

## STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

June 6, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

Georgia Department of Education Board Room  
East Twin Tower, Room 854, Atlanta, Georgia 30334

### Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Lewis at approximately 10:00 am. Commissioner Jose Perez, Commissioner Carmen Dill, and Commissioner Paul Williams were all present. Commissioner Tony Lowden joined via teleconference. Chairman Lewis verified that a quorum was present.
2. Also present was Commission staff member Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel.
3. Approximately 30 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives, charter school business representatives, Georgia Charter Schools Association representatives, and Georgia Department of Education representatives.
4. Commissioner Perez made a motion to begin Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and Commissioner Williams provided a second.
5. Commissioner Lewis called the meeting back to order following the Executive Session at approximately 10:30 a.m.
6. Commission staff members, including Terence Washington—Finance Accountability Manager, Morgan Felts—Associate General Counsel and Petitions Manager, Katie Manthey—Academic Accountability Manager, and Sarah Beck—Operational Accountability Manager, Rennie Laryea – Organizational Development Manager, Kristen Easterbrook – Business Manager and the public audience rejoined the meeting.
7. Chairman Lewis asked for an approval of the meeting minutes from the April 25<sup>th</sup> SCSC meeting. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Perez provided a second. The minutes were unanimously approved.
8. Chairman Lewis then moved to the action items on the agenda. Chairman Lewis then asked Mr. Gregg Stevens to present the action item. Mr. Stevens presented on his visit to Genesis Boys and Girls School.

9. Chairman Lewis then asked Mr. Terence Washington to present the proposed SCSC FY2019 budget. Mr. Washington explained that the SCSC will be getting a new training space which will significantly decrease its need to contract out for space for meetings and trainings. This impacted the real estate budget. He further explained that the contracts budget increased as a result of the SCSC planning to offer more direct-supports to SCSC schools. There is also an increased budget due to a new staff position within the SCSC. He then explained that House Bill 787 allowed for an increase in revenue for FY '19. The amount of schools the SCSC has served has nearly doubled since FY '15 and the amount of students those schools serve has increased by a little over ten thousand. Mr. Washington then explained that in FY '19 it is estimated that brick and mortar schools will make up nearly 55% of revenue in comparison to virtual schools. This is an increase of 5% from FY '18.
10. Chairman Lewis requested a motion to approve the budget as presented. Commissioner Perez provided a motion to approve the budget as presented by SCSC staff. Commissioner Williams provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.
11. Chairman Lewis called for a petition cycle update from Morgan Felts. She stated that all 12 schools have passed legal compliance review and that interviews will begin the following week.
12. Chairman Lewis then proceeded to the state charter school performance review portion of the meeting. Mr. Stevens gave an overview of the performance review. Mr. Stevens stated that performance reviews allow state charter schools to illustrate the actions they are taking to improve student outcomes and performance. Mr. Stevens explained that each school will have five minutes to present its plan for improvement to be followed by ten minutes of discussion with the Commission.
13. Mr. Stevens invited the leadership from Odyssey Charter School to present its plan for improvement. The school presented an action plan for improved academic performance, so far they have improved from being near the bottom of their county in performance to near the middle. They have replaced several teachers and added new teachers as well. The school has implemented a double signature system in order to improve their financial operations. There were also changes made to student & employment handbooks and they added additional information on FERPA, Civil Rights, and Protection of Pupil Rights.
14. Mr. Stevens invited the leadership from Georgia Connections Academy to present its plan for improvement. Connections Academy intends to use Test Pad to give benchmarks to students. They believe it is better aligned to standards. They met their district goal outlined in their District Improvement Plan and they are going to continue to use this strategy. They are doing curriculum updates in middle and high school similar to the updates in their elementary school.
15. Next, Mr. Stevens called upon Foothills Education Charter Highschool for its presentation. The school acknowledged they most needed to improve students' academic achievement. The school added a new pre-algebra course and other remediation courses before EOC courses. Test scores in all end-of-course exams have improved during the most recent academic year. They

formed a data team, a curriculum team, and built capacity for instructional coaching to focus on long-term improvements.

16. Next, Mr. Stevens called upon Statesboro STEAM for its presentation. The school underscored the steps it has taken to implement their initiatives with fidelity, including daily academic interventions for students in danger of failing. The school has instituted “Math Fridays” where every teacher in the school teaches math on Friday to students in differentiated academic tiers of need. They will also institute new benchmarking to measure interim progress. The school’s 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Milestone scores have gone up 20 and 30 points, respectively.
17. Chairman Lewis adjourned the meeting for lunch at approximately 11: 55 am.
18. Chairman Lewis reconvened the meeting at approximately 12:50 pm.
19. Mr. Stevens then introduced DuBois Integrity Academy. They have implemented new tools to improve their financial accountability. They received a \$700,000 grant and intend to use \$500,000 to improve their ratios. Their strong student enrollment has enabled them to keep from losing revenue. They intend to ensure their legal compliance is up to date and turn in all DOE required documents to gain those points back under operations. Monthly financial committee meetings have been implemented (four board members) to keep their finances on track.
20. Mr. Stevens noted that Liberty Tech Charter School was unable to attend and that pushed Scintilla Charter Academy up a spot on the schedule.
21. Lastly, Mr. Stevens introduced the governing board for Scintilla Charter Academy. The biggest update is that they purchased a new facility and additional acreage for a new building that is being constructed. Moving forward they are trying to raise more money for the academic side of their budget. They long term financial plans have included ongoing and rigorous training for board and staff members. They have a plan to move from a start-up loan to a long term bond over the next 10 years which is projected to save them millions of dollars over the next 30 years. The purpose of this is for better cash flow in addition to saving them money.
22. Chairman Lewis concluded the performance review portion of the meeting and asked if there were any additional items from Commissioners or individuals signed up for public comment.
23. With no additional items from Commissioners and no individuals for public comment, Chairman Lewis adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:12 pm.