



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

August Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday August 27, 2025 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: +1 646 931 3860

Meeting ID: 844 2791 6648

Passcode: 965938

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

Agenda

	Purpose	Presenter
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I. Opening Items

Purpose Presenter

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

C. Approve Minutes

Approve
Minutes

Approve minutes for July Board Meeting on July 30, 2025

D. Approve Minutes

Approve
Minutes

Approve minutes for August 8 Governance & Policy Retreat on August 8, 2025

II. Division Reports

A. Executive Director's Report

Discuss

Donovan Head

B. SCSC Operations Report

Discuss

Cerrone Lockett

- Epicenter Report
- Charter School Program (CSP) Report

C. Research & Evaluation Division Report

Discuss

Henry Siebentritt

- Academic Trend Report

D. Legal Division Report

Discuss

Tiffany Leach

- Monitoring Report

E. Finance Division

Discuss

Annie Chen

- Approved Auditor Program Report
- Financial Reporting Reminders

III. State Charter School Performance Report

A. State Charter School Report: Zest Preparatory Academy

Purpose	Presenter
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IV. Action Items

- | | | | |
|---|---|------|---------------------|
| A. | Renewal Petition Timeline | Vote | Katie Manthey |
| SCSC recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the 2025-2026 renewal petition timeline, as presented. | | | |
| B. | New School Petition Timeline & Priorities | Vote | Kristen Easterbrook |
| SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the FY26 start-up and replication petition timeline, as presented. | | | |
| C. | Charter Petition Approval: The Academy for Innovation in Medicine | Vote | Kristen Easterbrook |
| SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the petition for The Academy for Innovation in Medicine (AIM), as presented, 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 2026-2027 school year. | | | |

V. Public Comment

VI. Closing Items

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|------|
| A. | Adjourn Meeting | Vote |
|-----------|-----------------|------|

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	C. Approve Minutes
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for July Board Meeting on July 30, 2025

APPROVED



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Minutes

July Board Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday July 30, 2025 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: +1 646 931 3860

Meeting ID: 844 2791 6648

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

Directors Present

B. Brockway, C. Good (remote), L. Millan (remote), M. Dudgeon, S. Sweeney, T. Lowden (remote)

Directors Absent

B. Scafidi

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 Jul 30, 2025 at 10:00 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from June Board Meeting on 06-25-25.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Division Reports

A. Executive Director

The Executive Director announced recent local charter school approvals for Richmond County and Clayton County.

In addition, the Executive Director highlighted the impact of Senate Bill 82 and noted that it makes \$250K incentive funding available to local boards that approve new charter schools. Further, he noted that the SCSC and the State Board of Education would be collaborating to establish rules to implement Senate Bill 82.

The Executive Director congratulated the new state charter schools opening this year and thanked the SCSC summer interns for their service and support of the agency.

B. SCSC Operations

The Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer shared information about the SCSC 's implementation of the new Epicenter platform and explained that email communications are forthcoming for schools about setting up their Epicenter profile. She also confirmed that the application to transfer the CSP grant from the State Charter Schools Foundation to the SCSC is pending review by the U.S. Department of Education.

C. New Schools Division

The Director of New Schools noted that there are 2 schools from this petition cycle for which we are awaiting a local decision. Those decisions are scheduled to be made by August 13, at which time the SCSC will know whether it will need to take action on these

petitions during its August meeting or whether no action will be taken because the schools were approved locally.

In addition, she announced that pre-opening planning with the schools approved today, if that occurs, will begin immediately after the meeting.

D. Legal Division

The Senior Associate General Counsel announced the dates and deadlines for this year's monitoring cycle. For additional questions about state charter school monitoring, contact Tiffany Leach directly.

E. School Support & Outreach Division

The Senior Director for School Support & Outreach updated us on the total amount of CSP funds granted this year (\$16.9M) and participation in various CSP cohort programs. She noted that participants for this year will be announced at the August SCSC meeting. She also responded to questions from the Chairman about how schools are using CSP funds.

She also noted that CSP monitoring is now underway.

F. Finance Division

The Senior Director of Finance reported that all but two schools selected auditors from the SCSC's Independent Auditor program and that related contracts have been finalized. She also announced that the Finance Division will check in with auditors this year to understand any challenges they are experiencing in receiving documents and information from state charter schools.

The Senior Director provided updates on the State Board of Education's approval of federal Title funds and noted that the Finance team is working on calculating the state charter school administrative withhold return amount.

The Chairman emphasized the importance of completing audits in a timely manner and noted that the SCSC will be considering how to address the trend of late audit submissions.

III. Action Items

A. Petition Approval Recommendation - The Meliora School

S. Sweeney made a motion to approve to staff recommendation.

B. Brockway seconded the motion.

The Board Chair and School Leader for The Meliora School expressed gratitude for the staff recommendation and for the opportunity to expand opportunities for Georgia students and the Gwinnett community.

Commissioner Sweeny noted how challenging it is to develop a new charter school.

Commissioner Brockway added that he is excited to see this school become operational and urged school representatives to keep their focus on students.

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

B. Petition Approval Recommendation - Northwest Georgia Charter Academy

B. Brockway made a motion to accept the staff recommendation.

S. Sweeney seconded the motion.

The Founder and School Leader of Northwest Georgia Charter Academy thanked the SCSC board and staff for reviewing and recommending the petition and the consultants and teams that helped the school get to this point. The School Leader explained that the school will offer a strong, evidence-based, student-centered educational option that will earn the trust and confidence of its stakeholders.

Commissioner Brockway discussed the value of public school choice throughout the state and expressed excitement about the school's location outside of metro Atlanta.

Commissioner Sweeny described circumstances where parents have to move to find options to serve the needs of unique students and the value this approval will add.

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

C. Petition Denial Recommendation - Harvest Academy

B. Brockway made a motion to approve the staff recommendation.

S. Sweeney seconded the motion.

School representatives discussed their support for Harvest Academy, congratulated the schools that earned approval votes from the commission, and shared their individual experiences with charter schools. Both speakers asked the commission to reconsider Harvest Academy for authorization.

Chairman Dudgeon noted that the petition did not establish community engagement and excitement around the community the school will serve.

Commissioner Brockway urged Harvest Academy to take the feedback received from this process to refine and improve their petition if they choose to submit another petition.

Commissioner Brockway acknowledged the need for these schools. The demand for charter schools is evidence. While this is a no for now, there could be a yes next time. He encouraged the school to keep working towards its goal.

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

IV. 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 11:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Dudgeon

Coversheet

Approve Minutes

Section:	I. Opening Items
Item:	D. Approve Minutes
Purpose:	Approve Minutes
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Minutes for August 8 Governance & Policy Retreat on August 8, 2025

APPROVED



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Minutes

August 8 Governance & Policy Retreat

Date and Time

Friday August 8, 2025 at 12:31 PM

Location

The Lodge and Spa at Callaway Gardens
4500 Southern Pine Drive
Pine Mountain, Georgia, United States, 31822

The Lodge and Spa at Callaway Gardens
4500 Southern Pine Drive,
Pine Mountain, Georgia, 31822

Directors Present

B. Brockway, C. Good, M. Dudgeon, S. Sweeney

Directors Absent

B. Scafidi, L. Millan, T. Lowden

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 Friday Aug 8, 2025 at 12:31 PM.

II. SCSC Programmatic Updates

A. Strategic Plan Report

SCSC staff discussed its proposed updates to the SCSC strategic plan to better align it with the State of Georgia standards. Commissioners and staff completed an environmental scan and confirmed current critical priorities for FY26.

B. FY26 Staff Initiatives

SCSC described new processes and initiatives for FY26, including a toolkit for state charter schools to identify and address indicators of distress early on, and updated allotment sheet processes to ensure calculations are accurate. Staff also address its next steps and plans for implementing Senate Bill 83.

