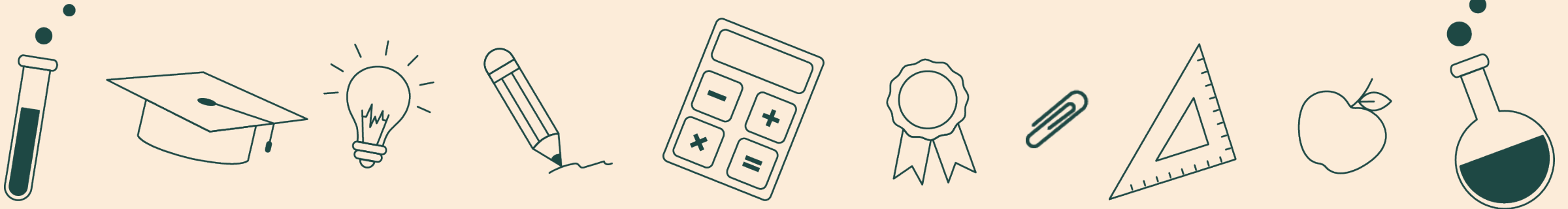




# Petition Review Process

Erin Wright  
Deputy General Counsel

State Charter Schools Commission  
Of Georgia



# Presentation Overview



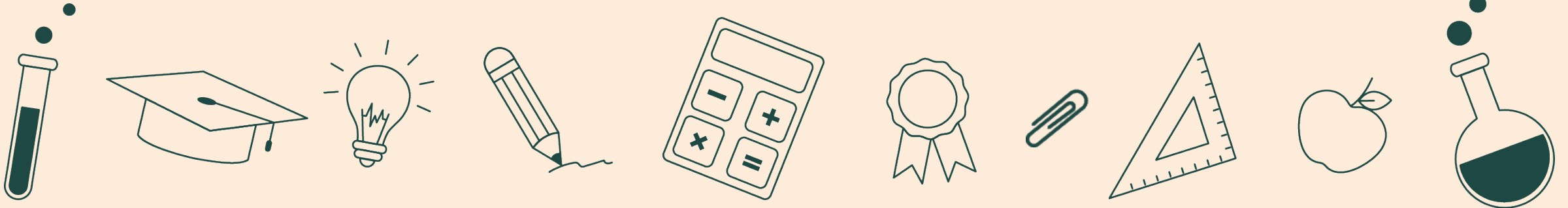
- Charter School Basics
- Petition Process Overview
- Attendance Zones
- Petition Priorities





# Charter School Basics

State Charter Schools Commission  
Of Georgia



# What is a Charter School?

- A Public school
- Authorized by and subject to a Charter Contract
- Flexibility from certain educational laws in exchange for increased accountability for student achievement

**Flexibility Waiver**



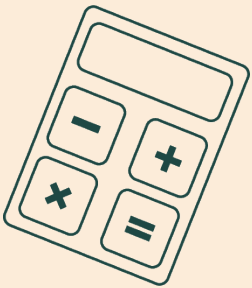
# Organizations Eligible to Apply

## ELIGIBLE

- Registered nonprofit corporation (Georgia's Nonprofit Code)

## NOT ELIGIBLE

- Home Study Programs or Schools
- Sectarian Schools
- Religious Schools
- Private-for-profit schools
- Private educational institutions not established, operated, or governed by the State of Georgia
- Existing private schools



# Who Can (and Cannot) be on your Board?

Nonprofit corporations must have at least 3 board directors. O.C.G.A. 14-3-803(a).

Governing Board members must:

- (A) Must be a United States citizen;
- (B) Must be a resident of Georgia; and
- (C) Must not be an employee of the state charter school.

