



## 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.