III. Commissioner-Led Discussion

A. Trend Review

SCSC staff discussed pre-opening enrollment and audit submission trends, operational challenges, and interventions for mature schools.

IV. Recess (5:00pm)

A. Welcome & Reconvene

Chairman Dudgeon reconvened the commissioners for day two.

B. Policy & Rulemaking

Staff presented trend data on state charter schools with more than one opening deferral. Commissioners and staff discussed how to address multi-year opening deferrals moving forward. Staff also discussed national trends in charter legislation relevant to facility and per-pupil funding.

Staff presented research data on transportation requirement trends nationally and discussed the trends with commissioners.

C. Master Calendar & Scheduling

Commissioners and staff considered meeting dates for 2026 and school visits dates.

V. 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 11:25 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Dudgeon

Coversheet

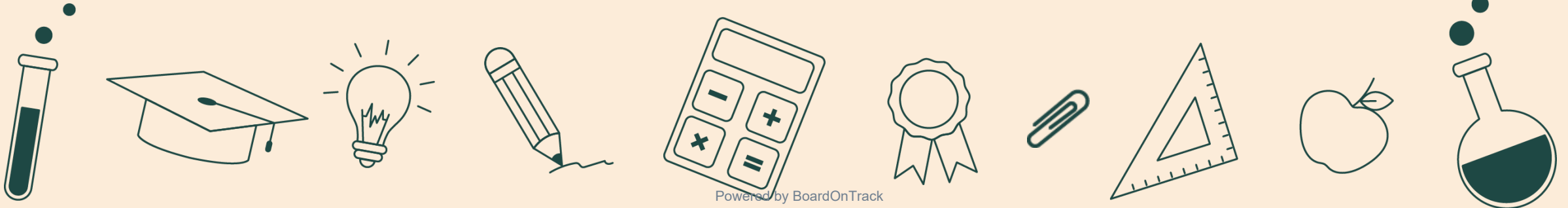
Research & Evaluation Division Report

Section:	II. Division Reports
Item:	C. Research & Evaluation Division Report
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	2024-2025 Academic Update.pdf



SCSC Accountability: Academic Trends

2023-2024 School Year and 2024-2025 GMAS Results





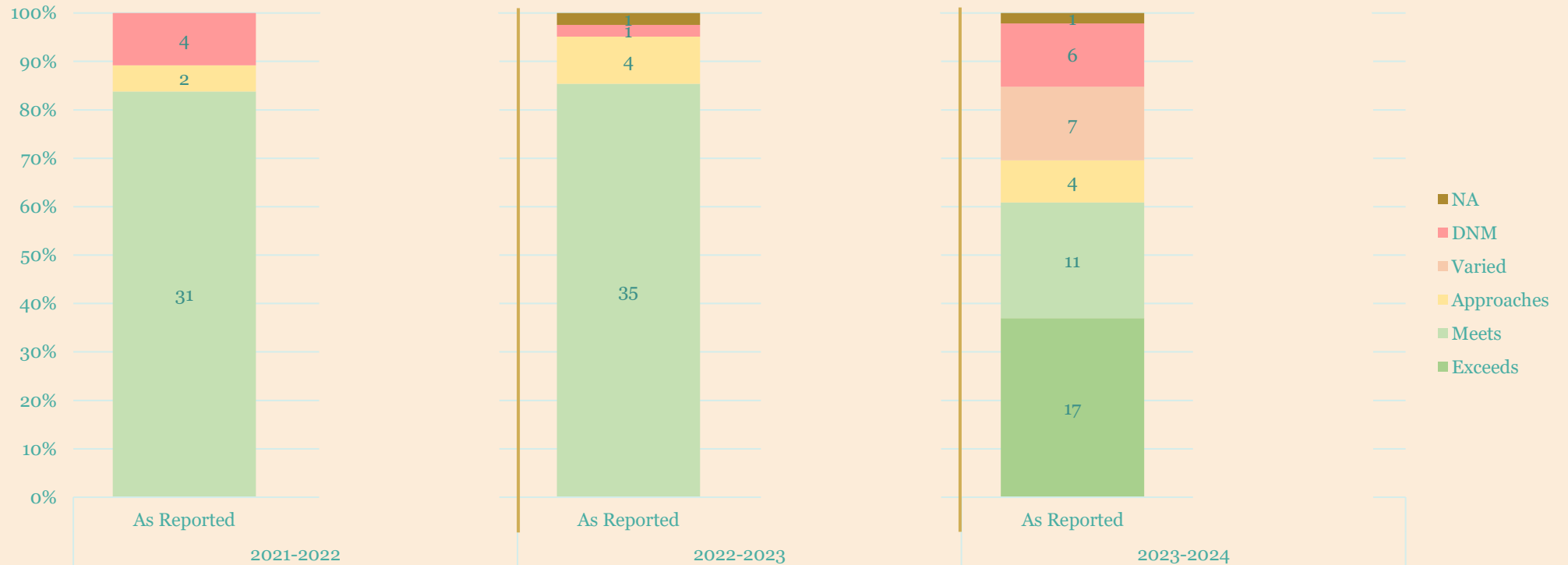
Presentation Overview

- Review of CPF Designations & CCRPI Trends
- Exploration of Key Factors Driving Trends
- Milestones 2025 Update
- Next Steps