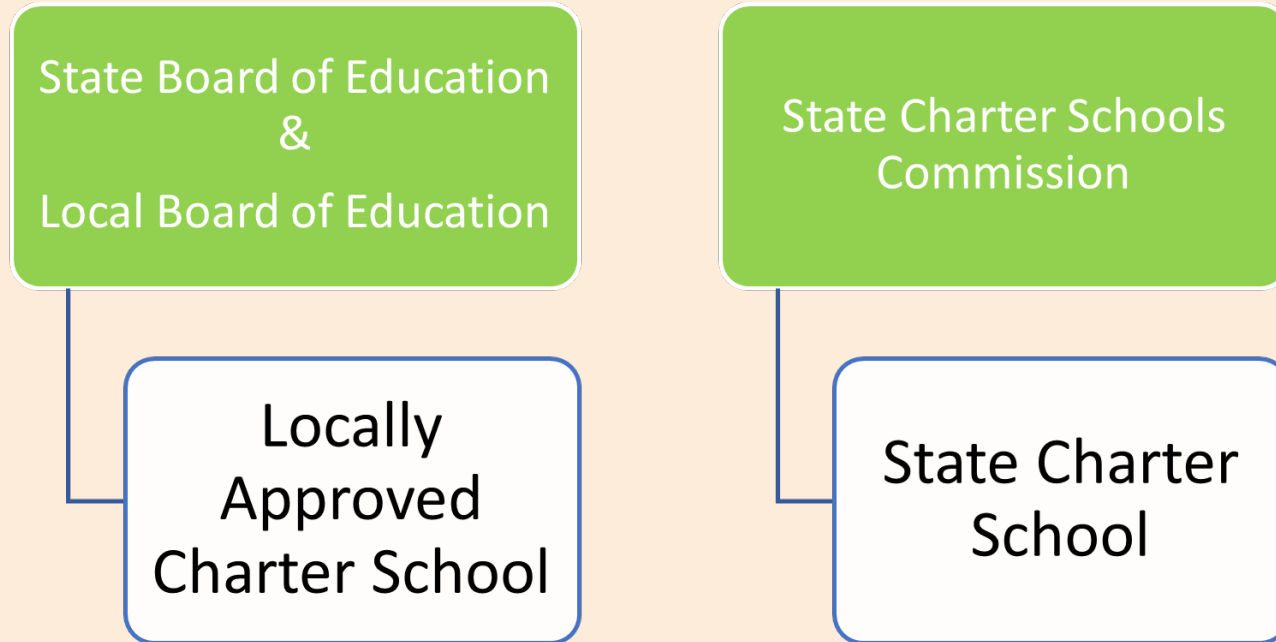
O.C.G.A. 20-2-2084

Governing Board members CANNOT :

- Be an officer or serve on the board of directors of any organization that sells goods or services to that state charter school; or
- Be an officer, member, or employee of a local board of education or an employee of a local school system.



