

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING
July 31, 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 10:07 am.
2. Commissioners Tony Lowden, Tom Lewis, Paul Williams, Jose Perez, Buzz Brockway, Hunter Hill and staff members Lauren Holcomb— Executive Director, Gregg Stevens— General Counsel, 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 60 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 June 26, 2019 meeting. He then called for the approval of the called July 17, 2019 meeting. Both minutes were approved.
5. Ms. Lauren Holcomb provided a brief walkthrough of the new SCSC website that will enable stakeholders to better locate information and engage in SCSC initiatives.
6. Ms. Kristen Easterbrook, New Charter Program Manager, gave an update on new school openings. Two schools have delayed opening till the 2020 school year. Three new charter schools will be opening this fall. In addition, two schools have transitioned from locally approved to state approved charter schools and will be opening in the 2019 school year as SCSC schools. Ms. Easterbrook also noted that SCSC staff will be monitoring and visiting the newly opened schools in the coming months to help ensure their success.
7. Ms. Rennie Laryea, Organizational Development Manager, then reviewed the supports offered to new schools, tenured schools, and school leadership for this upcoming year. She described the various trainings that the SCSC will be hosting including Governors Board Training, New School Orientation, Financial Management Certification Program, and the Academic Summit.
8. Chairman Lewis then proceeded to the Action Items and asked Ms. Kristen Easterbrook, New Charter Program Manager, to give an overview of the recommendation process for start-

up charter school petitions. Ms. Easterbrook gave an overview on the process and introduced the recommendation for the first school.

9. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Amana Academy West. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. The executive director of Amana Academy West discussed the school's excitement to replicate their flagship school and start serving a new population in Fulton County. Commissioner Lowden moved to approve, and Commissioner Brockway seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

10. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Atlanta SMART Academy. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. The school leader of Atlanta SMART discussed the school's goal to provide a high-quality school option to southwest Atlanta through its project-based learning model with a focus on science, math, and arts. Commissioner Lowden moved to approve, and Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

11. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Atlanta Unbound Academy. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. A representative from Atlanta Unbound highlighted the school's mission of focusing on social-emotional learning coupled with a culturally relevant approach to teaching. Commissioner Hill moved to approve, and Commissioner Brockway seconded the motion. Commissioner Hill then asked the school leader to elaborate on the school's interpretation of cultural relevancy. A vote was then called. The vote to approve was unanimous.

12. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Collegiate Academy of Albany. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. A representative from the school spoke to the board's desire to create a quality school option in Albany with a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum. Commissioner Williams moved to approve, and Commissioner Brockway seconded the motion. Commissioner Lowden expressed a desire that the school maintain its focus of serving the low-income students of Albany and not lose sight of its overall mission. A vote was then called. The vote to approve was unanimous.

13. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Delta STEAM Academy. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. A school representative outlined the school's focus in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education with a focus on community and cultural responsiveness. Commissioner Lowden moved to approve, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

14. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Furlow Charter School. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. The chairman of the governing board for Furlow Charter School highlighted commitment to have a student body and staff to reflect the diversity of their community so that they can best serve the area. Commissioner Lowden expressed his excitement for the approval of the school and underscored his

approval of the school's diversity initiative. Commissioner Williams moved to approve, and Commissioner Brockway seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

15. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Georgia Fugees Academy. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. A representative of the governing board of Georgia Fugees spoke about the school's commitment to serving refugee and New American populations and providing intense English language immersion and wrap-around services. The school also offers an after-school soccer program to all students with the goal of teaching and reinforcing transferable life and leadership skills. Commissioner Williams moved to approve, and Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

16. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Destinations Career Academy of Georgia. Following the recommendation, the school had five minutes to present. A representative of the board asked for a deferral rather than denial of the application and underscored that their belief is that virtual schools are a vital part of school choice in Georgia and a deferral would help accomplish that goal. Commissioner Williams motioned to pass the staff recommendation for denial. There was no second. Commissioner Brockway then motioned for general discussion and Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. The commissioners discussed the benefits and drawbacks of a deferral as opposed to a vote for denial. They also discussed what a deferral of the application would accomplish. To advocate for the deferral, the representative of Destinations Career Academy noted that the board of Destinations Career Academy has continued to develop, and more time would allow them the ability to strengthen the board's capacity for oversight of the Education Service Provider (ESP). The commissioners then discussed their commitment to approve high quality charter schools, their desire to exercise flexibility in process when appropriate, and support of virtual education. A motion to table the petition for Destinations Career Academy with no timetable was made by Commissioner Brockway. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. Commissioners Hill, Brockway, and Lowden voted in the affirmative. Commissioners Williams and Perez voted no. The motion was passed.

17. Ms. Easterbrook reviewed the recommendation for Infinity Charter School. No one from the school was present to present. Commissioner Hill moved to deny, and Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. The vote to deny was unanimous.

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

19. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm.