

# STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

## MEETING MINUTES

March 31, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Virtual Access: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/995861421>

Phone: 1 (571) 317-3122 Access Code: 995-861-421



**Attendees:** Commissioners: Buzz Brockway - Chairman; Hunter Hill - Vice Chairman; Tom Lewis; Jose Perez; Tony Lowden; Dr. Lina Millan; and Fitz Johnson. **SCSC Staff:** Lauren Holcomb – Executive Director; Morgan Felts – Chief Operations Officer; Cerrone Lockett – General Counsel; Katie Manthey – Director of Research and Evaluation; Kristen Easterbrook – Charter Development Manager; Darcy Callaway – Business Manager; Erica Acha-Morfaw – Administrative and Communications Coordinator.

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### I. Call to Order *(Chairman Brockway)*

- The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.
- Chairman Brockway completed a commissioner roll call. All commissioners (a quorum) were present.
- Former Commissioner Carmen Dill was thanked for her service to the SCSC board.
- New Commissioner Fitz Johnson was introduced and welcomed.

### II. Approval of February SCSC Meeting Minutes *(Chairman Brockway)*

- Commissioner Lowden moved for approval of the February 2021 SCSC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Perez. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

### III. School Openings Update *(Executive Director)*

- Following the February SCSC meeting, Governor Kemp announced that Georgia was expanding vaccine access to school personnel. All state charter schools have coordinated immunization events for their schools, either through private providers or local health departments.
- Nine state charter schools are still operating in a completely remote environment due to COVID-19. These schools are located in areas where the communities have been slower to resume in-person activities. We are hopeful that with increased vaccine access, these schools can resume in-person instruction soon.
- New CDC guidance for schools reduces the social distancing guidelines from six to three feet.
- SCSC commissioners plan to resume in-person school visits.

### IV. Legislative Update *(Executive Director)*

- Today is Sine Die, the 40th day of legislative session.
- The FY22 budget is in conference committee. As a reminder, austerity reductions were partially restored from 10% to 4%.
- The Governor and state leaders are using federal relief funds to provide retention bonuses to school personnel and certain state workers. The State Board of Education (SBOE) awarded funds for these retention bonuses in their meeting last week. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) held a webinar on Monday to outline the allocation and distribution process for schools. The webinar was recorded and should be available the GaDOE website.

- The American Rescue Plan Act includes a third federal relief package for schools. The third package provides nearly \$4B in emergency relief funds to Georgia school systems to address COVID-19 response. As a reminder, state charter schools act as their own school systems. Allocations were made based on school Title I populations. Funds can be used through September 2023. The SBOE voted on grant awards last week and funds are available to schools now.
  - Chairman Brockway sought clarity on updates that would be provided given that the funds would be available over the course of several years.
  - The Executive Director clarified that the near \$4 Billion allocation was across the full time frame (through 2023). The Executive Director reiterated that allocation of funds is based on a school systems Title I allocation. Staff can provide a list of state charter schools that qualify for the funds.
  - Commissioner Lowden requested a copy of the list of allocations per school.
  
- With respect to charter school-related legislation, SB 153 (GOAL Act) and SB 59 (Charter Omnibus bill) passed. As a reminder, the GOAL Act transitions system-collaborative model charter schools (Mountain Education Charter High School; Foothills Education Charter High School, and Coastal Plains Education Charter High School) to SBOE authorization, effective July 1, 2021. The models for the schools make them different from traditional state charter schools in that they partner with local school systems, which is uncommon for traditional state charter schools. The General Assembly will study the model with the goal of making the schools more locally controlled by the end of their charter terms.
  - Commissioner Lowden sought clarity on how the GOAL Act will impact charter schools that operate in prisons.
  - The Executive Director clarified that nothing about the schools' operations will change through the end of their charter terms. She noted that the General Assembly indicated its desire to continue to serve incarcerated and overaged students. The Executive Director noted that these charter schools offer incarcerated students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma rather than a G.E.D.
  - Commissioner Lowden noted that Georgia was the first state in the Union to allow charter schools in prisons, which is a huge accomplishment.

The Charter Omnibus bill primarily impacts local charter schools. However, as it relates to all charter schools, it allows charter schools to opt in to the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) at the time of authorization and upon renewal. Previously, charter schools were only permitted to opt into the SHBP at the time of authorization. In addition, the bill provides for additional QBE funding for local charter school students.

