



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for Cherokee Charter Academy

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners non-renew the charter contract for Cherokee Charter Academy. Cherokee Charter Academy will cease operation as a state charter school effective June 30, 2024.

#### Rationale

Cherokee Charter Academy is completing a five-year charter contract with a 1- year COVID extension. The school did not meet the academic eligibility criteria for renewal. It failed to outperform the schools its students would otherwise attend for a majority of the charter term. Cherokee Charter Academy is in its second five-year term under SCSC authorization. In the past ten years, the school has only met SCSC academic standards as outlined in the CPF in two years, once in the current and once in the previous charter term.

Cherokee Charter Academy failed to meet SCSC financial standards in the most recent year, and the financial viability of the school has significantly declined. Student enrollment has declined almost yearly for the past ten years by over 450 students total. The decline in students also represents a decline in revenue. Relatedly, the school plans to encumber additional debt. The school operated at a deficit for the past three months, for which financial statements are available. If these trends continue, the school will remain in an operational deficit and likely experience further declines in its financial CPF.

Although the school met operational standards for most of the charter term, the school's renewal interview raised significant concerns regarding the capacity of current governing board members to ensure positive academic, financial, and operational performance.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase the number of academically superior state charter schools.



## Cherokee Charter Academy

**Attendance Zone** Bartow, Cartersville City, Cherokee, Cobb, Marietta City, Pickens  
**Grade Levels Served** K-8  
**Total Enrollment** 611 (as of Oct. 2023)  
**Year Opened** 2011

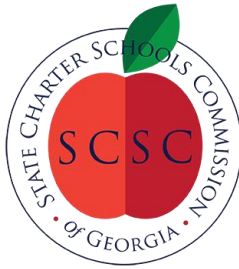
### Track Record of Performance in Current Charter Term

Section	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-2024
ACA	APP	NA	DNM	APP	Meets	Current School Year
FIN	75	80	95	80	55	
OPS	98	87	78	82	73	

Cherokee Charter Academy's (Cherokee Charter) current contract term is from July 2018 to June 2024 (five-year charter with a one-year COVID extension). The school is currently in its thirteenth school year of operations.

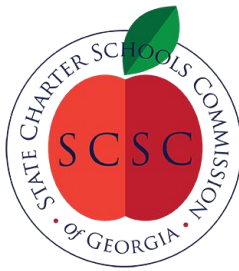
**Academic Performance:** The SCSC has tracked the Cherokee Charter's performance for ten years. The school has met academic standards in only two school years, 2013-2014 and 2022-2023. Cherokee Charter has trailed the comparison schools by about ten points in Content Mastery for both grade bands every year of the charter term, meaning Cherokee Charter Academy students are not mastering grade-level content at the same rate as students in the schools they would otherwise attend. In 2018-19 and 2021-22, the school was designated as Approaching academic standards because it had higher CCRPI Progress scores than the comparison schools' scores in the middle school grade band but not in the elementary school grade band. Seventy-one percent of the school's student enrollment is in the elementary grade band. In 2022-2023, the school met standards via the CCRPI Grade Band Score.

**Financial Performance:** Although Cherokee Charter typically met financial standards, in the most recent year, the school scored a "Does Not Meet," and its financial score declined dramatically – from an 80 in FY22 to 55 in FY23. The school scored poorly on the enrollment variance and debt-to-income measures. The school's enrollment continues to decline as it has over the past ten years. Its December enrollment report shows the school has 590 students enrolled, which is 85 students below its target of 675. Cherokee Charter's QBE funding is being reduced early (\$300,507) for FY24. Documents submitted for quarters one and two from high-risk financial monitoring indicate the school's cash balance continues to decline, and the school may end the year with a deficit. The FY22 audit revealed a negative net position, wherein liabilities exceeded assets. The school's largest



liability is a \$17M lease liability payable to Red Apple Development, a subsidiary of Charter Schools USA, the schools Educational Service Provider. The school's long-term liabilities have increased by about \$5.5M in FY23. When asked in the renewal interview about the cause of the large increase, no one could speak to it, indicating a lack of capacity by board members and school leadership to manage funds appropriately.