Academic CPF Designations

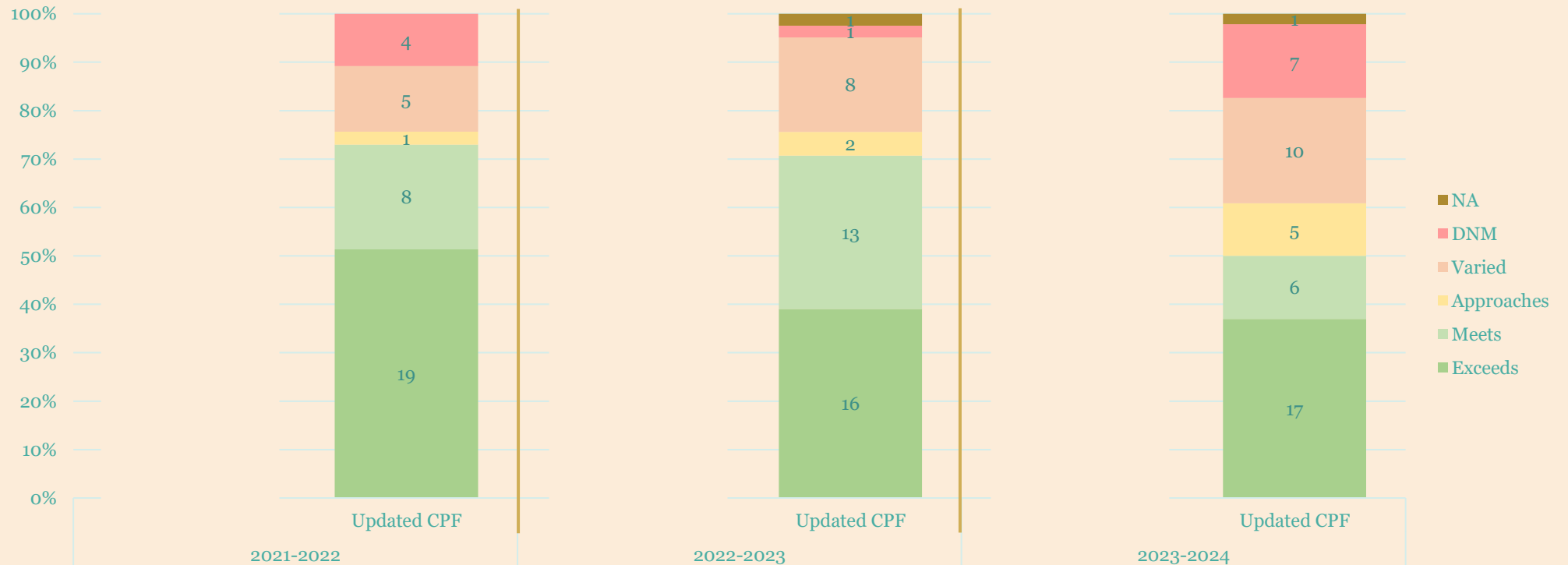
3 Year Academic Designation Trends





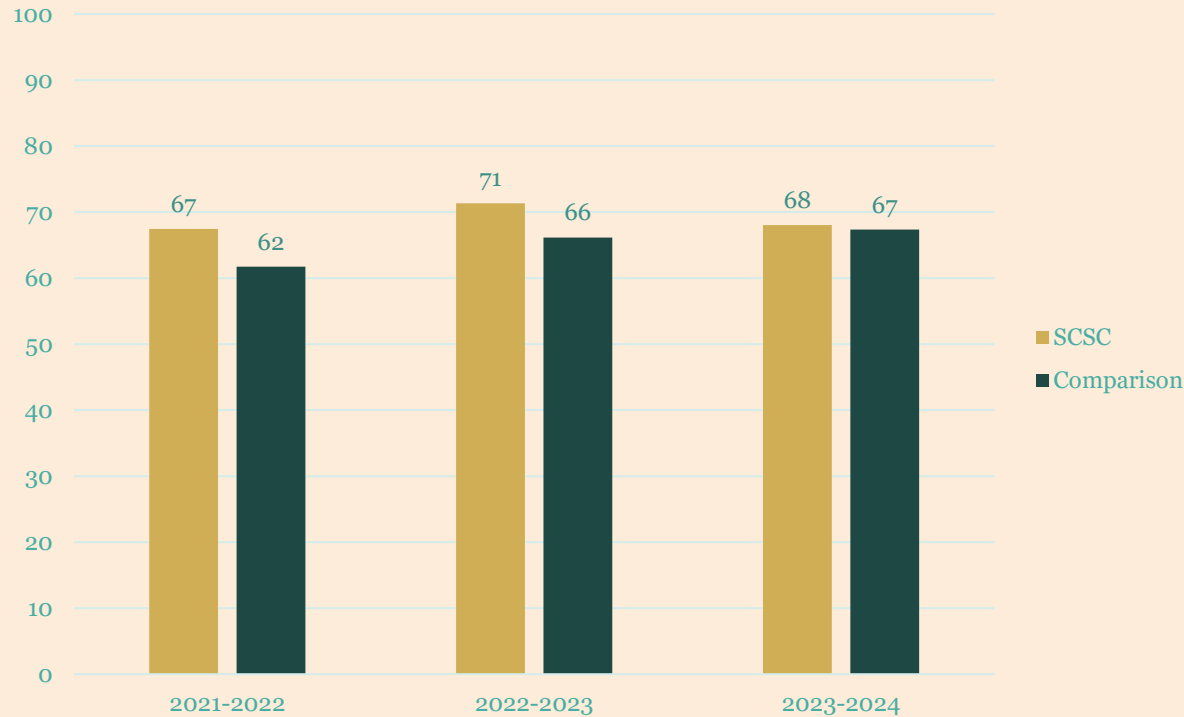
Academic CPF Designations

3 Year Academic Designation Trends





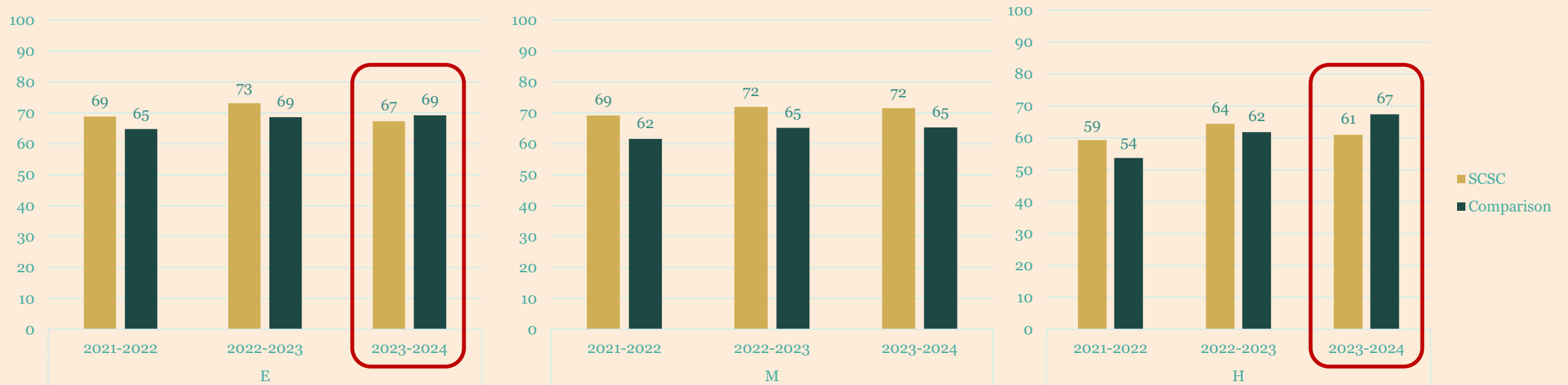
Average CCRPI Trends



- SCSC schools, on average, continued to outperform comparisons across CCRPI measures and grade bands.
- The magnitude of average outperformance shrank from ~5 to ~1 point.



CCRPI Trends By Grade Band





CCRPI Trends By Measure





Why?

SCSC staff have identified several factors, most of which fall into two broad themes:

- New Schools struggled
- State Charters struggled in Math

New Schools

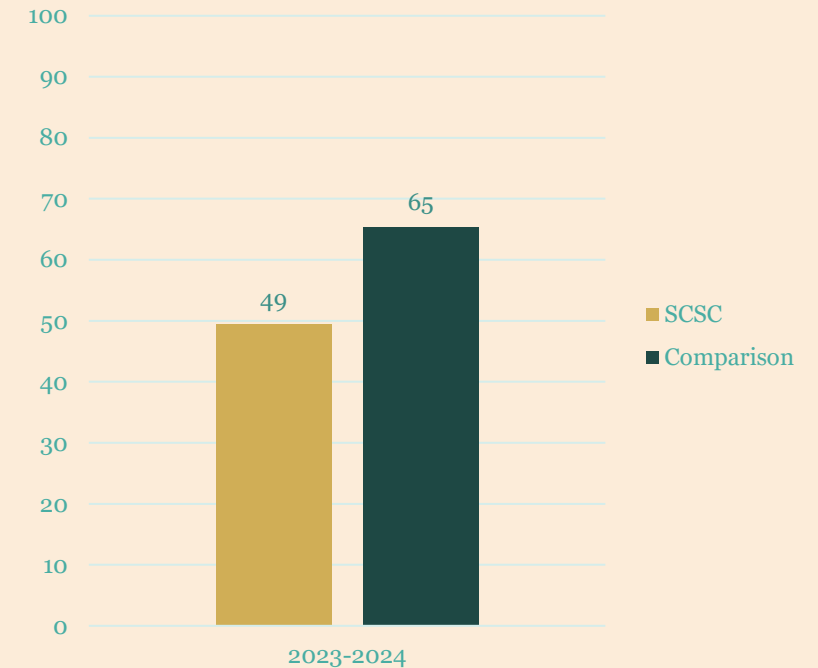
Four (4) of the seven (7) schools that did not meet standards were first-year schools

- Across all CCRPI CPF measures, these four schools averaged a 16-point underperformance.
- The remaining cohort of SCSC schools averaged a 1.5-point outperformance.

