APPROVED

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Minutes

August Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday August 27, 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. Scafidi, C. Good, M. Dudgeon, S. Sweeney (remote)

Directors Absent
B. Brockway, 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 Wednesday Aug 27, 2025 at 10:11 AM.

C. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from July Board Meeting on 07-30-25.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from August 8 Governance & Policy Retreat on 08-08-25.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

II. Division Reports

A. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director noted that the state recently received a third local charter school approval, indicating that Senate Bill 82's efforts are encouraging local charter authorization. The Executive Director announced the September 15 training for state charter schools on the SCSC's new Epicenter platform.

Additionally, the SCSC updated its Charter School Program (CSP) grant transfer application, on the advice of the United States Department of Education. We are currently awaiting a decision.

B. Research & Evaluation Division Report

The SCSC Academic Evaluation Manager provided an overview of state charter school academic trends. The report reviewed College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) results, emphasizing content mastery, progress, and related performance measures in the SCSC's Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF).

The Academic Evaluation Manager identified factors that may impact the state charter school results, including school tenure and data sample sizes. Overall, state charter schools continue to outperform comparison schools/districts. Staff responded to the commissioner questions relevant to SCSC academic support initiatives.

C.

Legal Division Report

The SCSC Senior Associate General Counsel reminded commissioners that the monitoring cycle will start later than usual this year. Monitoring orientation will occur on September 15 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Schools should register to attend this training.

All monitoring tasks must be completed by October 31, giving schools approximately seven weeks to upload the required documentation. Health and safety visits will occur in September and conclude in November. Initial results should be available in February 2026.

D. Finance Division

The Approved Auditor program is underway. The finance team is in touch with auditors to monitor progress. In addition, state charter schools were notified of state-level financial submission deadlines. It appears that all state charter schools have met current submission requirements.

III. State Charter School Performance Report

A. State Charter School Report: Zest Preparatory Academy

The Zest Preparatory Academy Vice Chair, Finance Committee Chair, Chief Financial Officer, and Executive Director read a portion of a letter from the governing board chair regarding the school's operational and financial circumstances.

Commissioners Scafidi, Sweeny, Vice Chair Good, and Chairman Dudgeon reiterated the importance of submitting the audit on time and ensuring appropriate financial oversight. School representatives responded to the commissioners' questions as follows:

- School representatives affirmed twice that the school's FY25 would be submitted on time.
- School representatives confirmed that the governing board chair would be in monthly contact with the SCSC Director of Finance.
- The School's Finance Chair identified himself as the school's Treasurer. He explained that the Finance committee meets monthly, usually for about 1.5 hours before the board meetings. At a recent board meeting, the board spent a subsequent 30-40 meetings discussing finances after the Finance Committee meeting.
- The CFO reported that the school currently has 30 days of cash on hand and will end August with a net positive.
- School representatives described process changes made recently to improve financial oversight, including a new reconciliation process, recording debt and asset transactions in a register with a schedule, and reviewing transactions. In addition, the board approved a budget review policy, which requires board

approval of financial documents monthly. Further, the school has reconciled back payments with TRS and is implementing a reconciliation process for TRS payments moving forward.

- Regarding facility planning, the school's Executive Director shared that the school has been working with its new back office provider to develop facility plans for this and next year. The CFO explained that the school's priority was to stabilize its financial circumstances. It is working with contractors to review a number of facility scenarios.

The school was commended on its use of contractors but reminded of its obligations to oversee its financial situation. School representatives explained that they understood the importance of the school's current situation and its oversight obligations. Commissioners will visit the school on October 1. The school's Executive Director welcomed the visit.

IV. Action Items

A. Renewal Petition Timeline

C. Good made a motion to approve the staff recommendation as presented.
B. Scafidi seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. New School Petition Timeline & Priorities

B. Scafidi made a motion to approve the staff recommendation, as presented.
C. Good seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Charter Petition Approval: The Academy for Innovation in Medicine

B. Scafidi made a motion to approve the staff recommendation, as presented.
C. Good seconded the motion.
Dr. Christy Beam, the Founder of The Academy for Innovation in Medicine, discussed the school's goals and thanked its partners, supporters, the commission, and its staff for believing in the school's vision.

Lauren Wright, a Grady Health Systems Director, shared current and future support for the program and described the opportunities the students will be provided through the school's partnership with Grady Health Systems. In response, Commissioner Scafidi expressed thanks for Grady Healthcare Systems' partnership with the school.

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

V. Public Comment

A. Cherise Johnson

The commentator explained her disagreement with standardized testing and urged commissioners to find another way to evaluate student academic performance.

VI. 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 11:24 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Dudgeon

Documents used during the meeting

- 2024-2025 Academic Update.pdf
- Monitoring Timeline.pdf
- Renewal Cycle Timeline Rec 2025.pdf
- FY26 Petition Timeline and Priorities Rec.pdf
- Action Item - Petition Approval (AIM).pdf