APPROVED

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Minutes

February Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday February 28, 2024 at 10:00 AM

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

Virtual Access information:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89177012619?pwd=PaFAzHZMarKVM5O3aUES1DuTNmwom8.1
Meeting ID: 891 7701 2619
Passcode: 045768

Phone Access Information:
+1 646 931 3860

State Charter Schools Commission *of* Georgia

February 2024 Board Meeting
February 28, 2024 10:00 a.m.

Directors Present
B. Brockway, C. Good, J. Cole, L. Millan, M. Dudgeon, T. Lowden

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 Feb 28, 2024 at 10:02 AM. Commissioner Scafidi was not able to join the meeting due to presenting at a conference.

II. Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes

A. November 15, 2023, Meeting Minutes and January 26, 2024, Policy Retreat Minutes

Commissioner Dudgeon motioned to approve the minutes by unanimous consent. Both meeting minutes were approved unanimously after hearing no objections.

Minutes for November Board Meeting on November 15, 2023

Minutes for January 26-27 Policy Retreat on January 26, 2024

III. Commissioner Visits to Schools

A. School Visits

SCSC commissioners and staff will be visiting the following schools this Spring:

- ZEST Preparatory Academy
- RISE Schools
- Utopian Academy for the Arts - Trilith
- Sankofa Montessori
- PEACE Academy
- Miles Ahead Charter School
- The Anchor School
- Liberation Academy

IV. Legislative Update

A. Update

- **Amended FY24 Budget (HB 915)** passed both chambers and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

- **HB 318** is also awaiting the Governor's signature. This new legislation reestablishes the Georgia Department of Education's Office of Charter School Compliance under the SCSC. The Office of Charter School Compliance will continue to support local school systems as charter authorizers. Special thank you to our good friend, State Representative Scott Hilton!
- **HB 1122** has passed the House Education Committee. Notably, this bill would provide funding to each state charter school for the beginning salary of one superintendent. Additionally, state charter schools serving grades K-8 could earn funding for up to two principals. Schools serving grades 9-12 will earn funding for one principal.
- **Crossover Day** is Thursday, February 29.
- **Sine Die** will be on Thursday, March 28.

V. Charter Development

A. Training

- **Past Trainings:**
  - New School Orientation (1 of 2), Data Summary: The first in-person New School Orientation for FY-24 Pre-Opening Schools occurred on January 17th. 10 newly approved state charter school board members attended the training session.
  - In-Person Governance Training Session (1 of 3), The first in-person Governance Training session for FY24 occurred on November 8th in Macon, GA. 47 state charter school board members, and school stakeholders attended the training event.
  - The second in-person Governance Training session occurred on February 6th in Athens, GA. 104 state charter school board members and school stakeholders attended the training event.

- Upcoming Training
  - March 20, 2024 - New Schools Orientation pt. 2
  - April 17, 2024 - April Governance Training

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

There are 5 schools in the pre-opening cohort, and 3 of those schools are projected to open in Fall 2024. The most recent pre-opening milestone was the submission of Governing

Board member rosters; 1 out of the 3 schools projected for Fall 24 opening did not meet the milestone. The lease submission milestone was due December 15, 2023. One school has been granted a lease extension until March 15, 2024. Facility, personnel, and enrollment milestones are scheduled for March and April; a more comprehensive preopening update will be given at the April board meeting.

VII. Petitions

A. Update

The online start-up petitions portal is currently open; petitioners have until March 15, 2024, to submit a petition for a start-up state charter school. As a reminder, we have posted several trainings and resources on our website, including an orientation that petitioners are required to view this year.

The SCSC received three letters of intent to replicate from schools in December. Those schools have until May 3, 2024 to submit their replication petition in the online portal.

VIII. Accountability

A. Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) Update

Staff shared results from the Comprehensive Performance Framework for the 2022-2023 school year with schools on January 30, 2024. Schools were given until Tuesday, Feb. 20, to submit related questions or provide documentation to rebut any scores. Schools' scores are now finalized and staff will present CPF results at the next SCSC meeting in April.

B. Finance

The SCSC Director of School Finance gave an announcement on the approved auditor program.

C. Operations

- The legal compliance team is reviewing FY 24 operations and fiscal monitoring Corrective Action Plans (CAPs), which were due February 20, 2024. We expect to have CAP responses for schools by the end of March. Schools should direct any operations monitoring questions to Tiffany Leach- Associate General Counsel, Tiffany.leach@scsc.georgia.gov, and fiscal monitoring questions to Carmen Freemire- Director of School Finance, Carmen.freemire@scsc.georgia.gov
- Additionally, the SCSC has updated its LEA Legal Obligations Guidance. Schools may access the resource on the SCSC website under Operations Guidance and within the Start a School Resources pages.

IX. Action Items

A. Charter Amendment - Atlanta SMART Academy

B. Brockway made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to amend the Atlanta SMART charter contract to extend the contract term by one year.
T. Lowden seconded the motion.
A representative from the school spoke in favor of the staff recommendation.

Charter Amendment Recommendation – Atlanta SMART Academy (contract extension)
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Charter Amendment - Northwest Classical

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to amend the Northwest Classical charter contract to align the contract with the SCSC board's Grade Band Policy.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
A representative from the school spoke in favor of the recommendation.

