



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

July Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday July 31, 2024 at 10:00 AM EDT

Location

SCSC Board Room
1356B Twin Towers East
,
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

Virtual Access Information

[Meeting Link](#)

Phone Access: +1 305 224 1968

Meeting ID: 827 0113 9499

Passcode: 406288

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

July 2024 Board Meeting
July 31, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter
I. Opening Items		
A. Record Attendance		Mike Dudgeon
B. Call the Meeting to Order		Mike Dudgeon
II. Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes		
A. June 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes	Approve Minutes	Mike Dudgeon
III. Announcements		
A. Agency Updates	FYI	Donovan Head
B. SCSC Personnel Changes	FYI	Donovan Head
IV. Action Items		
A. Amend SCSC Meeting Calendar	Vote	Cerrone Lockett
B. Ethos Classical - Amendment	Vote	Erin Wright
C. Start-up Petition - Movement School Atlanta	Vote	Erin Wright
D. Start-up Petition - The Simple Vue Academy	Vote	Erin Wright
E. Start-up Petition - The Wright Community School	Vote	Erin Wright
F. Zest Preparatory Academy Charter School	Vote	Carmen Freemire
V. Trainings		
A. Training	FYI	Kristen Easterbrook
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past Training • Upcoming Training

Visit the Training Page of the SCSC website for real-time updates and additional information.

<https://scsc.georgia.gov/school-resources/training-opportunities>

Purpose Presenter

VI. Pre-Opening Schools

A. Update FYI Kristen Easterbrook

VII. Accountability

A. Academics FYI Katie Manthey

B. Finance FYI Carmen Freemire

C. Operations FYI Tiffany Leach

- [FY25 Monitoring Timeline](#)

D. School Probation Announcements FYI Cerrone Lockett

VIII. Additional Items

IX. Public Comment

To sign up for public comment, please complete the [Public Comment Form](#) on the SCSC website by no later than **10:00 a.m. the day before** the scheduled meeting for written comments and no later than **9:00 a.m. the day of** the scheduled meeting for comments made in person.

Please note staff will share written comments submitted via the form with Commissioners ahead of the meeting and will not be read aloud during the meeting.

<https://scsc.georgia.gov/about-us/board-meetings/public-comment>

X. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting Vote Mike Dudgeon

Coversheet

June 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Section: II. Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes
Item: A. June 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes
Purpose: Approve Minutes
Submitted by:
Related Material: Minutes for June Board Meeting on June 26, 2024

APPROVED



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Minutes

June Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday June 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Location

SCSC Board Room

1356B Twin Towers East,
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

Virtual Access Information

[Meeting Link](#)

Phone Access: +1 301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 854 3776 1028

Passcode: 381937

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

June 2024 Board Meeting

June 26, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

Directors Present

B. Brockway, C. Good, J. Cole (remote), M. Dudgeon, T. Lowden (remote)

Directors Absent

B. Scafidi, L. Millan

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Dudgeon called a meeting of the board of directors of State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia to order on Wednesday Jun 26, 2024 at 10:05 AM.

II. Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes

A. April 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes

M. Dudgeon made a motion to approve the minutes from April Board Meeting on 04-24-24.

unanimous consent

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

III. Announcements

A. Announcements

1. Please note that the SCSC has updated its public comments policy. The updated policy is available on the SCSC website. The following updates were made:

- To comment during an SCSC meeting, guests complete the public comment form on the SCSC website no later than 9:00 AM the day of the meeting. In addition, guests wishing to comment during the meeting must attend the meeting in person.
- The SCSC welcomes written comments at any time. Written communications will be shared with commissioners consistent with the SCSC Communications Policy. However, written comments submitted through the public comment form will be shared with commissioners in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting, provided they are received in the public comment form by 10:00 AM the morning before the meeting. They will not be read aloud during the meeting.

