

# State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

## Staff Recommendation of Requested Charter Amendment

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**School:** Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the proposed charter amendment for Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School to expand to serve tenth grade for the 2020-2021 school year be **denied**.

**Rationale:** Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SOWEGA) is requesting a charter contract amendment to expand its grade offerings to include 10<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2020-2021 school year.

The SCSC's established evaluation priorities in reviewing a request for expansion require the school demonstrate a track-record of success by meeting performance expectations as outlined in the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework. SOWEGA has three years of performance data and has not met academic standards in any year, meaning the school has failed to demonstrate it is providing a better educational opportunity for students. Additionally, the school has only met financial standards in one of the three years and has never met operational standards. As such, SOWEGA has not demonstrated the requisite performance levels to warrant a recommendation to approve the request to expand into serving additional grades.

## Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School

Attendance zone: Statewide

Grades: K-9

Charter Term: July 2016- June 2021

### Background:

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SOWEGA) is located in Randolph County, Georgia with a statewide attendance zone. The school opened in 2016-17 serving grades K-5, with plans to add one grade level each year. By the end of the charter term, the school would serve grades K-9, as approved in the charter application. In April 2017, the school reached out to SCSC staff to discuss the potential of adding two grade levels in the following school year (2017-18), 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The school argued that the increase in enrollment would ease financial constraints. Although the specific pattern of expansion is not included in the school contract, SCSC staff requested that the school submit a formal written request stating the school's plans to depart from the original growth plan, a written rationale supporting the request and evidence that the school can meet its anticipated enrollment targets. Based on SCSC records, the school did not submit the requested documentation. Thus, the school is currently serving students in grades K-9 and is requesting a charter amendment to add 10<sup>th</sup> grade for the last year of their charter contract.

SCSC standards require that a school demonstrate a positive performance track record on the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework (CPF) to warrant grade expansion. **To date, SOWEGA has not performed at the requisite level to warrant a recommendation to approve a grade-level expansion. The school has failed to meet academic or operational standards in any year of its charter term and only met financial standards in the first year.**

Additionally, the SCSC typically does not grant charter amendments to schools in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year of the charter contract term. To avoid changing a school's accountability expectations in the middle of a charter term, the SCSC recommends addressing amendments to functional elements of the school's program (e.g. grades served) during the charter school renewal process.

### Supporting Data:

SOWEGA Enrollment by Grade										
Year/Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2016-17	14	12	13	12	14	13				
2017-18	19	27	15	22	27	27	24	19		
2018-19	40	24	41	30	37	44	40	40	35	
2019-20	34	40	27	40	21	43	44	40	29	21

SOWEGA Comprehensive Performance Framework Results			
Year	ACA	FIN	OPS
2018-19	App	65	53
2017-18	2	50	66
2016-17	1	80	56

SOWEGA College and Career Ready Performance Index Single Score						% Difference		
School Year	Grades Served	School Score	District Average	District Weighted	School Weighted	District Average	District Weighted	School Weighted
2018-19	E, M	59.6	77.1	68.9	64.2	-25.6%	-14.5%	-7.5%
2017-18		37.8	77.8	62.7		-69.2%	-49.5%	
2016-17		60.6	77.8			-24.9%		

SOWEGA	Attendance Zone: Statewide			Comparison Scores			% Difference		
School Year	Metric	Grade Cluster	School Score	District Average	District Weighted	School Weighted	District Average	District Weighted	School Weighted
2018-19	Content Mastery	E	48	67.6	49.5	49.2	-33.9%	-3.1%	-2.5%
2018-19	Grade Band	E	58.5	77.1	68.9	68.7	-27.4%	-16.3%	-16.0%
2018-19	Progress	E	65.8	84.4	75.2	75.0	-24.8%	-13.4%	-13.1%
2018-19	Content Mastery	M	43.1	66.3	45.2	44.3	-42.4%	-4.8%	-2.7%
2018-19	Grade Band	M	61.7	72.1	71.1	70.6	-15.5%	-14.1%	-13.4%
2018-19	Progress	M	72.6	80.3	88.6	88.0	-10.1%	-19.8%	-19.2%
2017-18	Content Mastery	E	40.5	65.7	42.5		-47.5%	-4.8%	
2017-18	Grade Band	E	33.4	77.8	62.7		-79.9%	-61.0%	
2017-18	Progress	E	35.7	84.4	75.2		-81.1%	-71.3%	
2017-18	Content Mastery	M	40.1	65.1	42.4		-47.5%	-5.5%	
2017-18	Grade Band	M	50.6	76.2	69.5		-40.4%	-31.5%	
2017-18	Progress	M	44.4	81.0	84.0		-58.4%	-61.7%	
2016-17	Content Mastery	E	30.3	31.3			-3.2%		
2016-17	Grade Band	E	60.6	72.9			-18.4%		
2016-17	Progress	E	NA	NA			NA		

SWOEGA Value-Added Model				
School Year	Grades Served	School Score	District Score	Statistically Significant
2018-19	E	-0.0830	0.00	Lower
	M	-0.0730	0.00	Lower
2017-18	E	-0.4274	0.00	Lower
	M	-0.3851	0.00	Lower
2016-17	E	NA	NA	NA

SOWEGA Beating the Odds				
School Year	Grades Served	Actual Score	Predicted Threshold	BTO?
2018-19	E, M	59.6	76.9	N
2017-18		37.8	73.5	N
2016-17		71.8	78.1	N