

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION INTERVIEW PANEL MEETING

June 20, 2019, 8:20 a.m.

**State Charter Schools Commission Conference Room
East Twin Tower, Room 1470B, Atlanta, Georgia 30334**

Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting convened at approximately 8:32am. The interview panel, consisting of Commissioner Tony Lowden; Commission Staff Gregg Stevens, Morgan Felts, Kristin Easterbrook, Terence Washington, and Sarah Beck; and Polina Aleshina, were present. Members of the public were also present.
2. The interview panel met with the governing board of Amana Academy. The panel asked representatives of the school to discuss a day in the life of a typical student, the motivations behind replicating Amana Academy, and the partnerships they have built with other charter schools. The interview panel then inquired about the Expeditionary Learning model and the rationale behind the statewide attendance zone. The panelists also asked about the financial situations of both the current and proposed Amana Academy schools, as well as the projected enrollment levels and student recruitment strategies. The interview panel then asked about gaps in the budget of the proposed replication school as well as the shared financial and staffing structures between the two schools. Additionally, the panel inquired about the capacity of the governing board to run two schools, with one being locally approved and one state approved, as well as the on-boarding process for new board members. The interview panel then asked the governing panel to explain their understanding of their responsibility to operate as an LEA. The panel asked about facility plans and the existing relationship with Atlanta Public Schools and Fulton County. The panel expressed concerns about student enrollment, unpaid programming workload, and leadership capacity. The interview concluded at approximately 9:37am. Interview panelist Polina Aleshina left the meeting.
3. At approximately 10:28am, Carolyn Bridges and Meca Mohammad joined the interview panel. The interview panel then met with the governing board of Atlanta Smart Academy. The interview began by asking the board to discuss a day in the life of a student at the proposed school. The board spoke about the envisioned schedule and highlighted the school's focus on advanced math, science, and integrated arts. The board also spoke to the school's project-based instructional approach education model. The interview panel then asked the charter school to speak about its plans for teacher recruitment, professional development, and how the board will ensure that the project-based learning model is implemented. Additionally, the interview panel inquired about board member recruitment and the governing board's capacity to function as an LEA. The interview panel also asked about the rationale of seeking a statewide attendance zone as well as the reasoning behind the 5-8 grade span. Finally, the interview panel asked the charter school to explain their proposed budget and projected cash flows. The interview panel expressed concerns about student enrollment and the governing board's ability to effectively oversee the school leader. The interview concluded at approximately 11:26am.