Limited scores and tested grades obscure a holistic assessment

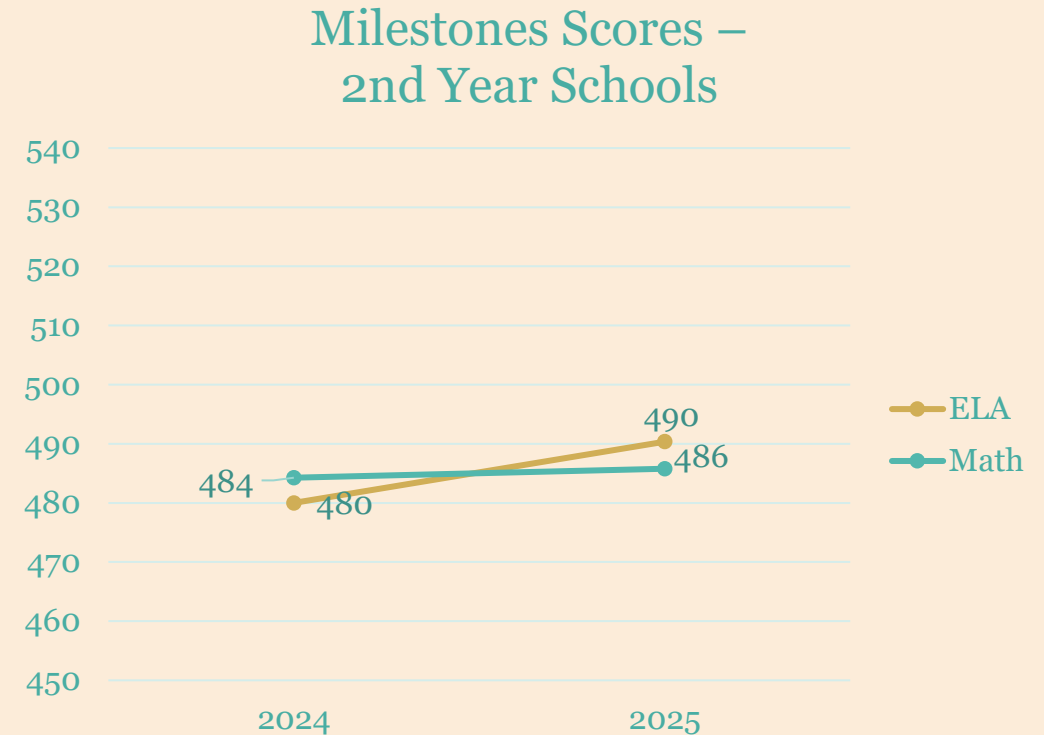
- Two (2) of the four (4) underperforming new schools only had two tested grades: 3rd and 4th. These students were in grades K and 1 during the pandemic.
- These two schools did not receive Progress scores.

2023-2024 First-Year Schools
Average CCRPI Score



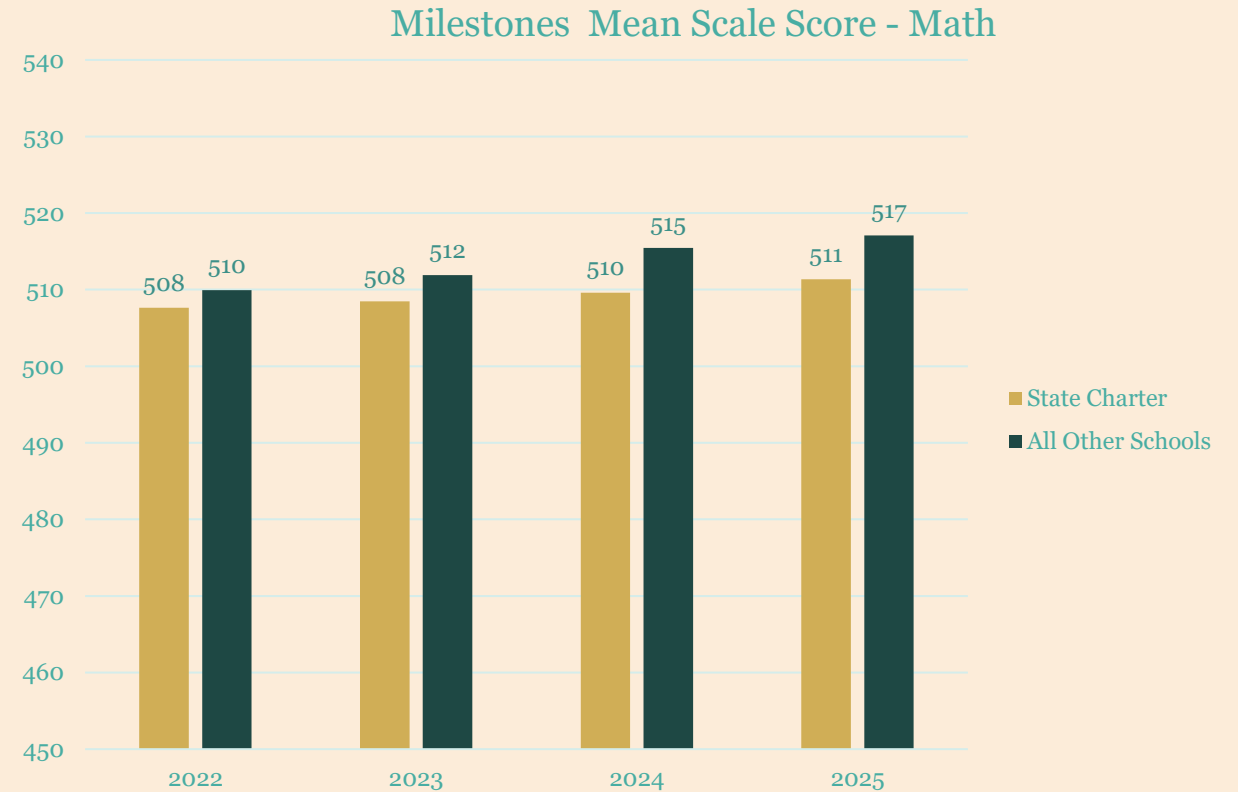
New Schools – 2025 Milestones Update

- In their second year, all four schools not meeting standards saw Milestones improvement.

