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
Passcode: 965938

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