

CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

August 30, 2017, 10:00 a.m.

**Oak Board Room, Department of Early Care and Learning Conference Room, Suite
East Twin Tower, Room, Atlanta, GA 30334**

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Lewis at approximately 10:03 am. All Commissioners were present including Ms. Carmen Dill, who has recently been appointed to the State Charter Schools Commission after being nominated by Governor Nathan Deal.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director, Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel, Terence Washington—Financial and Operational Accountability Manager, Morgan Felts—Associate General Counsel and Petitions Manager, Kristen Easterbrook – Business Manager.
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 June 28, 2017, SCSC meeting, as well as the minutes for the petitioner interview meetings that occurred July 18 – July 20. Commissioner Paul Williams made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Jose Perez provided a second. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Chairman Lewis asked Director Bonnie Holliday to introduce the new SCSC staff members and interns. Director Holliday introduced Rachel Stone as the new SCSC fall semester intern and Laurin Vonada as a returning intern for her third semester. Next, Director Holliday announced several internal promotions and new staff members – Ms. Sarah Beck, formerly SCSC Business Manager, was promoted to Operational Accountability Manger; Ms. Kristen Easterbrook is a new hire in the SCSC Business Manager role; Ms. Lauren Holcomb, formerly SCSC Director of Organization Development, was promoted to Chief Communications Officer; Rennie Laryea, former SCSC intern, was hired to fulfill the duties of Ms. Holcomb’s previous role as Manager of Organizational Development; and Ms. Laura Bollman was hired as the new Managing Director of the State Charter Schools Foundation.
6. Next, Chairman Lewis requested that Director Bonnie Holliday provide an update on the upcoming SCSC’s informal site meeting. Director Holliday shared that it will be at Resurgence Hall in Atlanta, Georgia on Tuesday, September 19, 2017. Commissioners Jose Perez and Clara Keith will be attending the informal site visit. Resurgence Hall is currently in its first year of operation.
7. Chairman Lewis then asked Gregg Stevens to discuss the 2017 State Charter School openings. First, Mr. Stevens announced the opening of Resurgence Hall, Genesis Innovation Academy for

Boys and Genesis Innovation Academy for Girls, the School for Arts Infused Learning (SAIL), and Coastal Plains Education Charter High School. Additionally, Mr. Stevens shared that International Academy of Smyrna, in Cobb County opened this year as a state charter school after transitioning from a locally-approved charter school. The school opened with an enrollment shortfall, but SCSC staff is currently providing technical assistance to aid the school's revision of its budget, and SCSC staff will receive monthly budget reports in order to monitor the school's progress.

8. Chairman Lewis requested Director Holliday give an update regarding school-level supports that the SCSC will provide during the upcoming year. Director Holliday shared that, along with the SCSC's standard suite of supports, such as trainings and strategic planning opportunities, the SCSC will provide additional voluntary support options for new and tenured schools. For newly approved schools that are not yet operational, the SCSC will make Implementation Specialists available to assist the new schools in preparing for operations. Additionally, schools operational for up to three years will be able to leverage partnerships with TNTP and New Leaders, as well as the support of a Governance Support Specialist. Director Holliday also explained a new program for school leaders, the Leadership Advisor Program, designed to provide individualized support to school leaders. Director Holliday emphasized that all supports are voluntary, and school will not be penalized for not participating.
9. Next, Chairman Lewis asked Director Holliday to share upcoming trainings. Director Holliday announced the Petitioner Boot Camp on September 28 at Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center. In addition, Director Holliday directed schools to save the date for the SCSC Governance Training. The first governance training is November 28-29 at the Georgia Center in Athens and the second is February 8-9 at Lake Lanier Legacy Lodge in Buford. Director Holliday also shared that the FY 18 Training and Support Calendar is available on the SCSC website.
10. Chairman Lewis then requested an update on the 2017 State Charter School Petition Review Process from Morgan Felts. Ms. Felts shared that the SCSC received a total of twelve applications this cycle. In addition, Ms. Felts stated that two applicants did not pass legal compliance. Overall, ten applicants were interviewed by the SCSC. Following interviews, six schools withdrew their petitions. Chairman Lewis asked Ms. Felts what was the status on the final four schools and Ms. Felts responded that two petitions were recommend for approval and two were recommended for denial.
11. Chairman Lewis asked Ms. Felts to share the first petition SCSC recommended to be approved. Ms. Felts stated that the SCSC staff recommended that the petition for the International Charter Academy of Georgia (ICAG) be approved by the SCSC. ICAG petitioned for statewide brick-and-mortar school to serve grades K-5 through dual language Japanese and English program. Chairman Lewis called for a motion to approve International Charter Academy of Georgia's petition. Commissioner Hogg made a motion to approve the recommended petition. Commissioner Keith provided a second. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Dill abstaining.