2. Scott Riley is leaving the SCSC effective June 30. He will return to his love of teaching as a 6th-grade social studies teacher at Tucker Middle School. The SCSC thanks him for his years of service to the commission, schools, students, and to the State of Georgia.

3. Henry Siebentritt will be the new SCSC Evaluations Analyst, effective July 1. Henry has been interning with the SCSC for the past six months and brings classroom teaching experience. He is a "Double Dawg," holding both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in education from the University of Georgia.

IV. HB318 Transfer

A. Updates

- The Georgia General Assembly overwhelmingly passed HB 318 during this year's session, moving the Office of Charter School Compliance and Flexibility, its duties and responsibilities, and its three staff positions from the Georgia Department of Education to the State Charter Schools Commission. Governor Kemp signed it into law, effective July 1.
- The SCSC leadership team has been working diligently on the plan for a smooth transfer, collaborating with the Office of Planning and Budget and GaDOE.
- The funding being transferred only covers the state-funded portions of each position, leaving out funding for much of what the SCSC will need to perform these statutory duties effectively.
- The SCSC will be working with the OPB, House and Senate Budget Offices, and the Governor's Office to ensure adequate funding is provided in the AFY24 budget.
- This will be a standalone line item in the budget, and state charter school withhold funds cannot, by law, be used to support locally authorized charter schools.
- The priority is to hire the Director for this new division. The position has been posted, and we are receiving applications. Only those meeting the minimum requirements will be interviewed.
- Once the director is fully on board, we will immediately begin planning the rest of the team and organizing everything to be in place by the beginning of the school year.

V. Charter Development

A. Training

As a reminder, all governing board members have until June 30th to complete their annual governance training requirements for FY24. Information about alternate training providers can be found on the SCSC website. Additional information about the Governance Training Certification process will be going out to all schools in July.

Visit the Training Page of the SCSC website for real-time updates and additional information.

<https://scsc.georgia.gov/school-resources/training-opportunities>

VI. Pre-Opening Schools

A. Update

2 new schools that are scheduled to open this fall, Excelsior Village Academies in Stockbridge and Rocky Creek Charter Academy in Augusta. Both schools have met critical pre-opening milestones and remain on track for opening this fall.

VII. Petitions

A. Update

The SCSC completed interviews of 10 start-up petitioners and one replication petitioner the week of June 3. Thank you to all the Commissioners and other panelists who participated in those interviews. The SCSC is formulating recommendations for those petitions and anticipates making them to the board at its next meeting in July.

VIII. Accountability

A. Finance

All but two state charters have submitted their selected auditors for the SCSC approved auditor program. The other two have decided to use their own auditor. As a reminder, the SCSC pays the audit only for schools that participate in this program. All audits will be due November 1.

B. Operations

LEA Legal Obligations Guidance Document has been updated to include FY 24 legislation applicable to state charter schools. Schools may review the guidance on the SCSC Operations Guidance webpage. A link will also be provided in the June SCSC newsletter.

C. School Probation Announcements

The RISE Schools were placed on probation on May 10, 2024, because its governing board demonstrated an inability to provide effective leadership or otherwise oversee the state charter school's operations. During the 2023-2024 school year, the school faced the possibility of mid-year closure due to budget shortfalls caused by over-projected student enrollment.

The documentation provided as a requirement of probation showed a plan to sustain school operations for the 2024-2025 school year. SCSC is not recommending suspension or termination of the School's charter contract at this time. However, concerns remain regarding the governing board's ability to provide effective leadership under these conditions. The School will remain on probation until June 30, 2025.

The school's probationary reporting requirements are robust. If, after reviewing interim reports, it appears that the school's continued operation would be contrary to the interests of the school's community, SCSC staff will request that this board immediately suspend school operations and issue a notice of intent to hold a hearing to determine if charter termination is appropriate.

Representatives from the school spoke to the challenges the school faced and how they plan to correct these shortfalls. Commissioners asked questions regarding enrollment, staffing, governance, and the parent community.

