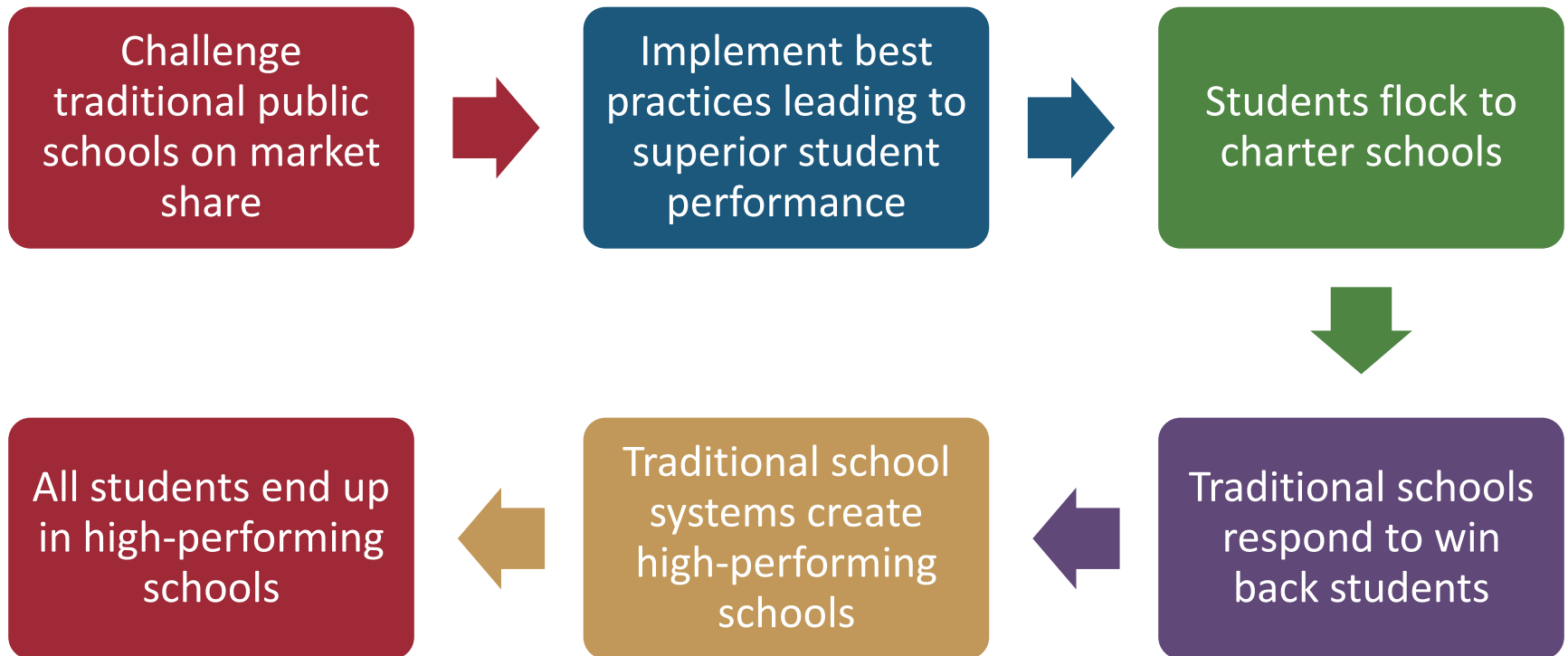
Decentralization



1990s Charter Schools

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# Original goal of charter schools



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# Still the goal of charter schools



All students  
are in high-  
performing  
schools

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# What are charter schools?

They are public schools of choice

They are publicly funded, but organized and governed by a private group of individuals, a private organization, or state and local public entities

They are free from many of the regulations that govern traditional public schools

They involve partnerships with local communities and businesses

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## High student performance

- 100% proficiency before NCLB deadline
  - Zero students in “does not meet”
- Annual growth in % of students in “exceeds”

