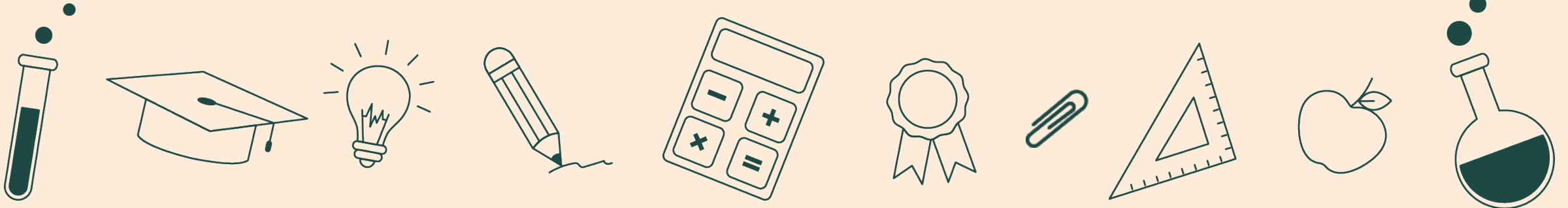# Website Compliance & Communications

Cerrone Lockett, General Counsel

Erica Acha-Morfaw, Communications Specialist

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

SCSC

Mission

To improve public education by authorizing high-quality charter schools that provide students with better educational opportunities than they would otherwise receive in traditional district schools.

Vision

Innovative and superior charter schools advancing education in every community.

Overview

The Basics – Legal & Regulatory Obligations

Beyond the Basics – Best Practices

Website Strategies & Best Practices

Legal & Regulatory Obligations

- State Law (O.C.G.A)
- Federal Law
- SBOE Rules
- SCSC Rules
- Charter Contract

State Law

Financial Information

- Link to the [SBOE website](#) for school budgets and expenditures.

- Link to the [SBOE website](#) for school system financial information.

- The annual budget submitted to the SBOE pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167(c).

- The state auditor's personnel report (O.C.G.A. § 50-6-27).*

- The most recent 5 years of DOAA audits (O.C.G.A. § 50-6-6(a)) and independent audits required by O.C.G.A. § 50-6-6(b).*

- Findings of irregularities or budget deficits reported by DOAA pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-67.*
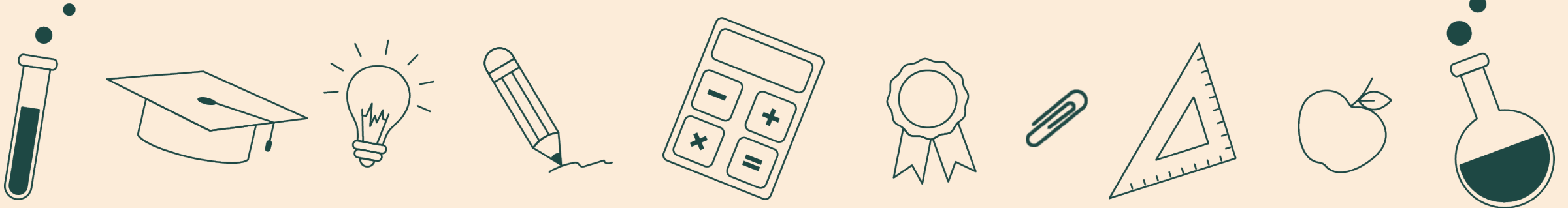
Open Records Act

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-71(2)

