

## STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

May 28, 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.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday—Executive Director, Gregg Stevens—General Counsel, Daniela Belton—Business and Operations Manager, Lauren Holcomb—Director of Organizational and Resource Development, Terence Washington—Accountability Manager.
3. Approximately 30 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 Perez and seconded by Commissioner Hogg that the Commission approve the meeting minutes from the April 30<sup>th</sup> SCSC meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Chairman Knapp next requested that Bonnie Holliday address the items listed under Section II of the agenda. Director Holliday introduced the two SCSC summer interns, Corin Collier and Amanda Pervine and outlined their duties.
6. Director Holliday next explained that the SCSC is undergoing a voluntary authorizer evaluation through the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). Director Holliday introduced two NACSA representatives who were in attendance, Katie Piehl and Parker Baxter, and explained that, as part of the evaluation, the NACSA representatives would observe meetings and speak with commissioners, staff, school leaders and other stakeholders on May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.
7. Director Holliday then provided a briefing on state charter CCRPI performance. Chairman Knapp asked how the 2013-14 academic performance compared to previous years and Commissioner Rippner asked if staff will conduct interventions for schools that have not met performance goals prior to the end of their charter term. Director Holliday explained that the SCSC staff is creating a risk-assessment tool and individual school profiles to address gaps and concerns in real-time. Commissioner Lowden noted that it is important to focus on academic growth.
8. Next, Gregg Stevens provided an update on the 2014 petition review process. Mr. Stevens explained that the SCSC received 20 charter petitions by the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. Mr. Stevens noted that he is currently completing a legal compliance review to ensure that all schools meet basic requirements and are eligible for further review. Mr. Stevens noted that the review

process will include an in-depth review of the charter petition and interviews with the petitioners in July. Mr. Stevens expects that staff recommendations will be submitted to the Commission in September. Chairman Knapp noted the low number of education management organizations represented in the petitions.

9. Next, Lauren Holcomb provided an overview of the SCSC May newsletter and highlighted a new statewide grant aimed at increasing access to high-speed broadband connectivity, along with several summer professional development opportunities available to schools. Ms. Holcomb noted that the SCSC completed the "How to be an LEA" training earlier in May and that two strategic planning training opportunities are available to state charters this summer. Lastly, Ms. Holcomb noted that the draft 2014-15 training calendar is available on the SCSC website to assist schools and petitioners in planning for trainings in the upcoming academic year.
10. Terence Washington next provided a status update on the SCSC's end-of-year closeout procedures for Heritage Preparatory Academy and Scholars Academy. Mr. Washington noted that the Heritage Academy closeout is primarily focused on inventorying existing assets at this point. Mr. Washington also explained that Scholars Academy officials have been unable to account for inventory purchased through a Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) implementation grant. Commissioner Lewis asked about the reporting procedures for these grants, and Mr. Washington explained that the GaDOE is responsible for monitoring. Commissioner Rippner inquired about assistance to the students in the school closure. Mr. Washington explained that Scholars Academy officials are working with the Clayton County School District to place students and transfer student records appropriately. Director Holliday clarified that the GaDOE will try to recoup any federal implementation grant funds for which the school cannot account.
11. Director Holliday then provided an overview of the SCSC FY15 proposed budget, noting that the SCSC budget increased from FY14 to FY15 due to increased enrollment growth of state charter schools. Director Holliday also noted that any unused FY15 funds will be sent back to state charters next year just as unused FY14 funds will be returned this year. Director Holliday explained that major budget expenditures for FY15 are planned to cover trainings for new and existing schools, research on best practices, and financial audits for state charters. Chairman Knapp inquired whether the budget required Commission approval. Director Holliday stated that it does not, as the Commission has delegated budget creation and management authority to the Executive Director in its bylaws; however, Director Holliday also noted that the SCSC staff is more than willing to adjust the bylaws and provide more detailed budget plans to commissioners in coming budget cycles if that is desired. Commissioner Perez asked if the SCSC should further research the issue of brick and mortar school funding vs. virtual school funding. Director Holliday explained that the SCSC staff has begun preliminary research on this topic and will continue to explore the issue.
12. Next, Chairman Knapp convened executive session to discuss personnel issues.
13. Following the conclusion of executive session business, Chairman Knapp asked for a motion to move out of executive session. A motion was provided by Commissioner Perez and seconded by Commissioner Rippner. The motion was unanimously approved.

14. Prior to adjourning the meeting, Chairman Knapp invited members of the audience to speak during the public comment period. Several members of the audience, including parents and staff from Scholars Academy, requested that the SCSC reconsider the decision to non-renew Scholars Academy.
15. Following the public comment period, Chairman Knapp asked Director Holliday to respond to those who signed up to speak.
16. There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Rippner and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45am.

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