**Operational Performance:** Cherokee Charter has consistently met operational performance expectations. However, more recently, SCSC staff have identified concerns regarding school governance; for example, at the start of 2023, the school's governing board experienced member turnover, including the long-time board chair, and the governing board has consistently not met the legal requirements for governance training. In addition, during the 2022-2023 school year, the Georgia Department of Education reported that the school did not submit its DE46 Actual Budget and FY23 ESSER Survey on time. Finally, the school received a finding in its FY23 SCSC Monitoring Letter for not adhering to its own purchasing threshold requirements, and it failed to submit a corrective action plan that demonstrated remediation of the finding.



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for Cirrus Academy Charter School

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners 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.

#### Rationale

Cirrus Academy Charter School (Cirrus) is completing a probationary 2-year charter contract. Cirrus met the academic standards by outperforming the schools its students would otherwise attend in the two most recent years for which data are available. Cirrus met financial standards for the past three consecutive years, demonstrating financial viability.

Generally, the school has stable operational performance; however, in 2023, the school had significant deficiencies related specifically to federal program compliance and employing proper governance oversight. The board and school leadership have completed a corrective action plan to remedy the issues and have processes in place to improve the school's operational standing on the CPF.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase charter school choice in communities with few or no options.



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## Cirrus Academy Charter School

Attendance Zone	Statewide
Grade Levels Served	K-8
Total Enrollment	498 (as of Oct. 2023)
Year Opened	2016

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**Table 1. Historical Track Record of Performance**

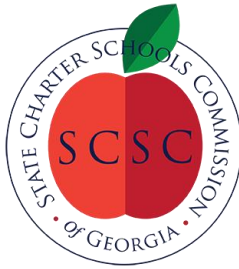
Section	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
ACA	DNM	DNM	APP	NA	DNM	Meets	Meets
FIN	50	40	45	75	85	95	80
OPS	70	85	79	88	79	78	64

Cirrus Academy previously went through renewal in the 2021-2022 cycle and was granted a 2-year charter contract with stipulations for improvement. The current contract term is from July 2022- June 2024. The school is currently in its eighth year of operation.

The SCSC reviews at least three years of data when assessing school performance for renewal. For a school with a two-year charter contract, only one year of data will be available when the school goes through the renewal cycle. As such, the previous two years of data will also be considered. For Cirrus, this includes school years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. These years are outlined in the table above.

**Academic Performance:** Cirrus met academic performance standards in the 2022-2023 school year by having a higher CCRPI Grade Band score when weighted based on grade band enrollment. In the 2021- 2022 school year, Cirrus had higher CCRPI Progress scores than the comparison schools in both the elementary and middle school grade bands. Cirrus typically outperforms in the middle-grade band but not the elementary-grade band. Only about one-third of Cirrus's students are enrolled in grades 6-8. Cirrus has been removed from the CSI (Comprehensive Support and Improvement School) as a school in the lowest performing 5% of all the Title I Schools. Although the school still generally performs below the comparison schools in CCRPI Content Mastery, it did demonstrate improvement.

**Financial Performance:** Although Cirrus struggled to meet financial standards early on, the school has met financial standards for the three most recent years. It lost financial points in FY23 due to a high enrollment variance. However, on a positive note, the school has increased its unrestricted days cash to 143 days (45 days is what is required to meet), increased its aggregated efficiency margin, and decreased its debt-to-asset ratio from 88% to just under 79%, meaning it has sufficient assets compared to its liabilities.