# Georgia Charter School Authorizers



# Role of a Charter School Authorizer?

## YES

Approve schools

Set academic, finance and operational expectations

Monitor school performance

Hold schools accountable for legal requirements

## NO

Dictate how schools meet performance goals

Act as an appellate entity for school-level decisions

Provide services for students

Set board policy

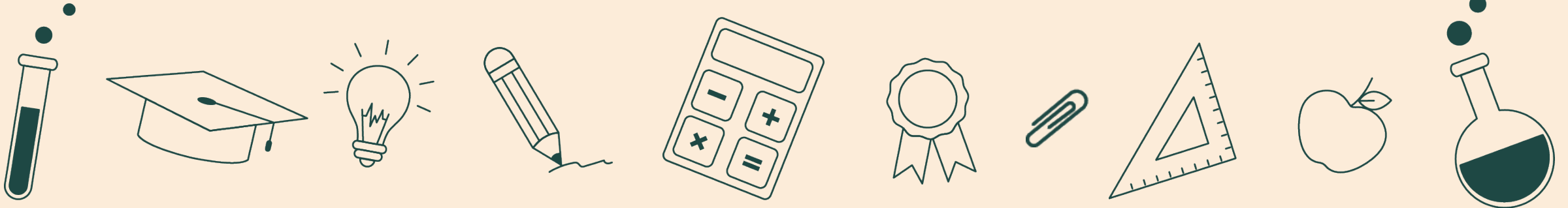






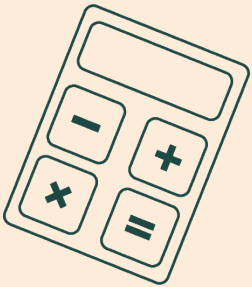
# Petition Process Overview

State Charter Schools Commission  
Of Georgia

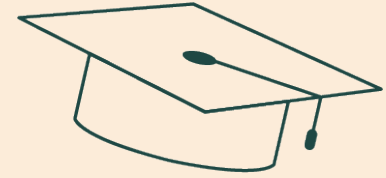


# State Charter School Petitions

- REQUEST to be approved to operate a taxpayer-funded school to educate Georgia's children.
- NOT a guaranteed approval.
- Consider the petition a formal business proposal.



# FY24 Start-up Petition Timeline





# SCSC Electronic Submission Portal

- Petitions must be submitted through the online Fluid Review Portal. SCSC will not consider petitions submitted via any other method.
- In November, SCSC staff will host a webinar to familiarize applicants with the Fluid Review system.



# SCSC Petition Contents

Narrative

Budget  
Template

Required  
Appendices

*Examples: Concurrent  
Submission, Nonprofit  
Registration, Community  
Engagement documentation,  
Conflict of Interest forms, etc.*



# SCSC Petition Review Process



# Legal Compliance and Budget Screen



- Adherence to state and federal laws applicable to the petition and charter school operations. General budget compliance requirements.
- Petitioners will be notified, in writing, if their submission fails to meet requirements.
- Deficiencies may be remedied in a revised petition in a subsequent petition cycle.



# Substantive Review

- Consistency with state education goals, including enhancing public educational opportunities to meet the growing and diverse needs of students and to provide the highest academic quality to increase student achievement and positive outcomes.
- In-depth budget analysis and examination of funding sources, business partnerships, facilities, and any other operational aspect of the school.





# Capacity Interview



- Interview panel composed of SCSC staff, Commissioners, and experts
- The focus of the interview relates to the governing board and school leadership's capacity to operate a charter school that is consistent with state education goals, and to do so in a fiscally responsible manner that fosters a positive school environment.



# SCSC Staff Recommendations & Board Vote

SCSC staff makes petition recommendations to the SCSC Board based on the interview panel's feedback, alignment with state educational goals, the SCSC strategic plan, and local district feedback.

Petitioners may withdraw from the petition process and SCSC staff will not present a recommendation to the SCSC board of commissioners.

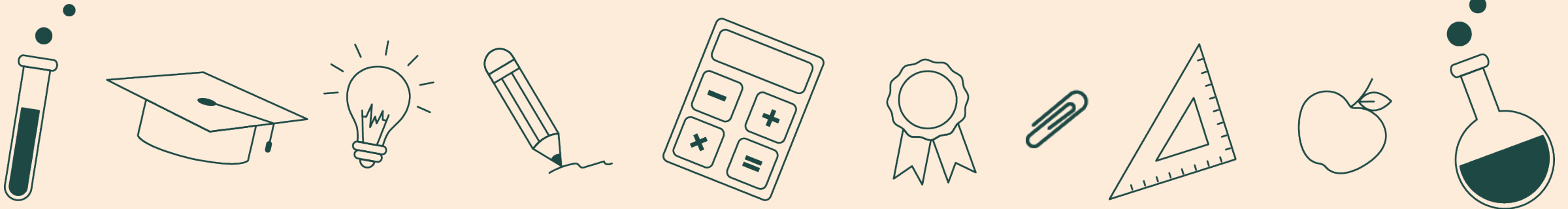
SCSC approvals are subject to State Board of Education review.





