

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
 CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM PLANNING GRANT COVER PAGE FOR  
 EXISTING SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Chestnut Mountain Elementary                                       | Hall County  |
| School   | System   |
| 4841 Union Church Road, Flowery Branch, GA 30548                   |  |
| School Address   |  |
| Dr. Sabrina May, Principal   | 770-967-3121   |
| School Contact Person  | Telephone Number of School Contact   |
| <a href="mailto:Sabrina.may@hallco.org">Sabrina.may@hallco.org</a> | <a href="mailto:Betsy.vanausdoll@hallco.org">Betsy.vanausdoll@hallco.org</a> |
| E-Mail of School Contact   | E-Mail of Additional School Contact  |
| K-5  | 750  |
| Grade Levels in the School   | Number of Students Projected when fully Enrolled                             |
| 650  |  |
| Number of students projected in first year of operation            |  |

*If your local board's grant approval policy requires board action, please complete this section. If board action is not required, please note and only the Superintendent's signature is required.*

The signatures below affirm that submission of this application has been approved through official action of the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education at its \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) board meeting.

**Local BOE action not required.**

Dr. Sabrina May  
 Principal or Charter School Representative

7/8/2011

Date

[Signature]

7/8/11

School System Superintendent

Date

Please submit one (1) original and two (2) paper copies and one electronic version (for a total of 4 submitted documents) of your application. Applications should be submitted to:

**Charter Schools Division  
 Georgia Department of Education  
 2053 Twin Towers East  
 205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive**

**Affidavit**

I assure that Chestnut Mountain Creative School of Inquiry is not a

(Applicant)

Home study program or school; a for-profit corporation, a sectarian or religious school; a private for profit school; a private educational institution not established, operated, or governed by the State of Georgia; or an existing private school.

Dr. Sabrina May  
Name of Applicant

July 14, 2011  
Date

Sworn to and subscribed to before me this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July 2011.

Jan Williams  
Signature of Notary Public

7/14/11  
Date

JAN WILLIAMS  
NOTARY PUBLIC, HALL COUNTY, GA  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES OCTOBER 8, 2012



## **Founding and Governing Board**

Chestnut Mountain's Creative School of Inquiry (CSI) will be governed by a Local Governing Board. The role of this Board will be to assist in the development of a comprehensive Charter plan to submit to the State Board of Education in the fall of 2011. Once charter status is granted, the Local Governing Board will monitor the implementation of the charter plan, including school goals. Members will also provide suggestions for school improvements and provide input for the evaluation of the principal. The function of the Local Governing Board will be communicated to the school community through presentations at staff and PTO meetings by the principal. Board members will be trained by central office staff and the principal, ensuring the understanding of their role in managing the charter and guiding school improvement. In addition, the Local Governing Board members may attend the Georgia Charter School Association's Annual Conference to further their understanding of developing a charter school. Although the Local Governing Board has not been established, the ideal Board will consist of seven to nine individuals who are parents, business partners from the school community, and staff members. It is important that the members have certain skills necessary to implement, manage, and monitor the goals of the Charter School. These skills include business savvy, a passion for service in the community, an enthusiasm for 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching strategies, and insight into the current trends and issues in education and the Hall County community. In addition, the teachers who serve on the Board will have expertise in infusing technology into inquiry-based, thematic teaching as well as engaging students in research and developing creative products to demonstrate learning. Two to three members will be parents of students who attend our school, one member will be a business partner, two to three members will be teachers, and one member will be the school bookkeeper, who has knowledge and training in school

finance, and the last member will be the principal. The Board members will work in conjunction with the Hall County Board of Education to ensure the efficient and effective operation of our school. Members will be recruited in various ways, depending on the type of position they hold on the Board and will serve two to three year terms, alternating to ensure consistency of the Board. As members rotate off, new members with the same qualifications will be added keeping a consistent number of Board members throughout the five years of the charter.

The Business Partner who serves will be recruited from the list of current Business Partners, or from new businesses in the community. This member will be a person who is successful in managing a local business, and someone who is passionate about the charter and sensitive to the needs of the community. The Business Partner will serve a three year term.

Of the two parent representatives, one will be a member of the PTO Board. PTO Board members are actively involved in the actions of the school and have a vested interest in the success of the school. All of the current PTO Board members are in support of the school's conversion to charter status, so he/she will bring passion to the success of the charter plan. This member will serve two years. The additional parent representative will be recruited from the large group of parent volunteers who are active at Chestnut Mountain. This person will be someone with a strong interest in developing the charter petition and someone who will present a parent's perspective for the charter plan. This person will serve three years.