#### V. **Organizational Development** (*Charter Development Manager*)

- SCSC staff hosted New School Orientation for state charter schools scheduled to open this fall. The training was held virtually and was recorded. Schools interested in viewing the training content should contact the Charter Development Manager by email.
- The SCSC is still offering financial management training opportunities. Interested persons should contact the Charter Development Manager by email.
- The SCSC will host the last of three in-person FY21 governance training sessions on April 13, 2021. As a reminder, the in-person training sessions constitute four of the twelve required FY21 governance training hours. The remaining eight hours are being offered via modules, which are available on the SCSC website.
  - Commissioner Lowden asked what percentage of state charter schools attended the governance training sessions.

- The Charter Development Manager did not have a percentage available but indicated that approximately 140 people attended the November training, eighty (80) people attended the February training, and that currently forty (40) people are registered for the April training.
- The Executive Director asked how many schools failed to meet the governance training requirement.
- The Charter Development Manager will provide commissioners with a list of schools that have not met the training requirements.

VI. **Petitions** (*General Counsel*)

- SCSC staff evaluated ten (10) FY21 petitions substantively and held capacity interviews with petitioner representative the week of February 15. Interview panels were comprised of SCSC staff, commissioners, and local and national experts. SCSC staff is preparing formal recommendations for the SCSC's consideration during the April SCSC meeting. SCSC staff initially planned to present FY20 petition recommendations during this meeting (March 2021). However, to accommodate the transition of SCSC board members, to maximize board member participation, and to ensure that all available commissioners have been sufficiently onboarded, these recommendations were postponed.
- Potential FY21 petitioners were notified of the opportunity to receive preliminary feedback from SCSC staff prior to submitting their finalized petitions. SCSC staff held Early Feedback "Office Hours" for five potential FY21 petitioners the week of March 15. As a reminder, FY21 petitions are due April 9, 2021. Based on the timeline approved by the SCSC, petitions that meet legal and substantive requirements will be scheduled for interviews the week of June 14-18, 2021. SCSC staff will begin making formal recommendations on qualifying petitions at the July 28, 2021 SCSC meeting.

VII. **Accountability** (*Director of Research and Evaluation*)

- On Friday, March 26, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) approved Georgia's waiver of accountability requirements, including the requirement that Georgia produce a College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) summary for the state, school districts, and schools. USED did not approve Georgia's request to waive state assessments altogether for the 2020-21 school year, which means the Georgia Milestones must be administered this spring. The results will not be summarized by school or district into a CCRPI score. GaDOE has posted a FAQs document on its website to help schools, parents, and students understand the details and implications of the approved waiver.
- School Performance Reviews will begin next month. As a reminder this is an opportunity for schools that did not meet standards on SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) to present improvement plans to commissioners. Four schools will be presenting in April. Each school is allotted fifteen (15) minutes. The first five (5) minutes will be a presentation from the school and the remaining fifteen (15) minutes will provide commissioners and staff an opportunity to ask questions. For the schools participating in the April review, responses to the performance review questionnaire are due April 12. SCSC staff will provide commissioners a summary of those responses and possible follow-up questions before the April SCSC board meeting.

VIII. **Action Items**

- Pataula Charter Academy Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommend **approval** of Pataula Charter Academy Inc.'s request to amend the school's mission-specific goals. Pataula Charter Academy, Inc. is the non-profit board that holds the charter contract for Pataula Charter Academy. The amendment request is based on the board's determination, through strategic planning, that the mission specific goals should be modified to capture more accurately two of the school's vital innovative features.
  - **Commissioner Perez moved to adopt the recommendation of SCSC staff. Commissioner Milan seconded the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The recommendation was adopted unanimously by all voting commissioners.**

- Spring Creek Charter Academy Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommend **approval** of Pataula Charter Academy Inc.'s request to amend Spring Creek Charter Academy's mission-specific goals. Pataula Charter Academy, Inc. is the non-profit board that holds the charter contract for Pataula Charter Academy and Spring Creek Charter Academy. The amendment request is based on the board's determination, through strategic planning, that the mission specific goals should be modified to capture more accurately two of the school's vital innovative features.
  - **Commissioner Milan moved to adopt the recommendation of SCSC staff. Commissioner Perez seconded the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The recommendation was adopted unanimously by all voting commissioners.**
  
