

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

August 25, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

SCSC Board Room

5th Floor, West Tower

Virtual Access: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/398407325#>

Phone: +1 (571) 317-3122 Access Code: 398-407-325



Attendees: Commissioners: Buzz Brockway-Chairman; Tony Lowden-Vice Chairman; Fitz Johnson; Dr. Lina Millan; Jose Perez; Hunter Hill; and Mike Dudgeon. SCSC Staff: Lauren Holcomb – Executive Director; Morgan Felts – Chief Operations Officer; Cerrone Lockett – General Counsel; Kristen Easterbrook – Charter Development Manager; Kathy Schieber – Financial Analyst; Katie Manthey – Director of Research and Evaluation; Kristen Settlemire – Associate General Counsel; Erica Acha-Morfaw – Administrative and Communications Coordinator; and DeShantis Huff – SCSC Intern.

- I. **Call to Order (Chairman Brockway)**
 - Chairman Brockway called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.
 - The following Commissioners attended the meeting: Commissioners Brockway, Lowden, Perez, Johnson, Hill, Millan, and Dudgeon. A quorum was formed.

- II. **Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes (Chairman Brockway)**
 - Commissioner Lowden made a motion to approve the July 28, 2021, meeting minutes. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The July 28, 2021, meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.
 - Commissioner Hill was not present for this vote.

- III. **Commissioner School Visits (SCSC Executive Director)**
 - Commissioners will be visiting schools that are up for renewal throughout Fall 2021.
 - The schools include Cirrus Charter Academy, Statesboro STEAM, Atlanta Heights Charter School, and Georgia Connections Academy. The Executive Director noted that Georgia Connections Academy is a virtual school.
 - The Executive Director encouraged commissioners to attend the school visits.

- IV. **School COVID Update (SCSC Executive Director)**
 - Updated Guidance
 - New CDC guidance for schools recommends universal masking ages two and up, regardless of vaccination status, and Covid-19 testing for any fully vaccinated individual who has had contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 within three to five days after exposure.
 - DPH also issued new guidance for schools at the beginning of August 2021. Pursuant to that guidance, schools may now implement alternate quarantine measures to facilitate in-person learning if the point of exposure is at school and if the individual has remained asymptomatic during exposure.
 - The SCSC provided information regarding updated CDC and DPH

- guidance to schools.
 - Commissioner Brockway stressed flexibility and noted that schools should make the best decisions for the populations they serve.
- Remote Learning Waiver
 - As a reminder, the SCSC issued a remote learning waiver a few months ago, whereby schools could have up to 25% of students opt into virtual learning. Thirteen schools submitted and were approved for these waivers.
 - At this time, the SCSC has not increased the percentage of students permitted to engage in virtual learning.
 - The Executive Director stressed that schools' pandemic plans and guidance from local public health authorities should remain primary and be implemented in the event of an outbreak. The remote learning waiver applies when schools are operating outside of an outbreak.

V. Organizational Development (SCSC Charter Development Manager)

- Past Trainings
 - Past trainings are available via video recording.
- Governance Training Certification Reminder
 - The governance training certification application for FY21 closes at the end of August. The application must be completed by August 30, 2021.
 - Schools should contact Kiara Thompson with any questions.

VI. Pre-Opening Schools (SCSC Charter Development Manager)

- The SCSC hosted a post-approval training webinar for schools approved earlier this year.
- Thirty-five people attended the training.
- The training introduced participants to the SCSC staff and provided them with specific information about the Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) and the pre-opening checklist.

VII. Closure Update (SCSC Charter Development Manager)

- As a reminder, the SCSC previously accepted the surrender of Harriet Tubman School of Science and Technology's charter at its July 28, 2021, meeting.
- Since then, SCSC staff have meet with school representatives weekly to ensure that the school is satisfying its closure obligations.
- The school is continuing to work with families to ensure that records are transferred to students' new schools and with the SCSC and the Georgia Department of Education to coordinate the collection and redistribution of school assets.

VIII. Petitions (SCSC General Counsel)

- The SCSC received an expansion petition from the Georgia School for Innovation and the Classics (GSIC), which is currently under review. The SCSC anticipates that an interview will be scheduled in early to mid-September and that a recommendation will be provided to the Board at its September meeting.
- The SCSC anticipates that the petition calendar will be presented to the Board either at the September or October meeting. The SCSC plans to open the petition portal in

November 2021, close the petition portal in April 2022, and present recommendations to the board in late summer 2022.

- Petitioner Bootcamp is scheduled for October 2021 and is currently planned to proceed in-person. During Petitioner Bootcamp, potential charter petitioners learn about SCSC application guidelines and expectations.
- Commissioner Lowden requested clarification regarding GSIC's location. The Executive Director stated that GSIC is located around Augusta, Georgia and is looking to replicate near Harlem, Georgia.

IX. Authorizer Standards (SCSC Director of Research and Evaluation)

- The SCSC recently met with the Georgia Department of Education to incorporate the feedback received from charter schools into the new authorizer standards.
- The SCSC anticipates having finalized standards for approval by the end of the month and is hopeful that the standards will be approved by the State Board of Education in September.

X. Accountability (SCSC Director of Research and Evaluation and SCSC General Counsel)

- 2020-21 Georgia Milestone Assessment Results (SCSC Director of Research and Evaluation)
 - The SCSC reported that the participation rates for the Georgia Milestone were down across the state for the 2020-2021 school year and that SCSC-authorized schools had lower participation rates than the state average. However, the data showed that SCSC-authorized schools tended to perform better than their state counterparts in key metrics.
 - The SCSC will continue to analyze data specific to SCSC schools to evaluate trends and student growth and provide Commissioners with corresponding updates.
 - Commissioners provided feedback and asked questions about the data and trends presented.
- 2020-21 Operational Monitoring Update (SCSC General Counsel)
 - The SCSC legal team is currently finalizing Corrective Action Plan responses, and results should be sent to schools within the next week or so.
- 2021-22 Onsite School Monitoring (SCSC General Counsel)
 - FY22 Operational Monitoring has started, and in-person monitoring visits will begin on September 27, 2021.

XI. Georgia Facility Resource Center Presentation (Bonnie Holliday and Cameron Quick)

- The Georgia Charter Schools Association presented on its recently launched Facility Resource Center (FRC).
- The FRC focuses on supporting charter petitioners and existing charter schools with their facility needs to assist them in avoiding financial predicaments down the road.
- Commissioners discussed and asked questions about the information presented.

XII. Action Items

- There were no action items presented.

XIII. Additional Items from Commissioners

- There were no additional items from commissioners.

XIV. Public Comments

- There was no public comment.

XV. Adjourn

- Commissioner Lowden made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.