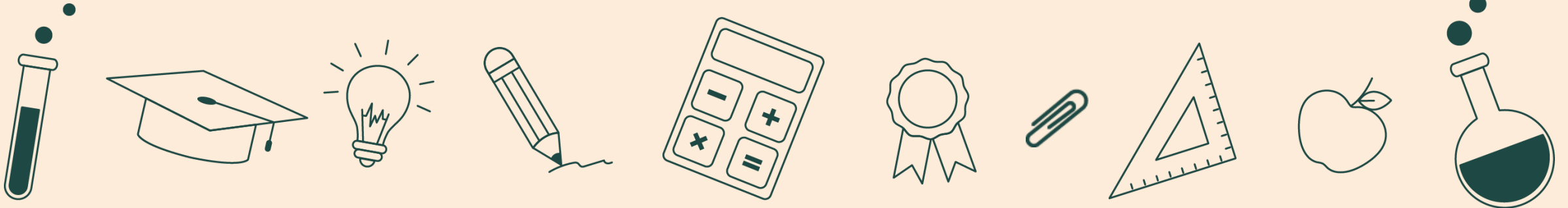




# Georgia Principles and Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing



# Code of Principles and Standards for Charter School Authorizers



- In 2017-2018 legislative session, Governor Deal signed HB430 into law
- § **20-2-2063.3**. Code of principles and standards for charter school authorizers
  - Georgia Code Title 20 – Education, Chapter 2 - Elementary and Secondary Education, Article 31 - Charter Schools Act of 1998
- **Intent:** Encourage authorizer accountability and quality charter school authorizing practices



# § 20-2-2063.3 Part A

The State Board of Education (SBOE) and the State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC) shall jointly establish a code of principles and standards of charter school authorizing to guide local boards of education, the SBOE, and the SCSC in meeting high-quality authorizing practices. The principles and standards shall include:



1. Maintaining high standards for approving charter petitions;
2. Establishing high academic, financial, and operational performance standards for charter schools;
3. Annually monitoring, evaluating, and reporting charter school progress in meeting academic, financial, and operational performance standards,
4. Upholding charter school autonomy in school governance, instructional program implementation, personnel, and budgeting;
5. Protecting students and holding charter schools accountable for their obligations to all students; and
6. Protecting the public interest and holding charter schools accountable for their obligations of governance, management, and oversight of public funds.



# § 20-2-2063.3 Part B, C & D



1. The SBOE shall provide for the annual review of local boards of education by an independent party (that has demonstrated history of evaluating authorizer performance) for adherence to the principles and standards of charter school authorizing practices.
2. A charter school authorized by a local board of education that fails to meet the principles and standards of charter school authorizing on its annual evaluation for two consecutive years **may petition to transfer its charter authorization to the SCSC**.
3. In its discretion, the SCSC may approve a charter school petitioning for authorization pursuant to paragraph (2)

C. The SCSC shall ensure that its adherence to the principles and standards of charter school authorizing practices is annually reviewed by an independent body that has a demonstrated history of evaluating charter school authorizers for quality authorizing practices.

D. The SBOE shall provide for or approve training for its staff and local board of education members on the principles and standards of charter school authorizers.



# Standards Overview



In December 2021, the SBOE adopted the standards as drafted by the SCSC and GaDOE and following a period of feedback.

The standards are designed to evaluate Georgia charter authorizing bodies on authorizing practices and are informed by both the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) [\*Principles & Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing\*](#) and [\*Georgia laws\*](#) and rules.

Five (5) Core Categories:

- 1. Authorizer Commitment & Capacity**
- 2. The Petition Process**
- 3. Performance Contracting**
- 4. Oversight and Evaluation**
- 5. Renewal and Termination**



# Evaluation Process



Evaluations will be conducted by an **independent, third-party** contracted by the State Board of Education or State Charter Schools Commission. The reviewer must have a demonstrated history of evaluating charter school authorizers for quality authorizing practices.

**Process will include:**

- 1) Orientation (Training)
- 2) School Surveys
- 3) Relevant Authorizing Documents
- 4) Authorizer Debrief and
- 5) Rubric Completion

Evaluation will distinguish between **local and state authorizer obligations**.



# Authorizer Ratings



Following the evaluation, every authorizer will be assigned an overall rating of:

- **Needs Improvement;**
- **Adequate;** or
- **Exemplary**

The overall rating categories are established in SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.06 Charter Authorizers, Financing, Management, And Governance Training.





# **Category I. Authorizer Commitment & Capacity**





# Authorizer Commitment & Capacity



**Standard 1. Human Resources.** The authorizer identifies appropriate personnel to carry out its authorizing obligations, including the point(s) of contact who will coordinate charter school support.

***Example Criterion:** The authorizer has dedicated staff to supporting the charter schools in its portfolio. Exemplary best practice specifies one employee for every 5 charter schools in the portfolio.*



# Authorizer Commitment & Capacity



**Standard 2. Financial Resources.** Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2068.1 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2089, the authorizer allocates the required financial resources to support charter schools, treats charter schools no less favorably than other local schools within the system unless otherwise provided by law, and provides transparency on the availability and allocation of charter school funding.

***Example Criterion:** Publishes and shares calculation of earning for each charter school in accordance with law, specifically:*

- Allotment sheet itemizing the calculation of state, local and federal allocations to be provided.*





# Category II. The Petition Process



# The Petition Process



**Standard 3. Petition Application.** The authorizer publishes a written petition application in accordance with state requirements and timelines. The authorizer provides reasonable and timely technical assistance and is responsive to petitioner questions.

***Example Criterion:** Petition materials (application, timelines, process guidance) are published to the authorizer's website in an easy-to-find location.*



# The Petition Process



**Standard 4. Petition Review.** The authorizer conducts petition review in accordance with state requirements. The petition review includes an evaluation team of no fewer than three individuals with diverse expertise, with at least one of the individuals having charter school experience. For the review of local charter petitions at least one of the individuals on the evaluation team shall have district administrative experience.

***Example Criterion:** Petition evaluation team includes at least three individuals that have varied and relevant skills and backgrounds (i.e. education, finance, school governance, charter experience, trained in petition review or have completed a relevant training).*



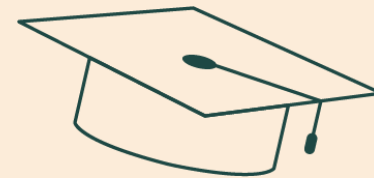
# The Petition Process



**Standard 5. Petition Decisions.** The authorizer grants charters only to petitioners that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in all aspects of the school, including a strong plan for improving student opportunities and outcomes. The authorizer makes petition decisions that are free from conflicts of interest.

***Example Criterion:** If denied, petitioner is provided a written detailed description of deficiencies.*





# **Category III. Performance Contracting**



# Performance Contracting



**Standard 6. Pre-Opening Period.** The authorizer establishes clear and necessary, but not overly burdensome expectations for the pre-opening period including, but not limited to, expectations regarding facilities, student enrollment and board development.

***Example Criterion:** Pre-opening expectations specify board development requirements including required trainings, policy development and operational oversight procedures.*





# Performance Contracting



**Standard 7. Performance Standards.** The authorizer, through the performance contract, establishes high academic, financial, and operational performance standards under which schools will be evaluated, using objective and verifiable measures of student achievement and growth as the primary measure of school quality.

***Example Criterion:** Targets, thresholds or goals for each evaluation measure are clearly defined.*



# Performance Contracting



**Standard 8. Contract Terms and Agreements.** The authorizer executes an initial contract for a term of five years that clearly outlines the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer. Agreements related to funding or in-kind services not required by OGGA §20-2-2068.1 or §20-2-2089 or that are not included in the charter contract, must be negotiated and executed in writing and signed by the local authorizer and charter school (for local charter schools) or the State Charter Schools Commission and state charter school (for state charter schools).

***Example Criterion:** Specific services provided by authorizer are negotiated and agreed to by both parties and are outlined in a written contract or agreement, if applicable.*



# Performance Contracting



**Standard 9. Authorizer Obligations.** The authorizer follows all authorizing obligations outlined in law, State Board Rule, and the charter contract.

***Example Criterion:** Contracts include applicable state and federal law and requirements.*





# **Category IV. Oversight and Evaluation**



# Oversight and Evaluation



**Standard 10. Compliance Monitoring.** The authorizer protects the public interest and holds charter schools accountable for their obligations of governance, management, and oversight of public funds. The authorizer defines, communicates, and effectively implements the processes, methods, and timing of collecting and reporting school performance and compliance information. The authorizer conducts school visits as appropriate and necessary, and annually publishes school performance data.