Two to three teachers will be chosen by the staff to serve as representatives on the Local Governing Board. These teachers will have expertise in 21<sup>st</sup> Century pedagogy, as well as a strong understanding of inquiry-based instructional practices. They will have experience in using technology to engage their students in research, discovery and creative expression. One or two teachers will serve two years, and one teacher will serve three years.

The school secretary will be a member of the Local Governing Board. The role of this person will be to provide input in budgetary issues, ensure compliance in budget expenditures, and to take minutes at all meetings. This person is trained by the Hall County Board of Education Finance department each year, ensuring state and federal compliance in budget management.

The final member of the Local Governing Board will be the principal of Chestnut Mountain. The principal will provide consistency in the charter development and implementation by serving on the Board all five years of the charter. In addition, the principal will provide vision, leadership and knowledge of the overall school improvement plan to Board members.

The Local Governing Board will be instrumental in the preparation of the charter petition that will be submitted to the State Board of Education by November 1, 2011. The Board will be trained on the curriculum and pedagogy of the CSI pilot classrooms by the principal and pilot teachers, and a review of school data will be conducted. In addition, visits to successful charter schools in Georgia, and attending professional conferences will help Board members gain understanding of implementing a charter school. The Local Governing Board will lead the communication and marketing platform of the conversion, ensuring that parents know and understand the aspects of the charter petition.

It is the belief of our staff, PTO Board and School Council members that the model of curriculum and pedagogy used in the pilot CSI program will increase student achievement at all levels, including making gains with our subgroups. Researchers found remediation of basic skills with a focus on direct instructional teaching methods does not work with struggling students (Chang & Mao, 2001; Shippen, Houchins, Calhoon, Furlow, & Sartor, 2006). Implementation of instructional practices that focus on non-traditional, rigorous curriculum often raise test scores because when teachers hold students accountable to high academic standards, their achievement

improves (Chang & Mao, 2001; McBride & Bonnette, 1995). A rigorous curriculum includes opportunities for students to engage in meaningful experiences that focus on research and inquiry (Dewey, 1938/1991; DeWitt, 2003; Metz, 2004).

Over the past several years, our school has been successful in managing complex tasks. From 2005-2008, we implemented the change from Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) to Standards-based instructional practices; in 2008 we moved to a new location and started a new school community; and in the past two years, we have implemented standards-based grading and reporting. In addition, the implementation of a pilot CSI program this school year was challenging and proved to be very successful. Our biggest challenge will be creating professional learning time for our staff as we implement the pedagogical changes of the charter plan. Many of our professional learning days have been replaced with furlough days due to budget cuts. Yet, training our staff will be crucial to the successful development and implementation of our charter.

### **Local Community**

Chestnut Mountain Elementary School is located in southern Hall County. In the fall of 2008, the school population moved to a new 92,500 square foot facility located at 4841 Union Church Road in Flowery Branch, GA. The local community was involved in the planning of the move to the new facility as well as the move toward a charter petition. In 2008, a Vision Team was established, which consisted of 15 parent representatives from Chestnut Mountain and Spout Springs Elementary schools, eight teachers, and two administrators. The Vision Team worked together to plan the merge of the two school communities. Although we had a successful year forming a new school community, in 2010 our community and staff began to rethink our use of traditional teaching methods due to a growing desire among the parents of Hall County students

to enroll their children in schools with non-traditional approaches to teaching. Through the use of a “Dream a School” activity, the school staff, Parent/Teacher Organization Board, and the School Council identified important components of school curriculum and organization that would best meet the needs of the students in our community. The common themes of the “Dream a School” activity were to provide engaging, inquiry-based instruction through thematic units based on the Georgia Performance Standards, to incorporate strong use of technology, and to provide opportunities for students to be creative in demonstrating their learning.

In the spring of 2010, our School Improvement Team requested approval from the Hall County Board of Education to pilot a program of choice at Chestnut Mountain. We were granted permission to offer this program, which we named the Creative School of Inquiry (CSI), in one third, one fourth, and one fifth grade classroom. Students were accepted into the program through an application process. Due to a high level of student engagement, excitement in learning, and parental endorsement, the program has grown in popularity. The parents in our community have requested we grow the program to include more students and offer it to Kindergarten, first and second grade students.

