

## **STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING**

**June 26th, 2013, 10 a.m.**

**Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning Conference Room  
East Twin Tower, Room 854, Atlanta, Georgia 30334**

### Meeting Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order by Commission Vice- Chairman Paul Williams. Vice-Chairman Williams verified that a quorum existed and that all members of the commission were present with the exception of Chairman Charles B. Knapp.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday, Executive Director and Gregg Stevens, General Counsel and Petitions Manager.
3. Approximately 15 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives as well as Georgia Charter Schools Association staff.
4. A motion was made by Commissioner Perez and seconded by Commissioner Lowden that the Commission approve the meeting minutes from the May 29<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.
5. Vice-Chairman Williams then expressed appreciation for Chairman Knapp's service to date and acknowledged the recent article written by Dick Yarbrough in which Chairman Knapp's leadership was highlighted as an asset to the SCSC. Vice-Chairman Williams also recognized Dr. Knapp's recent appointment as interim dean of the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business.
6. Vice-Chairman Williams next announced that GBA ID badges would be provided to commissioners after the meeting so as to enable improved access to the SCSC office and meeting areas.
7. Bonnie Holliday then provided an update on the 2013 application cycle at the request of Vice-Chairman Williams. Director Holliday noted that the SCSC received 16 petitions prior to the June 14<sup>th</sup> deadline. Those schools are: Utopian Academy for the Arts, Statesboro STEAM College and Career Academy, Byron Peach Charter High School, Georgia Fugees Academy, International Charter School of Atlanta, Fulton Science Academy High School, Fulton Sunshine Academy Elementary School, Cobb Preparatory Academy, Hepzibah Charter Academy, The Academy for Classical Education, Sports Leadership and Management (SLAM) Middle School, St. Augustine Preparatory Academy of Excellence, Nexus Academy of Atlanta, Cirrus Academy Charter School, Noble Virtual School of Georgia (Virtual), and Rivers School. More information about the schools' attendance zones and proposed grade levels is posted on [scsc.georgia.gov](http://scsc.georgia.gov).
8. Director Holliday next reminded commissioners of the petition review timeline and process. SCSC staff are currently reviewing petitions for compliance purposes to determine which—if any—petitions are ineligible for further review. Following completion of compliance checks, an

in-depth substantive review of all eligible petitions will take place. Additionally, interviews with petitioning groups will be scheduled for September and recommendations will come to the commissioners for approval in October.

9. Vice-Chairman Williams then announced that all of the SCSC's open staff positions have been filled, and he requested that Director Holliday introduce each of the new employees. Director Holliday introduced three (3) new full-time staff members who will start on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013: Mr. Terrence Washington—Academic and Financial Accountability Specialist, Ms. Lauren Wright—Director of Organizational and Resource Development Director, and Ms. Daniela Belton—Business and Operations Manager.
10. Director Holliday also introduced the three (3) part-time student interns working at the SCSC this summer: Ms. Nnenna Ogbu from Penn State, Mr. William Ruffin from Georgia State, and Ms. Chelsea Ulrich from the University of Georgia.
11. Vice-Chairman Williams then announced that the following state charter school site visits are scheduled for August and September: Provost/ Atlanta, GA (August 19<sup>th</sup>—10am-12pm), Ivy Prep Kirkwood & Ivy Prep Young Men's, DeKalb Co., GA (9am-1pm--September 17<sup>th</sup>), and Mountain Education Charter High School/ Jasper, GA (August 26<sup>th</sup>, 4pm-6pm). Director Holliday will coordinate with commissioners who are able to attend.
12. Next, Vice-Chairman Williams called on student intern, Chelsea Ulrich, to provide a policy and research update on Promise Neighborhood Grants. Ms. Ulrich gave an overview of the purpose, eligibility criteria, charter involvement, and state-level participation. A briefing document was provided to commissioners and will be posted on the SCSC website as a resource for state charters seeking additional funding.
13. Vice-Chairman Williams then explained that some state charters applied for Facilities Grants which require the signature of the Commission chair. In order to facilitate efficiency of operations, Chairman Knapp signed a document providing Bonnie Holliday with signatory authority for purposes of signing facilities grant applications. SCSC bylaws state that this authority requires ratification by vote of the SCSC. Commissioner Lowden made a motion to ratify Director Holliday's signatory authority, Commissioner Rippner seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.
14. An overview of a potential amendment to the SCSC's Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy was then provided by Gregg Stevens at the request of Vice-Chairman Williams. During the May meeting, commissioners inquired about potential consequences for breaching the COI policy, and after conducting a review of other state-level board policies, Mr. Stevens found the following consequences to be applicable to state agencies: 1) censure and 2) referral to appropriate authority for enforcement of other applicable laws (in the event a violation of the conflict of interest policy was also a violation of the state code of ethics in law). Mr. Stevens requested that commissioners review these consequences prior to the next meeting. If there are no concerns, the SCSC can amend the COI policy to include these consequences at the July meeting.
15. Vice-Chairman Williams then asked if commissioners had any additional items to bring before the SCSC. Director Holliday announced that new SCSC email addresses would be ready for

commissioners' use within the week. She also reminded commissioners that SCSC staff would be attending the National Charter Schools Conference on Monday, July 1 – Wednesday, July 3.

16. Commissioner Rippner then made a recommendation on behalf of the SCSC communications task force that commissioners refrain from contact with petitioners who currently have applications under review by the SCSC. Commissioner Lewis voiced support for this recommendation as did Commissioners Williams and Lowden who both noted that in order to avoid recusal in future votes, commissioners should not engage directly with petitioning groups. Commissioner Perez agreed with the recommendation for the time being pending a full analysis of the pros and cons during SCSC retreat that would lead to the development of a sound equitable policy. Commissioner Perez further noted concern that these short-term communication limitations could become the long term policy, and instead the SCSC needs to create a sound permanent communications policy that affords interested parties increased and not decreased access to commissioners.
17. Prior to adjournment, Vice-Chairman Williams invited members of the audience to speak during the public comment period. Director Holliday confirmed that no one signed up to speak.
18. There being no further business to come before the Commission, Vice-Chairman Williams adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:05am.