

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

May 26, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

SCSC Board Room

5th Floor, West Tower

Virtual Access: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/722377061>

Phone: +1 (646) 749-3122; Access Code: 722-377-061



Attendees: Commissioners: Buzz Brockway – Chairman; Hunter Hill – Vice-Chair; Tony Lowden; Dr. Lina Millan; Fitz Johnson; and Mike Dudgeon. SCSC Staff: Lauren Holcomb – Executive Director; Morgan Felts – Chief Operations Officer; Cerrone Lockett – General Counsel; Kristen Easterbrook – Charter Development Manager; Katie Manthey – Director of Research and Evaluation; Kathy Schieber – Financial Analyst; Erin Wright – Associate General Counsel; Kiara Thompson – Program Coordinator; Erica Acha-Morfaw – Administrative and Communications Coordinator; and Elliot Race, Jae Yeon Jeong, and Claire Maloney – SCSC Graduate Interns.

- I. **Call to Order (Chairman Buzz Brockway)**
 - The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.
- II. **Approval of SCSC Meeting Minutes (Chairman Buzz Brockway)**
 - The April 28, 2021, SCSC board meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote. Commissioner Lowden was not present for this vote.
- III. **Commissioner School Visits**
 - Commissioners Brockway and Lowden visited Brookhaven Innovation Academy and Ivy Preparatory Academy at Kirkwood this month. Commissioner Millan visited Yi Hwang Academy of Language Excellence this month.
 - The SCSC plans to schedule visits to charter schools with summer programming.
- IV. **School COVID Update (SCSC Executive Director)**
 - There is no mask mandate for Georgia public schools currently. Charter schools may use their discretion to implement their own mask policies. The SCSC encourages schools to work with their local health departments in this decision-making process.
 - The SCSC encourages charter schools to resume in-person instruction, if that instruction was contemplated in the school's petition.
- V. **Legislative Update (SCSC Executive Director)**
 - The governor signed SB 153 (the GOAL Act). The legislation will transition system-collaborative model charter schools from SCSC authorization to SBOE authorization.
 - The governor signed SB 59 (the Charter Omnibus bill). The legislation allows state charter schools to opt into the State Benefit Health Plan upon renewal of their charter contract.
- VI. **Organizational Development (SCSC Charter Development Manager)**
 - The SCSC held its final live governance training session on April 13. All schools have eight remaining modules to complete for FY21. These modules will be available on the SCSC website for the remainder of the fiscal year.

- The deadline to complete governance training is June 30.

VII. Petitions (SCSC Associate General Counsel)

- The SCSC received nine start-up charter school petitions for the FY21 petition cycle. Four petitions were disqualified in an initial budget screen.
- The SCSC has begun substantive reviews of the remaining five petitions.
- The SCSC has scheduled interviews for June and expects to present formal recommendations at the July board meeting.

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

- The SCSC anticipated opening four new schools this fall. Two schools have elected to defer their opening until Fall 2022 due to facility challenges.
- Of the two remaining schools, both are currently considered on track to open. The SCSC is actively monitoring each school's remaining pre-opening requirements and is conducting school visits.

IX. Accountability (SCSC Chief Operations Officer)

- An accountability presentation update for state charter schools was presented, containing an overview of state charter school performance across the three areas of Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) accountability: academics, operations, and finance.
- Four schools will present performance reviews next month. Responses to the performance review questionnaire are due June 9.
- The SCSC has selected four approved auditors for FY22.
- The SCSC has provided three opportunities for governing board members to receive governance training, which is required each fiscal year, at no cost. The certification for FY21 will open in mid-June, and schools will have six weeks to complete the certification process.

X. Authorizer Standards (SCSC Executive Director)

- The SCSC and GaDOE are close to completing the authorizer standards required by legislation. The standards are based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizers principles and standards for quality authorizing and informed by best practices in other states.

XI. Action Items

- **2021-22 COVID Remote Learning Waiver (SCSC Executive Director)**
 - The SCSC recommended to allow schools to opt into a waiver to provide a remote learning option to up to 25% of students in the 2021-22 school year.
 - The recommendation was amended to shorten the period from the 2021-22 school year to the Fall 2021 semester with a review midway through the semester to determine whether to extend the waiver.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved the amendment to the COVID Remote Learning Waiver. Commissioner Lowden was not present to vote.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved the amended COVID Remote Learning Waiver. Commissioner Lowden was not present to vote.
- **FY21 Administrative Withhold Return (SCSC Chief Operations Officer)**
 - The SCSC will administer its annual return of unused agency funds to schools.
 - By a unanimous vote, the SCSC approved the FY21 Administrative Withhold Return. Commissioner Lowden was not present to vote.

XII. Additional Items from Commissioners

XIII. Public comment

XIV. Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 am.