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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Greene County BOE holds Special Called Meeting on House Bill 1209 *Board votes to submit letter of intent for IE2 to the GaDOE*

February 20, 2015 - The Greene County Board of Education voted unanimously last night (February 19) to submit a letter of intent for Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2) to the State Board of Education. Under House Bill 1209 (2008), all school systems in the state of Georgia must notify the Department of Education of its operational intent by June 30, 2015. School districts can choose to operate as a Status Quo district, IE2 district, or Charter System.

A status quo school is very similar to the existing public school. Status quo systems and schools must meet all federal and state accountability measures, and can only apply for state waivers due to dire emergency. Unlike status quo schools, charter schools receive flexibility from certain state and local rules in exchange for a higher degree of accountability for raising student achievement. A charter system also provides the opportunity for teachers, administrators, parents and local school boards to have greater flexibility to determine the educational needs of students within their district and requires school level governance. IE2 districts must enter into multi-year contracts with the State BOE based on strategic plans developed in partnership with the GaDOE and Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). Such plans must identify specific school-level student achievement goals that are in addition to current federal accountability requirements.

After attending a presentation on IE2 in December, Arlie Collins, Greene County Board of Education Chairman, said the BOE believes that IE2 would be a good fit for Greene County. Referring to Rabun County Schools, Chairman Collins said the two districts are very similar, and that Rabun County was one of the first school districts to select the IE2 option.

Prior to the vote, Superintendent Philip Mellor presented information on system flexibility followed by the BOE answering questions from the public. More than 100 people attended the Special Called Meeting that was held in the theater at Greene County High School.

“I was encouraged by the community support and participation,” said Superintendent Mellor. “The questions from the audience showed a sincere interest in the process and a desire for input and collaboration between the community and the school district.”

Over the next six to 12 months, the BOE must enter into a performance contract, or agreement, with the GaDOE before it can begin operating as an IE2 district. Schools that will fall under the performance contract are Greensboro Elementary School, Carson Middle School and Greene County High School. Union Point STEAM Academy and Lake Oconee Academy are both charter schools, and contracts are already in place between the local school board and State BOE. Once each school’s charter contract ends, the local school board can either enter into another charter agreement with the State BOE or it can amend its IE2 contract to include Union Point STEAM Academy and Lake Oconee Academy.

According to Superintendent Mellor, the district has several steps to focus on over the next few months.

“Some of our next steps we will be gathering information about how other systems have moved forward and working with our stakeholders in the development of our contract; answering the eight questions which are required parts of the application,” said Superintendent Mellor.

Currently, Cobb County, Forsyth County, Gwinnett County and Rabun County have been approved as IE2 school districts. Of the 180 school districts in the state, more than half have submitted their letter of intent to the GaDOE.

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