

# **STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION INTERVIEW PANEL MEETING**

**June 12, 2019, 9:20 a.m.**

**State Charter Schools Commission Conference Room  
East Twin Tower, Room 1470B, Atlanta, Georgia 30334**

## Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting convened at approximately 09:22am. The interview panel, consisting of Commissioner Jose Perez; Commission Staff Gregg Stevens, Morgan Felts, Kristin Easterbrook, Terence Washington, and Rennie Laryea; Tony Eitel and Carolyn Bridges were present. Members of the public were also present.
2. The interview panel met with representatives of Atlanta Unbound Academy. The governing board of the proposed charter school began by walking the panel through a day in the life of a student, provided an overview of the school's education model, and outlined plans for implementation. The interview panel questioned the proposed school's governing board to determine its capacity to implement its proposed educational program and its strategy to train and direct teachers to implement its complex educational model. Additionally, the panel questioned Atlanta Unbound about how data gleaned from interim assessments will be used in classroom instruction. The panel asked the school to elaborate more on the benefits of the proposed schedule. The governing board of Atlanta Unbound then spoke about their cultural relevancy curriculum, how the school plans to successfully implement it in a way traditional public schools have not, and how they propose to implement this approach while still meeting state mandates. The panel asked Atlanta Unbound to elaborate on their recruitment strategy, especially given the increasing number of educational opportunities in their proposed location. Finally, the panel inquired about the proposed weighted lottery, the intended leadership structure of the proposed charter school, how the charter school proposes to track data, and its capacity to operate as an LEA. The panel expressed concern regarding the school's ability to recruit and train teachers based on the proposed curriculum. The interview concluded at approximately 10:57am. Interview panelist Tony Eitel left the meeting. A lunch break was called.
3. The meeting reconvened at approximately 1:00pm. A representative from the Dougherty County School System spoke to the panel regarding the district's interests relating to the potential charter school. The representative expressed the district's concerns about the proposed charter, but also expressed an openness to creating a conversion charter school.
4. The interview panel then met with the governing board of SOWEGA Regional Charter Academy for Research and Technology. The panel first questioned the board about similarities between their submitted petition and a previously submitted petition from another school. The representatives of the governing board of the proposed charter then provided an overview of the school's vision and a typical day for a student. The school board expanded on its proposed focus on fine arts education and STEM, in addition to a core curriculum. The interview then questioned the school further about their proposed academic model and the creation of a curriculum. The panel also asked the proposed school to elaborate on how they plan to evaluate student progress over the course of the year and to share their proposed remediation strategies for struggling students in the school. The school board was then asked to speak to their ability to work with and maintain productive relationships with the local school district. In addition, the interview panel asked school about the governing board's efforts toward student recruitment, the capacity to operate as an LEA, its plans to recruit teachers with professional expertise in STEM areas, and how the board would implement proper oversight over school leadership. Finally, the interview

panel questioned the school's governing board about the school's proposed budget. The panel expressed concern regarding the school's ability to meet LEA obligations and the proposed budget. The interview concluded at approximately 2:42pm.

5. At approximately 3:03pm commission staff member Katie Manthey joined the interview panel.
6. At approximately 03:05 PM, the interview panel met with the governing board of Omega Academy. The panel first questioned the board about similarities between their petition and a previously submitted petition. The governing board of the proposed school provided a brief overview of the school's vision and plans for implementation of their proposed educational model. The interview panel questioned the proposed school's governing board to determine its capacity to implement its proposed educational program and how the school would fulfill its requirements as an LEA. The panel inquired about the school's proposed curriculum and if it is aligned with Georgia standards. Additionally, the panel asked how the school will implement their plan for professional development given the specific academic program, and about their plans for teacher recruitment. The school discussed their plans to utilize technology to monitor teacher performance. Additionally, the panel inquired about the school's student recruitment plan given their proposed location. The panel expressed concerns about the proposal for operating as an LEA, the target enrollment numbers, and startup costs. The interview concluded at 04:23 PM.