As excitement for the program grew among the parents, it also grew in popularity among the teachers. During January, 2011 teachers in several grade levels requested that we entertain the idea of becoming a charter school, with this program being the model of instruction in all grade levels. As evidenced by the growing popularity of the nearby World Language Academy which opened in 2008, Martin Technology Academy which opened in 2010, as well as other schools which have recently converted to charter schools in our area, there is both an interest and a need in our community for a charter school to meet the specific academic and creative needs of our students. Chestnut Mountain’s Creative School of Inquiry charter will attract students whose

interests are in the areas of research, creativity and technology. An elementary school of this type does not currently exist in Hall County. While it would be possible to offer CSI as a program of choice at Chestnut Mountain, we feel the development of the Chestnut Mountain's Creative School of Inquiry as a charter school would provide the flexibility we need to implement CSI in all grade levels. In addition, the move to a charter school would allow students to attend our school through lottery, instead of requiring an application. It will be a successful school reform model as we focus on using 21<sup>st</sup> Century pedagogy that will engage all students, not just those who meet current application requirements.

CRCT scores for Chestnut Mountain Elementary students have slowly increased over the past several years. Spring 2010 scores for full academic year students reveal 88.4% passed Reading/ELA, and 78% passed math. Current 2011 scores show 92% passed Reading/ELA and 89.6% passed math. The largest gains were made in the Exceeding category with growth from 26.8% to 35.2% exceeding in Reading/ELA and 28.1% to 49.8% exceeding in Math. Although the school did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) last school year due to the students with disabilities subgroup, gains were made in this subgroup this year giving the school favorable AYP status.

While there were numerous school improvement initiatives which contribute to our current success, we believe it is the implementation of the strategies in the CSI program which helped to move a large percentage of students into the Exceeds category. Examination of the data for CSI students illustrates the success of the students in the pilot program. The third grade class had a mean score of 868 in Reading, 858 in ELA, and 892 in Math, with 85%, 70% and 80% scoring in the Exceeds category respectively. Fourth grade CSI students had mean scores of 853 in Reading, 846 in ELA, and 860 in Mathematics with 58%, 38% and 81% scoring in the

Exceeds category respectively. Fifth grade CSI students had mean scores of 859 in Reading, 851 in ELA, and 864 in Math with 78%, 56% and 70% scoring in the Exceeds category respectively. These percentages exceed the state average for CRCT scores.

The pedagogy used in the CSI program engaged students in work that was based on the Georgia Performance Standards. They had experiences which allowed them to develop questions based on their interest, research and discover answers to their questions, and creatively show what they learned. Students gained a strong understanding of the GPS and were excited about learning. In addition, they were engaged in 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning through the use of technology. All of these factors contributed to the success of the pilot classes.

### **School Concept**

The curriculum design for Chestnut Mountain's Creative School of Inquiry engages students in 21st Century learning through the use of a non-traditional pedagogy. It is based upon research in the fields of inquiry-based instruction (Dewey, 1902/2001; 1938/1991); guiding creativity (E. Paul Torrence, 1977) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum (Jacobs, 2010). Teachers use the Georgia Performance Standards to develop thematic, inquiry-based units of study which guide students to develop *questions; research and discover* answers to their questions, then *creatively* demonstrate what they have learned. Technology is deeply embedded in the instructional practices as well as student research, and products created by the students. Students use Web 2.0 tools (such as Glogster, Creaza, and Animoto) to assist them in presenting what they have learned to authentic audiences.

A review of research in the areas of inquiry-based instruction, developing creativity, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century pedagogy was conducted as the curriculum and pedagogy model for CSI was developed. Inquiry-based curriculum provides opportunities for students to ask questions about

something of interest and time to explore answers (Chang & Mao, 2001; Dewey, 1902/2001, DeWitt, 2003; IBO, 2002; Wilson & Murdock, 2004). Students explore new ideas and creatively investigate problems with more than one possible solution (Dewey, 1938/1997; DeWitt, 2003; Haefner & Zembal-Saul, 2004, Torrance, 1977). Inquiry involves learning through experiences. Instead of teachers imparting knowledge, they create experiences for students to achieve understanding (Joseph, Mikel & Windschitel, 2002; Kliebard, 1986; Schon, 1983; Smyth, 2000). Inquiry involves students working cooperatively in pairs or small groups. They share with others what they are thinking and how they approach their questions (Aubrecht, 2005; Chang & Mao, 2001; Haefner & Zembal-Saul, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). There is time for students to reflect as they consider answers to their questions and make decisions about what to do or what to believe (Ennis, 1993; Hudgins & Edelman, 1988). Students know and understand the purpose for learning (Wehlage, Newmann & Secada, 1996). Students learn where to find information, how to analyze it, and apply it to real situations. They learn to communicate their knowledge and take action beyond the classroom or the school building (DeWitt, 2003; Wehlage, Newmann & Secada, 1996). This skill is also an important part of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning (Jacobs, 2010).

The students we teach are inundated with information; therefore information literacy is a vital component of the CSI curriculum. Students are more engaged when technology is used by the teacher, and when students are given opportunities to use technology for research and creating products to show their understanding (Jacobs, 2010; Owens, Hester & Teale, 2002). Creativity is an important component of the CSI program. A recent IBM poll of 1500 CEO's identified creativity as the number one "leadership competency" of the future (IBM News, 2010). In the CSI curriculum model, students use creativity to demonstrate understanding of the standards. Beghetto (2004), Torrance (1977), Vygotsky (1978) believe opportunities for inquiry

develop creativity. In addition, the use of technology and creativity in the classroom is supported by the most recent Horizon Report (Johnson, Adams & Haywood, 2011).

Although inquiry-based curriculum is typically used with gifted program students, research supports the use of inquiry with all students. Owens, Hester & Teale (2002) found using inquiry with students who have disabilities show higher levels of engagement and improvement in student achievement. Benefits include increased student engagement, and the development of a deeper understanding of what students are learning (Godbey, Barnett & Webster, 2005; Owens, Hester & Teale, 2002; Miller, 2003). In addition, students learn to ask better questions and they stay interested in what they are learning which increases on-task behavior (Godbey, Barnett & Webster, 2005; Haefner & Zembal-Saul, 2004).

Chestnut Mountain's Creative School of Inquiry will serve Kindergarten through fifth grade students who live in Hall County. Students will be recruited via our website, printed brochures, signs, and community meetings. Students will be accepted through a lottery, based on the amount of space available in each grade level. The first year of the charter, approximately 650 K-5 students will be accepted; increasing each year until 750 students attend by the end of the charter. The charter will seek flexibility in class size; instructional delivery, and enrollment by lottery for students living outside of the Chestnut Mountain attendance zone.

### **Operations**

Our vision for successful implementation of our charter includes the development of the Local Governing Board and marketing to our school community for their continued involvement and support of the charter. The most important part of the implementation process will be training for the staff and school community. The development of the Local Governing Board was outlined in detail in the first part of this application. The Local Governing Board members will

visit current charter schools that have been successful in charter school conversion and may attend the Georgia Charter School Association's Annual Conference. Marketing the charter to the school community will include community informational meetings, and printed brochures/materials. This will be on-going throughout the five years of the charter.

Training sessions for the staff will be vital to the success of the charter. During the first five years of the charter, at least 10% of the staff will obtain Gifted Endorsement as this includes teaching strategies for inquiry-based curriculum. In addition, all staff members will attend trainings sessions each year on inquiry-based curriculum, developing creativity and incorporating technology into teaching and student productivity. Experts in the fields of inquiry, creativity and technology will provide additional training for the staff members. A committee of teachers and the Local Governing Board will attend professional conferences such as the Georgia Technology Conference and/or the Georgia Charter Schools Association's Annual Conference, and return to share what they have learned with the staff. Staff will also be provided release time to develop the charter petition, and create inquiry-based curriculum units.

We will ensure that our charter remains in compliance with both State and Federal laws and regulations by following the guidelines we already have in place as a Georgia public school. Our Local Governing Board will work collaboratively with the Hall County Board of Education to ensure compliance in programs offered to all of our students, including Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners and Early Intervention Program students. If awarded a charter study grant, Chestnut Mountain Elementary School will remain in compliance with both State and Federal laws and regulations in spending charter grant funds. The Local Governing Board will follow the approved budget, and ensure compliance of all laws and regulations outlined in the Charter schools planning grant.

## **Budget Narrative**

The primary purpose of our planning grant is to be able to provide professional learning for our Local Governing Board and our staff members. The majority of the budget plan includes expenditures for substitutes, travel, and professional conference registration fees. Substitutes will provide release time for teachers to visit successful charter schools in Georgia, and to attend professional conferences such as the Georgia Educational Technology Conference, and the Georgia Charter Schools Association's Conference. The remainder of the budget expenses will be used for the membership fee to join the Georgia Charter Schools Association and for marketing to our community.

