

CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

January 31, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Conference Room
East Twin Tower, 8th Floor, Atlanta, GA 30334

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Lewis at approximately 10:08 am.
2. Commissioners Tom Lewis, Tony Lowden, Paul Williams, Clara Keith, and Jose Perez, and staff members, Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director, Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel, Morgan Felts—Associate General Counsel and Petitions Manager, Kristen Easterbrook—Business Manager, Katie Manthey—Academic Accountability Manager, Rennie Laryea—Organizational Development Manager, Sarah Beck – Operational Accountability Manger, Terence Washington – Financial Accountability Manager, and Lauren Holcomb—Chief Communications Officer were present.
3. Approximately 110 members of the public were also present, including charter school staff and representatives, families of students attending state charter schools, charter school business representatives, and Georgia Charter Schools Association representatives.
4. Chairman Tom Lewis called for an approval of the meeting minutes from the SCSC November 15, 2017 meeting, the SCSC January 11-12, 2017 Policy Retreat, and the SCSC January 22 and 25 renewal interviews. Commissioner Jose Perez made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Tony Lowden provided a second. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Next, Chairman Tom Lewis asked Ms. Rennie Laryea to provide an organizational development update. The SCSC held a governance training on November 28-29, 2017 at the Georgia Center in Athens, Georgia. An upcoming SCSC governance training will be held on February 8-9, 2018 at the Lake Lanier Legacy Lodge in Buford, Georgia. The New Schools Orientation has been rescheduled due to inclement weather. Lastly, the FY18 training and support calendar is available on SCSC website. Chairman Tom Lewis and Director Bonnie Holliday encourages all SCSC governing board members to attend the upcoming SCSC governance training.
6. Chairman Tom Lewis then asked Director Bonnie Holliday to discuss the 2018 SCSC renewals process regarding reminders and updates. Director Bonne Holliday discussed the SCSC previous, current, and future actions, the SCSC mission, the SCSC evaluation metrics, the SCSC performance standards, the SCSC renewal eligibility guidance, the SCSC staff recommendations, and the SCSC renewal timeline.
7. Chairman Tom Lewis asked if anyone signed up for public comment. Ms. Easterbrook informed him that there were 13 people signed up to speak. Beth McCarey, a parent of students enrolled in Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA), spoke on the closure of the K-5 school at Connections; Olivia Fields, parent of students enrolled in GCA spoke on her children’s success; Lisa Moseley, a parent to students enrolled in GCA, spoke on the benefits of the engineering and math curricula

that GCA offers her children; Gabriela Mendizabel, a learning coach at GCA, spoke on why she chose GCA for her children; Chungere Dakota, a student at GCA, spoke on the misconceptions of a virtual or home school; Lauren Ferguson, a parent of students enrolled in Georgia Connections Academy, spoke on her understanding of education as a parent with autism and a graduate from Harvard's education graduate program; Jessica Williams, a parent of students enrolled in Georgia Connections Academy, spoke on her child's success; Krystale Williams, a student at Georgia Connections Academy, advocated for school choice and virtual schools; Valerie Larkin, a parent of a student in GCA, thanked the SCSC commissioners and staff for GCA; Madelyn Wright, a student at GCA, spoke about her educational experience; Joan Wilson, a parent of students in GCA, spoke about her choice to enroll her children in GCA; Colleen Sieber, a parent of a GCA student, advocated for elementary at GCA; and Renee Lord, president of Georgia Families for Public Education, spoke on the possibility of state colleges and universities no longer using test scores for admission.

8. Chairman Lewis called on Director Bonnie Holliday to provide a recap. First, Director Holliday spoke on the SCSC staff's commitment to taking the SCSC parents' and students' feedback seriously. Secondly, Director Holliday encouraged parents to remain communicative to the the governing board their school. Director Holliday also encouraged parents to recognize the responsibility of the SCSC staff to uphold a state charter school's charter contract. Thirdly, Director Holliday spoke to the retention rate of virtual schools and the SCSC staff's role in using objective data to make decisions. Lastly, Director Holliday highlighted the differences between a charter school and a magnet school. Commissioner Tony Lowden spoke on excellence as an expectation instead of an option in education.
9. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30am.