TALKING POINT ONE:
So, what exactly is the Opportunity School District?

1. The Opportunity School District (OSD) is a proposed state level bureaucracy that will be created to take over schools that have scored “60” or below on Georgia’s College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) for three consecutive years.
2. This new state level bureaucracy is an idea taken from other areas of the country like Katrina devastated New Orleans.
3. The OSD is a state takeover plan that would grant special powers to a new superintendent answering directly and only to the governor.
4. Although a new state-wide level authority, this new OSD superintendent is not required to or expected to work in concert with the current elected State Superintendent of Schools.
5. The OSD will be enacted and legitimized by an amendment of the Georgia State Constitution.
6. This constitutional amendment will be voted on by the public as a referendum that will appear on the ballot when the country goes to the polls to vote in the coming general elections, the first Tuesday of November.

TALKING POINT TWO:
When would the Opportunity School District “take over” local schools?

1. Schools will be added to the list for takeover by the OSD as early as Jan. 1, 2017.
2. Once selected, a school will remain under the supervision of the OSD for a minimum of five consecutive years.
3. If a school earns a rating above 60 on the CCRPI for three consecutive years, it will be released from the OSD.
4. The maximum term a school will remain under the supervision of the OSD is 10 years.

TALKING POINT THREE:
Why should the OSD be important to me and my community?

1. Without any consultation with the local community, this OSD superintendent is empowered to:
   • Close down any school,
   • Reorganize staff, fire and replace teachers and principals at will,
   • Transfer any school to the State Charter Schools Commission, or
   • Direct local school boards to make changes at an OSD schools via contract.
2. The entire local community of parents, educators, and other stakeholders are will lose their voice in local school affairs.
3. The historic and long appreciated demonstration of trust and access of the entire local community of parents, educators, and other stakeholders to its locally-elected school boards will lose purpose and value.
4. The OSD will reduce all the social factors, personal circumstance, challenge, discovery and adjustments relevant to each child and that child’s entire school community to a simple “failing” number.
5. There is no data supported evidence that the OSD will be successful.
6. Data used to justify the empowerment of the OSD are inconsistent and have not been adequately tested by time.
7. Data show that student progress – despite from particularly under-resourced lower starting points – for OSD selected schools has been more significant than the progress of other usually higher performing schools in Georgia.
8. The CCRPI, the measurement used to determine OSD eligibility, has changed several times since its implementation.
9. The OSD plan lacks transparency and does not address why students and schools are struggling.
10. The OSD legitimizes a history of ignoring what local communities of parents, educators, and other stakeholders have long petitioned for to help them close gaps in the tailored process of developing the potential of each child.
11. The Office of School Improvement and School Turnaround at the GaDOE already provides the lowest performing schools with special funding and support. Instead of creating more bureaucratic duplication, local communities should be supported in influencing how such special funding can be better targeted for measurable outcomes.
12. In the November 2016 election, the language of the referendum to allow for the OSD constitutional amendment is crafted in a way that will surely confused voters to vote against all of the above stated points highlighting their own local liberties and interests:

*Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow the state to intervene in chronically failing public schools in order to improve student performance?*
TALKING POINT FOUR:
How will funding the OSD affect me or my local community?

1. The OSD gives the state control over local assets – actual local tax dollars and local facilities.
2. Local communities continue to retain liability for local schools while the state seizes control of the assets of the schools.
3. The facilities of selected schools that are transferred to the supervision of the OSD will then be controlled by the OSD.
4. Acquired assets such as textbooks, technology, media resources, instructional equipment, and all other resources will all be controlled by the OSD at the discretion of the OSD superintendent.
5. The OSD will be empowered to contract out any maintenance and repair of school buildings, but the local board and the local community will continue to be responsible for extensive repairs and capitol expenses, even if such conceivable major expenses result from poor maintenance and repair.

TALKING POINT FIVE:
What can I do to prepare my community for the OSD takeover attempt?

1. Each community of parents, educators, and stakeholders concerned about the OSD takeover should use the coming months to educate all of the local community about the OSD and initiate and facilitate thorough discussions.
2. Teachers and school leaders should use CCRPI data to demonstrate upward progress at the local level and encourage open and honest community discussion about resources needed to assist struggling students.
3. We all should explain to our communities how utilizing only the CCRPI Single Score is an incomplete method to address struggling schools.
4. We should explore ways to clearly illustrate that schools identified as potential candidates for the Opportunity Schools District generally have lower overall scores than others in the state.
   • As measured by the CCRPI, these schools are also showing greater progress and growth and are moving their students in a positive direction
5. We should persistently spread the valid point that OSD-eligible schools are almost entirely comprised of poor, minority students.
   • Over 90% of students in the OSD schools are participating in the free and reduced lunch program
   • Disproportionately, almost 95% of the students of OSD targeted schools are either black or Hispanic
• In contrast, the High Achieving schools have under a third of their students in the free and reduced lunch program and only about a quarter of their students are black or Hispanic
• Both of these facts are reflective of national trends in what impacts student achievement