- Professional Learning **\$7000**

Professional learning for the Local Governing Board members and the staff is crucial to the development of the charter petition, and the success of the charter. The Local Governing Board and staff members will visit charter schools in Georgia who have successfully converted from a traditional public school to charter school. We will search out schools that are currently using inquiry-based instruction, creativity, and/or technology in instructional practices. In addition, a committee of staff members and Local Governing Board members will attend the Georgia Technology Conference and/or the Georgia Charter Schools Association's Annual Conference. Travel funds (\$3000) will be used for reimbursement as outlined by the State travel guidelines. Expenditures from this account will be used to provide substitutes (\$3000) for staff members who visit Georgia charter schools and/or attend professional conferences. Substitutes will also be needed for teachers to collaboratively write the charter petition and plan curriculum units during this planning year. The funds in this

section of the budget may be used for consultants in the field of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, through *Curriculum 21* (\$1000).

- Consultant Services and Marketing Support **\$1000**

If awarded the grant, we will join the Georgia Charter School Association. The GCSA will provide support to us as we develop the charter petition (\$500). Marketing expenses will include the printing and distribution of materials to provide information to our school community about our charter petition (\$500).

**Total** **\$8000**

Indicate one: Original Budget  X  
 Budget Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_

**Georgia Department of Education  
 Charter School Planning Grants  
 State! FUNDS ONLY**

School: Chestnut Mountain Elementary School  
 Name: Dr. Sabrina May, Principal  
 School System: Hall County

State Funds - FY 12  
 \$ 8,000.00

Please note that applicants need to complete a separate summary budget schedule for each year of the grant.

Amount and Source of Funds

Summary Budget Schedule

Grant Period Covered: July 1, 2011 - May 30, 2012

| FUNCTION CODE | Descriptions                            | OBJECT CLASS                       |                         |                                       |                                   |                                |                |                             |         |         |         | TOTAL   |         |         |                |
|---------------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
|               |   | (100) Personal Services - Salaries | (200) Employee Benefits | (300) Professional Purchased Services | (400) Purchased Property Services | (500) Other Purchased Services | (600) Supplies | (XXX) Other (Attach Detail) |         |         |         |         |         |         |                |
| 1000          | Instruction                             | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2100          | Pupil Services                          | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2210          | Improvement Instructional Services      | \$2,785                            | \$215                   | \$1,000                               | \$0                               | \$825                          | \$0            | \$2,175                     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$7,000        |
| 2220          | Educational Media Services              | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2300          | General Administration                  | xxxxxxx                            | xxxxxxx                 | xxxxxxx                               | xxxxxxx                           | xxxxxxx                        | xxxxxxx        | xxxxxxx                     | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx        |
| 2400          | School Administration                   | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2500          | Support Services - Business             | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2600          | Maintenance and Operation of Plant      | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2700          | Student Transportation                  | xxxxxxx                            | xxxxxxx                 | xxxxxxx                               | xxxxxxx                           | xxxxxxx                        | xxxxxxx        | xxxxxxx                     | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx        |
| 2800          | Support Services - Central              | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 2900          | Other Support Services                  | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 3000          | Operation of Non-Instructional Services | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
| 3100          | School Nutrition Program                | xxxxxxx                            | xxxxxxx                 | xxxxxxx                               | xxxxxxx                           | xxxxxxx                        | xxxxxxx        | xxxxxxx                     | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx | xxxxxxx        |
| XXXX          | Other (Attach Detail)                   | \$0                                | \$0                     | \$0                                   | \$0                               | \$0                            | \$0            | \$0                         | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0            |
|               | <b>TOTAL</b>                            | \$2,785                            | \$215                   | \$1,000                               | \$0                               | \$825                          | \$0            | \$2,175                     | \$500   | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | \$0     | <b>\$8,000</b> |

\*Budget in Whole Dollars - No Cents

This proposed budget has been prepared in accordance with all applicable state and/or federal laws and regulations and the procedures of the Georgia Department of Education.