If a state charter school designates an open records officer, it shall prominently display such designation on the agency's website.
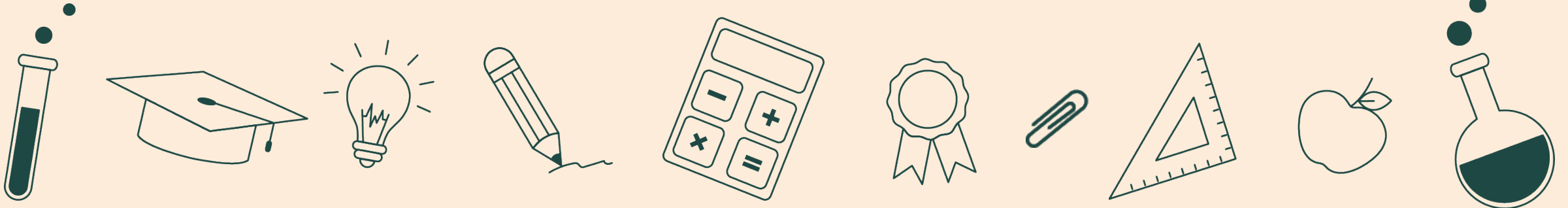
Protect Student First Act
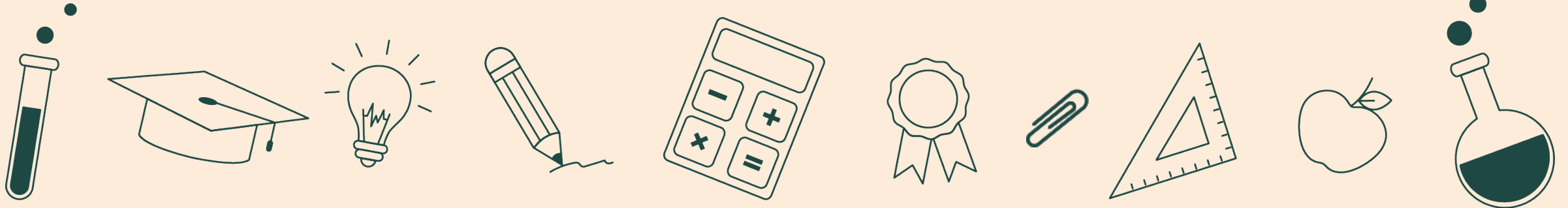## O.C.G.A. § 20-2-786

The governing boards of state charter schools must post the school's policy or regulation to promote parental involvement in public schools on the school's website.

Federal Law

General Notice Obligations
Federal Civil Rights Statutes

❑ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

➢ Charter schools must make information regarding Title VI's prohibition against discrimination based on race, color, and national origin available to stakeholders.

➢ Charter schools must communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English.

General Notice Obligations
Federal Civil Rights Statutes

❑ **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
  ➢ A Charter school that employs 15 or more people must take continuing steps to notify stakeholders that it does not discriminate based on disability.

❑ **Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act**
  ➢ A public entity that employs 50 or more people must take continuing steps to notify stakeholders that it does not discriminate based on disability.

Website Accessibility
Section 504 and Title II

TOPIC 3
Recommended Practices &
Tips for Digital Accessibility

Website Obligations
Federal Civil Rights Statutes

❑ Title IX of the Education Amendments

➢ Notify stakeholders that the school does not, and Title IX prohibits it from, discriminating based on sex in its programs or activities and that Title IX inquiries may be referred to the school's Title IX Coordinator.

➢ The name or title, office address, email address, and telephone number of the school's Title IX Coordinator must be prominently displayed on its website and in any handbook or catalog it makes available to stakeholders.
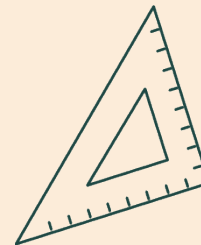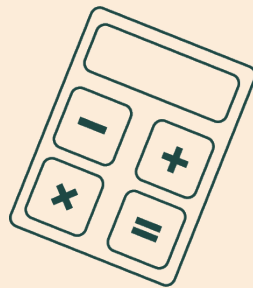
Website Related Obligations

o State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.06 Charter Authorizers, Financing, Management, and Governance Training

o State Charter Schools Commission Rule 691-2-.03 State Charter School Monitoring

o State Charter Schools Commission Rule 691-2-.05 State Charter School Student Admissions and Lotteries

SCSC Rule 691-2-.03
State Charter School Monitoring

- Governing Board membership
- Governing Board meeting calendar
- Meeting agendas for upcoming Governing Board meetings
- Meeting minutes for past Governing Board meetings unless the Georgia Open Meetings Act limits their publication
- Procedure for contacting the school's Governing Board
- Procedure for contacting the school's most senior school administrator;
- Any admissions application utilized by the school;
- Notification of enrollment and admission procedures required by SCSC Rule 691-2-.05
- Annual operating budget or summary thereof
- The charter school's Charter Contract.

SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.06
(Additional Obligations)

- Governing Board and <u>committee meeting calendar</u>.
- Meeting agendas for upcoming Governing Board and <u>committee meetings</u>.
- Meeting minutes for past Governing Board and <u>committee meetings.</u>
- Monthly financial statements.
- Meeting minutes must be uploaded to the website within ten (10) business days of approval and remain on the website for the duration of the charter.

SCSC Rule 691-2-.05
State Charter School Student Admissions and Lotteries

❑ Enrollment Eligibility
- ✓ Attendance zone
- ✓ Grades Served
- ✓ Single-sex Requirements

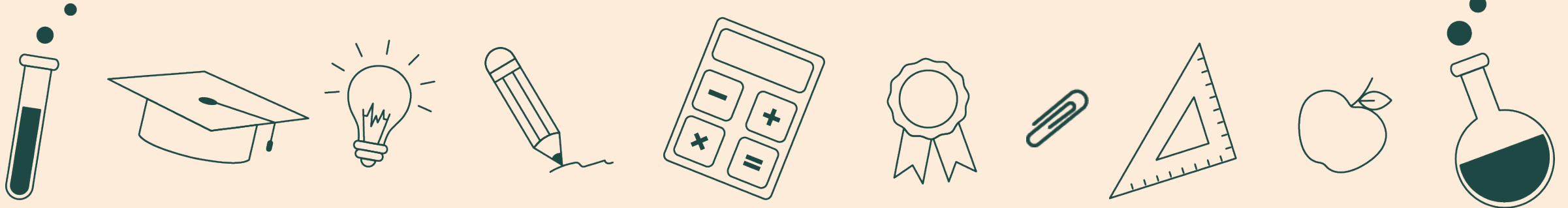❑ Enrollment Preferences

❑ Admissions and Lottery Information
- ✓ Lottery occurs when applications exceed capacity

❑ Application
- ✓ Distinguish pre-lottery applications from post-lottery registration forms.

Paragraph 14 - Governance

➢ Communicate in a timely manner with stakeholders and use all reasonable efforts to respond to and address stakeholder communications and complaints.

➢ Website Compliance – SCSC Rule 691-2-.03 State Charter School Monitoring

➢ Maintain the website six (6) months after education operations cease.

➢ Notify and inform stakeholders of the school's closure, including staff, parents, the general public, appropriate local stakeholders (school district), and creditors.
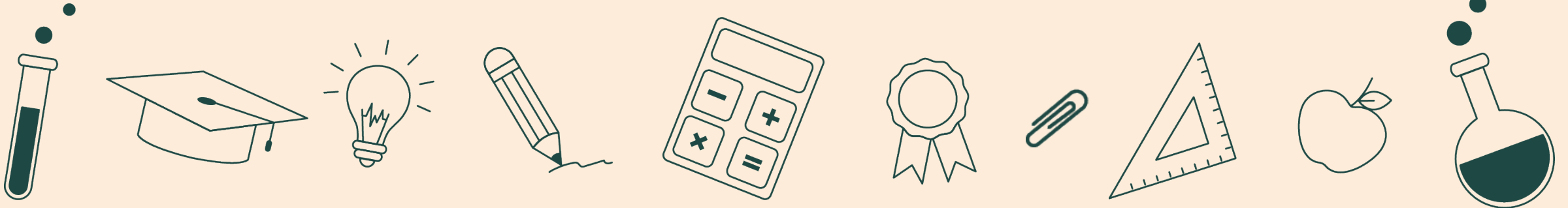
Website Best Practices

