

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

July 28, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

SCSC Board Room

5th Floor, West Tower

Virtual Access: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/347131549>

Phone: +1 (408) 650-3123; Access Code: 347-131-549



Attendees: Commissioners: Buzz Brockway – Chairman; Dr. Lina Millan; Tony Lowden; Fitz Johnson; and Mike Dudgeon. SCSC Staff: Lauren Holcomb – Executive Director; Morgan Felts – Chief Operations Officer; Kristen Easterbrook – Charter Development Manager; Katie Manthey – Director of Research & Evaluation; Kathy Schieber – Financial Analyst; Erin Wright – Associate General Counsel; Kiara Thompson – Program Coordinator; and Elliot Race and Jae Yeon Jeong – SCSC Graduate Interns.

I. Call to Order (Chairman Buzz Brockway)

- The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.
- Chairman Brockway completed a commissioner roll call. Commissioner Millan attended virtually. Commissioners Perez and Hill were absent. A quorum was formed.

II. Officer Elections (Chairman Buzz Brockway)

- Chairman Brockway was appointed to the position of SCSC Chairman by a unanimous vote. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.
- Commissioner Lowden was appointed to the position of SCSC Vice Chairman by a unanimous vote. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.

III. Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes (Chairman Buzz Brockway)

- The June 30, 2021, Board Meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous vote. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.
- The July 14, 2021, Called Board Meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous vote. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.

IV. Commissioner School Visits (SCSC Executive Director)

- The commissioners are visiting schools with charter terms that end June 2022.
- The commissioners will visit Cirrus Charter Academy, Statesboro STEAM, Atlanta Heights Charter School, and Georgia Connections Academy this fall.

V. School COVID Update (SCSC Executive Director)

- SCSC Remote Learning Waiver
 - The waiver allows brick and mortar state charter schools to provide virtual instruction to up to 25% of students this fall. The purpose is to provide accommodations to students with exceptional situations.
 - Thirteen schools opted into the remote learning waiver.
 - The SCSC expects to receive reports and assessments from schools in October and will provide a status update to the commissioners.

VI. Organizational Development (SCSC Charter Development Manager)

- Past Trainings
 - Past trainings are available via video recording.
- FY22 Training Calendar
 - SCSC will return to conducting in-person trainings.
 - The annual Petition Bootcamp will be held October 12 at the Georgia Hotel and Conference Center. Any petitioners who are interested in opening charter schools can attend.
 - The SCSC will split governance training into two parts: In-person sessions and live virtual sessions. These trainings will be held in November, February, and April. Webinar dates will be posted soon.
 - The Data Collections Conference has announced that it will be virtual this year but will be held in-person in 2022.

VII. Pre-Opening Schools (SCSC Charter Development Manager)

- The SCSC authorized the openings of two new charter schools this fall.
- Northwest Classical Academy will operate in Cobb County, initially serving grades K-6 but ultimately plans to serve grades K-12.
- Atlanta SMART will operate in Fulton County, initially serving grades 5-6 but ultimately plans to serve grades 5-8.

VIII. Petitions (SCSC Associate General Counsel)

- The SCSC finished substantive review of the FY21 petitions. Four of the five schools withdrew their petitions, and staff will make a recommendation on the remaining one petition to the board.
- The SCSC anticipates that the next cycle of FY22 petitions will open in October.

IX. Authorizer Standards (SCSC Director of Research & Evaluation)

- Last month, the SCSC shared the draft set of standards for quality charter authorizing with state and local charter schools. These were the same standards staff presented to commissioners at the June SCSC board meeting. The standards were open for public comment and feedback until July 15.
- The SCSC received feedback from multiple charter schools and a couple of charter and education consultants. Staff are in the process of compiling the feedback and believe the suggestions will be informative during the next stage of this work, which will include developing specific criteria and processes for evaluating authorizers on the standards.

X. Accountability (SCSC Director of Research & Evaluation and SCSC Associate General Counsel)

- 2020-21 Georgia Milestones Assessment Results
 - The SCSC is expecting results from the assessments at the end of the week and hopes to present some results in the August board meeting.
- 2021-22 Onsite School Monitoring
 - The SCSC is finalizing schedules to monitor schools and will open the portal for schools to submit monitoring materials in August. Monitoring visits will likely occur in September and October.
 - The primary feedback that the SCSC received was schools would like to be made aware of changes to the laws that might affect their policies and how they could implement those changes. The SCSC is preparing a legislative summary for schools, which will be posted on the SCSC website.

XI. State Charter Schools Foundation (SCSF President)

The State Charter Schools Foundation gave a presentation on its programs, the resources and guidance it provides to schools, and its upcoming strategic goals.

XII. Action Items

- **FY21 Petition Recommendations (SCSC Associate General Counsel)**
 - The SCSC staff recommended denial of Infinity Charter School's petition as there are concerns with the school's academic model, teacher recruitment, and financial clarity.
 - An Infinity Charter School representative attended the meeting virtually and spoke on the recommendation.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved the denial of Infinity Charter School's petition. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.
- **Amana Academy Charter Petition Surrender (SCSC Charter Development Manager)**
 - The SCSC staff recommended acceptance of Amana Academy's charter contract surrender.
 - Amana's governing board identified a facility in a new attendance zone. Therefore, Amana voted to surrender its charter contract so that it could operate in the new attendance zone under a new charter contract.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved the surrender of Amana Academy's charter petition. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.
- **Amana Academy Charter Petition Approval (SCSC Charter Development Manager)**
 - The SCSC staff recommended approval of Amana Academy's petition for a new charter contract.
 - An Amana Academy representative attended the meeting virtually and said the school is excited to begin this new chapter on a new campus.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved Amana Academy's charter petition. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.
- **Harriet Tubman School of Science and Technology Petition Surrender (SCSC Associate General Counsel)**
 - The SCSC staff recommended acceptance of Harriet Tubman's surrender of its charter contract.
 - The Harriet Tubman school board voted and advised SCSC staff of its contract surrender on July 27.
 - A Harriet Tubman representative attended virtually and briefly spoke on the school's closure activities.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved the surrender of Harriet Tubman School of Science and Technology's charter contract. Commissioners Perez and Hill were not present for this vote.

XIII. Additional Items from Commissioners

XIV. Public Comment

XV. Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.