

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

November 18, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

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

Virtual Access: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/168551373>



Attendees: Commissioners: Buzz Brockway - Acting Chairman; Jose Perez; Tom Lewis; Carmen Dill; and Dr. Lina Millan. SCSC Staff members: Lauren Holcomb – Executive Director; Morgan Felts – Chief Operations Officer; Cerrone Lockett – General Counsel; Sarah Beck – Associate General Counsel and Operational Accountability Manager; Darcy Callaway – Business Manager; Danielle Williams – Communications and Outreach Coordinator; Katie Manthey, Director of Research & Evaluation. Approximately 25 members of the public attended remotely.

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

- The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

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

- The SCSC Acting Chairman called for the approval of the October 28, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Perez motioned. Commissioner Milan seconded. The October 28, 2020 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

III. **School Openings Update (SCSC Executive Director)**

- The SCSC staff is staying updated on state charter schools reopening plans. There are 22 schools operating in-person and 15 operating only virtually. Two schools temporarily transitioned to virtual instruction due to confirmed COVID-19 cases. State charter schools were reminded to remain cognizant and responsive to family needs when making decisions regarding instructional models.

IV. **Organizational Development (SCSC Executive Director)**

- The SCSC held Governance Training on November 10, 2020. Additional SCSC trainings and the schedule for upcoming trainings were announced.

V. **Financial Accountability Update (SCSC Chief Operations Officer)**

School Audits

- School audits were due November 2, 2020. Of the thirty-three (33) school audits due, the SCSC received thirty (30) by the November 2nd deadline. Cherokee Charter Academy submitted its audit on November 13, 2020. The audits for Coweta Charter Academy and Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SOWEGA) remain outstanding.

Student Enrollment

- Student enrollment generates state charter school funding. Under Georgia law, new charter schools or charter schools that grow by 2% or more are eligible for forward funding. Each spring the SCSC works with schools and GaDOE to generate projected enrollment figures and forward funding amounts, which are then compared to actual enrollment figures generated during the October Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment count. Thirty-nine (39) schools including six (6) brand new schools submitted projections. Both virtual state charter schools saw enrollment growth. Two-thirds of brick-and-mortar state charter schools maintained and/or grew enrollment. Some new state charter schools over projected enrollment and will be required to reimburse the overpaid forward funding.

SCSC staff will work with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to monitor and analyze enrollment projections.

VI. **Accountability Update (Director of Research & Evaluation)**

Federal Assessment and Accountability Waiver Status

- The State Board of Education (SBOE) will consider its proposal to reduce the weight of the End Of Course (EOC) grades from 20% to 10% tomorrow at the November 19 meeting. Public feedback on this proposal was accepted through November 16.
- The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Ed.) announced an opportunity to make one-year modifications to accountability for the 2020-2021 school year. GaDOE is reviewing U.S. Ed. guidance to determining next steps. As a reminder GaDOE's request to waive assessments for this school year was denied. All public schools in Georgia should now be preparing for the spring Georgia Milestones Assessment administration. GaDOE has updated resources on their website.
- Superintendent Woods plans to resubmit Georgia's testing and accountability waivers to the U.S. Ed. in the event that a new Presidential administration may respond differently to GaDOE's previous request. We remain in close contact as more information becomes available.

2019-2020 Graduation Rates Review

- On Nov. 10, 2020 GaDOE released graduation rates for the 2019-2020 school year. Georgia's graduation rate increased again in 2020, rising to 83.8 percent up from 82 percent in 2019. Ten (10) state charter schools graduated students in 2020. Of those schools, five (5) had a graduation rate higher than the state. Three (3) state charter schools had 100 percent graduation rates, including the Academy for Classical Education, Baconton Community Charter School and Statesboro STEAM.

VII. **Action Items**

- **2021 Meeting Calendar (SCSC Executive Director)**
 - The SCSC staff recommended that the SCSC approve the 2021 SCSC board meeting calendar. The SCSC Acting Chairman called for the approval of the staff recommendation. Commissioner Perez motioned. Commissioner Lewis seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.
- **Northwest Classical Charter Academy (SCSC General Counsel)**
 - The SCSC staff recommended that the SCSC approve the replication of Northwest Classical Charter Academy. Matthew Kirby, founder of the school, provided information about Northwest Classical Charter Academy. The SCSC Acting Chairman called for the approval of the staff recommendation. Commissioner Lewis motioned. Commissioner Milan seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VIII. **Additional Items from Commissioners**

- The SCSC Executive Director announced that the Charter Development Manager had a new addition to her family with the birth of her son.

IX. **Public Comment**

- There was no public comment offered.

X. **Adjourn**

- The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.