**Example Criterion:** *Authorizer annually publishes, to their website, a report with individual level and aggregate level school performance results based on evaluation measures included in the contracts.*



# Oversight and Evaluation



**Standard 11. Intervention.** The authorizer gives schools evidence-based and timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies and allows schools reasonable time and opportunity for remediation.

***Example Criterion:** Following each compliance site visit the authorizer provides written notification that includes information collected during the site visit, a summary of findings, areas needing improvement and is tied directly to applicable law or contract requirements.*



# Oversight and Evaluation



**Standard 12. Upholds Charter School Autonomy.** The authorizer upholds charter school autonomy in school level governance, including personnel decisions, financial decisions, curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals, and school operations.

**Example Criterion:** *The authorizer's practices recognize the school's autonomy in school governance, instructional program implementation, personnel, and budgeting.*





# Category V. Renewal and Termination





# Renewal and Termination



**Standard 13. Renewal and Termination Process.** The authorizer clearly communicates to schools the criteria for charter termination, renewal, and non-renewal that are consistent with the terms of the charter contract. The renewal process includes a written application and an opportunity for an interview.

***Example Criterion:** Renewal criteria are transparent, specific and align to performance standards and expectations outlined in the charter contract.*



# Renewal and Termination



**Standard 14. Renewal Decisions.** The authorizer bases renewal decisions on a thorough analyses of the criteria outlined in the charter contract, with objective and verifiable measures of student achievement and growth as the primary measure of school quality. The authorizer ensures the renewal decision-making processes are free of conflicts of interest. The authorizer communicates renewal decisions to the school community and public within a timeframe that allows parents and students to exercise choices for the coming school year.

**Example Criterion:** *Renewal/nonrenewal recommendations are provided through prompt, written notification to the school's governing board and the public within a reasonable timeframe, following the availability of necessary data, as to provide parents and students time to exercise choices for the upcoming school year.*



# Renewal and Termination



**Standard 15. Closure.** In the event of school closure, either at the conclusion of the charter term or during the charter term, the authorizer oversees and ensures the school governing board and leadership carry out a detailed closure protocol that includes the provisions outlined in the charter contract, such as ensuring timely notification to parents; orderly transition of students and student records to new schools; and disposition of school funds, property, and assets in accordance with law, rule and contract terms.

***Example Criterion:** Authorizer has a written policy for termination procedures that ensures timely notification to parents, orderly transition of students and student records to new schools, disposition of school funds, property, and assets in accordance with law and effectively implements policy in the event of a school closure.*



# Next Steps



## **Spring 2022:**

- Finalize evaluation process.
- SCSC secures independent party for annual review of authorizer practices.
- GaDOE secures/provides training for local authorizers on adopted principles and standards.

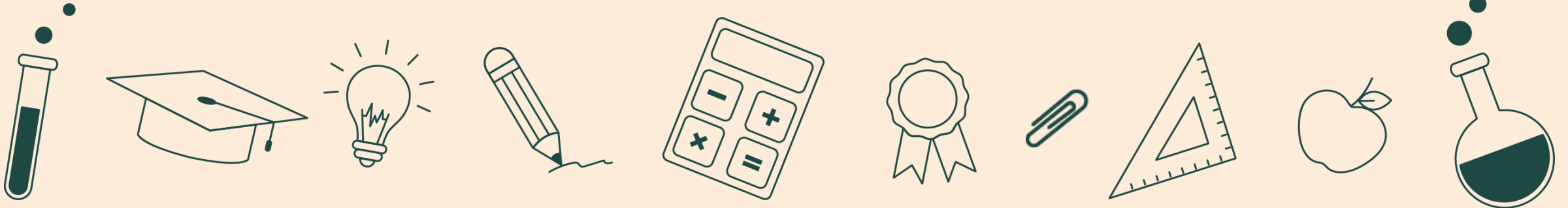
## **Summer 2022:**

- Independent party conducts annual review of SCSC authorizer practices.
- SCSC annual review is published.





# Questions?





State Charter Schools Commission

## SCSC Contact

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