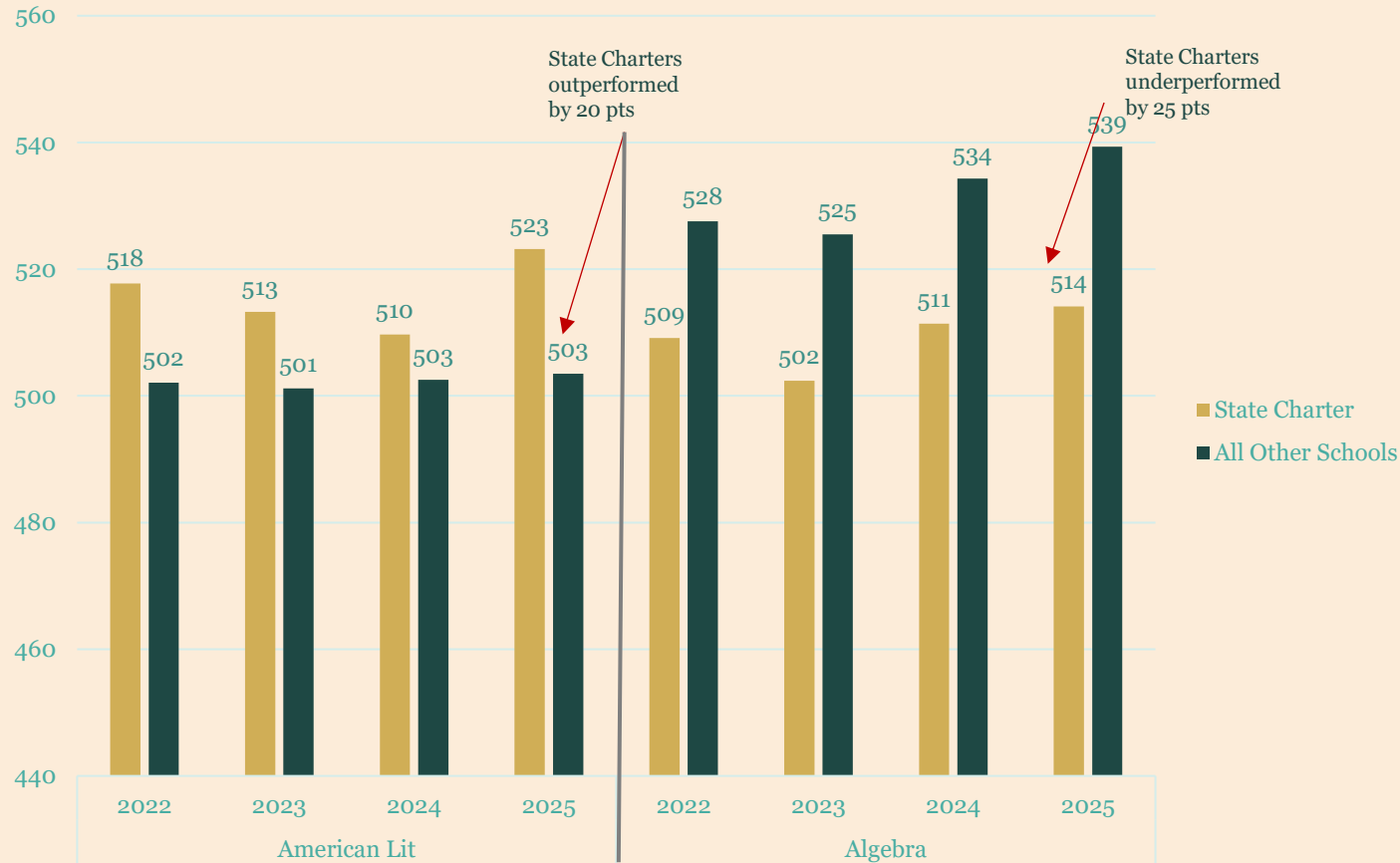


Math Performance: Elementary and Middle

- SCSC schools have struggled to improve students' math scores relative to their comparisons.
- New Math standards in the 2023-2024 school year may have had a disparate effect on state charter schools.



Math Performance: End-of-Course Tests



- 2023-24 SY High School CCRI Progress Scores only included Algebra since the pandemic.
- Once American Lit is included in this measure again, high school progress scores will likely increase for state charter schools.

Identified Issues Summary



SCSC schools continued to outperform CPF comparisons on average, but the margin of outperformance shrank in the 2023-2024 school year. Areas of struggle for state charter schools were:

- New Schools
 - In their second year, the formerly new schools that did not meet academic standards improved in Milestones scale score across grade bands and subjects.
- Math
 - SCSC schools improved in math on average, though the state average also increased.

Milestones Trends Over Time

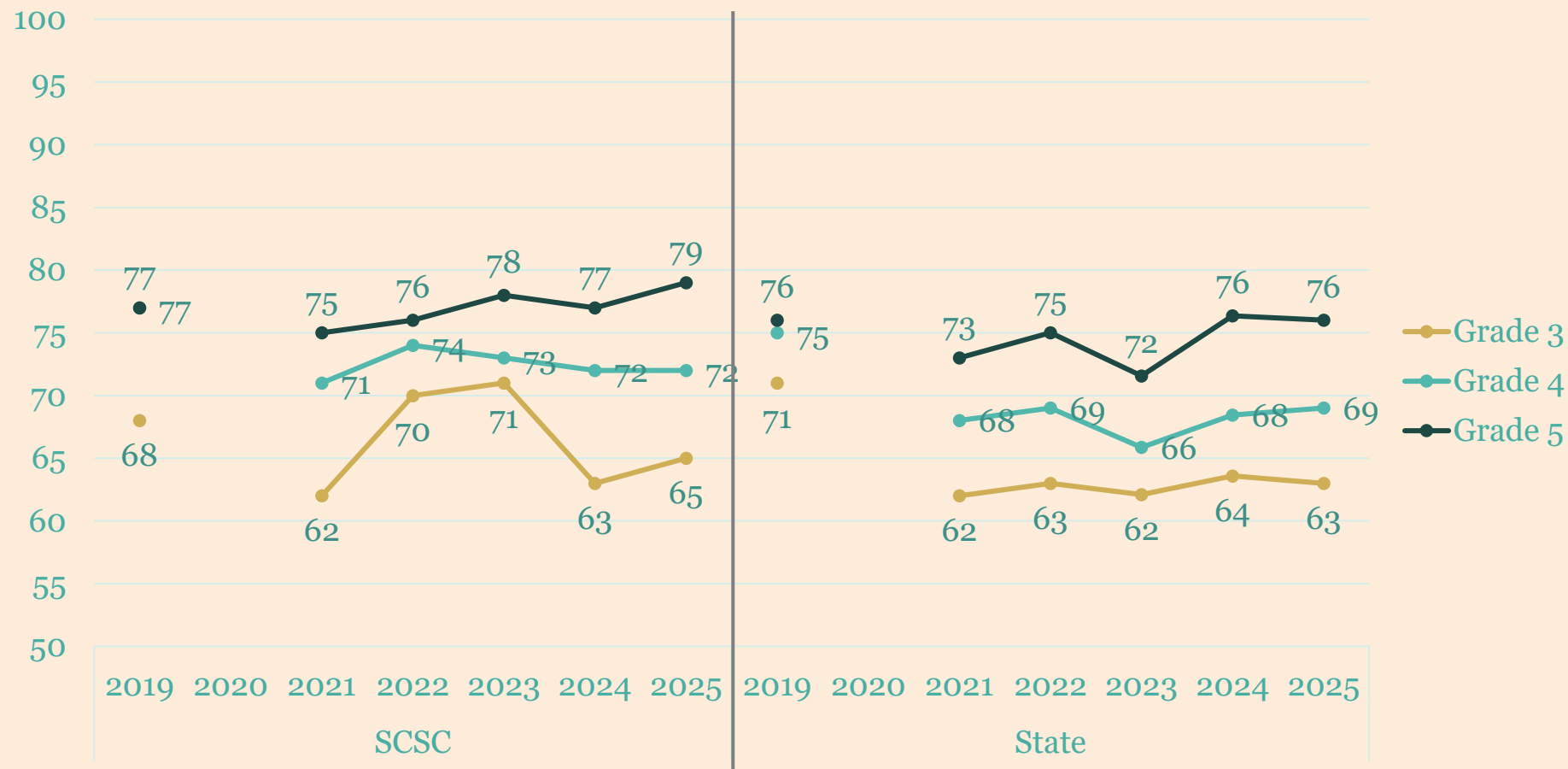


- Charts on the next several slides examine Milestones performance recovery post-COVID
- Compares the recovery of SCSC schools to the Statewide average.
- The percentage of students scoring at the Developing Learner level and Above is used as the measure of interest.