# Attendance Zone

State Charter Schools Commission  
Of Georgia



# Petitioners Must Select an Attendance Zone

Statewide Attendance Zone	Defined Attendance Zone
<p>Demonstrate community interest in and a plan to recruit students from <u>a majority of the school districts in Georgia</u>. If the petition is approved, the school must accept enrollment of students from any local school system in Georgia.</p>	<p>Demonstrate community interest and a plan to recruit students from <u>less than a majority of Georgia school districts</u>. If the petition is approved, the school may only accept enrollment of students from the local school systems in its attendance zone.</p>





## REQUIRED:

- Documentation of community interest to support the selected attendance zone. *Failure to do so may result in withdrawal of your petition.*
- Must reflect the location of stakeholders relevant to local school systems (zip code, county, etc.)
- Letters of Support
- Intent to Enroll
- Pre-enrollment Forms
- Signed Petitions
- Meeting sign-in sheets



# Concurrent Submissions



- Unless you submit a petition for a fully virtual school with a statewide attendance zone, you **MUST** concurrently submit your petition to a local board(s) of education.
- Concurrent submission requirements are based on attendance zone.
- SCSC petitions **MUST** include documentation of concurrent submission compliance.
- Petitions without sufficient evidence that concurrent submission requirements are met will be removed from consideration.



# DEFINED Attendance Zone

A petition with a defined attendance zone must be submitted to:

- the local board(s)\* of education where the school is proposed to locate **FOR ACTION**; and,
- to each local school district from which the proposed school plans to enroll students for informational purposes.

**SCSC cannot vote to approve or deny your petition unless and until the local board of education denies it.**





# What qualifies as a “local denial” so SCSC can act on your *Defined Attendance Zone* petition?

## Denial

- Local board votes to deny your petition;
- Local board fails to act on your petition within 90 days of submission and you did not request an extension to give the local board additional time; or
- An extension of additional time expired and the local board has not acted.

## No Denial

- Local board approves your petition;
- The local board rejects or withdraws your petition because it failed to adhere to the board’s technical requirements, process or deadlines; or
- You failed to work with the local board in good faith seeking approval.





# Certification of Local Board Denial



- Petitioners with a defined attendance zone must submit a Certification of Local Board Denial for SCSC to act on your petition.
- Submitting a Certification does not guarantee SCSC will act on your petition by a certain date. Factors affecting when SCSC acts on a petition include, but are not limited to, whether the petitioner and local board appear to still be working through the petition review process despite no formal extension past 90 days.

**CERTIFICATION OF  
LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION DENIAL**

**Use of this Form:** A petitioner proposing a defined attendance zone to the State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC) must submit its petition for action to the local board of education (LBOE) where the school plans to locate. Per O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084, the SCSC cannot act on the petition until the LBOE denies the petition or fails to act on the petition within 90 days, unless the petitioner requested an extension. The petitioner must submit this completed form to the SCSC as evidence of LBOE denial.

**A. School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. LBOE to which Petitioner Submitted its Petition for Action:** \_\_\_\_\_

**C. LBOE's Established Petition Submittal Deadline:<sup>1</sup>** \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Select One:**

LBOE Denied the Petition on \_\_\_\_\_ (date). *Attach a copy of the Board Meeting Summary or Minutes.*

90 days have passed since the LBOE's Petition Submittal Deadline and (i) the LBOE has not approved or denied the Petition and (ii) the School has not requested an extension for the LBOE to approve or deny the Petition<sup>2</sup>.

An extension of time for the LBOE to approve or deny the Petition<sup>2</sup> has expired and the School has not requested another extension.

**E. Certification**

I certify that the information provided herein is true and correct and that I have worked through the local petition process in good faith seeking approval. I acknowledge that the SCSC has discretion when to act on my petition and that the submission of this form does not guarantee that the SCSC will act on my petition at any specific time. Furthermore, I understand that the SCSC recommendation on my petition may be a denial and SCSC is not responsible for any impact on my locally submitted petition due to my decision not to request an extension from the LBOE.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Petition Contents

The concurrent submission filed with the applicable local board petition must be *substantively* the same as the petition submitted to the SCSC.