12. Next, Chairman Lewis asked Ms. Felts to share the second petition SCSC recommended to be approved. Ms. Felts stated that the SCSC staff recommended that the petition for SLAM Academy of Atlanta be approved by the SCSC. SLAM Academy is petitioned to serve grades K-7 with a sports theme integrated through Project-Based Learning in the Atlanta Public Schools attendance zone. Chairman Lewis called for a motion to approve the petition for SLAM Academy of Atlanta. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the recommended petition, and Commissioner Lowden provided a second. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Dill abstaining.
13. Chairman Lewis then requested Ms. Felts to discuss the SCSC staff recommendation to deny the petition for Valloita Preparatory Academy. Ms. Felts explained that the SCSC staff recommended Valloita Preparatory Academy's petition be denied as the petition did not demonstrate that the governing board and school personnel possess requisite capacity to operate a charter school that serves as its own Local Education Agency (LEA); the school did not evidence a process for identifying and selecting an administrator and/or administrative team possessing the requisite skills and knowledge to fulfill the school's LEA obligations; and neither the petition nor the interview demonstrated a strategy for integrating all aspects of its educational model into an organized, cohesive and interrelated educational model. Chairman Lewis called for a motion to approve the recommendation to deny the petition for Valloita Preparatory Academy. Commissioner Williams made the motion, and Commissioner Lowden provided a second. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Dill abstaining.
14. Commissioner Lewis then asked Ms. Felts to discuss the SCSC staff recommendation to deny the petition for Masomo College Preparatory Academy. Ms. Felts explained that the SCSC staff recommended Masomo College Preparatory Academy's petition be denied as the petition did not demonstrate that the governing board and school personnel possess requisite capacity to operate a charter school that serves as its own LEA; the governing board did not establish the practices or systems necessary to hold the school administration accountable for effective legal or financial operations; neither the petition nor the interview demonstrated a strategy for integrating all aspects of its educational model into an organized, cohesive, and interrelated educational model; and the school presented a budget that raised questions about the proposed school's financial viability. Chairman Lewis called for a motion to approve the recommendation to deny the petition for Masomo College Preparatory Academy. Commissioner Williams made the motion, and Commissioner Perez provided the second. The motion passed unanimously with Commissioner Dill abstaining.
15. Ms. Felts also shared that the SCSC staff provides opportunities for petitioners that were not recommended for approval to discuss identified deficiencies to strengthen future petitions. Additionally, Ms. Felts detailed the training opportunities provided by the SCSC and the Georgia Charter Schools Association.
16. Chairman Lewis directed Director Holliday to provide any additional items. Director Holliday explained that the deadline for commissioners to notify SCSC staff if they would like to attend the National Charter School Authorizer Leadership Conference is Friday, September 8, 2017.

Director Holliday also stated that a date for the SCSC Governance and Policy Retreat is forthcoming, but it will be in January 2018.

17. Chairman Lewis then announced that the September 27, 2017 SCSC Governing Board Meeting would be cancelled.
18. Chairman Lewis asked Ms. Easterbrook if there was anyone signed up for public comment. Mr. Johnson, who is an attorney in Atlanta and sits on the Board of International Charter Academy of Georgia (ICAG) spoke on behalf of ICAG. Mr. Johnson shared the excitement ICAG has with continuing the long-standing relationship between Japan and Georgia. Also, Mr. Johnson shared that there are 650 Japanese companies that have invested in Georgia, and this school will give the opportunity for families to take advantage of this important economic relationship.
19. Chairman Lewis adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:40 a.m.