Elementary Grade Band

Georgia Milestones ELA End of Grade

% Developing & Above

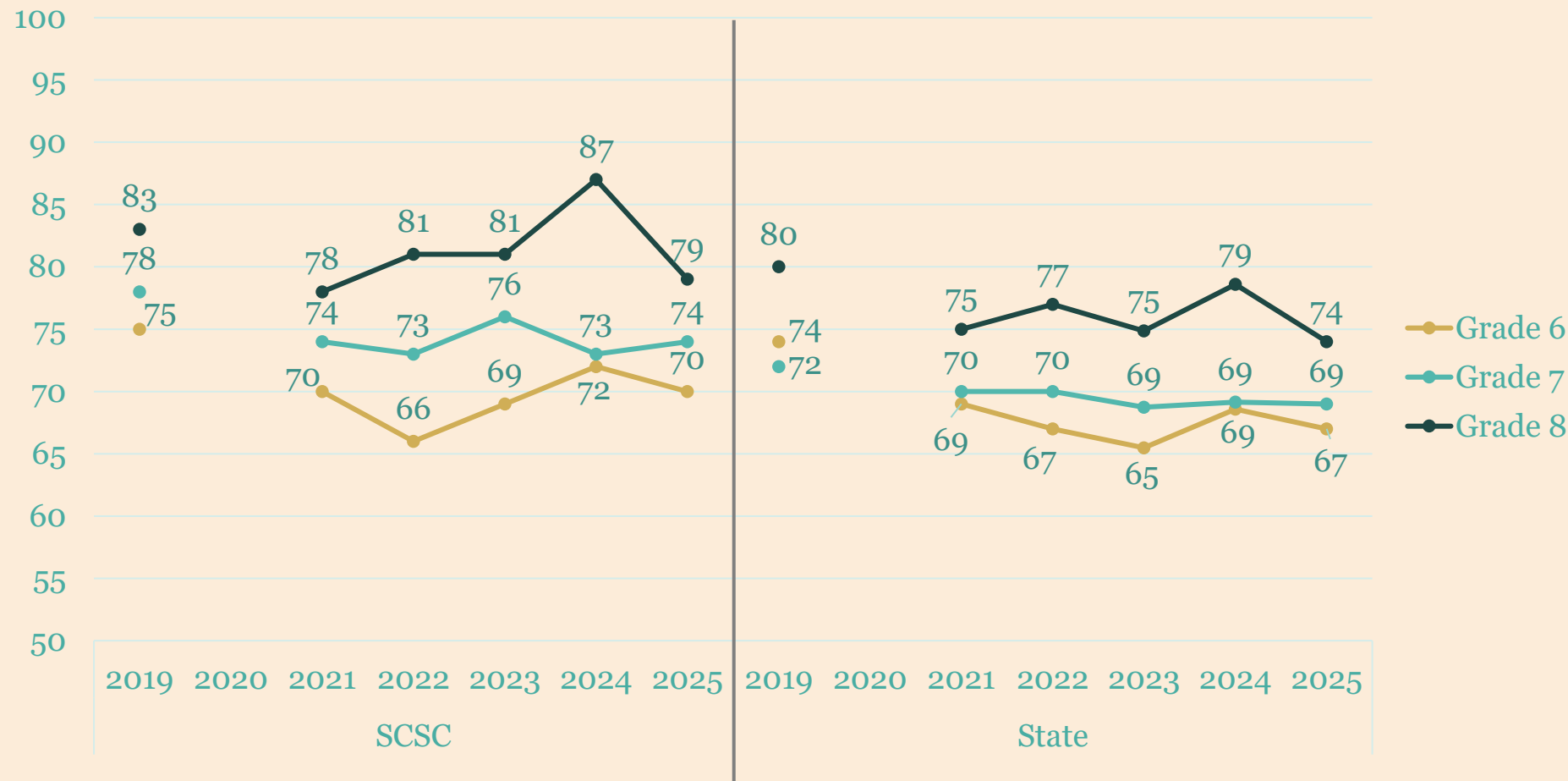


State Charter Schools had a higher share of students in the Developing & Above range than the State average for grades 3, 4, and 5.

Middle Grade Band

Georgia Milestones ELA End of Grade % Developing & Above

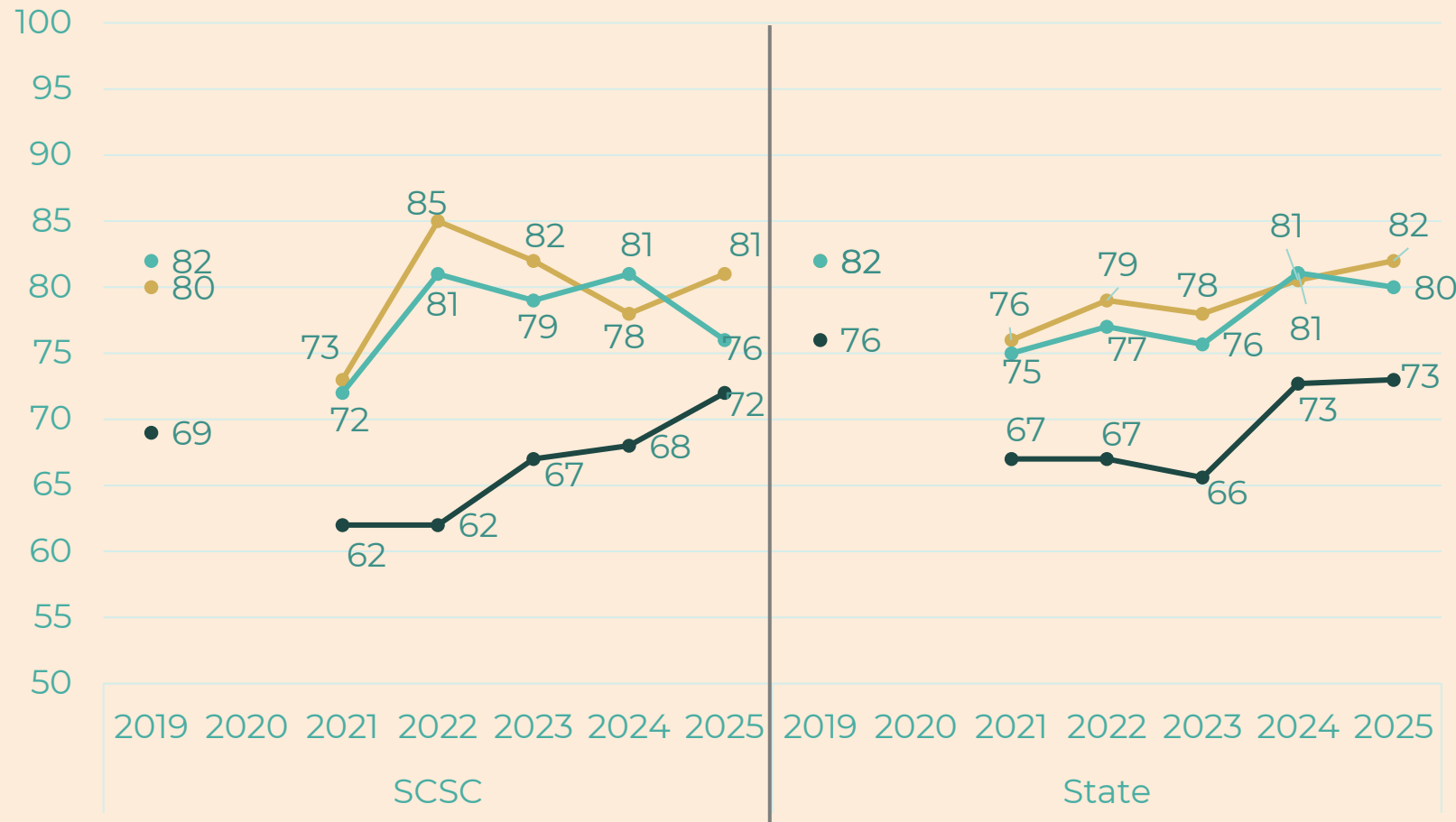
State Charter Schools had a higher share of students in the Developing & Above range than the State average for grades 6, 7, and 8.



Elementary Grade Band

Georgia Milestones Math End of Grade

% Developing & Above



State Charter Schools had a slightly lower share of students in the Developing & Above range than the State average for grades 3, 4, and 5.

State Charter schools saw improvement in grades 3 and 5 in 2025.