# STATEWIDE Attendance Zone

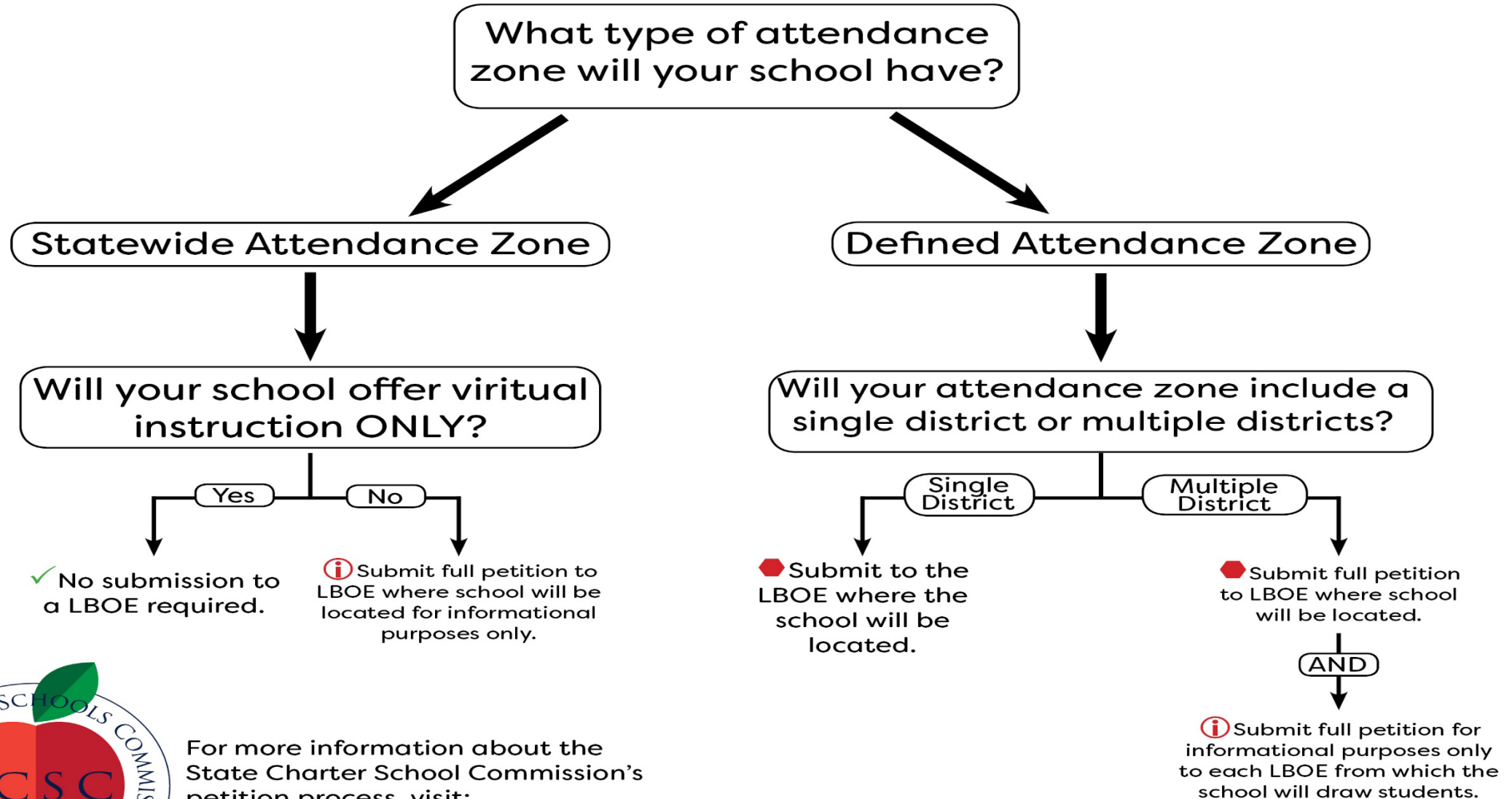
A petitioner that selects a statewide attendance zone must submit its petition to the local board of education where the school is proposed to locate *for informational purposes only*.