**Operational Performance:** For the majority of the charter term, Cirrus met or was close to meeting operational standards. However, in 2023, the school had significant operational deficiencies. The school's FY23 audit identified material weaknesses in its internal control over financial reporting, and it received three findings from the Georgia Department of Education's FY23 Cross-Functional Monitoring. School governance has also been a major concern. The SCSC has received several complaints about the school's governance during FY23. Tension existed between the governing board and the school's administration, including the school leader. In recent months, it appears that school administrators and governing board members have been working together more cooperatively, as the SCSC has not received governance complaints concerning the school since October 2023. At the school renewal interview, both parties seemed to have resolved their issues and are back on track. The board has also onboarded new members and is working to provide them with adequate training.



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for Coweta Charter Academy

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners 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.

#### Rationale

Coweta Charter Academy (Coweta Charter) is completing a standard five-year charter contract with a 1- year COVID extension. Coweta met the academic eligibility requirements for a standard 5-year renewal by outperforming the schools its students would otherwise attend in all years of the current charter term.

Coweta Charter has a demonstrated track record of stable financial performance and has consistently met operational compliance standards as outlined in the CPF.

All evidence indicates the school will continue to operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the educational goals of Georgia.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase charter school choice in communities with few or no options.



## COWETA CHARTER ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE ZONE	COWETA, MERIWETHER, SPALDING COUNTIES
GRADE LEVELS SERVED	K-8
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	734 (as of Oct. 2023)
YEAR OPENED	2013

**Table 1. Historical Track Record of Performance**

Section	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	MEETS	NA	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	Current School Year
FIN	60	70	80	75	75	
OPS	100	90	83	83	73	

Coweta Charter Academy is completing a 5-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, their current contract term is from July 2018 - June 2024.

**Academic Performance:** Coweta Charter has met SCSC academic performance standards for the past six years, meaning it is providing a better educational option for its students than they would otherwise receive in the traditional district school. Coweta Charter consistently outperforms the comparison schools' score on content mastery in both grade bands served, elementary and middle, meaning students master grade-level content at a higher rate than the comparison schools.

**Financial Performance:** The school met financial standards in one year and approached financial standards in three of five years. Coweta Charter scored a 75 (Approaches) in both FY22 and FY23 (a score of 80 is meeting). The only metric for which the school received 0 points was the debt-to-asset ratio; however, the ratio did marginally improve from FY22 (106%) to FY23 (105%). The predominant source of debt is the school's bond, which was used to finance the facility. The school owns its building but not the land, which is leased via a subsidiary of its Educational Service Provider, Charter Schools USA.

**Operational Performance:** Coweta Charter has consistently met operational expectations throughout the charter term. However, in the most recent year, 2022-2023, the school earned an "Approaches" standards designation. In its renewal application, the school noted it had hired a consultant to inspect and determine the root cause of operational concerns. Additionally, the board hired a new school leader and a Federal Programs, Grants, and Operations Director to ensure compliance and provide accountability and clarity across all areas of federal programs.





## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for Fulton Leadership Academy

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners non-renew the charter contract for Fulton Leadership Academy. Fulton Leadership Academy will cease operation as a state charter school effective June 30, 2024.

#### Rationale

Fulton Leadership Academy is completing a five-year charter contract with a 1- year COVID extension. The school did not meet the academic eligibility criteria for renewal. It failed to outperform the schools its students would otherwise attend for a majority of the charter term. Fulton Leadership Academy is in its second five-year term under SCSC authorization. In the past ten years, the school has only met SCSC academic standards as outlined in the CPF in three years, once in the current and twice in the previous charter term.

Fulton Leadership Academy failed to meet SCSC financial standards for a majority of the charter term, and the financial viability of the school has significantly declined. Student enrollment has declined almost yearly for the past seven years by over 240 students total. The decline in students also represents a decline in revenue. Relatedly, the school's lease payments are high and not sustainable. FLA could not provide documentation that the leaseholder is willing to reduce costs or adjust the agreement terms. If these trends continue, the school will not have a positive cash flow to operate for the upcoming school year.

Although the school met operational standards for most of the charter term, the school still has areas for improvement.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase the number of academically superior state charter schools.



