Mission and Goals

The mission of THINC. is “to produce work-savvy graduates in an expert-based charter academy using a down-to-business approach to education with authentic hands-on curriculum, extending learning beyond the traditional classroom and propelled by sustained community support.”

THINC.’s Academic and Organizational goals, as stated in the charter contract with the State Board of Education, are as follows:

Academic Goals

Goal 1: During each year of its first five-year charter term, the Charter School shall “beat the odds” as determined by a formula measuring expected student growth. The Beating the Odds analysis is a cross-sectional, fixed effects regression model that uses the following factors from the CCRPI school-level dataset, GaDOE student record file, and GaDOE CPI data.

Student-based Factors:
- % African American
- % Hispanic
- % White
- % Other
- % Free/Reduced Lunch
- % Students with Disabilities
- % English Learners
- % Gifted

School-based Factors:
- School Size (FTE)
- Student/Teacher Ratio
- School Configuration/CCRPI Score Type (i.e. Elementary, Middle, High)
- Locale Type (i.e. City, Town, Rural)
- District Performance (fixed effect)

Goal 2: The Charter School will demonstrate proficiency and/or improvement on the CCRPI.

Measure 1: For new start-up charter schools first opening in 2014 or later, using Year 1 of the charter term to establish a CCRPI baseline, the Charter School’s CCRPI score shall be equal to or better than both the State and local district in Year 2, and better than both the State and local district in Years 3-5 of the charter contract.

Measure 2: If the school’s first-year CCRPI score is lower than either or both the local district and the State, the school shall have until the end of Year 2 of the charter term to close the gap between the Charter School and whichever score is higher, the local district or the State.
Measure 3: In Years 3-5 of the charter term, the Charter School’s CCRPI score shall be better than both the State and the local district.

**Goal 3: From the baseline developed in year 1, the Charter School will increase the number of students successfully earning dual-enrollment credit from a college partner.**
- Measure 1: The number of students passing the Compass or ASSET test demonstrating program readiness will increase 10% per year.
- Measure 2: The number of students earning post-secondary credit through dual enrollment will increase 10% per year.

**Organizational Goals**

**Goal 1: The Charter School will be economically sustainable.**
- Measure 1: Each year, the Charter Schools will operate in a fiscally sound manner as measured by an external audit that is submitted on time to the Department.
- Measure 2: Actual and proposed budgets for each school year will demonstrate effective allocation of resources.
- Measure 3: Yearly balance sheets will demonstrate that the Charter School maintains adequate cash reserves.
- Measure 4: The Charter School will meet all Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) as demonstrated by external, annual audit reports.
- Measure 5: The Charter School will meet all financial reporting deadlines set by the Department.

**Goal 2: The Charter School shall ensure all Governing Board Members receive effective training.**
- Measure: All Governing Board members shall participate in training at least annually.

**Goal 3: The Charter School shall promote a positive school experience that engages students, parents and teachers.**
- Measure 1: According to data reported by the Charter School, in each year of the charter, the percentage of students absent 15 days or more shall not exceed 10% and shall improve by 2 percentage points until the percentage of students absent 15 days or more is below 5%.
- Measure 2: Each year, 90% of parents will indicate that they are at least “satisfied” with the overall quality of their child’s education as measured via an annual survey conducted at the conclusion of the school year, in which the options are very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. The survey response rate will be at least 85% of parents surveyed.
- Measure 3: Each year, 90% of teachers will indicate that they are at least “satisfied” with the overall quality of their job as measured via an annual survey conducted at the conclusion of the school year, in which the options are very unsatisfied, unsatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. The survey response rate will be at least 85% of teachers surveyed.

**Need**

THINC.’s founding Steering Committee formed a Needs Assessment Working Group that conducted an online needs assessment survey. 118 respondents completed the needs assessment from March 25 – May 16, 2013. The results of that assessment were published on June 2, 2013, and the report’s conclusions were used to complete our charter petition in July 2013 and our GCCAP grant application in September 2013. More than half of the local workforce was represented by the responses, which broke down as follows:

- Large companies responding (200+ employees): 22
- Medium companies responding (16-200 employees): 42
• Small companies responding (1-15 employees): 41
• Number of respondents not reporting size: 13
• **Total employment reported by all respondents: 17,207**
• Regional civilian labor force (per Georgia Department of Labor): 34,162
• **Percentage of local workforce represented by respondents: 50.4%**
• Minimum new hires per year by respondents in all jobs: 1,656
• Average annual new hires per respondent: 14
• Average turnover rate: less than 10%
• Potential number of employees turning over annually: approximately 1,700
• Total annual training budgets of responding firms: $7,293,401
• Average annual training budget of responding firms: $61,808
• **Major job titles specified by respondents: 115**
• Employees currently employed in jobs that a Troup County CCA can impact: 6,748
• Minimum new hires within five years that a Troup County CCA can impact: 3,845
• **Maximum estimated employment impact of a Troup County CCA in five years (estimated turnover + projected new hires): 12,345**

Other significant findings:
• Nearly half of respondents (46%) plan to expand their workforce within five years.
• 100% of needed jobs can be filled by employees trained at some level by the partners in Troup County collaborating to run a college and career academy.

The top five (5) employment sectors represented included:
• Manufacturing
• Healthcare
• Education (secondary and post-secondary)
• Utilities
• Service

Based on survey results from our local industry, regional business and occupational trend data for the State of Georgia, the Steering Committee concluded that our region, at a minimum, has a need for course offerings and career pathways in the areas of:
• Health Science: Therapeutic Services—Nursing, Diagnostic Services—Medical Lab
• Manufacturing: Mechatronics, Manufacturing
• STEM: Engineering, Drafting & Design; Engineering & Technology; Electronics
• Energy: Energy Systems
• Business: International Business, Small Business Development
• Marketing: Marketing & Management, Fashion Merchandising & Buying, Marketing Communications & Promotion

*The needs assessment report’s recommendations are being used to finalize THINC.’s course offerings for the charter term (see College and Career Focus below).*

**Partnerships**

THINC. is working with its permanent Board (see Governance below) to reach out and include as many local stakeholders as possible. Our partnership is a joint venture between the community, K-12 education, postsecondary education, business and industry as represented by the Troup County School System, West
Georgia Technical College, LaGrange College, Point University, the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce, the Troup County Development Authority, the Troup County Center for Strategic Planning, and the parents and students of Troup County.

**Our partners also include – at a minimum – the 118 employers who responded to our needs assessment. These partners employ more than 17,000 workers, or more than 50% of Troup County’s workforce.**

In the last few months, the Board has overseen the refinement of our educational program course offerings, hired our CEO and Director of High School Programs, helped solidify plans for enrollment, and supported plans for our school opening in August.

**Budget**

THINC. is the only CCA partnership in Georgia history to start with a multi-million dollar private sector commitment (made possible by KIA through its bond deal with the Troup County Board of Commissioners). In total, $3 million will flow to THINC. in its first five years from KIA alone, and THINC. is pursuing other private-sector grants to create an endowment.

THINC. will access its GCCAP grant funding, per the TCSG GCCAP Memorandum of Understanding just signed this month. The cash portion has been transferred to the fiscal agent (Troup County Schools), and THINC.is using bond funds to reimburse expenditures for design and the first major phase of our facility renovation. THINC. will formally file for 501(c)(3) tax exempts status and will begin securing donated private assets to enhance the impact of our public funds from the grant. In the balance of Year One (which begins in July 2014), the CEO and Board will also begin following up with the partners who signed and submitted 10-year Letters of Commitment in support of the GCCAP grant application. Many of those letters documented annual cash and in-kind contributions (mostly in-kind) that will add tremendous value to the partnership. The CEO and Board of Directors of THINC. will manage all private assets directly.

The partnership will operate under the public budgets submitted with the charter and grant applications last year, in which state QBE K-12 dollars “follow the child” for each enrolled student.

THINC. is overseeing the renovation of a portion of the LaGrange Campus of West Georgia Technical College to become our headquarters. WGTC will continue to own and maintain the 50,000 square-foot renovated space per the GCCAP MOU, and also through other agreements being developed with THINC., Troup County Schools and WGTC regarding joint funding and operations.

**Governance and Leadership**

The Board of Directors of THINC. (see membership below) meets every second and fourth Tuesday at 3pm at Columbus Bank and Trust (CB&T) in LaGrange. The most recent meeting was on June 24, 2014. All meetings are open to the public, and the Board follows Georgia’s open meetings and open records laws.

**THINC. Board of Directors**

**John Asbell** – Chair, works for Georgia Power Company and is the Chamber of Commerce representative on the Board. He was also Chair of the Needs Assessment Working Group for the Steering Committee.

**Renae Willis** – Vice Chair, works for Columbus Bank and Trust. She served as Chair of the Marketing Working Group for the Steering Committee.

**Robby Burch** – Secretary/Treasurer, works for Interface. He served on the Steering Committee.
Dr. Tonya Whitlock – West Georgia Technical College administrator.
Dr. Linda McMullen – LaGrange College professor.
Dr. Darryl Harrison – Point University administrator.
Dr. Tonia Contorno – Troup County School System administrator.
Dr. C. J. Tumambing – Healthcare representative.
Greg Hicks – Small Business owner.
Toni Striblin – Restaurant owner and Parent representative.
Josh Fernandez – Manufacturing representative who works for KIA.

On December 2, 2013, our Board participated in a full day Training and Orientation retreat at the KIA in West Point. We engaged a consultant to facilitate the meeting and review applicable laws, Board roles and responsibilities, the charter contract, our mission and goals, and to develop our next steps. That consultant is also working with the Board and CEO to develop a five-year Strategic Plan.

In March, the Board worked with the school system to interview candidates for CEO. The Board of Directors and the Troup County Board of Education unanimously accepted the recommendation to hire Dr. Kathy Carlisle to serve as CEO. Dr. Carlisle is a former senior executive with Columbus State University and Goodwill, Inc.

The Directors and CEO Carlisle have worked on several major issues over the winter and spring, including:

• Completing Board Training
• Completing the GCCAP TCSG MOU
• Filing for IRS 501(c)(3) status
• Designing a facility renovation to be paid for with GCCAP funds
• Offering needs-based curriculum
• Offering dual enrollment with all post-secondary partners
• Marketing and branding THINC.
• Defining THINC.’s culture in a formal planning process and document
• Writing a five-year Strategic Plan
• Communicating with and meeting partners and students/parents
• Inheriting the contract with the ADDIE consultant, who now works under contract for the nonprofit corporation
• Developing a performance database to drive goal-tracking and reporting to local and state stakeholders
• Hiring Dr. Chris Williams to fill the charter-designated position “Director of High School Programs”

The Board determined at its most recent meeting to revise its bylaws and create standing committees for Finance, Governance and Personnel. The CEO is working with the Troup County School System to comply with the terms of the charter contract and define the Board of Directors’ “substantive control” over such areas as personnel decisions, financial decisions, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations, at a minimum.

Timelines

THINC. will open this fall in a pilot program with limited curriculum and enrollment. The pilot will start with only Work-Based Learning students served at their base high schools and at local businesses – all overseen by THINC. – and also all dual-enrollment students in Troup County. Full curriculum offerings and a new (renovated) facility at WGTC will open in August 2016.
Other major tasks and schedules include:

- The Board of Directors will continue with their twice-monthly meetings until further notice.
- Renovation of the WGTC-owned facility will begin once design is completed, estimated to be in August 2014.
- Work on THINC.’s performance database will begin this summer.
- The five-year strategic plan will be adopted and published no later than November.
- Marketing material distribution and counselor training for Year 2 Registration will be held this Fall.
- Registration for Year 2 will begin in January 2015 at the base high schools, supported by open houses, student/parent information sessions, direct mail, social media, website interactions, DVDs, and counselor at base schools.
- Equipment paid for by DOE Capital Equipment grants will arrive in July and be installed.
- THINC.’s ribbon cutting will take place in Summer 2015.
- THINC.’s dedicated facility will officially open and serve students in August 2015.

**Career and College Focus**

Student interest and current employment needs provided the data used to develop the curriculum for THINC. The career pathways being implemented include, but are not limited to, the following clusters (*Note: Clusters have been ranked based on needs assessment data.*):

- Health Science: Therapeutic Services—Nursing, Diagnostic Services—Medical Lab
- Manufacturing: Mechatronics, Manufacturing
- STEM: Engineering, Drafting & Design; Engineering & Technology; Electronics
- Energy: Energy Systems
- Business: International Business, Small Business Development
- Marketing: Marketing & Management, Fashion Merchandising & Buying, Marketing Communications & Promotion

Based on survey results from our local industry, regional business and occupational trend data for the state of Georgia, at a minimum in our region there is a need for course offerings and career pathways in the above areas. Using current partners and creating new partners for Work-Based Learning, THINC. is putting into practice student opportunities in cooperative education, internships, job shadowing, youth apprenticeships and clinical experiences with local business and agency partnerships in the available career pathways. Dual and joint enrollment courses are available through West Georgia Technical College, LaGrange College and Point University. The Board of Directors has adopted a focus on dual enrollment among its major tasks.