- Include Board Policies, School Policies, Grievance Procedures, Code of Conduct, and Bylaws.
- Include the school's mission and vision.
- Include documents regularly requested by stakeholders.
- Use available web products to ensure the website is accessible to stakeholders with disabilities; train staff responsible for maintaining or adding content.
- Ensure compliance with the heightened requirements of State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.06

State Charter Schools Commission

scsc.georgia.gov
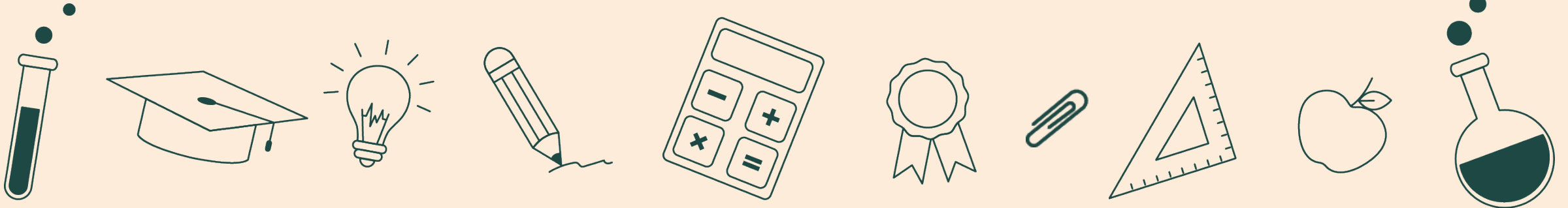
School Website = Single Source of Truth

Your school's website should be the central source of information and news for your school, a.k.a. the Single Source of Truth (SSoT). The absence of an SSoT can foster confusion and frustration, especially if inconsistent information exists across multiple platforms.

NEWS

**EVENTS**

Instructional Updates

SSoT: Why It Matters

Consistency: A single source ensures a consistent message across all stakeholders.

Reliability: Verified information builds trust within the school community.

Efficiency: Streamlined communication saves time and minimizes confusion.

Accessibility: It's accessible to everyone, regardless of their preferred communication channels.
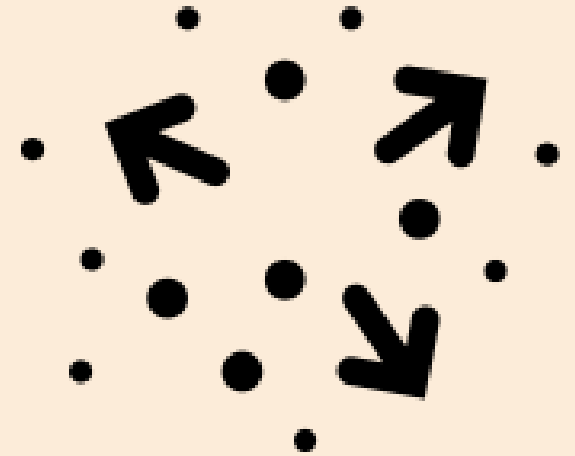
Overcoming Challenges to SSoT

Challenges

- Regular Updates

- User-Friendly Design

- Promoting Website Usage

Strategies to Overcome Challenges:

- Assign Responsibility

- User-Friendly Design

- Active Promotion

Website Features

- News & announcements
  - Keep everyone informed with a dedicated section for news and announcements.

- Calendars
  - Maintain an events calendar to highlight important dates like parent-teacher conferences, school plays, and exams.