Charter Amendment Recommendation – Northwest Classical Academy (Grade Band Completion)
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Charter Amendment - Ethos Classical

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to the Ethos Classical charter contract to expand the grades served from K-5 to K-8, increase the enrollment limit, and amend mission-specific goals.
L. Millan seconded the motion.
A representative from the school spoke in favor of the recommendation.

Charter Amendment Recommendation – Ethos Classical (Grade Band Expansion)
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Charter Amendment – Yi Hwang Academy of Language Excellence

L. Millan made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to amend the Yi Hwang Academy charter contract to expand the grades served from K-5 to K-8.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
A representative from the school spoke in favor of the recommendation.

Charter Amendment Recommendation – Yi Hwang Academy of Language Excellence (YHALE) (Grade Band Expansion)

Commissioner Lowden expressed his excitement for schools being approved for grade band expansions.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

E.

Charter Surrender - Savannah Exploratory Charter Academy

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to accept the surrender of the Savannah Exploratory Charter Academy charter contract.
L. Millan seconded the motion.
Representatives from the school explained why the school struggled to open over the years.

Charter Surrender Recommendation – Savannah Exploratory Charter Academy (SECA)
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

F. Charter Renewal Recommendation - Pataula Charter Academy

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the renewal application for Pataula Charter Academy by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a charter contract for the operation of a state charter school for five years with an opportunity to receive an automatic renewal for an additional five years.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation. SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

Pataula Charter Academy Renewal Recommendation
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

G. Charter Renewal Recommendation - Coweta Charter Academy

B. Brockway made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the renewal application for Coweta Charter Academy by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a 5-year charter contract for the operation of a state charter school.
L. Millan seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation. SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

Coweta Charter Academy Renewal Recommendation
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

H. Charter Renewal Recommendation - Georgia Cyber Academy

L. Millan made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the renewal application for Georgia Cyber Academy by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a 5-year charter contract for the operation of a state charter school.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation. SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

Georgia Cyber Academy Renewal Recommendation

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

I. Charter Renewal Recommendation - International Academy of Smyrna

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to accept the renewal application for the International Academy of Smyrna by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a 5-year charter contract for the operation of a state charter school serving grades K-8.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation. SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

Commissioner Milan read a statement from Commissioner Scafidi that expressed his support for the staff recommendation.

International Academy of Smyrna - Renewal Recommendation
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

J. Charter Renewal Recommendation - International Charter Academy of Georgia

B. Brockway made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to approve the renewal application for International Charter Academy of Georgia by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a 5-year charter contract for the operation of a state charter school serving grades K-8.
T. Lowden seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation. SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

International Charter Academy of Georgia Renewal Recommendation
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

K. Charter Renewal Recommendation - Cirrus Charter Academy

L. Millan made a motion to approve the SCSC staff recommendation to approve the renewal application for Cirrus Academy Charter School by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute an abbreviated 3-year charter contract for the operation of a state charter school.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation.

Commissioner Lowden abstained.

SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

Cirrus Charter Academy Renewal Recommendation

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

Roll Call

T. Lowden Abstain
B. Scafidi Absent

L. Charter Renewal Recommendation - SLAM Academy of Atlanta

B. Brockway made a motion to approve the SCSC staff recommendation to approve the renewal application for SLAM Academy of Atlanta by authorizing the SCSC Chair to execute a probationary 2-year charter contract for the operation of a state charter school.
L. Millan seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke in favor of the recommendation. SCSC commissioners expressed their continued support for the school.

SLAM Academy of Atlanta Renewal Recommendation
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

M. Charter Renewal Recommendation - Cherokee Charter Academy

B. Brockway made a motion to to approve the SCSC staff recommendation to non-renew the charter contract for Cherokee Charter Academy.
T. Lowden seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke against the staff recommendation.

SCSC commissioners and staff discussed the school's academic, financial, and operational history.

Commissioner Milan read a statement from Commissioner Scafidi that expressed his support for the staff recommendation.

Cherokee Charter Academy Renewal Recommendation
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

L. Millan Aye
C. Good Aye
B. Scafidi Absent
B. Brockway Aye
T. Lowden Aye
J. Cole No

N. Charter Renewal Recommendation - Fulton Leadership Academy

T. Lowden made a motion to approve the staff recommendation to non-renew the charter contract for Fulton Leadership Academy.
B. Brockway seconded the motion.
School representatives spoke against the staff recommendation.

SCSC commissioners and staff discussed the school's academic, financial, and operational history.

Fulton Leadership Academy Renewal Recommendation

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

Roll Call	
L. Millan	No
T. Lowden	Aye
B. Brockway	Aye
C. Good	Aye
M. Dudgeon	Aye
B. Scafidi	Absent
J. Cole	No

X. Additional Items

A. Updates

Kiara Thompson has been promoted to Legal Programs Specialist.

Morgan Felts was recognized for her more than a decade of service to the SCSC and charter school community as a whole. Commissioners commended Morgan for her service to the state.

XI. 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 12:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Dudgeon

Documents used during the meeting

None