

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

April 25, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

State Board of Education Meeting Room
East Twin Tower, Room 2070, Atlanta, GA 30334

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Lewis at approximately 10:03 am.
2. Commissioners Tom Lewis, Tony Lowden, Carmen Dill, Paul Williams, Jose Perez, and staff members, Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel, Morgan Felts—Associate General Counsel and Petitions Manager, Kristen Easterbrook—Business Manager, Terence Washington—Financial Accountability Manager, Katie Manthey—Academic Accountability Manager, Sarah Beck—Operational Accountability Manager, Rennie Laryea—Organizational Development Manager, and Lauren Holcomb—Chief Communications Officer were present.
3. Approximately 25 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 Lewis called for an approval of the meeting minutes from the SCSC March 28, 2018 meeting. Commissioner Perez made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Lowden provided a second. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Next, Chairman Lewis asked Mr. Gregg Stevens to provide an update on the SCSC staff's informal site visits at operating state charter schools. A final fourth quarter informal site visit is scheduled for next week at the Genesis Innovation Academies. Commissioner Lowden will be attending. Chairman Lewis encourages other SCSC commissioners to attend.
6. Chairman Lewis then asked Ms. Rennie Laryea to provide an organizational development update. The SCSC staff hosted a webinar in preparation for performance reviews on April 17, 2018. The FY19 training calendar is being compiled and will include governance training, petitioners boot camp, and new school orientation. The SCSC is also providing new supports in data, assessments, and school safety per the request of SCSC schools. Furthermore, the SCSC staff is finalizing dates for upcoming trainings.
7. Chairman Lewis then asked Mr. Gregg Stevens to provide a legislative update. The legislative session ended on March 29, 2018. HB 787, sponsored by Representative Scott Hilton and Speaker Pro-Tempore Jan Jones, provides for increased state charter funding, raises the state charter supplement to the average state local supplement amount, provides forward funding for horizontal growth, provides language to allow state charter schools to receive services from RESA, establishes a grant program for replication of high performing charter schools, increases the capital portion of the state charter school supplement, and requires virtual schools to undergo annual audits from the Department of Audits. The bill passed the 2018 Georgia General Assembly and is awaiting signature from the governor or will naturally become law on July 1,

2018. Chairman Lewis thanked Representative Scott Hilton, Speaker Pro-Tempore Jan Jones, Mr. Gregg Stevens, Mr. Terence Washington, and Governor Nathan Deal for their hard work and support. Commissioner Lowden emphasized the impact of HB 787 for state charters. Commissioner Williams encourages everyone to write thank you notes to Representative Hilton and Speaker Pro-Tempore Jones.

8. Next, Chairman Lewis asked Ms. Lauren Holcomb to introduce the research team from Georgia State University (GSU). The GSU research team discussed their analysis of the academic achievement results of start-up charter schools and links to subsequent lifelong outcomes. Dr. Peter Bluestone and Nicholas Warner from the Center for State and Local Finance recently concluded phase three of a three-part study. Dr. Bluestone provided a literature review and discussed: the treatment and control cohorts and milestones attained, the economic impact of charter schools on property values, and the average economic benefits for communities and students served by start-up charter schools. Commissioner Lowden commended the GSU research team for including a breakdown of data on racial and academic demographics. Ms. Holcomb then discussed the SCSC staff's plans for sharing research findings with schools.
9. Next, Mr. Terence Washington provided a financial accountability update. The SCSC staff have received three RFP proposals for the Approved Auditor Program and are finalizing evaluations. Chairman Lewis thanked Mr. Washington for his work. Commissioner Lowden also thanked Mr. Washington for urging operating state charter schools to submit audits on time.
10. Next, Ms. Sarah Beck provided a school opening update. Three SCSC new schools are on target to open. These schools are, The International Charter Academy of Georgia (ICAG), DREAM Academy, and SLAM Academy of Atlanta. All three schools have conducted an admissions lottery and have a few open slots. All three schools have also hired school leaders. The SCSC has provided these schools with resources for implementation.
11. Mr. Stevens then provided a school closing update. Graduation Achievement Charter High School (Graduation Achievement) is closing. Mr. Terence Washington is the SCSC contact person for Graduation Achievement personnel. The SCSC staff is focused on student transition. Foothills Education Charter High School (Foothills) is partnering with Team Challenge to ensure current Graduation Achievement's Team Challenge students can smoothly transition to Foothills. The SCSC plans to track the transition of students in the future. Commissioner Lowden commended representatives from Foothills for offering their support with Team Challenge and ensuring that students have access to a quality choice education.
12. Chairman Lewis then announced that the May 2018 SCSC meeting has been rescheduled to June 6, 2018.
13. Next, Chairman Tom Lewis asked if anyone signed up for public comment. No one signed up for public comment.
14. Having no additional items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:56 am.