

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES



February 24, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

SCSC Board Room West Twin Tower, 5th Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Virtual Access: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/514162749>

Phone: +1 (571) 317 – 3122 **Access Code:** 514-162-749

Attendees: Commissioners: Buzz Brockway – Chairman; Hunter Hill – Vice-Chair; Jose Perez; Tom Lewis; Carmen Dill; Dr. Lina Millan; and Tony Lowden. SCSC Staff: Lauren Holcomb – Executive Director; Morgan Felts – Chief Operations Officer; Cerrone Lockett – General Counsel; Kristen Easterbrook – Charter Development Manager; Darcy Callaway – Business Manager; Katie Manthey – Director of Research and Evaluation; Mu’min Islam – Associate General Counsel; Erica Acha-Morfaw – Administrative and Communications Coordinator; and Kiara Thompson and Jackson Caruso – SCSC Interns.

I. **Call to Order (Chairman Buzz Brockway)**

- The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

II. **Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes (Chairman Buzz Brockway)**

- The SCSC Chairman called for the approval of the minutes for the January 22 – 23, 2021 Board Retreat and January 27, 2021 Board meeting. Commissioner Perez motioned for the approval of these minutes. Commissioner Lewis seconded the Motion. The January 22 – 23, 2021 Board retreat minutes and January 27, 2021 Board meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

III. **Officer Elections (Chairman Buzz Brockway)**

- Since Commissioner Chairman Paul Williams’ resignation, Commissioner Buzz Brockway has served as Acting Chairman. Commissioner Brockway informed the board of his interest in serving as Chairman and if elected there would be a vacancy for the position of Vice-Chair.
- Commissioner Lowden nominated Commissioner Brockway as Chairman. There were no further nominations and Commissioner Lowden motioned to close nominations. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion to close nominations which was approved by unanimous vote.
- Commissioner Lowden motioned to elect Commissioner Brockway as Chairman. Commissioner Hill seconded the Motion. Commissioner Brockway was elected and approved to serve as SCSC Chairman by unanimous vote.
- Commissioner Lewis motioned to nominate Commissioner Hill as Vice Chair. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Perez. There were no further nominations and Commissioner Lewis motioned to close nominations and to elect Commissioner Hill as Vice Chair. Commissioner Lowden seconded the motion. Commissioner Hill was approved by unanimous vote as Vice-Chair.
- Chairman Brockway appointed Commissioner Milan to serve on the State Charter Schools Foundation board.

IV. **School Openings (SCSC Executive Director)**

- There are 10 schools currently operating completely virtual and they are considering in person instruction in the near future.
- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued an operational strategy for the re-opening of K-12 schools.
- State charter schools are advised to reach out to their local Departments of Health to coordinate the delivery of vaccinations for staff.

V. **Legislative Update (SCSC Executive Director)**

- The amended 2021 state budget included the Governor's recommended partial restoration of austerity reductions to education formula funds from 10 percent to 4 percent.
- CARES Act funding will be used to provide a \$1,000 bonus to teachers, education personnel and essential employees appropriated by the State Board of Education. State charter schools opening during the 2020 – 2021 school year will receive CARES Act funding to offset losses related to the schools' failure to meet projected enrollment.
- The State charter supplement budget has increased as a result of new enrollment and opening of new state charter schools. Based upon this increase, SCSC's budget comprising of a 3% administrative withhold of state charter school funding will increase. Although SCSC anticipates returning as much of these funds as possible to its schools, the increased budget will allow for the hiring of additional needed staff.
- Senate Bill 59 proposes to allow state charter schools to opt in to the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) upon renewal of their charter contract. Previously, schools were only able to opt into the SHBP at the beginning of their charter contract.
- The State Board of Education voted to reinstitute its Charter Committee, which is a forum for local and state charter schools to converse with the State Board of Education on issues related to charter schools.

VI. **Organizational Development (SCSC Charter Development Manager)**

- The SCSC is offering a Governance Training on April 13, 2021 from 8:30am – 12:30pm. This is the last training offered by SCSC for schools to meet the governance training requirements in their charter contracts.
- New school orientation will be held on March 18, 2021 for schools opening in fall 2021.
- The SCSC is providing scholarships for two financial certification courses. One course is provided by the Georgia Charter Schools Association and the other is provided by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

VII. **Petitions (SCSC General Counsel)**

- The SCSC received a total of twelve FY20 petitions by the November 20, 2020 deadline. Of the twelve, two petitions were disqualified. SCSC staff evaluated ten petitions substantively and scheduled capacity interviews with petitioner representatives. Interviews occurred the week of February 15-19. Interview panels were comprised of SCSC staff, commissioners, and local and national experts. SCSC staff is preparing formal recommendations for the SCSC's consideration during the March SCSC meeting.
- Fiscal Year 2021 petitions are due April 9, 2021. Based on SCSC's approved timeline, petitions that meet legal and substantive requirements will be scheduled for interviews the week of June 14-18, 2021. SCSC staff anticipate making formal recommendations for its Fiscal Year 2021 petitions at the July 28, 2021 meeting.
- Early feedback for technical questions about Fiscal Year 2021 petitions will occur during the week of March 15th – 19th, 2021.

VIII. **Accountability Update (SCSC Director of Research & Evaluation)**

- A 2019 – 2020 accountability presentation update for state charter schools was presented. It contained an overview of state charter school performance across the three areas of Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) accountability: academics, operations, and finance. Overall, 76% of schools are meeting all sections of the CPF.

IX. **Public Comment**

- Approximately 40 people attended the meeting virtually.
- Dr. Charles Lovell, Superintendent of Mountain Education Charter School, spoke about valuing the school's partnership with SCSC to benefit their students. He further discussed his opposition to Senate Bill 153 and wanted to thank the SCSC for their support.

X. **Adjourn**

- Commissioner Lowden made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous vote at 11:56am.