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## FULTON LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE ZONE	SOUTH FULTON AND CLAYTON COUNTY, ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRADE LEVELS SERVED	6-12
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	166 (as of Oct. 2023)
YEAR OPENED	2013

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**TABLE 1. HISTORICAL TRACK RECORD OF PERFORMANCE**

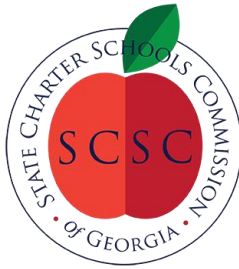
Section	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	APP	NA	MEETS	APP	APP	Current School year
FIN	45	55	95	60	60	
OPS	98	90	68	71	86	

Fulton Leadership Academy is completing a 5-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, the current contract term is from July 2018 - June 2024. The school previously went through renewal in the 2017-2018 cycle. The school is in its tenth year of operations.

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**Academic Performance:** The SCSC has tracked the Fulton Leadership Academy's (FLA) performance for ten years. The school has met academic standards in only three school years: 2013-2014, 2016-2017, and 2020-2021. FLA is designated as "Approaches Standards" most years because it outperformed the comparison score in one grade band (middle school) but not the other (high school). Student enrollment is evenly split between the middle and high school grade bands. In the 2022-2023 school year, the school outperformed on all measures in the middle-grade band but outperformed no measures at the high school level. FLA met standards in 2020-2021 because it had a higher score in the middle-grade band, but too few students tested in the high-school grade band to generate a score. FLA was recently removed from the CSI (Comprehensive Support and Improvement School) as a school in the lowest performing 5% of all Title I Schools.

**Financial Performance:** FLA has consistently struggled to meet financial standards. In Fiscal Years (FY) 2019, 2020, 2022, and 2023, the school earned no points on the enrollment variance or debt-to-asset ratio measures. The main contributing factor to the school's debt is the 25-year triple net lease with an annual 3% escalator currently totaling \$13.8M and a continuous decline in enrollment. Due to concerns regarding the continued financial viability, the school submitted a budget modified to include FY25 revenue. The intent was to verify that the school could support a positive cash flow for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond. To be feasible, the budget was tied to increased enrollment



and decreased current lease payments. The school did not provide a robust student enrollment plan, and given FLA's downward enrollment trends, it is difficult to predict that the school will be able to reach the enrollment targets submitted in the budget. If the enrollment target for the upcoming school year is not reached, the school will have insufficient funds to operate until the end of the 2024-2025 school year. FLA did not submit supplemental information confirming reduced lease payments from its leaseholder. Additionally, during its renewal interview, the school explained that it still had not reached an agreement with its leaseholder, nor did it have a firm date when such an agreement may go into effect. If the lease agreement is not reduced, the school will have insufficient funds to operate until the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

**Operational Performance:** FLA met operational standards for a majority of the charter term, including the most recent school year. In the two years it struggled (FY21 and FY22), the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) federal programs monitored the school. In both years, GaDOE noted that the school failed to meet standards related to federal education, financial, and employee qualification requirements. Since then, the school has improved its policies and procedures.



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for Georgia Cyber Academy

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners 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.

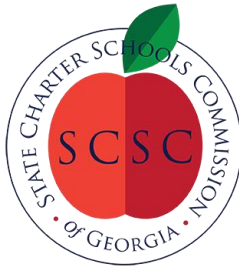
#### Rationale

Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) is completing an abbreviated 3-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. GCA met the eligibility requirements for a standard 5-year renewal by outperforming the schools its students would otherwise attend in all years of the current charter term and by meeting financial and operational standards for a majority of the current charter term.

All evidence indicates that the school will continue to operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the educational goals of Georgia.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Expand high-quality middle and high charter school choice.



## GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE ZONE	STATEWIDE
GRADE LEVELS SERVED	K-12
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	9,762 (as of Oct. 2023)
YEAR OPENED	2014

**Table 1. Historical Track Record of Performance**

Section	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	NA	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	Current School Year
FIN	85	100	100	80	
OPS	100	87	93	79	

Georgia Cyber Academy is completing a 3-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, their current contract term is from July 2020 - June 2024. The school previously went through the renewal cycle in 2018-2019 renewal cycle.