- Resources for Students & Parents
  - Offer a repository of resources, including educational materials, homework assignments, and links to useful websites.

resources

State Charter Schools Commission

scsc.georgia.gov
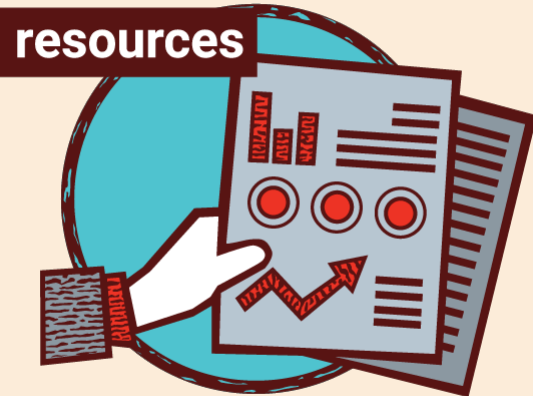
Amplify with Social Media

Rather than treating social media as an independent source of information, it should be seen as a valuable extension of your website. By seamlessly linking back to your website or Single Source of Truth (SSoT) within your social media posts, you not only enhance trust but also reinforce reliability in the information you provide.
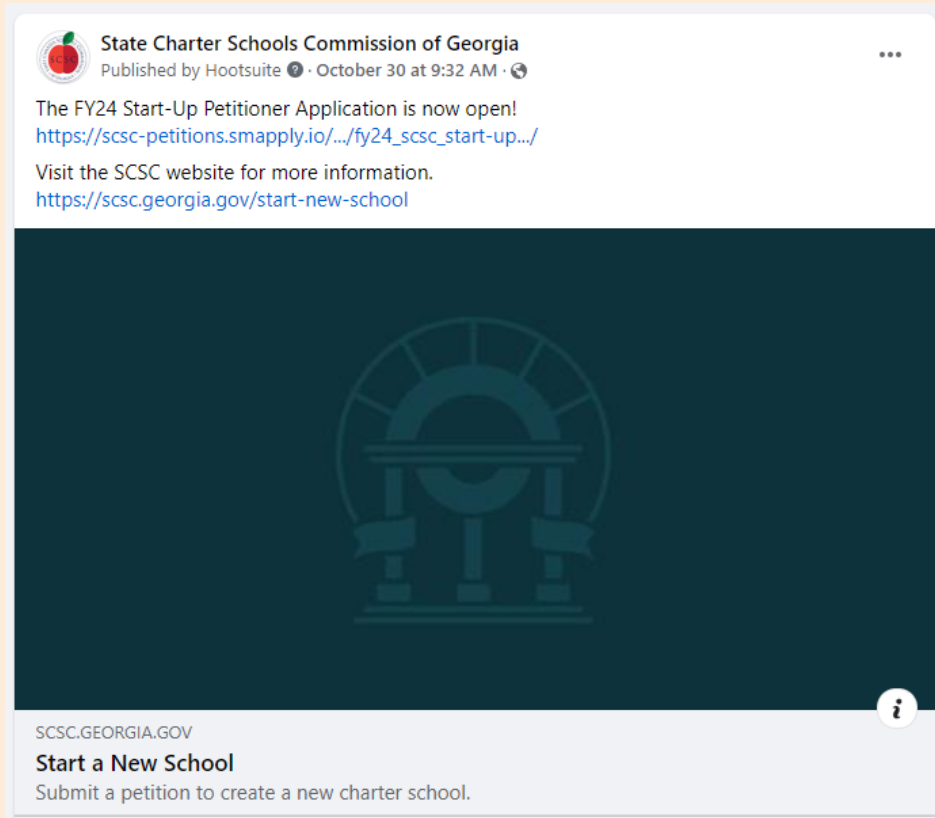
Key Takeaways

- **Centralized Information:** Your school website consolidates critical updates, announcements, and resources in one central hub. This ensures that staff, students, parents, and the community can easily access verified and up-to-date information.

- **Reliability and Trust**: By maintaining a reliable website, you foster trust within your school community. Users can rely on your website as a credible source of information.

- **Challenges Can Be Overcome:** While challenges exist, such as regular updates and user-friendly design, they can be surmounted with proper planning and dedication. Your commitment to maintaining a high-quality website is key.

- **Social Media Amplification**: Social media can complement your website by extending your reach and engagement. When used strategically, it can reinforce the reliability of your website content