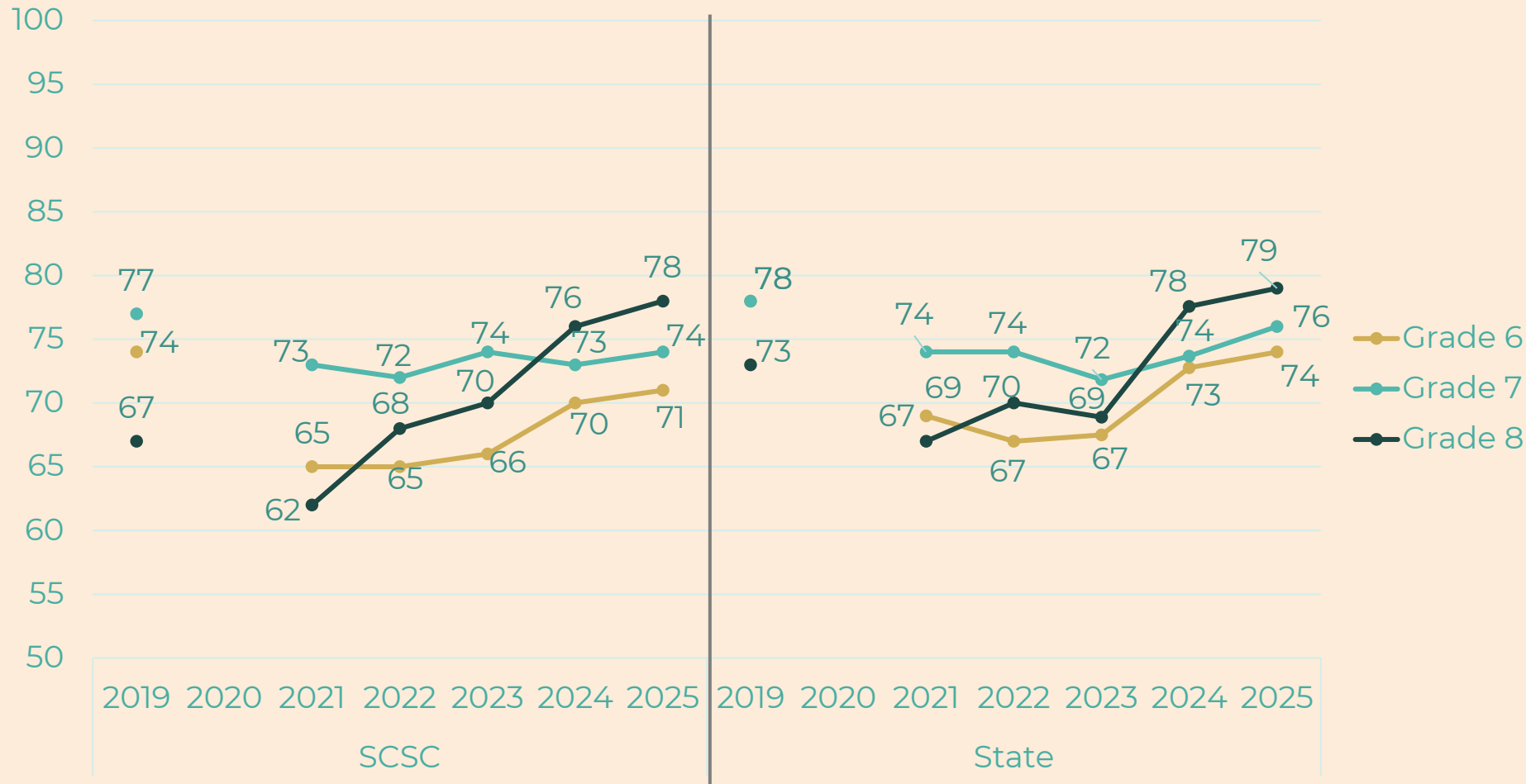
Middle Grade Band

Georgia Milestones Math End of Grade

% Developing & Above

State Charter Schools had a slightly lower share of students in the Developing & Above range than the State average for grades 6, 7, and 8.

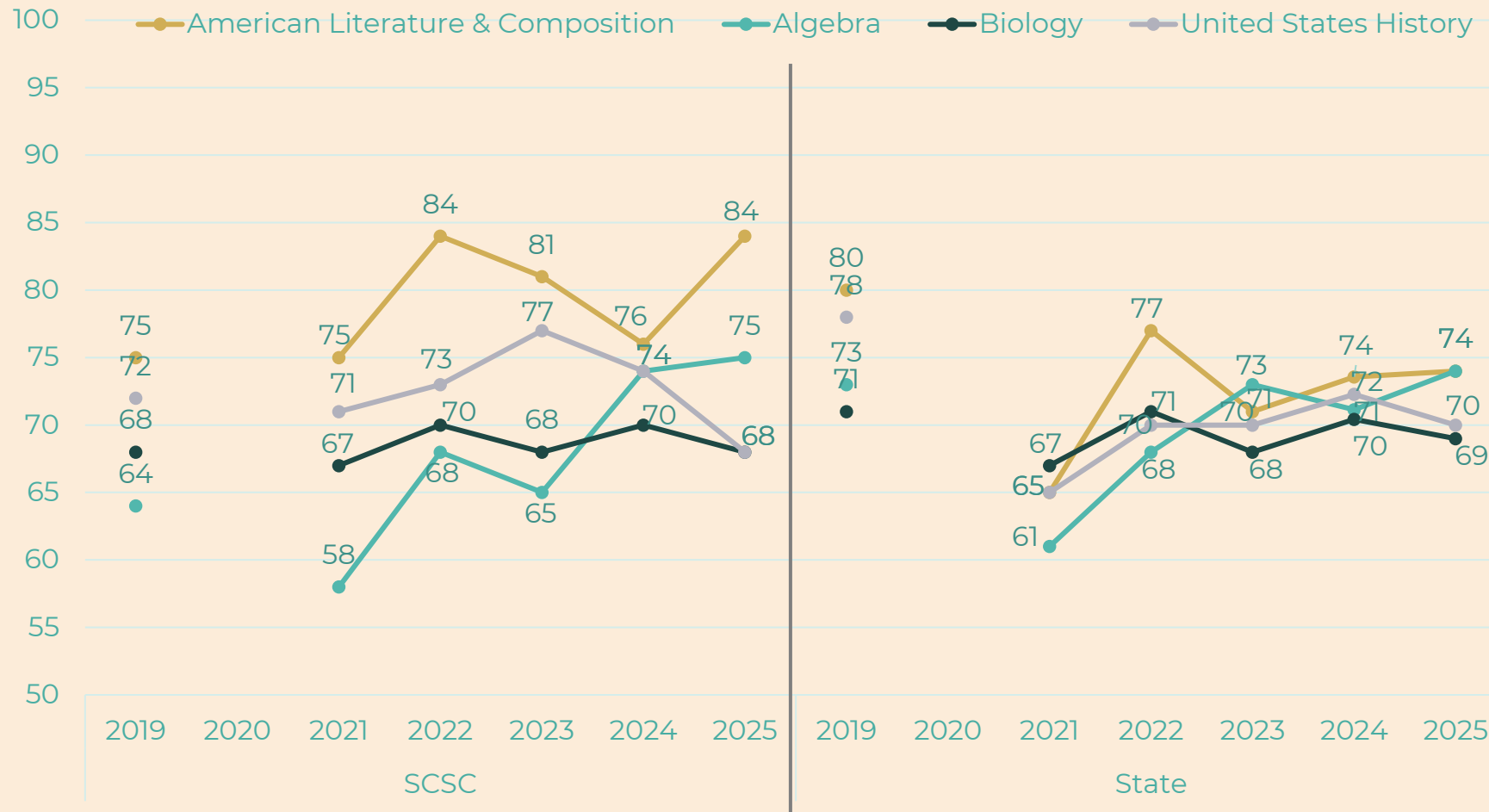
State Charters saw improvements in each of these grades for 2025.