- Scintilla Charter Academy Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommended **denial** of the school's request to amend its charter to expand from K-6 into middle grades due to the school's failure to consistently meet SCSC performance standards.
  - The Scintilla Charter Academy School Leader (Mandy Avera) spoke on behalf of the school. Ms. Avera noted that forty-four (44) current sixth grade students would be returned to schools they chose to leave if the amendment request is not approved. She emphasized that current performance data derived from the administration of Navy assessments showed that the school has improved academically; particularly, the data showed greater content mastery than in previous years. Ms. Avera noted that Navy assessments are designed to be compatible with Georgia Milestones assessments. Ms. Avera also noted that the school has met financial and operational CPF standards this year and has the resources and facility space to serve seventh grade students. Ms. Avera encouraged commissioners to review the school's "real-time" data rather than CPF data from previous years. She noted that the lack of available data due to the COVID-19 pandemic should not prevent the school from expanding to serve seventh grade.
  - Commissioner Milan inquired as to the school's long term plan, noting that the school would likely come before the SCSC board again next year to ask to serve an additional grade. Commissioner Milan opined that it might be better to consider service to the full middle grade band, rather than just the addition of seventh grade.
  - Ms. Avera indicated that the school's long term plan is to serve a full middle school grade band. She indicated that the request to serve seventh grade is a "one-time" ask. Further, she indicated that the school would adhere to the standard SCSC process when seeking to serve a full middle school grade band.
  - Commissioner Perez inquired as to how many students the school serves in total. Ms. Avera responded that the school currently serves 543 students.
  - The Executive Director noted that staff does not intend to allow the lack of current Milestones data to be a barrier to expansion. However, the school presented one (possibly two) years of Navy data showing improvement. The Executive Director reminded commissioners that the school was initially approved to serve students in grades K-5. The school then requested an amendment to serve students in middle grades. The school did not have the data to support this expansion. As a compromise, the SCSC board agreed to permit the school to serve sixth grade students. The Executive Director emphasized that the SCSC has always required multiple years of data to support an expansion. The SCSC board's decision to allow the school to expand to sixth grade was an exception to its standard requirement. This was a bad decision that should not be repeated.

- Vice Chairman Hill noted that the school's track record in 2016 and 2017 was good but declined in 2018 and 2019. He questioned the change in performance. In response, the general rating scale was explained. Specifically, schools are scored as meeting standards (color coded as green), approaching standards (coded as yellow), and not meeting standards (coded as red).
- Vice Chairman Hill inquired about the efficacy of using the Navy data to assess the school's academic improvement.
- Commissioner Milan follow-up on Vice Chair Hill's initial inquiry regarding the reason for the school's decline in performance.
- Chairman Brockway questioned whether the implementation of new measures would result in academic improvement.
- In response to Commissioner Milan's inquiry, Ms. Avera indicated that school underwent a lot of changes, which resulted in the performance decline. Further, she acknowledged that the local school districts did not administer the Navy assessments. Thus, there is no comparison data available.
- Commissioner Perez inquired as to whether there is available data showing the academic performance of the schools this school's students would go back to.
- The Director of Assessment and Accountability responded that based on available comparable data, the students would return to local schools that provided better educational opportunities than the school.
- Commissioner Lewis noted the difficulty in the decision before the SCSC board, but recommended the board consider the whole picture. Commissioner Lewis noted that the board has a responsibility to students and has standard processes in place to ensure accountability. He cautioned the board to be mindful of not jumping all over the board and to remain mindful of how the board would address similar situations in the future. He noted that it is hard to rely on data that is not concrete.
- Commissioner Lowden agreed that this was a tough decision for the board. He also noted that southwest Georgia is hurting in terms of educational options. Commissioner Lowden explained that we have a process that works. It is based on judging schools based on their performance; however, it would be difficult to send a student back to a failing local school.
- Commissioner Perez echoed Commissioner Lowden's concerns and expressed his belief in the SCSC's process. However, he noted that students going back to failing schools trumps the process. He acknowledged that at this point, the board does not know whether the students would be returned to worse schools.
- The Director for Assessment and Accountability responded that available data shows that these students would be returned to better local schools. Ms. Avera remarked that the parents of these students would disagree.
- Commissioner Lewis noted that forty-four students would be impacted by this request, but that the school has 543 students.
- Commissioner Lowden inquired about the school's waiting list. Ms. Avera responded that the school's waiting list is robust. It is currently comprised of approximately 200 students.

- Vice Chairman Hill acknowledged that the school got off to a rough start, but that the point is to help schools move from the red (not meeting standards) to green (meeting standards). Further, if the data shows that the school is providing a better educational opportunity, then the SCSC board would be missing an opportunity by denying the school's request. He indicated that he would rather allow a school to expand that is moving in the right direction. He further noted that the SCSC board is not bound by the staff's work.
- The Executive Director noted that reliance upon a track record of performance is a research-based approach to considering school expansion. It also ensures that schools are sound academically, financially, and operationally before expanding. These standards are here for a reason.
- Commissioner Milan asked whether the SCSC board could re-evaluate this recommendation at the next meeting and potentially consider the request in the context of an entire grade band. Commissioner Lowden inquired as to whether the staff could review the Navy data.
- The Executive Director agreed that staff could review the Navy data to see if it demonstrated that the school has improved academically. She reminded the board that there is another school seeking a similar amendment. Therefore, the board should consider what it wanted to do from a process standpoint.
- Chairman Brockway inquired as to when Georgia Milestone data for this year would be available. The Director of Assessment and Accountability opined that it might be available at the end of the calendar year. Ms. Avera noted that the school administered the Navy assessments throughout the year. The Director of Assessment and Accountability noted that the Navy assessments are not nationally normed.
- **Commissioner Lewis moved to adopt the recommendation of SCSC staff. Commissioner Milan seconded the motion.**

During discussion, Vice Chairman Hill acknowledged that processes matter, but expressed that he was not convinced that the school keeping these students an additional year was a bad thing. He added that if there was proof that the school was failing its students, then we should consider closing the school.

There was a discussion about moving to table the discussion. No motion or second was recorded. Chairman Brockway asked how soon the school would need a decision. Ms. Avera indicated that the school's parents would be willing to wait for a decision. She noted that the school is prepared to serve seventh grade students. Thus, it could accommodate a "last minute" decision.

**Chairman Brockway called the question, noting that the motion on the floor was to adopt the staff recommendation to deny the school's amendment request. Commissioners Lowden, Milan, and Lewis voted in favor of the motion. Vice Chairman Hill and Commissioner Perez opposed the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The motion passed.**

- Southwest Georgia STEM Academy Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommends **denial** of the school's request to expand from K-9 into high school due to the school's failure to consistently meet SCSC performance standards.
  - School Leader Ginger Almon spoke on behalf of the school. Ms. Almon acknowledged that the school's track record is "not good." She explained that she would not go into the details as to why, but that the current school administration had made changes to address the situation it

inherited. As a result, the school is tracking in a positive direction since the 2018 and 2019 data. She indicated that the school is in good financial standing, its facility can serve the additional students, and that it would have to make staffing arrangements to accommodate the expansion.

- Chairman Brockway noted that he could see the school had made improvements.
  - Commissioner Lowden noted that this was a similar request as the previous recommendation. In addition, he wanted to ensure that his yes vote was to table consideration the previous recommendation.
  - Commissioner Milan indicated that her yes vote was also to table the matter. The board did not act on this item immediately following this discussion.
- Scintilla Charter Academy SCSC Board Action: Motion to **rescind** the previous vote to adopt the staff recommendation to deny Scintilla Charter Academy's Amendment Request to expand from K-6 into middle grades.
    - After some discussion regarding the appropriate procedure for correcting the previous vote, **Commissioner Perez moved to rescind<sup>1</sup> the prior vote and action. Commissioner Milan seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Hill and Commissioners Lowden, Milan, and Perez voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Lewis opposed the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The motion passed.**
  - Scintilla Charter Academy Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommended **denial** of the school's request to amend its charter to expand from K-6 into middle grades due to the school's failure to consistently meet SCSC performance standards.
    - **Commissioner Perez moved to table consideration of this recommendation. Commissioner Milan seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Hill and Commissioners Lowden, Milan, and Perez voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Lewis opposed the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The motion passed.**
    - The Executive Director sought clarity on the SCSC board's direction to staff. Commissioner Milan requested more information regarding the comparability of available data across the middle school grade band. The Director of Assessment and Accountability noted that no comparable data exists because Georgia Milestones data will not be available until the end of the calendar year. Commissioner Perez wished to see data from the forty-four parents that would be impacted by the board's decision. Commissioner Lowden wished to see a budget confirming the financial viability of the school's expansion plan. He was informed by the Executive Director that a budget was provided by the school and made available to commissioners. Commissioner Lowden also requested information regarding whether the school's current facility would accommodate the expansion request and to determine whether the available data would line up, for comparison purposes, to the SCSC's performance standards.
  - Southwest Georgia STEM Academy Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommends **denial** of the school's request to expand from K-9 into high school due to the school's failure to consistently meet SCSC performance standards.
    - School Leader Ginger Almon spoke on behalf of the school. Ms. Almon asked that the school be given the same consideration (tabling the discussion) as Scintilla Charter Academy.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of procedure, the vote to rescind functioned as a vote to reconsider. The term rescind was used to clarify for the public that the prior vote was no longer valid.

- Commissioner Milan inquired as to whether the school had completed Navvy assessments. The Director of Assessment and Accountability explained that the school had completed interim criterion referenced assessments. The Executive Director explained that SCSC staff is willing to consider other data to establish a track record of performance. She noted, however, that without a track record of positive performance, the SCSC staff would not recommend expansion.
- Commissioner Perez inquired as to whether the school could provide a strategic plan if the board voted to table consideration of this request. Ms. Almon indicated that it could. Vice Chairman Hill opined that if the school was up for renewal soon, then the board could consider reserving consideration on the expansion request once an additional year of data is available.
- Commissioner Milan questioned whether the school could support expansion of an entire grade band from an operational, financial, and academic stand point.
- **Commissioner Perez moved to table consideration of this recommendation. Commissioner Milan seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Hill and Commissioners Lowden, Milan, and Perez voted in favor of the motion. Commissioner Lewis opposed the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The motion passed.**
- Yi Hwang Academy for Language Excellence Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommends **approval** of the school's request to add one year to the school's charter term due to the school's decision to defer its opening due to facility-related challenges.
  - Board Chairperson, Liza Park spoke on behalf of the school.
  - **Vice Chairman Hill moved to adopt the staff recommendation. Commissioner Milan seconded the motion. Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The recommendation was adopted unanimously all voting commissioners.**
  - Ms. Park sought to clarify that although the school experienced facility related challenges during its pre-opening year, the impetus behind its deferral was difficulty finding a qualified school leader.
- Utopian Academy for the Arts Amendment Request: SCSC staff recommends **denial** of the school's request to add two years to the school's charter term due to the school's failure to consistently meet SCSC performance standards.
  - School Executive Director, Dr. Artesius Miller, spoke on behalf of the school. Dr. Miller quoted an Atlanta Journal Constitution article which stated that the school had the worst start of any charter school in history. He noted that opposition from the local school district explained the school's early performance issues. In particular, the school lost 45 percent of its student population before it opened. These difficulties prompted the SCSC to develop an emergency fund to ensure that the school could continue operations. There was additional intervention by Governor Nathan Deal and legislation passed to ensure that the circumstances would not repeat themselves. Initially, the school struggled with enrollment.

In the February 2020 SCSC meeting minutes, the SCSC board asked what it could do when a school had met all but financial CPF standards. Dr. Miller indicated that the school currently has over \$760k in cash, which does not include CARES Act or other stimulus funding. It has also made strides in enrollment. The school set a goal of 335 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students. It exceeded this goal during both the October and March FTE counts. In addition, 90% of the school's current students have indicated an intent to re-enroll.



Dr. Miller noted that the school has submitted financials to SCSC staff on a quarterly basis. He noted that these financials were not mentioned by SCSC staff in its recommendation. By the end of the year, the school expects to have over \$1 Million in cash.

Dr. Miller stated that during the February 2020 SCSC meeting, the board asked the school for two deliverables: (1) evidence that the school met financial CPF standards; and (2) evidence of the school's financial viability. Because the school has met these deliverable requests, it is asking the SCSC board to approve its amendment request. Dr. Miller indicated that the school's Chair, CFO, and Director of Strategic Initiatives were available to respond to questions from the SCSC board.