## High parent satisfaction

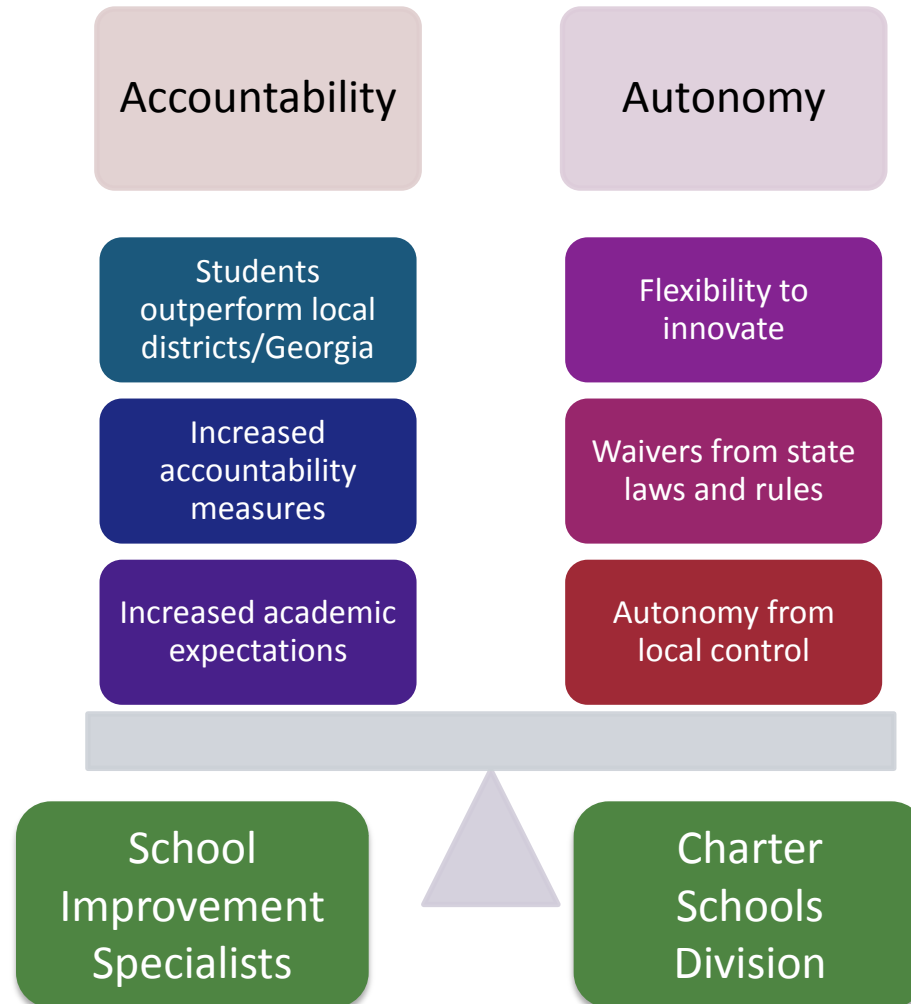
# Components of a High Quality Charter School