High School Grade Band

Georgia Milestones Tested Subject End of Course

% Developing & Above



State Charter Schools share of students in the Developing & Above range increased and was slightly higher than the State average for American Literature and Algebra.

State Charters share of students in the Developing & Above range fell slightly in Biology and US History

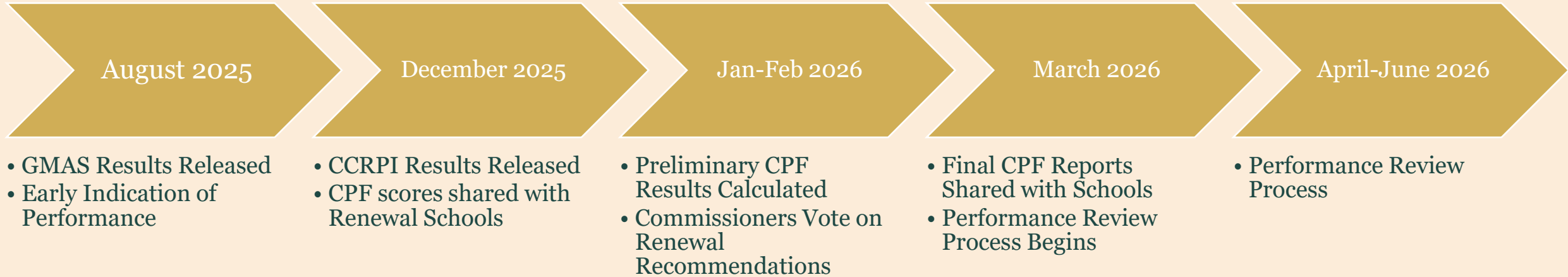
Geographic District Comparisons



A majority of state charter schools are outperforming the district in which they are located.

- 25 of 41 (61%) state charter schools serving elementary grades had a higher share of students scoring at developing learner and above across ELA and Math.
- 22 of 37 (59%) of state charter schools serving middle grades had a higher share of students scoring at developing learner and above across ELA and Math.
- 9 of 9 (100%) of state charter schools offering American Literature had a higher share of students scoring at developing learner and above. For Algebra, this figure was 11 of 18 (61%).
- ❖ Schools with no reported GMAS scores due to Too Few Students (TFS) could not be included in the figures above.

Contextualizing Milestones Results





Performance Review

Ten (10) schools submitted Tier 2 responses for academic concerns

- Major themes of problem areas:
 - Leadership Instability
 - Instructional Practices
 - Challenging Student Population
- Major themes of solutions:
 - New Leadership and Organizational Adjustments
 - Training for Instructional Staff
 - Re-evaluation of Assessment Tools

Future Support for State Charter Schools

- Scholarship to GCSA Maximizing Student Success conference
 - Academic-focused sessions cover key skills and offer practical tips in school leadership and classroom instruction.
- Conducting Ongoing Academic Progress Monitoring
 - Existing process formalized and documented on website
 - Employed when signs of significant academic distress present themselves
- Exploring ways to offer future targeted supports for schools

Questions?

Coversheet

Legal Division Report

Section:	II. Division Reports
Item:	D. Legal Division Report
Purpose:	Discuss
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Monitoring Timeline.pdf

FY26 MONITORING (OPERATIONS & FISCAL) TIMELINE

September 15, 2025 Monitoring Webinar & Health and Safety Facility Visit Notice

September 16, 2025 Monitoring Tasks Open

October 31, 2025 Submission Deadline: Operations and Fiscal Monitoring Tasks

September 2025- November 2025	Health and Safety Facility visit window
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February 2026	Monitoring Results Released
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1 week from receipt of monitoring results	Appeals Due
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6 weeks from receipt of monitoring results	Corrective Action Plans (CAP) and Remediation Evidence Due
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Questions

Operations Monitoring

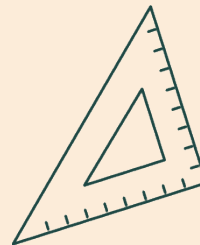
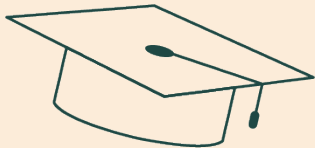
Tiffany Leach- Sr. Associate General Counsel
Tiffany.leach@scsc.georgia.gov

Fiscal Monitoring

Carmen Freemire- Sr. Director of Finance
Carmen.freemire@scsc.georgia.gov

Health & Safety Facility Visit

Robert Watts- Facility & Asset Manager
Robert.watts@scsc.georgia.gov



Coversheet

Renewal Petition Timeline

Section:	IV. Action Items
Item:	A. Renewal Petition Timeline
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Renewal Cycle Timeline Rec 2025.pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Approve the 2025-2026 Renewal Cycle Timeline

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC initiate the 2025-2026 renewal cycle by approving the renewal calendar as presented.

Rationale

Four state charter schools' contracts end on June 30, 2025, and thus these schools are eligible to submit a renewal application. Those schools are:

- Atlanta SMART Academy
- Liberty Tech Charter School
- Northwest Classical Academy
- SLAM Academy of Atlanta

The renewal cycle timeline mirrors that of previous years. The specific dates are as follows:

- September – October 2025 – Renewal Site Visits
- November 1, 2025 – School Independent Financial Audits Due
- November 4, 2025 – Renewal Application Released
- December 2025 – GaDOE 2025-2026 School Year CCRPI Scores Released
- January 6, 2026– Applications Due*
- January 27 – 29, 2026 – Renewal Interviews
- February 11, 2026 – Recommendations Letters Sent to Schools
- February 18, 2026 – Recommendations Posted
- February 25, 2026 – Commission Votes on Recommendations

**The deadline is tentative and dependent on the Georgia Department of Education's release the 2024-25 CCRPI scores.*

Strategic Plan Alignment

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

Coversheet

New School Petition Timeline & Priorities

Section:	IV. Action Items
Item:	B. New School Petition Timeline & Priorities
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	FY26 Petition Timeline and Priorities Rec.pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Adoption of the FY26 Petition Timeline & Start- Up Petition Priorities

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the State Charter School Commission Board of Commissioners vote to initiate the FY26 start-up petition cycle by approving the start-up and replication timeline and start-up petition priorities as presented.

Rationale

SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC approve the FY26 start-up and replication petition cycles as follows:

- Letter of Intent Available: October 1, 2025
- Petition Portal Opens: November 3, 2025
- Letter of Intent Deadline: December 31, 2025
- Petition Portal Closes (Submission Deadline): March 13, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.
- Interviews Begin: June 1, 2026
- Recommendation: Beginning at the July 2026 SCSC Commission Meeting

Additionally, SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC approve the FY26 start-up petition priorities as follows:

“Priority Area” is a location more than five miles from any operational charter school authorized to serve all or some of the same grade band(s) as the petitioner’s proposed school, calculated as the most direct route measured in a straight line. If approved, a petition that plans to locate a charter school in a Priority Area must locate and serve students within a Priority Area during its first operational school year.

Strategic Plan Alignment

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

Coversheet

Charter Petition Approval: The Academy for Innovation in Medicine

Section:	IV. Action Items
Item:	C. Charter Petition Approval: The Academy for Innovation in Medicine
Purpose:	Vote
Submitted by:	
Related Material:	Action Item - Petition Approval (AIM).pdf



State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Action Item – Staff Recommendation

Item Summary

Approval of State Charter School Petition for The Academy for Innovation in Medicine (AIM).

Recommendation

SCSC staff recommend that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve the petition for The Academy for Innovation in Medicine (AIM), 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 2026-2027 school year.

Rationale

The petition and information provided by The Academy for Innovation in Medicine (AIM) meet 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 middle and high charter school choice.