

New School Leader Fellowship 2026-27

Thank you for your interest in the Georgia Strategic Charter School Growth Initiative! The initiative, led by the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia, seeks to expand charter school opportunities for Georgia's children.

The Charter Growth Initiative's New School Leader Fellowship program will include intensive support in a cohort setting for new school leaders during their pre-opening year. Led by a Georgia charter school founder and school leader, participants will gain the knowledge and guidance to plan for a successful first year in both academics and operations.

This opportunity is funded by the State Charter School Commission of Georgia's FY2022 CSP SE Grant. All current Georgia charter schools that have an approved charter contract and are planning to open Fall 2027 are encouraged to apply.

2026-27 Timeline

August 20	Applications due at 12:00 p.m. noon ET (via email)
August 31 – September 2	Applicant interviews
By September 4	Fellows selected and notified
Week of September 7	Fellowship kick-off
September – July	Program activities – expect 10+ hours/week of engagement plus school assignments. Services provided by Lead with Excellence.

Selection Criteria

Participants for this cohort program will be selected through a competitive process. Applications will be reviewed by representatives from the SCSC. The application review team reserves the right to schedule an interview with prospective applicants to assess their readiness to participate in the cohort.

To be eligible, applicants must have an approved charter contract and remain in good standing with their existing charter school authorizer. Charter schools may be authorized by a local school board or the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia.

Applications will be rated on the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to community need – Applicants planning to locate in one of the SCSC's geographic priority areas will be given priority for this cohort program. Applicants proposing to locate in an area of high charter school concentration must demonstrate strong community need for the unique model proposed.
- Learning mindset – Applicants should express their willingness to engage in open, transparent conversations with technical assistance providers and to welcome feedback with an open mind. Consideration may be given to applicants' access to other fellowship/leadership development programs.
- Commitment – During the cohort program, applicants must demonstrate their willingness to devote at least 10 hours per week to meetings, convenings, and "homework." During the cohort program, applicants

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must designate a primary contact who will be responsible for attending in-person convenings, traveling to other schools, and communicating with technical assistance providers. Participants should be prepared to participate in activities as determined by Lead with Excellence.

Submission Details

Please submit applications for the New School Leader Fellowship by 12:00 noon ET on Monday, August 17, 2026. Applications must be submitted via email to molly.gassman@scsc.georgia.gov. Application submissions will be stored in Epicenter

Contact

Please direct any questions about this opportunity to molly.gassman@scsc.georgia.gov.

New School Leader Fellowship Program Application

Feel free to submit responses using the text boxes below. Applicants are also welcome to submit a separate document for their longer responses.

1. General Information

Primary Participant Name

Primary Participant Role

Primary Participant Email

Additional Participants (if any)

What grades does the school plan to serve when fully enrolled?

2. Introduction

Tell us about your school/organization. Describe your school's purpose and core vision, instructional model, leadership structure, the need in the community it serves, and community demand for the school.

3. Target Area

Describe the geographic areas or communities that you are targeting for the school. This description should include some of the demographics of the target community, specific community needs and resources, and the need in the area for a high-quality charter school. Please also describe why you selected this area to target for your school.

4. Statement of Interest

How will this experience help bring your vision into existence? Please include 2-3 current or anticipated challenges and how you would work through them in this cohort to realize the vision you have described.

5. Other Assistance

List any other fellowships or technical assistance programs you or your school have participated in/will participate in during the pre-opening year.

Program Participant Commitment & Assurances

The Board Chair is required to sign this form and include it as an attachment to your application.

Our organization is applying to participate in the Georgia Strategic Charter School Growth Initiative New School Leader Fellowship Program, which begins September 2026 and concludes July 2027. This selective experience is intended to help charter school leaders develop their capacity as they plan to open a high-quality charter school.

By signing this form, I am assuring:

- The school/organization has an approved charter contract and is preparing to begin operations in Fall 2027.
- The school/organization has a chief-level leader who, from September 2026 – July 2027, is prepared to commit to:
 - Dedicating approximately 40 hours per month to the New School Leader Fellowship;
 - Leading internal 1:1 and team conversations about school opening-related topics;
 - Completing structured pre-work documents to prepare for advisory calls, meetings, and activities; and
 - Participating in weekly or bi-weekly advisory calls, meetings, and activities as determined by Lead with Excellence.
- The school/organization will engage stakeholders actively in this process as needed for the organization, including at least one board member.
- The school/organization will actively collaborate and contribute to the cohort and all of its members as part of a community of practice.

By signing this form, I am further assuring the following:

- I endorse our organization's participation and time investment in the New School Leader Fellowship as an organizational priority.
- I understand the time commitment required and will support leadership's investment in this initiative while also performing the important day-to-day responsibilities of the pre-opening process.
- I am willing to participate in a launch interview and serve as a point person for leadership through this process, OR I have identified another board member who will serve in this role. Name, phone number, and email address of designated board member:

Board Chair Signature

Board Chair Name

Board Chair Email Address

Board Chair Signature

Date