IX. Action Items

A. Charter Amendment - International Charter School of Atlanta

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the SCSC staff recommendation that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve an amendment to the International Charter School of Atlanta's charter contract to amend the school's mission-specific goals.

B. Brockway seconded the motion.

[ICS Atlanta Mission Specific Goals Amendment.pdf](#)

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Agency Budget Actions

C. Good made a motion to approve the SCSC recommendation that the SCSC Board of Commissioners adopt of FY25 administrative withhold, adopt of FY25 operational budget, and approve the return of unused FY24 administrative withhold funds.

B. Brockway seconded the motion.

Commissioners and staff discussed new changes to the budget from the passage of House Bill 318.

[Action Item - Budget Recommendation.pdf](#)

[FY2025 Budget Presentation Final.pdf](#)

[FY25 Budget Narrative_Final.pdf](#)

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

X. Public Comment

A. Public Comment

Juanchella Francis and Nandi Edouard spoke in favor of the SCSC approving The Simple Vue Academy.

Michael Bernard and Cherise Jefferson discussed end of year testing policies and issues in state charter schools.

XI. Executive Session

A. Personnel

B. Brockway made a motion to go into executive sessions to discuss personnel matters as authorized by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2).

C. Good seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

XII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 11:49 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Dudgeon

Coversheet

Amend SCSC Meeting Calendar

Section: IV. Action Items
Item: A. Amend SCSC Meeting Calendar
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: SCSC 2024 Meeting Calendar.pdf
Amended Meeting Calendar.pdf



2024 SCSC Meeting Calendar

The SCSC will meet on the following dates in 2024:

February 28

April 24

June 26

July 31

August 28

September 25

November 13



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Amend the 2024 Meeting Calendar

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the board of commissioners amend the 2024 meeting calendar to add a regularly scheduled meeting on August 28, 2024, at 10:00 AM and to reschedule November 6, 2024, for November 13, 2024 at 10:00 AM.

Rationale

To permit the SCSC to act on start-up and replication petitions awaiting local board decisions as soon as practicable, SCSC staff recommend amending the 2024 SCSC meeting calendar to add a regularly scheduled meeting on August 28, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

SCSC staff recommend amending the 2024 meeting calendar to move the November 6, 2024, board meeting to November 13, 2024, to account for Election Day.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Develop and maintain a strong internal foundation that aligns with and supports the SCSC's mission and vision

Coversheet

Ethos Classical - Amendment

Section: IV. Action Items
Item: B. Ethos Classical - Amendment
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Ethos Enrollment Limit Amendment.pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Charter Amendment – Ethos Classical (Enrollment Limit Maximum)

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve an amendment to Ethos Classical’s charter contract (Charter) to increase the student enrollment maximum to 1,120 students.

Rationale

Ethos Classical currently serves students in grades K-5. The school will expand its grade offerings to include 6th grade for the 2025-2026 school year, 7th grade in the 2026-2027 school year, and full enrollment of grades K-8 in the 2027-2028 school year. Due to its grade expansion and increased community interest, the school requests a charter contract amendment to increase its maximum enrollment limit from 852 to 1,120.

Over the past few years, the school’s end-of-year waitlist numbers have consistently increased, reflecting the high demand for its educational programs. This year, the school’s waitlist has reached a historical high, indicating a strong and persistent demand for enrollment at Ethos Classical. Given these trends, the school is on track to maintain, if not exceed, this rate of growth in the coming years. By increasing the school’s maximum enrollment, it can continue to fulfill its mission of providing high-quality education and fostering confident, competent scholars.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Expand high-quality middle and high charter school choice.

Coversheet

Start-up Petition - Movement School Atlanta

Section: IV. Action Items
Item: C. Start-up Petition - Movement School Atlanta
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Petition Approval - Movement.pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Approval of State Charter School Petition for Movement School Atlanta

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the petition for Movement School Atlanta, authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a charter contract for the operation of a state charter school for an initial term of five (5) years starting with the 2025-2026 school year.

