

**STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING  
2015 Governance and Policy Retreat**

**May 12-13, 2015, 12 p.m.**

**Perch Room**

**2459-H US Highway 280 West, Cordele, Georgia, 31015**

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jennifer Rippner. Chairman Rippner verified that a quorum existed. Commissioner Suzanne Werner was not present.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director, Gregg Stevens—General Counsel, Lauren Holcomb—Director of Organizational and Resource Development, Katie Manthey—Business and Operations Manager, Morgan Felts, Associate General Counsel & Petitions Manager, and Terence Washington – Finance and Operational Accountability Manager.
3. Parker Baxter, Director of Knowledge with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), was also present.
4. After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Rippner opened the meeting by welcoming commissioners to the retreat and summarizing the rationale behind developing an SCSC’s performance framework. Director Holliday continued the opening remarks by explaining several policies and projects that were initiated as a result of previous years’ governance and policy retreats. She also noted that the purpose of the 2015 retreat was to discuss the refinement and potential adoption of a comprehensive performance framework that the SCSC could use to monitor and evaluate state charter school performance in academics, operations, and finance.
5. Following the opening remarks by Chairman Rippner and Director Holliday, Parker Baxter presented the benefits of formalizing decision making processes through the adoption and utilization of a comprehensive performance framework. Mr. Baxter discussed the development of NACSA’s model performance framework as well as the organization’s role with several other authorizers in the implementation of performance frameworks. Mr. Baxter outlined the basics of the charter school bargain and highlighted how a performance framework can improve student outcomes by maintaining high standards for schools while upholding school autonomy and protecting student and public interests. Mr. Baxter outlined the need for performance frameworks to measure academics as well as a school’s finances and operations. Mr. Baxter also stressed the need for authorizers to use performance frameworks to guide their renewal decisions. Lastly, Mr. Baxter detailed how the SCSC’s previous accountability work aligns well with the goals of a performance framework, and the adoption of a framework will create greater transparency with regard to how high-stakes decisions are made.
6. Next, Director Holliday provided an overview of the draft performance framework developed by SCSC staff. Director Holliday outlined how the performance framework would measure schools based on their academic performance, financial health, and operational compliance. She stated

that each school would receive a numerical score as well as a designation of exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations for each component of the framework. Director Holliday detailed that the results of the performance framework would help staff to formulate recommendations to commissioners for charter renewals. Director Holliday also highlighted that the performance framework would assist schools and stakeholders by providing a clear and established set of expectations as well as transparent yearly measures of school performance.

7. Director Holliday then discussed the academic portion of the performance framework in detail. Director Holliday detailed the individual measures of the framework, which include federal accountability designations, student growth, and student achievement. Director Holliday also presented the academic framework's second-look provisions that utilize CCRPI scores and the school's performance on the SCSC value-added analysis.
8. After presenting the academic framework, Director Holliday led the commissioners in discussing appropriate performance thresholds for state charter schools. The commissioners discussed whether state charter schools should be expected to have the same level of academic performance as their comparison district(s) or whether state charter schools should be expected to outperform their comparison district(s). After considerable deliberation, the commissioners reached the consensus that state charter schools must be expected to outperform their comparison districts.
9. Chairman Rippner concluded the first day of the meeting at approximately 4:45 p.m.
10. On the second day of the retreat, Chairman Rippner verified that a quorum existed and reconvened the meeting at approximately 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Suzanne Werner was not present. All SCSC staff members were present. Parker Baxter was also present.
11. Chairman Rippner then provided a brief overview of the topics discussed during the first day of the retreat, highlighting that the commission concluded that requiring state charter schools to outperform their comparison district(s) academically aligned with the SCSC's mission to provide students with better educational opportunities than they would otherwise be afforded.
12. Next, Terence Washington provided an overview of the financial portion of the performance framework. Mr. Washington discussed each measure and financial indicator while detailing that the foundation of the financial framework was based on NACSA's model framework. Commissioners concurred with the financial framework suggesting minor changes to the ranges of some indicators.
13. Gregg Stevens then presented the operational framework. He identified each operational indicator as well as the expectations and measures for each. Mr. Stevens also discussed how the SCSC's monitoring activities and authority to terminate a charter for material breaches combined with the operational performance framework to ensure strong and consistent school operational compliance. Commissioners concurred with the operational performance indicators.

14. Next, commissioners and staff discussed possible interventions for schools that do not meet standards on the academic, financial, or operational portions of the framework. Director Holliday outlined the current efforts such as training, technical assistance, communication, and research that are utilized by SCSC staff to develop and improve school-level performance and capacity while respecting the autonomy to which each state charter school is entitled. Commissioners agreed that SCSC staff should provide supports and resources to schools but only in a manner that does not encroach on the school's autonomy. The Commissioners noted that the SCSC must be careful not to dictate school operations—especially as they are related to academic performance. Commissioners also discussed the process for early charter termination for schools not meeting SCSC performance standards. Commissioners encouraged SCSC staff to hold schools accountable for not meeting expectations, and they confirmed that the SCSC is prepared to terminate charters for poor performance.
15. Mr. Stevens then presented draft principles of service for commissioners. He explained that the principles of service were written to memorialize current expectations of commissioner conduct and would be used as a succession planning tool in guiding new commissioners. He explained that the document included more robust versions of current policies, such as a code of ethics, conflict of interest policy, and communication policy, as well as new sections designed to detail the operation of the commission and expectations for commissioners. Mr. Stevens asked that each commissioner carefully review the draft document and provide any feedback to Director Holliday. Upon receipt of the feedback, SCSC staff will finalize the document for SCSC approval.
16. Chairman Rippner then asked for a motion to convene an executive session to discuss federal court proceedings related to the Byron-Peach Charter High School and the SCSC. Commissioner Lowden offered a motion, and Commissioner Perez provided a second. The motion was unanimously approved by those present, and the executive session was convened at approximately 12:30 p.m.
17. The executive session concluded at approximately 12:50 p.m., and the meeting was again opened to the public.
18. Following executive session, SCSC staff recommended that the SCSC approve the consent order negotiated by the parties in the matter of *United States v. State of Georgia, Peach County School District through the Peach County Board of Education, et al.*, 5:69-CV-2771(MTT). Chairman Rippner asked for a motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the proposed consent order. Commissioner Lewis offered a motion, and Commissioner Perez provided a second. The motion was unanimously approved by those present.
19. Next, Director Holliday discussed the next steps in implementing the performance framework. She noted that SCSC staff will incorporate the decisions discussed by the commissioners and will share a revised draft as soon as it is complete. Following preliminary approval of the commission, SCSC staff will share the performance framework with schools and other stakeholders for comments and feedback. SCSC staff will then make any necessary changes to the performance framework and present it to the commission for final approval. Director Holliday hopes to have a final performance framework complete by early fall for incorporation into new charter school contracts. The SCSC will allow schools with existing charter contracts to choose whether they prefer to be evaluated under the terms of the current charters or to use

the performance framework for their accountability metric. As the existing contractual performance measures are very high and often difficult for schools to meet in totality, most, if not all, operational state charter schools will likely opt for the flexibility provided by the performance framework.

20. There being no further business before the SCSC, Chairman Rippner asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Lowden offered a motion, and Commissioner Lewis provided a second. The motion was unanimously approved by those present, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:05 p.m.