## High student retention

## High compliance

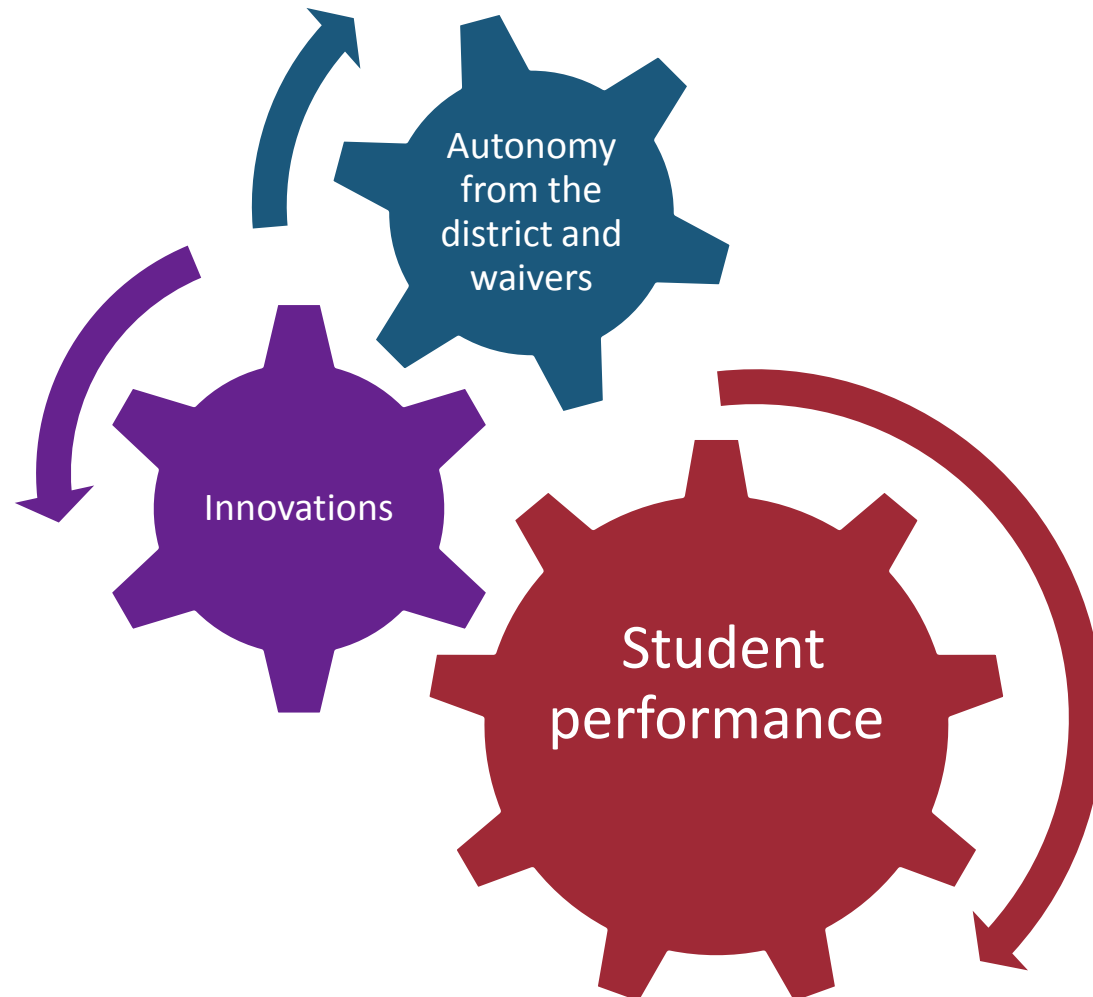
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# THE CHARTERING DEAL FOR SIG CHARTERS



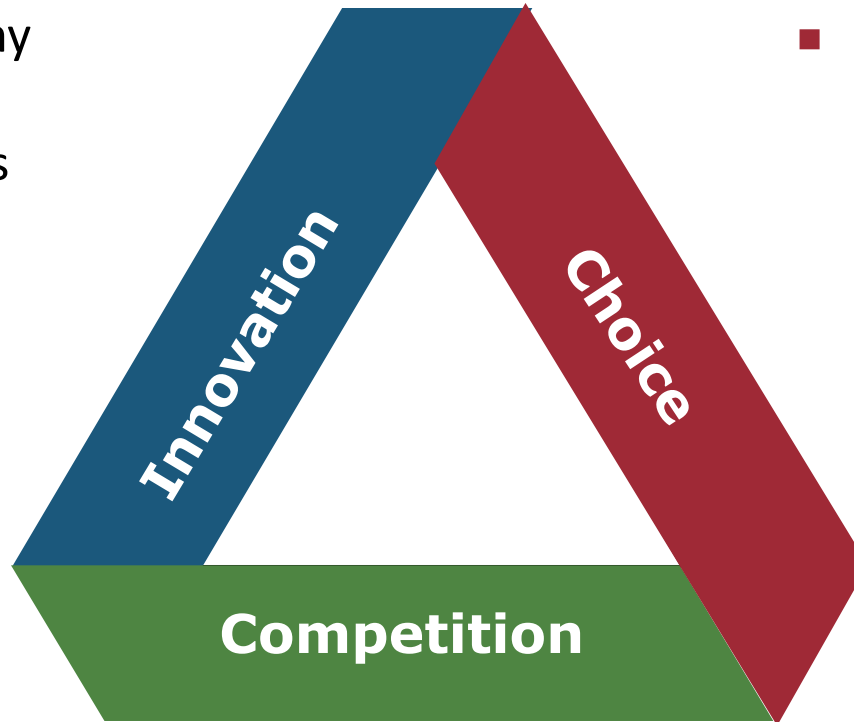


# Must show the following links



# Why charter schools?

- Freedom from many state and district regulations inspires creativity, innovation, and new best practices