**Academic Performance:** The school met SCSC academic standards in the three most recent years, meaning it is providing a better educational option to its students than they would otherwise receive in the traditional district school. GCA had higher CCRPI Content Mastery scores than the comparison schools' scores in the middle and high school grade bands in 2022-2023. Although the school failed to outperform in the elementary grade band that year, when calculating a whole school score based on grade band enrollment, overall, GCA had a higher score than the comparison.

**Financial and Operational Performance:** GCA has consistently met financial and operational performance standards. The school maintains a viable and sustainable financial disposition. The school employs appropriate governance policies, attends required training, and executes an educational program that aligns with state requirements and charter contract expectations. GCA is currently remediating Federal Programs compliance issues which contributed to the operational performance decline in 2022-2023.



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for International Academy of Smyrna

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners approve 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.

#### Rationale

The International Academy of Smyrna (IAS) is completing an abbreviated 3-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. IAS met the academic eligibility requirements for a standard 5-year renewal by outperforming the schools its students would otherwise attend in all years of the current charter term.

IAS has a demonstrated track record of stable operational performance, and the school presented a plan to improve its financial viability. By adding a middle school, IAS will be able to increase student enrollment and accompanying revenue. Additionally, IAS provided documentation from its bondholder identifying modified payment terms for the next three fiscal years that will improve the school's financial standing on the CPF.

All evidence indicates that the school will continue to operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the educational goals of Georgia.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Expand high-quality middle and high charter school choice.



## INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF SMYRNA

**ATTENDANCE ZONE** COBB COUNTY; MARIETTA CITY SCHOOLS  
**GRADE LEVELS SERVED** K-5  
**TOTAL ENROLLMENT** 301 (as of Oct. 2023)  
**YEAR OPENED** 2017

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**Table 1. HISTORICAL TRACK RECORD OF PERFORMANCE**

Section	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	Current School Year
FIN	70	75	50	
OPS	86	78	78	

International Academy of Smyrna is completing a 3-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, their current contract term is from July 2020 - June 2024.

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**Academic Performance:** IAS met academic standards for the past four years that data are available, meaning it is providing students with a better educational option than they would otherwise receive at the traditional district schools. In the 2022-2023 school year, IAS outperformed the comparison school score on CCRPI Content Mastery (+8 points), Progress (+10 points), and Grade Band Score (+16). Preliminary data also suggest the school had statistically significantly higher Value-Added Impact scores than the schools its students would otherwise attend.

**Financial Performance:** IAS consistently struggles with the debt-to-income and debt-to-asset ratio measures. Most of the school's financial issues stem from its debt of \$15.3M from a bond that the school is paying for its land and building. The school decreased its current liabilities to approximately \$365,000 in FY23, down from \$3.3M in FY22, improving its current ratio. IAS addresses the issue of its debt in its renewal application. The school anticipates that with continued financial flexibility, it can still be successful. The school intends to add a middle school to its new charter with plans to increase student enrollment and income.

**Operational Performance:** IAS met operational standards three out of the last five years. Generally, the school employs appropriate governance policies, creates a safe and healthy learning environment, and executes an educational program that aligns with state requirements and charter contract expectations. IAS has been two points shy of meeting operational expectations in the last two years. Not all governing board members fulfilled the annual training requirement in both years.



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for International Charter Academy of Georgia

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners 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.

#### Rationale

International Charter Academy of Georgia (ICAG) is completing its first five-year charter contract with a 1- year COVID extension. ICAG met the eligibility requirements for a standard 5-year renewal by outperforming the schools its students would otherwise attend in all years of the current charter term and by meeting financial and operational standards for a majority of the charter term.