**Grade Levels/Enrollment and Student Focus**

After the Year 1 pilot program starting this August (serving only Work-Based Learning and dual enrollment students offsite while our facility is completed), introductory career pathway courses will be strongly recommended and encouraged by counselors at each student’s home high school starting in preparation for Years 2-5. Work-based learning experiences will begin in grade 11 and will continue into the student’s senior year. Dual and joint enrollment options will be available during each student’s 11th and 12th grade year. Placement with local business and agency partners aligned to a student’s chosen career path will be emphasized and strongly encouraged during the student’s senior year of high school.
THINC. has estimated that its enrollment for the first five years (including dual enrollment) will be as follows:

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<td>550</td>
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</tbody>
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*This projection was developed prior to political and practical reality that the partnership will need an extra year to prepare the facility, and prior to the related decision to open in Year 1 with a pilot program. It is possible that Year 1 enrollment will be lower; however, without the need to support a facility yet, this will not prove financially burdensome to the partnership.*

**Student Support**

Students are supported mostly by the counseling efforts of our three partnering high schools (LaGrange, Troup and Callaway). This support will be expanded significantly with the beginning of school at THINC.’s dedicated facility on the campus of West Georgia Technical College in August 2015, supported by dedicated counseling and student support staff from all high schools and colleges.

Mentoring is also offered through the existing efforts of the high schools. In our own facility starting in Year 2, THINC. will host and manage the mentoring program, have onsite counseling, and continue to oversee all dual enrollment and Work-Based Learning opportunities for Troup County Schools.

**Structure**

THINC. has been building our brand (or culture) through direct communications with students and parents for more than a year; however, we expect and plan to have more success with cultural awareness and brand when our dedicated facility officially opens. We will be proud to having a “place” that is uniquely “ours” to control, host events, and educate students.

The Directors have approved and our school is now using our logo:

![THINC Logo](image)

This logo appears on the school’s award-winning website, created by an internationally-renowned marketing and advertising firm based in LaGrange (Kelsey Advertising) and paid for by private funds. This brand is completely unique among CCAs in Georgia and appears on all materials shared with stakeholders and parents/students.
Standards and Curriculum

THINC. will have Advisory Committees for every CTAE program at all three participating high schools by the end of its first charter term. We are following state standards for all classes and used needs data (see Need above) to determine course offerings. We will open in August with a pilot program for students pursuing Work-Based Learning and dual enrollment. See above sections for enrollment levels and pathway offerings.

Faculty and Staff

THINC.‘s CEO (Dr. Kathy Carlisle) and Director of High School Programs (Dr. Chris Williams) are both hired, trained and in place. Year 1 faculty will be the pilot program’s Work-Based Learning teachers and dual enrollment instructors. Our CEO is the only employee of THINC., reporting directly to the Board of Directors. Faculty and staff for Years 2-5 will be greatly expanded, offering a full complement of academic and CTAE electives (see College and Career Focus above), Work-Based Learning and dual enrollment opportunities.

Evaluation

The CEO will develop a unique database for THINC. that will be used to prepare annual reports for DOE and all stakeholders. Our first annual report with full accountability data is not due until October 2015. THINC. is using the Evaluation and Improvement form from the GCCAP grant application and our list of charter goals above as templates for developing that database. The database is being developed in concert with the school system and all college partners with the help of a consultant.

The Board of Directors will evaluate the CEO, and the CEO will keep an eye on and report to the Board and all stakeholders overall progress toward meeting all charter goals and the five-year strategic plan.

Cycle of Improvement

THINC. has committed through its charter contract to conduct an annual surveys of parents. We will update our employer needs assessment at least once during the charter term, and we will also conduct student surveys every year. We will also follow the several pages of evaluation and improvement measures submitted with our 2013 GCCAP grant application. Initial student survey data will be collected in Spring 2015.

Charter School Law

THINC.‘s charter was unanimously approved by the Troup County Board of Education on July 29, 2013 and by the Georgia Board of Education on December 4, 2013. THINC. has a Charter to operate for a five-year term beginning on July 1, 2014 and expiring on June 30, 2019.