Signature of School Official: *Dr. Sabrina May*

Date: 7/8/2011

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ga. Dept. of Ed. Program Office

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Authorizer: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ga. Dept. of Ed. Grants Accounting

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Budget Detail: Function Code 2210 - Imp. of Instructional Svces

System Name Dr. Sabrina May, Principal  
System Code Hall County

| Object Class |                                 | Item Description                 | Costs    |              |
|--------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| 100          | Salaries                        | Substitutes                      | \$ 2,785 |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ 2,785     |
| 200          | Benefits                        | Substitutes (FICA&Medicare)      | \$ 215   |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ 215       |
| 300          | Professional Purchased Services | Professional Learning Consultant | \$ 1,000 |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ 1,000     |
| 400          | Purchased Property Services     |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ -         |
| 500          | Other Purchased Services        | Travel                           | \$ 825   |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ 825       |
| 600          | Supplies                        |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ -         |
| XXX          | Other                           | Conferece fees                   | \$ 2,175 |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          |              |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | Object Total |
|              |                                 |                                  |          | \$ 2,175     |

Function Total \$ 7,000

Budget Detail: Function Code 2500 - Support Svces.-Business

System Name Dr. Sabrina May, P  
System Code Hall County

| Object Class | Item Description                      | Costs                                      |              |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| 100          | Salaries                              |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ -         |
| 200          | Benefits                              |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ -         |
| 300          | Professional<br>Purchased<br>Services |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ -         |
| 400          | Purchased<br>Property<br>Services     |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ -         |
| 500          | Other<br>Purchased<br>Services        |  | \$ -         |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ -         |
| 600          | Supplies                              | Marketing                                  | \$ 500       |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ 500       |
| XXX          | Other                                 | Membership fee (GA Charter Schools Assoc.) | \$ 500       |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  |              |
|              |                                       |  | Object Total |
|              |                                       |  | \$ 500       |

Function Total \$ 1,000

July 12, 2011

Charter Schools Division  
Georgia Department of Education  
2053 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Sirs and Madams:

I am writing on behalf of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at Chestnut Mountain Elementary School in Hall County, Georgia, in support of their application to become a Creative School of Inquiry charter school. Over the past year, the PTO has been involved in discussions and seeing firsthand how the school would operate through the pilot program of CSI and the Evidence of Learning Events. Our CSI children have grown through this experience and we, as parents have come to a great appreciation of the importance of involving the students in more research based learning. During the Evidence of Learning nights, parents have seen the work that was produced by the students in the pilot program. Students displayed their work and creativity through various projects based on the thematic units from the Georgia Performance Standards.

We have worked with Dr. Sabrina May, Principal, and the leadership team at Chestnut Mountain as they have developed the concept of a Creative School of Inquiry. We know that teachers are already at work planning instructional strategies and organizing the frameworks for creative inquiry. We are aware of the community involvement and partnerships that have been formed and we feel that our stakeholders have been involved in this process.

Chestnut Mountain has a strong history in the community with many parents that were past alumni. We have many students that are new to our community from various and diverse cultural backgrounds and about a third are from economically disadvantaged families. We feel all of our students can learn from inquiry based instruction and the opportunity to creatively display their learning. Research has shown that not all students learn the same way. This program allows students more flexibility in their learning process. We also know that our feeder middle and high schools require more collaborative based research and presentations. Our fifth graders will go into middle school with a greater advantage having had the CSI experience.

The PTO at Chestnut Mountain Elementary School fully supports the development of a Creative School of Inquiry charter at Chestnut Mountain, and we are in full support of the application for a planning grant.

Sincerely,



Tanya Schwab  
PTO President, Chestnut Mountain Elementary

## **Assurances**

If awarded a Charter Study grant, Chestnut Mountain Elementary School agrees to spend the grant funds on allowable expenses. Our plans are to use the funds for professional learning by visiting charter schools in Georgia who have successfully converted from traditional schools. In addition, we will send a team of staff members to the Georgia Technology Conference held in November. We will use the funds to hire substitutes for teachers visiting Georgia charter schools and attending the technology conference. We will consult with curriculum experts in the field of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning through live video conferencing and webinars to provide professional learning in curriculum development. We may consult with a consultant, Pioneer RESA, or the Georgia Charter Schools Association to provide guidance and legal services for the development of the charter petition. In addition, it is our intention to continue to educate our community through an extensive marketing campaign to involve our community and all stakeholders in the charter petition process. We will hold community meetings and informational sessions, as well as develop brochures and other marketing materials.

It is our full intention to submit a charter petition by November 1, 2011. We have already piloted our CSI model in three classrooms, and will continue to develop the model and the logistics of using this model throughout the school. The Hall County School System is willing to submit to a full review by the Georgia Department of Education's Office of Financial Review. Hall County is audited annually by the Division of Audits, and our school's financial expenditures will continue to be monitored closely by the system's Office of Accounting to ensure all funds, including those in this grant, are spent properly.

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