Additionally, by meeting standards in all sections of the CPF for the three most recent years, ICAG meets the SCSC's criteria for grade band expansion.

All evidence indicates that the school will continue to operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the educational goals of Georgia.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Expand high-quality middle and high charter school choice.





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## INTERNATIONAL CHARTER ACADEMY OF GEORGIA

ATTENDANCE ZONE	STATEWIDE
GRADE LEVELS SERVED	K-5
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	231 (as of Oct. 2023)
YEAR OPENED	2018

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**Table 1. Historical Track Record of Performance**

Section	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	MEETS	NA	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	Current School Year
FIN	75	95	95	80	95	
OPS	87	92	82	84	92	

International Charter Academy of Georgia is completing an initial 5-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, their current contract term is from July 2018 - June 2024.

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**Academic Performance:** ICAG has met academic standards every year since opening, meaning it is providing its students with a better educational option than they would otherwise receive at the traditional local schools. The school has an exemplary track record. In the 2022-2023 school year, ICAG outperformed the comparison schools by almost 20 points on Content Mastery and was five points higher on CCRPI Grade Band Score.

**Financial Performance:** ICAG consistently meets financial expectations and demonstrates a financially viable track record. The school typically meets standards across most financial metrics, both short-term and sustainability, and consistently submits its annual independent financial audit before the required deadline.

**Operational Performance:** ICAG has consistently met operational expectations. The school employs appropriate governance policies, attends required governance training, creates a safe and healthy learning environment, protects student and employees' rights, and executes an educational program that aligns with state requirements and charter contract expectations.



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for Pataula Charter Academy

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners 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.

#### Rationale

Pataula Charter Academy (Pataula) is completing a standard five-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Pataula met the eligibility requirements for a standard 5-year renewal by academically outperforming the schools its students would otherwise attend and meeting financial and operational standards as outlined in the CPF in all years of the current charter term.

Pataula is completing its second five-year term. The school has met standards in each section of the SCSC CPF for the past ten years; it exceeded academic standards for a majority of the current charter term by scoring ten or more points higher than comparison schools score on one or more academic measures within the CPF and has not been placed on probation in the last two charter terms. Meeting the aforementioned criteria earns the school a five-year charter renewal with an automatic additional five-year extension when certain renewal criteria are met.

All evidence indicates that the school will continue to operate as a high-quality charter school consistent with the SCSC's mission and the educational goals of Georgia.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase the number of academically superior state charter schools.



## PATAULA CHARTER ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE ZONE	BAKER, CALHOUN, CLAY, EARLY, MILLER, RANDOLPH, TERRELL COUNTIES
GRADE LEVELS SERVED	PK-12
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	562 (as of Oct. 2023)
YEAR OPENED	2013

**Table 1. Historical Track Record of Performance**

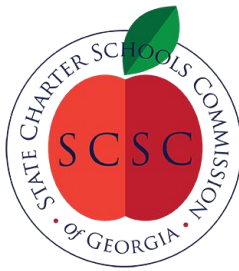
Section	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	MEETS	NA	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	Current School year
FIN	95	90	95	95	90	
OPS	100	96	98	94	96	

Pataula Charter Academy is completing a 5-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, their current contract term is from July 2018 - June 2024.

**CPF Performance:** Pataula has met standards in every section (academics, finances, and operations) of the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework for the past ten years. In the 2022-2023 school year, Pataula outperformed the comparison school score on CCRPI Content Mastery, Progress, and Grade Band Score in all grade bands served (except for elementary Progress, where it trailed the comparison score by only two points 88 v. 90). Pataula has consistently met financial and operational performance standards. The school maintains a viable and sustainable financial disposition. The school employs appropriate governance policies, attends required training, and executes an educational program that aligns with state requirements and charter contract expectations.

### Previous Charter Term CPF Track Record

Section	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
ACA	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS	MEETS
FIN	85	80	80	80	85
OPS	86	86	81	100	98



## State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

### Action Item – Staff Recommendation

#### Item Summary

Charter Renewal Recommendation for SLAM Academy of Atlanta

#### Recommendation

SCSC staff recommends that the SCSC Board of Commissioners 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.

