

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

September 28, 2016, 10:00 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 10:00 a.m. Chairman Rippner verified that a quorum was present. Commissioner Suzanne Werner was absent.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director, Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel, Terence Washington—Finance and Operational Accountability Manager, Morgan Felts—Associate General Counsel and Petitions Manager, Katie Manthey—Academic Accountability Manager, and Sarah Beck—Business Operations Manager.
3. Approximately 30 members of the public also attended the meeting including representatives of charter schools, businesses, and the Georgia Charter Schools Association.
4. Chairman Rippner called for approval of the meeting minutes from the August 31st SCSC meeting. Commissioner Jose Perez made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Tony Lowden provided a second. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved by those present.
5. Chairman Rippner asked Director Bonnie Holliday to discuss the SCSC's completed informal site visits. Director Holliday described her visit to DuBois Integrity Academy in Riverdale on September 13th along with Commissioners Lowden, Perez, and Chairman Rippner. Commissioners Lowden, Perez, and Chairman Rippner shared their thoughts on the visit. There was also a groundbreaking ceremony for Pataula Charter Academy's new facility on September 16th, which was attended by Commissioners Williams, Lowden, and Hogg and Mr. Gregg Stevens. Director Holliday described Pataula as a model for a slow, controlled approach to growth. Commissioners Williams, Lowden, and Hogg shared their thoughts on the visit. Director Holliday then noted that there would be another informal site visit in November to the Georgia School for Innovation and the Classics (GSIC) in Richmond County.
6. Chairman Rippner asked Ms. Lauren Holcomb to provide an update on organizational development. Ms. Holcomb reported on several SCSC trainings that were conducted since the last meeting and described upcoming trainings. Governance training for charter school governing board members will be held on November 29th and 30th. Additionally, the SCSC will be offering an implementation specialist for newly approved schools. She also reported that mock interviews would be conducted to help petitioners better understand the process and expectations.
7. Chairman Rippner requested Ms. Katie Manthey provide an update on academic accountability. Ms. Manthey reported that 2015-2016 value-added measures updates will be released by January 2017. Feedback has been solicited from the virtual schools on controls they request to be considered and added to the evaluation model.

8. Chairman Rippner next asked Mr. Gregg Stevens to provide an update on new schools. Mr. Stevens reported that four new schools have opened. Mr. Stevens noted that the SCSC staff is closely working with Southwest Georgia STEM (SOWEGA) as a result of low student enrollment. Mr. Stevens then reported that SCSC staff has met with Cirrus Academy's governing board and has been working closely with the school. The Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA) has been contract to provide governance support and perform operations assessments on the school. The SCSC staff is also requiring Cirrus to submit monthly financial reports to monitor the school's financial stability. Director Holliday stated that some of the support services Cirrus is receiving from GCSA will be offered to all SCSC schools in the 2017-2018 school year. Chairman Rippner then invited Cirrus Academy Governing Board Chair Mr. Sheldon Hart to speak before the Commission. Mr. Hart reported that the school has hired a new principal, it has increased community relationships and transparency, and described several other areas of progress and where efforts are being focused.
9. Chairman Rippner requested Mr. Terence Washington provide an update on school headcounts performed in the past month. Mr. Washington reported that headcounts have been performed at nine schools (four new schools and five schools that added a grade level). Six of the nine schools did not meet projections—predominantly the new schools. Three schools that added grade levels met projections.
10. Chairman Rippner asked Mr. Washington to also provide an update on financial compliance. Mr. Washington reported that the FY2016 audit deadline is October 1, 2016. Last year, 73 percent of schools submitted their audits on time.
11. Chairman Rippner then requested that Mr. Stevens provide an update on SCSC process items. Mr. Stevens presented an item to authorize the SCSC Chairperson the authority to execute charter contract amendments for schools requesting to incorporate the Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) as their measure of accountability. Commissioner Lowden made a motion to approve the amendment and Commissioner Lewis provided a second. There was no discussion, and the amendment was unanimously approved by those present.
12. Chairman Rippner stated there would be no October meeting due to the National Association of Charter Schools Association (NACSA) meeting in Atlanta.
13. Chairman Rippner next called for public comment. Dr. Monica Henson of Graduation Achievement High School addressed the Commission concerning support and information that the Georgia Association of Education Leadership (GAEL) provides.
14. There being no further business before the SCSC, Chairman Rippner adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:20 a.m.