Rationale

The petition and information provided by Movement School Atlanta meets all requirements of rule and law and indicate that the school can operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the education goals of Georgia. The petition demonstrated the school's ability to operate as an LEA and the governing board's capacity to oversee the school's LEA obligations. The proposed budget demonstrates fiscal feasibility. If approved, the school will be authorized to serve students in grades K-5.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase the number of academically superior state charter schools.

Coversheet

Start-up Petition - The Simple Vue Academy

Section: IV. Action Items
Item: D. Start-up Petition - The Simple Vue Academy
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Petition Approval - Simple Vue.pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Approval of State Charter School Petition for The Simple Vue Academy

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the petition for The Simple Vue Academy, authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a charter contract for the operation of a state charter school for an initial term of five (5) years starting with the 2025-2026 school year.

Rationale

The petition and information provided by The Simple Vue Academy meets all requirements of rule and law and indicate that the school can operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC’s mission and the education goals of Georgia. The petition demonstrated the school’s ability to operate as an LEA and the governing board’s capacity to oversee the school’s LEA obligations. The proposed budget demonstrates fiscal feasibility. If approved, the school will be authorized to serve students in grades 6-12.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Expand high-quality middle and high charter school choice.

Coversheet

Start-up Petition - The Wright Community School

Section: IV. Action Items
Item: E. Start-up Petition - The Wright Community School
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Petition Approval - Wright.pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Approval of State Charter School Petition for The Wright Community School

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the petition for The Wright Community School, authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a charter contract for the operation of a state charter school for an initial term of five (5) years starting with the 2025-2026 school year.

Rationale

The petition and information provided by The Wright Community School meets all requirements of rule and law and indicate that the school can operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the education goals of Georgia. The petition demonstrated the school's ability to operate as an LEA and the governing board's capacity to oversee the school's LEA obligations. The proposed budget demonstrates fiscal feasibility. If approved, the school will be authorized to serve students in grades 6-12.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase charter school choice in communities with few or no options.

Coversheet

Zest Preparatory Academy Charter School

Section: IV. Action Items
Item: F. Zest Preparatory Academy Charter School
Purpose: Vote
Submitted by:
Related Material: Emergency Ops. Grant - Zest Prep..pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Recommendation for a grant award pursuant to SCSC Rule 691-3-.05, Emergency School Operating Fund Grant.

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the State Charter Schools Commission grant Zest Preparatory Academy's Emergency School Operations grant request and award the school \$28,713.17 to be used toward the school's June 2024 TRS payment. Within fifteen (15) days of receiving the grant award, the school must submit documentation to the SCSC showing a lump sum payment to TRS in the amount of \$28,713.

Rationale

Zest Preparatory Academy (the school) submitted an Emergency School Operations Fund Grant application on July 16, 2024, seeking an award of \$200,000.00 to assist with a budget shortfall caused by low enrollment and increased payroll costs in the school's first operating year, unplanned facility repairs, and Teachers Retirement System (TRS) payment errors made by the school's back-office provider.

SCSC staff reviewed the application in accordance with the requirements of SCSC Rule 691-3-.05. Staff determined that the school is eligible for an award of grant funds for the impact of errors made by its back office provider. The back office provider's errors included making an unauthorized \$99,128.38 payment to TRS and providing incomplete information about outstanding amounts owed to TRS. In addition, the school failed to make additional timely TRS payments. As a result of these errors, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) will deduct outstanding amounts owed to TRS from the school's yearly funding allotment, which will reduce the school's monthly funding allocation throughout this fiscal year.

Based on the school's application narratives, attached documentation, and information provided by the GaDOE and TRS, the SCSC recommends a grant award of \$28,713 to cover the financial impact of the back office provider's TRS errors. The award amount will allow the school to pay outstanding TRS obligations and stabilize operations for the 2024-25 school year.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Empower all state charter schools to leverage autonomy, flexibility, and resources to meet the needs of their community.