- The Executive Director clarified that during the February 2020 meeting, the SCSC agreed to consider the school's request for a charter term extension. It did not promise to approve such a request. She further explained that when schools meet CPF standards, they are given a full charter term. If the SCSC board approved this request, it would be deviating from its operating standards and establishing a precedent to renegotiate charter contract terms any time new information is available. This practice violates the charter authorizer standards the SCSC staff is currently developing.
- Dr. Miller explained that the school did what it said it would do. Dr. Miller noted that he sits on the board for the Technical College System of Georgia and understands the importance of asking questions about data. The school delivered on the SCSC's expectations.
- The Director for Research and Accountability explained that even if the staff considered FY20 performance data, the school would still not qualify for a five-year renewal term. Further, the Executive Director acknowledged that the school had been submitting quarterly financial reports, which the staff can make available to commissioners. These reports were required submissions because the school was identified as financially high risk. The SCSC does not consider single years of data in making these determinations.
- Commissioner Perez asked the school why it was seeking an extension. Dr. Miller responded that the school had delivered on its promise and met the expectation. Thus, the SCSC board should deliver on its promise to grant a five-year contract. The school is seeking what it rightfully worked for. Commissioner Perez recalled that during the February 2020 meeting, there was discussion about the school's move to a new facility. Dr. Miller indicated that the facility move saved the school substantially in rent, that the school currently carries no debt, and that transportation is being provided by the local school district that initially opposed the school's operation. Dr. Miller added that a five-year term shows the school's community, funders, and parents that the school will be around for more than three year.
- Commissioner Milan noted that the school is doing a great job, which should signal to funders that it will be around. In response, Dr. Miller stated that this is an accountability issue. Dr. Miller stated that the SCSC board, in a public conversation, asked the school to deliver two things. Dr. Miller stated that the school is expecting this extension as a result of the February 2020 meeting. The school wants the same flexibility extended to other schools today.
- Vice Chairman Hill indicated that he shared Dr. Miller's concern. Specifically, all schools are dealing with what this school is dealing with, which is an "end date" to the charter terms. This is an issue traditional public schools do not have to deal with. Thus, this challenge is organic. Any charter term the school receives has a deadline. There is no solution to that challenge. Vice Chairman Hill further explained that he sensed a tone that the school feels the SCSC board is not working with the school consistent with how it has addressed other action items today. However, this situation is dissimilar in that in the other matters before the commission, the SCSC

board was grappling with a decision that would result in students not being able to attend the charter school. Here, the school has already received a three year charter term and appears on its way to a five-year renewal. Vice Chairman Hill indicated that the SCSC board is with the school. It is not losing here. Vice Chairman Hill question whether Dr. Miller would disagree with his statement?

Dr. Miller stated that a five year term provides additional flexibility. With a three year term, the odds are stacked against the school. If for any reason standards are not met, the school is at risk of closure.

The Director of Assessment and Accountability noted that now that the school has a four year term considering the additional year given to all schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it will have the same opportunity to demonstrate its track record of performance from a data perspective as it would have if it received a five-year term.

- **Commissioner Milan moved to adopt the staff recommendation. Commissioner seconded the motion.**
- During discussion, Commissioner Perez explained that he is rooting for the school. He does not doubt that when the school is up for renewal again, it will receive a five-year term. Commissioner Perez asked Dr. Miller what the SCSC could do to help.

Dr. Miller responded that his concern is for his school and other charter school leaders listening in on this call. His concern is that if a school was told to do something and they do it, then the SCSC board should support that school. He questioned what other school leaders could come to expect. The school has worked hard, it is disheartening that it is not being supported.

Chairman Brockway emphasized that the SCSC is focused on the students and assisting schools.

- **Commissioner Johnson abstained from this vote. The motion to adopt the SCSC staff recommendation passed unanimously by all voting commissioners.**

#### IX. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

#### X. Adjourn

- Chairman Brockway noted that the meeting had been emotional. The public should see that these decisions are not easy, especially when the lives, hopes, and dreams of students are at stake. The SCSC's focus is the well-being of students. The entire SCSC board supports charter schools and students.
- The Executive Director added that we have created situations by not adhering to our standards. We maintain standards for a reason. We do not want to create instability.
- The Executive Director noted that the General Counsel would begin maternity leave next month.
- The Executive Director acknowledged that two state charter schools in Coweta County were impacted by recent storms. She noted that it has been heartening to see these communities pull together to support students and families by providing hot meals and clothing. These schools remain in our thoughts and should reach out the SCSC for additional support.
- The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.