- Choices for parents and students
  - Alternatives to failing schools
  - Specific focus or model that provides a better fit for some students

- Provide market competition to district public schools as an incentive for improving schools

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# Charter schools are public schools

They are publicly funded

They must have fair and open enrollment

They cannot charge tuition

They must be secular

They must serve all populations (e.g. English language learners)

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# What is a charter?

A performance-based contract between a charter school board and its authorizer(s)

It sets forth the agreement under which the charter school is governed

Charter schools are held accountable by the state and local boards of education for upholding the stipulations in their charter

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# What is an authorizer?

## Contracts

- An authorizer enters into two- or three-party contracts with a charter school petitioner

## Decision making

- Determines if a petition to start and operate a charter school should be approved
- Determines if existing charter schools should be renewed

## Monitoring

- Conducts ongoing oversight of charter schools to evaluate performance, monitor compliance and enforce contract terms
- Ensures that charter schools practice open enrollment and conduct fair and open enrollment lotteries

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# Georgia Authorizers

## State Board of Education

- Local Boards of Education (once the SBOE authorizes the school)

## Georgia Charter Schools Commission

- State Board of Education may overrule the Commission

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# Local School Board Chartering Roles and Responsibilities

Review and act on local  
charter school petitions

Enforce clear  
expectations for  
performance goals set  
forth in charters

Ensure that charter  
schools comply with  
state and federal  
accountability  
provisions

Provide funds to local  
charter schools on the  
same basis that it  
provides funds to other  
local schools

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# State Board of Education/GaDOE

## Roles & Responsibilities

Review and act on local charter school petitions and state-chartered special school petitions

Technical assistance to local school systems

Technical assistance to petitioners

- Planning, implementation, facilities grants
- Charter petitions
- Petition renewal applications

Strategic plan and policy for the state's charter schools program

Management of federal grants

Annual report to the General Assembly

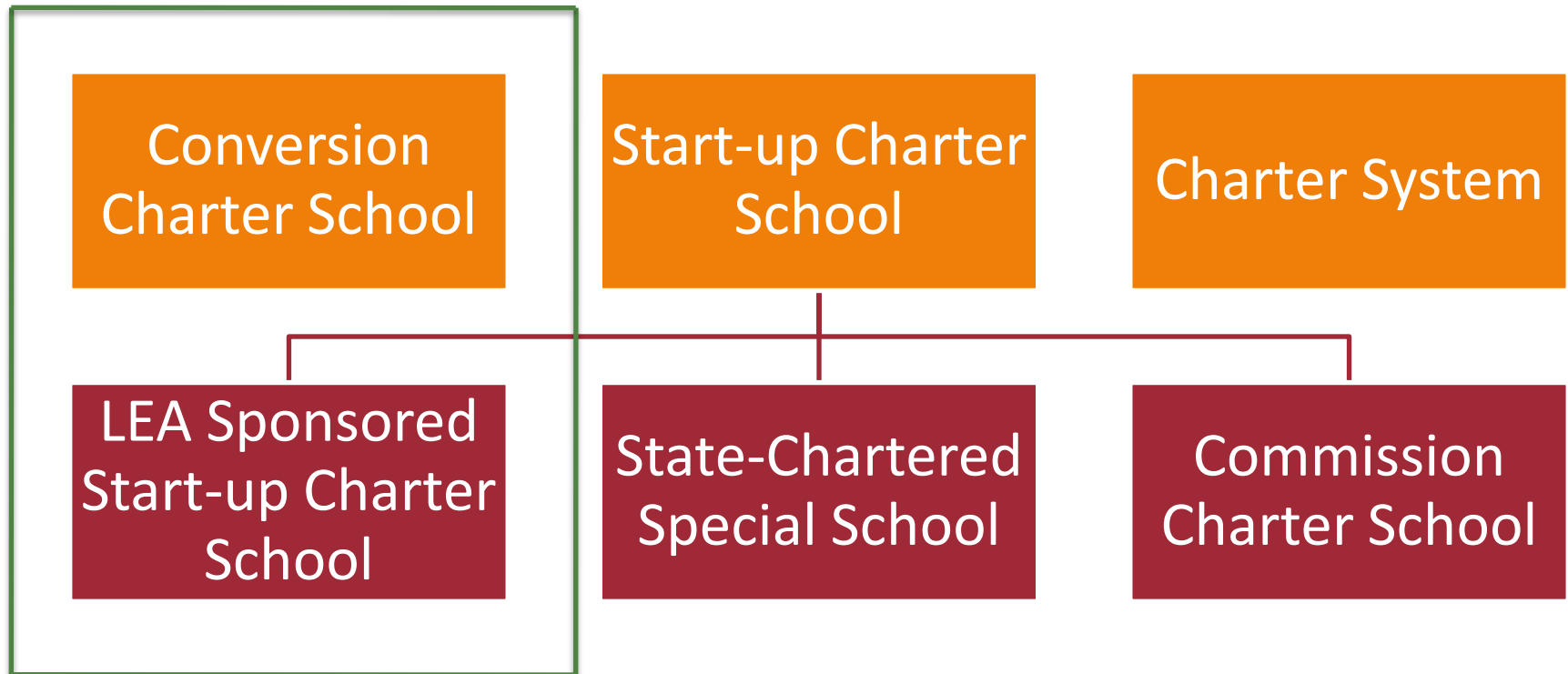
Control and management of state-chartered special schools