#### Rationale

SLAM Academy of Atlanta (SLAM) is completing a 5-year charter contract with a one-year COVID extension. The school is in its first charter term. SLAM met the academic, financial, and operational standards early in the charter term but failed to meet standards in the two most recent years for which data are available. However, performance across all sections of the CPF did increase from 2022 to 2023, and information provided during the renewal interview indicates that the trend may continue. Student enrollment has also increased over the last few years.

SCSC staff recommend that the abbreviated two-year charter term be subject to the school's agreement to produce a corrective action plan that addresses its deficiencies within thirty (30) days of the SCSC's approval of an abbreviated renewal term. The additional two years will allow the school time to demonstrate that recently implemented changes will result in the requisite gains. The SCSC Executive Director may approve the corrective action plan submitted or impose additional terms to remedy the performance deficiencies addressed therein. SLAM will be required to implement the corrective action plan. During the abbreviated charter term, the SCSC may require the school to file interim reports and produce other data and information on any matter relevant to the school's performance deficiencies. SLAM must submit the data at the time and in the form prescribed by SCSC staff. The requirements of the abbreviated charter term will be integrated into the school's renewal contract.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment

Objective: Increase charter school choice in communities with few or no options.



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## SLAM ACADEMY OF ATLANTA

ATTENDANCE ZONE	ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS; SOUTH FULTON COUNTY
GRADE LEVELS SERVED	K-8
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	192 (as of Oct. 2023)
YEAR OPENED	2018

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**Table 1. Historical Track Record of Performance**

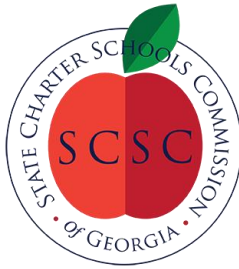
Section	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
ACA	MEETS	NA	MEETS	DNM	APP	Current School Year
FIN	65	80	95	45	60	
OPS	89	90	87	59	77	

SLAM Academy of Atlanta is completing an initial 5-year charter contract with a 1-year COVID extension. Thus, their current contract term is from July 2018 - June 2024.

**Academic Performance:** SLAM's academic performance has declined since its first year in operation. The school notes that the effects of COVID, teacher and leader retention, and a mid-year facility move in 2021 significantly contributed to the performance decline. However, the school's 2022-2023 results show improvement from the previous year. The middle school outperformed the comparison schools on CCRPI Content Mastery and Progress measures, but the elementary grade band lagged significantly. More than three-quarters of SLAM students are in grades K-5. In the renewal interview, the school introduced its new school leader after having operated with an interim since the start of the current school year.

**Financial Performance:** The school did not meet standards in FY22 or FY23; however, its financial score improved. The school scored poorly on the enrollment variance and debt-to-asset measures. Notably, the school lost points on the enrollment variance measure due to the *under projection* of students – the school projected 125 students but was serving 157 students at the October FTE. The debt-to-asset ratio worsened from FY22 to FY23 due predominantly to the lease liability of \$7.1M. The slightly positive trend is attributable to the increase in the school's unrestricted days cash on hand from 10 days in FY22 to 71 days (meets standard) in FY23. Additionally, the school's debt-to-income ratio marginally improved from 18% in FY22 to 13% (approaches standard) in FY23. Continued enrollment increases will provide more revenue for the school.

**Operational Performance:** Although the school met operational standards in the first three years of the charter term, it has struggled more recently. In the 2021-2022 school year, Federal Program



monitoring found that SLAM Academy failed to comply with federal education, financial, and employee qualification requirements. The school lost 13 points because of GaDOE's cross-functional monitoring. The school would have approached standards had it met the requirements evaluated for cross-functional monitoring. Additionally, the board needs to increase its membership and capacity. There are only three board members, and the current chair will transition to a school leadership role.