

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

June 28, 2017, 9:00 a.m.

**Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Conference Room
East Twin Tower, Room 854, Atlanta, Georgia 30334**

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jennifer Rippner at approximately 9:00 am. Chairman Rippner verified that a quorum was present.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director and Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel.
3. Approximately 50 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives, charter school business representatives, Georgia Charter Schools Association representatives, Georgia Department of Education representatives, and members from the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement.
4. Commissioner Rippner made a motion to begin Executive Session to discuss personal matters and Commissioner Lewis provided a second.
5. Commissioner Rippner called the meeting back to order following the Executive Session at approximately 9:30 a.m.
6. Commission staff members, including Terence Washington—Finance and Operational Accountability Manager, Morgan Felts—Associate General Counsel and Petitions Manager, Lauren Holcombe – Director of Organizational and Resource Development, Katie Manthey—Academic Accountability Manager, and Sarah Beck—Business Operations Manager and the public audience rejoined the meeting.
7. Chairman Rippner asked for an approval of the meeting minutes from the May 31st SCSC meeting. Commissioner Tony Lowden made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Paul Williams provided a second. The minutes were unanimously approved.
8. Chairman Rippner then moved to the action items on the agenda. Chairman Rippner announced that she will be resigning as Chairman and Commissioner on August 1, 2017 and called for officer elections to fill the Chairman vacancy effective August 1, 2017.

9. Chairman Rippner called for nominations for Vice Chairman. Commissioner Lowden nominated current Vice Chairman Paul Williams and Commissioner Jose Perez provided a second. The motion passed, and Vice Chairman Williams was reelected as Vice Chair.
10. Chairman Rippner called for a motion for nominations for Chairman. Commissioner Williams motioned to nominate Commissioner Tom Lewis as Chairman. Commissioner Perez provided a second. The motion passed, and Commissioner Lewis was elected Chairman effective August 1, 2017.
11. Chairman Rippner then asked Mr. Gregg Stevens to present the next action item. Mr. Stevens presented the Cherokee Charter Academy charter amendment that would allow Cherokee Charter Academy to operate under its own governing board and not the Georgia Charter Foundation governing board that oversees both Cherokee Charter Academy and Coweta Charter Academy. Chairman Rippner asked for a motion to approve the charter amendment, Commissioner Lewis provided the motion and Commissioner Williams provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.
12. Chairman Rippner then asked Ms. Sarah Beck and Mr. Terence Washington to present the proposed SCSC FY2018 budget. Ms. Beck explained that the personnel budget increased since the SCSC will add two new staff positions in the next fiscal year. She further explained that the contracts budget increased as a result of the SCSC planning to offer more direct-supports to SCSC schools. Mr. Washington explained that the SCSC will increase its revenue in FY '18. Washington explained the revenue increase – more brick and mortar schools are operating as opposed to virtual schools. Washington also explained that he maintains contingency budgets for different levels of funding received from schools. Ms. Beck stated that the revenue for the SCSC FY2018 increased because of the addition of four new operational state charter schools.
13. Chairman Rippner requested a motion to approve the budget. Commissioner Lowden provided a motion to approve the budget as presented by SCSC staff. Commissioner Williams provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.
14. Chairman Rippner then proceeded to the state charter school performance review portion of the meeting. Chairman Rippner asked Director Holliday to explain the purpose and parameters of the performance reviews. Director Holliday stated that performance reviews allow state charter schools to illustrate the actions they are taking to improve student outcomes and performance. Director Holliday explained that each school will have five minutes to present its plan for improvement to be followed by fifteen minutes of discussion with the Commission.
15. Director Holliday invited the leadership from Dubois Integrity Academy to present its plan for improvement. The school presented an action plan for improved academic performance that includes one-to-one student technology systems, adding curriculum coaches, and formative and diagnostic assessments. The school also elaborated on its strategic plan development and implementation timeline.

16. Chairperson Rippner then introduced Foothills Education Charter High School. The school presented its new interventions and support enhancements to improve academic performance that includes a tutoring program, formative assessments, professional development, and a comprehensive needs assessment. The school will soon have a two-day strategic plan retreat with its site directors.
17. Following the presentation of Foothills Education Charter High School, Commissioner Lowden left the meeting.
18. Next, Chairperson Rippner called upon Graduation Achievement Charter High School for its presentation. The school added academic support positions, Saturday school for EOC prep, tutoring opportunities, and college and career readiness support. Additionally, the school is reviewing course curriculum with its curriculum provider, adding a senior monitoring program, and will continue working with the School Improvement Division of the Georgia Department of Education as a Priority school. The school stated that it does not intend to seek renewal with the State Charter School Commission, and instead will create a plan to seek authorization from a local school district as an inter-district school choice opportunity.
19. Chairperson Rippner then introduced the governing board of the Ivy Preparatory Academies to present on both schools in Gwinnett and Kirkwood. The schools explained that they built a new academic structure using an instructional leadership team and created additional supports such as a two-week summer institute, common benchmark assessments, a weekly job professional development, a stipend for teachers to have professional development. The schools are also taking steps toward financial compliance. The governing board will also add 9 new board members.
20. Chairperson Rippner next invited the governing board of Utopian Academy for the Arts. The governing board explained that it made enormous strides in improving its financial viability and added programs and timelines to meet operational compliance. Academically, the school conducted a needs assessment and will implement interventions and improvements that include data-driven instruction, student schedule modifications, increased professional development, personnel retention, and adding new support roles like a reading specialist, math support teacher, and a Dean of Students.
21. Chairwoman Rippner adjourned the meeting for lunch at approximately 11: 55 am.
22. Chairwoman Rippner reconvened the meeting at approximately 12:45 pm.
23. Next, Chairwoman Rippner introduced the governing board for Georgia Cyber Academy. The school explained that it is taking significant proactive strides to produce better educational outcomes for students. The school contracted for an independent academic review from a third-party that will be completed at the end of the summer. This review will recommend an educational plan and will identify areas of improvement for best practices. The school is also in the process of hiring a new school leader in coordination with their educational service provider.

Director Holliday assured the school that it has the full support of the State Charter School Commission to assist the school in making the improvements necessary to increase student achievement.

24. Chairwoman Rippner then called upon the governing board for International Charter School of Atlanta. The school stated that it increased their fundraising efforts and changed the organization that assisted the school in financial management. Additionally, the school explained that it is now using the SCSC's Comprehensive Performance Framework to gauge financial viability and will apply for the federal Charter School Program implementation grant.
25. Next, Director Holliday introduced Odyssey Charter School and explained that it and Atlanta Heights Charter School would have met performance standards in all three categories if the schools completed the governance training required by law. As such, the schools needed to address how they will meet the board training requirements in the upcoming year. Odyssey stated that it will complete the required training and that it is adding more board members.
26. Commissioner Rippner then invited Atlanta Heights Charter School to make its presentation. The school assured the SCSC that it will be attending required training in the upcoming year and that they implemented a policy to respond when board members who do not fulfill training requirements. Upon request from Director Holliday, Deputy Director Stevens asked the governing board for an update on its progress in negotiating with its educational service provider structure future operational and financial systems in a manner that meets SCSC expectations. The school stated that it is currently in the process of negotiations. Director Holliday assured the school that it has the support of the State Charter School Commission in working with its educational service provider.
27. Commissioner Rippner 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.
28. With no additional items from Commissioners and no individuals for public comment, Commissioner Rippner adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:35 pm.