

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING
May 29, 2019 10:00 a.m.
SCSC Meeting Room
SCSC Conference Room, 5th Floor, West Tower GA 30334

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Lewis at approximately 10:00am.
2. Commissioners Tony Lowden, Tom Lewis, Clara Keith, Paul Williams, Jose Perez, and staff members Gregg Stevens—Interim Executive Director, Lauren Holcomb— Chief Communications Officer, Kristen Easterbrook—New Charter Program Manager, Katie Manthey—Academic Accountability Manager, Rennie Laryea— Organizational Development Manager, Terence Washington— Financial Accountability Manager, and Darcy Callaway— Business Manager were present.
3. Approximately 50 members of the public were also present, including charter school staff and representatives, charter school business representatives, charter school representatives and Georgia Charter Schools Association representatives.
4. Chairman Lewis called for an approval of the meeting minutes from the April 24, 2019 meeting.
5. Chairman Lewis added an item to the agenda, announcing the commencement of the search for the new SCSC Director. The Commission will contract with the Georgia Charter Schools Association to conduct the search. The search will be conducted by a panel of three commissioners, Chairman Lewis, Clara Keith, and Jose Perez, will be open for approximately two weeks. The Chairman anticipates announcing a candidate by the next board meeting.
6. Ms. Kristen Easterbrook, New Charter Program Manager, provided a brief update on the five schools on track for opening in August. Ms. Easterbrook discussed two schools experiencing hurdles and reported that SCSC continues to be in communication with them. She reported that Y Hwang Academy of Language Excellence has elected to defer for a year due to several setbacks, including loss of its facility. She then reported that The Community Academy for Architecture and Design (TCAAD) is pursuing the next steps in order to open.
7. Chairman Lewis then asked Ms. Easterbrook to give an update on the 2019 Application Cycle. Ms. Easterbrook reported that petition interviews have been scheduled and 21 interviews will be conducted over the course of two weeks in June. There are 19 new applicants, one replication applicant, and one school seeking to transition from local to state accreditation.
8. Chairman Lewis then asked Ms. Katie Manthey to begin the School Performance Reviews. Ms. Manthey called up the first group which was Ivy Preparatory Academy at Kirkwood. Ivy Preparatory Academy at Kirkwood did not meet compliance standards in the area of finance. School representatives discussed overarching programmatic adjustments to improve standards including the creation of a finance department and adoption of state of board policies about financial stewardship. The school is also in conversation about utilizing the land they own to generate additional revenue through sales and leasing. The board questioned school representatives about their high board turnover rates and respondents felt confident that they have implemented new plans to alleviate this problem.
9. Utopian Academy for the Arts followed. Utopian Academy for the Arts did not meet in the area of finance. The school representative highlighted the school's improvement in

academics and outlined how they would improve financial standards. They identified three areas to concentrate on in order to improve standards with the goal of increasing control over debt to asset ratio. School representatives also expressed a desire to better their relationship with the local school board.

10. Georgia Connections Academy did not meet in the area of finance. They will improve enrollment variance, efficiency margin, and debt to asset ratio. School representatives attributed their enrollment variance scores to issues in reporting accuracy.

Representatives noted the extreme difficulty in improving their debt to asset ratio or efficiency margin because, as a virtual school, it is not necessary to have a capital asset.

11. Fulton Leadership Academy did not meet in the areas of finance or academics. The board noted that this performance is an anomaly for the school. School representatives discussed the need for greater stability in staffing, a focus on hiring more experienced teachers, and increasing professional development. The school will also be focusing on literacy and collaboration going forward. School representatives also discussed various ways they will reduce operating expenses and said they are in talks to purchase their current facility.

12. Cirrus Academy then presented. Cirrus Academy did not meet on financial or academic categories. School representatives discussed a number of efforts they have taken to increase academic outcomes including the opening of a new resource center, an effort to implement ongoing professional development. The board expressed concern that the school was not investing enough resources into their academics. Cirrus Academy also discussed their financial outcomes and noted that the school has hired a new accountant, are investing in new accounting software, and that they have revised their financial policies and procedures which includes a new purchasing requisition process.

13. The School for Arts-Infused Learning followed. The school did not meet in the area of finance. School representatives explained that the school's biggest challenge has been their debt to asset ratio, which is high because of their current agreement for their facility. Representatives said that they have revised the school budget to more accurately reflect financial state and do not plan to end the next fiscal year in a deficit. Representatives also spoke to previous board instability and said they are working on restructuring the board so that it is more proactive.

14. Coastal Plains Charter High School failed to meet standards in academic performance. The board noted that this was the schools first time failing to meet academic standards. The school said that they plan to add additional sites, hire writing teachers to support the students, and hire instructional coaches for staff. Coastal Plains Charter High School is also discussing decreasing the size of the board.

15. Mr. Stevens, Interim Executive Director, presented the first action item which was to return any remaining funds from the SCSC FY2019 2% administrative withhold to schools upon satisfaction of the SCSC's FY 2019 budgeted expenses. Mr. Washington, Financial Accountability Manager, provided a financial overview on the action item. The motion for the first action item was passed.

16. Mr. Stevens presented a second action item for consideration. The proposal was to restrict the provision of funds Cirrus Academy by earmarking the funds for specific use and withholding them till professional development criteria has been met. Funds will not be

released to the school till they have secured additional funds from a third-party provider for professional development training. Board members expressed concern about the performance of the school. The motion for action item 2 was passed.

17. Chairman Lewis asked if there was public comment. There was none.

18. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.