

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

June 25, 2014, 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 Chair Charles B. Knapp. Chairman Knapp verified that a quorum existed and that all members of the commission were present with the exception of Jennifer Rippner.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director, Gregg Stevens--General Counsel, Daniela Belton—Business and Operations Manager, Terence Washington—Accountability Manager.
3. Approximately 10 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives and charter school business representatives. Representatives from GCSA were also present.
4. A motion was made by Commissioner Lowden and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the meeting minutes from the May 28th SCSC meeting including the minutes from the executive session on May 28th. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Commissioner Lewis moved to approve the minutes from the called June 5th meeting, including the executive session minutes. Commissioner Hogg seconded the motion and they were unanimously approved.
6. Executive Director Holliday provided an update on the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Evaluation and Site Visit. She explained that NACSA representatives committed to providing a draft of the SCSC's evaluation report before the July 4th holiday.
7. Next, Director Holliday announced that the SCSC Governance and Policy Retreat will take place on September 4-5, 2014 at Brasstown Valley Resort. Commissioner Williams inquired if individuals from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government would facilitate the training, and Director Holliday said it had not been confirmed, but SCSC staff would be reaching out to CVIOG soon.
8. Chairman Knapp asked if the retreat agenda had been finalized and Director Holliday explained that SCSC staff are waiting to review the NACSA evaluation report before finalizing an agenda since the report might provide useful recommendations for continued improvement. Chairman Knapp requested all commissioners to email Executive Director Holliday topics they wished to discuss.
9. Gregg Stevens, Petitions Manager, updated the Commissioners on the Petition Review Process. He explained that the legal compliance review was completed and two petitions are not eligible

for further review because of substantive legal or submission compliance issues. Stevens said he would email commissioners to confirm their availability during the week of petitioner interviews: July 28th through August 1st. Each commissioner will participate in at least two petitioner interviews. Chairman Knapp, Commissioner Lowden, Commissioner Hogg, and Commissioner Williams volunteered to participate in three petitioner interviews if needed.

10. Commissioner Perez asked if the SCSC planned to have a “Second Look” process that would allow the SCSC to delay action on certain petitions that need additional refinement. Mr. Stevens informed commissioners that the SCSC staff has created a process that allows for the issuance of delayed decisions in very specific circumstances during the 2014 review cycle. He clarified that certain technical deficiencies—including, but not limited to, budget construction—may warrant a recommendation for delayed decision; however, substantive deficiencies—including, but not limited to—academic plans, curriculum models, or attendance zones would not warrant a recommendation for delayed decision.
11. Daniela Belton provided an update on organizational development. Nine state charter schools opted into the strategic planning opportunity provided by the SCSC and conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Nine schools also opted into the budget and financial review opportunity provided by the SCSC and conducted by the Georgia Charter Schools Association. Additionally, the 2014-2015 training schedule was in the newsletter and is now on the SCSC website.
12. Additionally, Ms. Belton stated the Georgia Department of Public Health issued new vaccination requirements for those students enrolled in public and private schools in Georgia who were born on or after July 1, 2002. Chairman Knapp inquired if there were published opt outs for those students with religious reasons, financial constraints, etc. He voiced his concerns with the potential problems this could cause for schools and students. Executive Director Holliday assured Chairman Knapp that the SCSC would update the website with information for students and schools.
13. Terence Washington, Accountability Manager, updated the Commissioners with the end-of-year closeout proceedings for Heritage Prep and Scholars Academy. Mr. Washington explained that Scholars Academy had recovered some, but not all, of the Federal Implementation grant funds and/or purchased assets for which they were previously unable to account. He also noted that Heritage Prep had completed its asset inventory, and that both schools would close their books on June 30th, 2014. He also explained that each school would continue to employ 2-3 staffers until October in order to ensure student records are transferred appropriately, and final invoices and expenses are paid in a timely way. Following a question from Commissioner Perez regarding the schools’ official closeout dates, Mr. Washington clarified that the schools would not receive any additional state funding after June 30th, 2014; however, he explained that—in instances of charter school closures—it is not unusual for governing boards to employ a few staff members beyond the official closure date in order to tie up loose ends over the summer.
14. Next, Director Holliday provided an update on bylaw rule review and revision. By request of the commissioners, the SCSC staff is planning to review the budget section of the bylaws and make a recommendation for revision this fall. (This timeline allows staff to get through petition review before tackling the bylaw revision). Additionally, Director Holliday announced that the staff’s

goal is to annually review the SCSC rules to determine whether changes are needed to improve our service and support to the charter community. Director Holliday stated this could also be a topic at the SCSC Governance and Policy Retreat.

15. Commissioner Lowden expressed his support for the staff, especially with recent challenges. He was appreciative of the behind the scenes work of the SCSC staff.
16. Executive Director Holliday gave a brief update on the SCSC intern program noting that several previous interns are now employed by the Office of Planning and Budget, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, as well as national non-profit organizations. Director Holliday hopes this will make the SCSC internship program a highly sought after opportunity.
17. Director Holliday also provided an approximate amount of funds that would be returned at the end of the year, pending year end close-out expenses. She noted the amount would not be final until after June 30th.
18. Commissioner Lowden and Commissioner Perez expressed interest in drafting a press release to announce this large return of funds.
19. Since no attendees signed up to speak during the public comment period, Chairman Knapp asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Lewis offered a motion and Commissioner Hogg provided a second. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:38a.m.