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# Types of charter schools

SIG Types of Charter Schools



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# Conversion Charter School

## Definition

- Traditional public school that becomes a charter school
- Gains additional flexibility in exchange for higher levels of accountability

## Facts & Features

- 32 conversion charter schools in Georgia
- Strategy for turning around low performing schools

## Relative Advantages:

- Student population, building, and operational systems and structures are already in place

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# Start-up Charter School

## Definition

- Started by private individuals, private organizations, or state and local public entities

## Facts & Features

- Did not exist prior to the petition
- Most common type of charter school in Georgia

## Relative Advantages

- Opportunity to build school culture from the ground up

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# How can your school benefit from converting to a charter school?

Increased flexibility can lead to innovative teaching and educational opportunities

Increased academic accountability

Turn your school around by changing its culture and operation

Provide parents with choices

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# Chartering Allows Flexibility

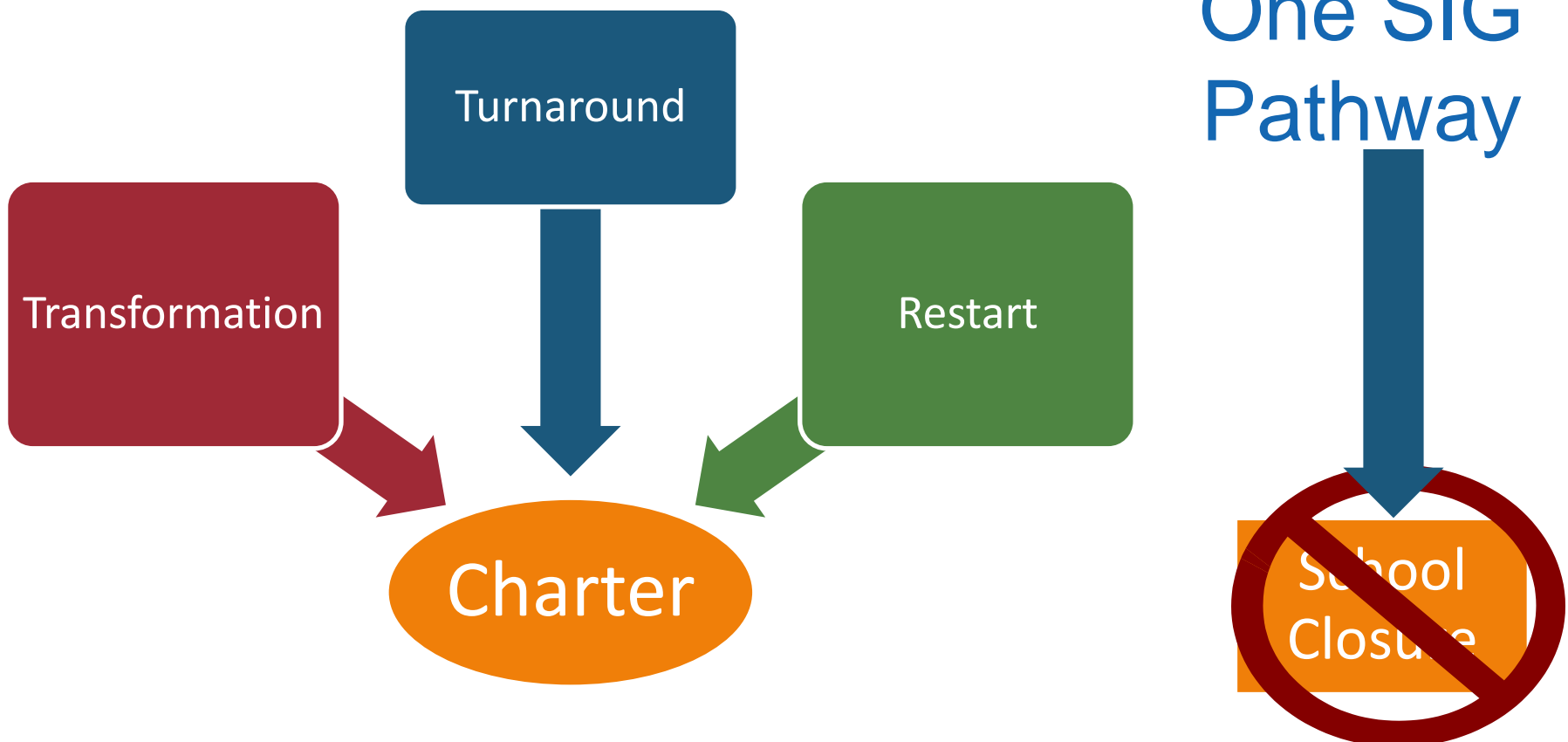
Title 20 waived

State Board Rules waived

Local District Policies waived

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# Three SIG Pathways to Chartering



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# Transformation

## Minimum Requirements

- Replace school leader
- Develop rewards for teacher and leader effectiveness
- Implement comprehensive instruction programs
- Extend time for students and staff
- Offer community-oriented services
- Operational flexibility

## How Charter Complements

- Full flexibility waiver can allow schools to take advantage of greater operational flexibility
  - Seat time waiver
  - School calendars
  - Programmatic waivers (EIP, Gift ed, ESOL)
  - Certification waivers
- Charter = Community Support

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# Turnaround

## Minimum Requirements

- New leadership
- 50% new staff
- New or revised instructional strategies
- Extended school day
- Social services
- Recruit, place, and develop highly effective teachers

## How Charter Complements

- Flexibility in scheduling
  - More professional development
- Flexibility with school day
  - Extended school day and/or year

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# Restart

## Minimum Requirements

- New Leadership
- 50% new staff
- LEA converts the school
- LEA closes and reopens a school under a Charter School Operator
  - Charter Management Organization (CMO)
  - Education Management Organization (EMO)
- LEA holds CMO/EMO accountable to terms of contract

## How Charter Complements

- Successful Charter School Operators
- Charter schools are held accountable to terms of their charter
- Flexibility

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# Restart Example - Mastery Schools