*Exception:*

If the charter school selects a statewide attendance zone but will only provide virtual instruction, it does not need to submit a petition to any local board of education.



# Do I need to submit my petition to a Local Board of Education (LBOE)?



For more information about the State Charter School Commission's petition process, visit: [www.scsc.georgia.gov](http://www.scsc.georgia.gov).

# Concurrent Submission Timing

## (I) Local Board of Education submission *for action*

**Submit to the local board according to its deadlines for a 2025-26 school year opening.**

- If the local deadline comes before the SCSC deadline, submit your local petition by the local deadline & include evidence of the submission in your SCSC petition. If the deadline is after the SCSC deadline, upload evidence of the deadline with your SCSC petition and then email evidence of the submission once submitted to the local board.
- If you cannot locate any local board published deadlines, contact the local board to confirm its process. *Note, local board petition processes are subject to State Board of Education Rules. SCSC does not have authority over local board processes.*

## (II) Local Board of Education submission *for informational purposes*

**Because you are only submitting for informational purposes, submit the petition to the local board at the same time as your SCSC petition and include submission evidence in the SCSC petition.**

# Local Board Timelines

- Local petition timelines can affect a petitioner's SCSC timeline, including its pre-opening year if approved.
- Petitioners must understand all implications of the local timeline.
- **KNOW:** If the local board will not act on your petition in 90 days, you must decide whether to offer the local board additional time!

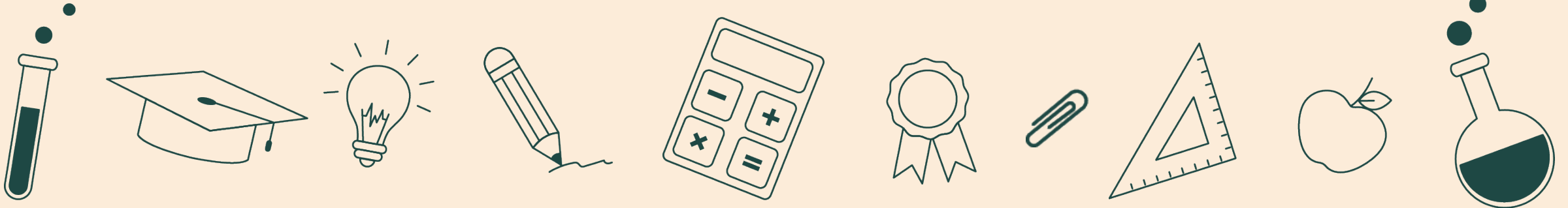
## Consider!

- The local process may end if you do not grant the local board additional time. Meaning, if the SCSC thereafter recommends denial (*you will not know the SCSC recommendation when deciding whether to offer additional time*), the result is no local or state approval this cycle.
- However, granting additional time would delay a SCSC approval & pre-opening year.



# FY24 Petition Priorities

State Charter Schools Commission  
Of Georgia



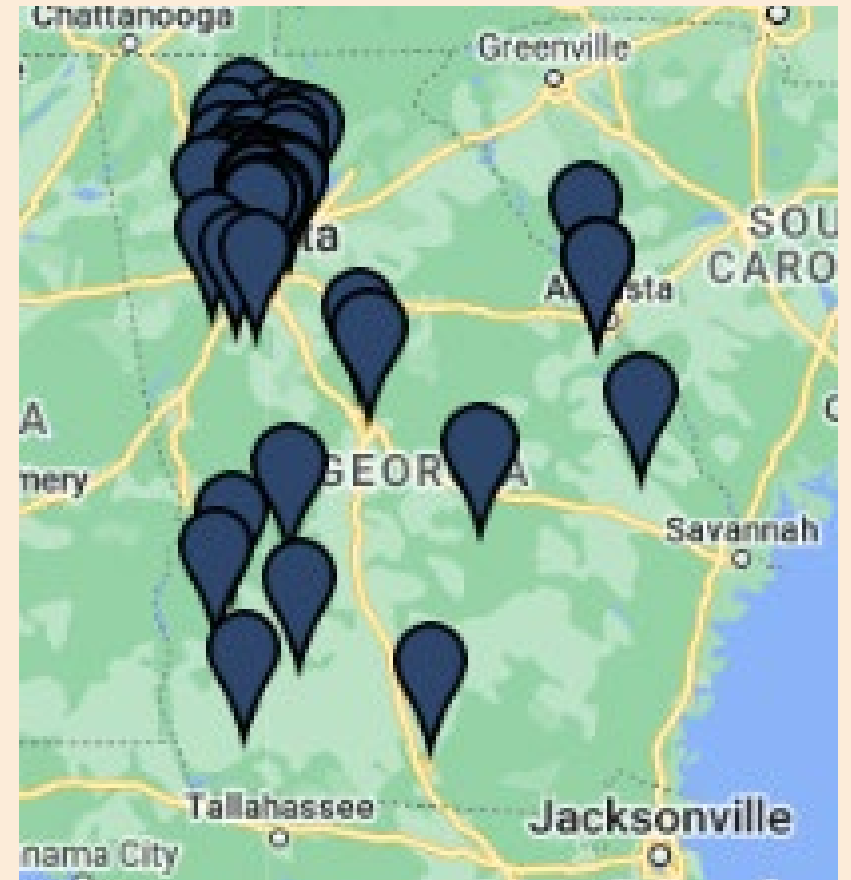




# SCSC Strategic Plan: Growing a Brighter Future

State charter schools are heavily concentrated in the metro-Atlanta area and relatively sparse or nonexistent in other areas of the state.

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





# FY24 Priority Areas

Priority areas are locations more than 5 miles\* from any operational charter school.

*\*direct route, not driving distance*

Approved schools located in a priority area **MUST** locate and serve students in the priority area its first year.





# Non-Priority Area Petitions

- The SCSC will accept petitions for schools that plan to locate and serve non-priority areas.
- To ensure sufficient resources can be allocated to charter growth in areas with limited educational options, the SCSC *may deny charter applications solely based on location.*



# Operational Charter School Map

[https://qgiscloud.com/ktmanthey/Petition\\_Priority\\_2023\\_db/](https://qgiscloud.com/ktmanthey/Petition_Priority_2023_db/)

*Map of all operational charter schools in Georgia.*

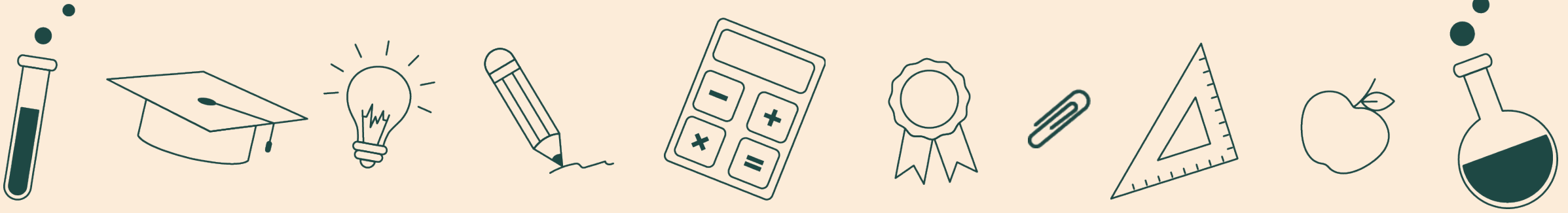
- Search a specific location (address) in relation to operational charter schools.
- Can add layers to explore:
  - A five-mile radius around each operational charter school.
  - Content Mastery scores
  - Waitlists
  - School-age population
- Petitioners must independently verify locations of existing charter schools.

*The SCSC is not responsible for the accuracy of the information in this tool.*



# Questions





# Contact Us

**Website:** [scsc.georgia.gov](http://scsc.georgia.gov)

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