## Background

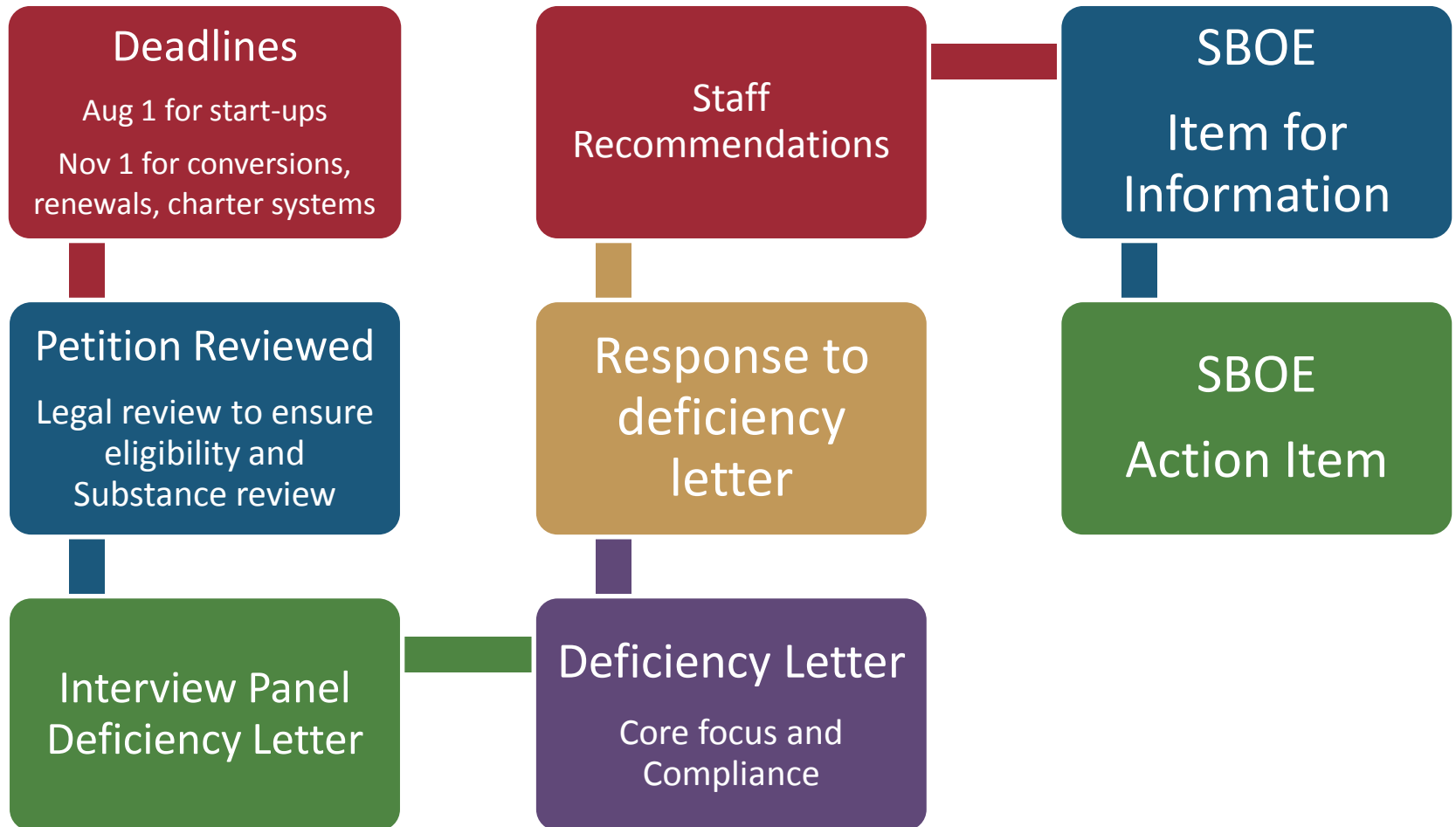
- Philadelphia charter organization
- 'No Excuses' CMO
- Manages 4 schools
- Only converts existing schools

## Success Story

- Pickett Middle School, Philadelphia PA
  - Staff and students signed contracts
  - Student performance improved after one year
    - 45 percent increase in Reading
    - 21 percent increase in Math
  - Violent incidents down 85%

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# Petition Process and Deadlines



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# GaDOE Petition Evaluation

## Legal Compliance

- IDEA
- NCLB
- Georgia Charter School Statute
- SBOE Charter Schools Rule

## Quality

- High academic goals, objectives, and performance measures
- Strength of educational program
- Evidence of innovation
- Governance capacity
- Fiscal feasibility

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# SIG Charter School Monitoring

Grant  
monitoring

Special  
Education

Title I

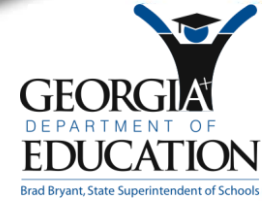
Annual Report

Audits

Accountability

School  
Improvement  
Specialists

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# Questions?

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