

## **STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING**

**November 18 2015, 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 Chairman Jennifer Rippner. Chairman Rippner verified that a quorum existed. Commissioners Perez and Werner joined the meeting around 10:10 a.m.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday-Executive Director, Gregg Stevens—Deputy Director and General Counsel, Terence Washington – Finance and Operational Accountability Manager, Morgan Felts – Deputy Counsel and Petitions Manager, Lauren Holcomb – Director of Organizational and Resource Development, and Katie Manthey – Business and Operations Manager.
3. Approximately 10 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives, charter school business representatives, and Georgia Charter Schools Association representatives were also present.
4. After calling the meeting to order, Chairman Rippner called for approval of the meeting minutes from the October 28th SCSC meeting. Commissioner Lowden made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Williams provided a second. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Chairman Rippner then welcomed Executive Director Holliday back from maternity leave and thanked the staff for covering assignments and projects in her absence. Deputy Director Stevens was then asked to review the portion of the agenda pertaining to agency-wide updates. Mr. Stevens noted that SCSC staff and Commissioners completed the 4th quarter state charter school visit on November 16, 2015, to Utopian Academy for the Arts in Riverdale. Mr. Stevens, Commissioner Perez, Commissioner Werner, and Commissioner Lewis attended. Commissioner Lewis commented on the visit to the school.
6. Chairman Rippner then asked Lauren Holcomb for an update on organizational development. Ms. Holcomb stated that the SCSC hosted a governance training November 4-6 at Little Ocmulgee State Park. Ms. Holcomb noted several upcoming training opportunities, including New School Orientation on December 2 in the Twin Towers for newly approved school boards, and Petitioner Boot Camps on December 15-16 at the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center and January 20 at the Macon Marriott City Center in Macon. Ms. Holcomb also noted that the December 16<sup>th</sup> training would specifically focus on budget and finance and that the SCSC would host webinars in January for those who are unable to attend trainings in person.
7. Chairman Rippner then asked for an update on academic accountability. Director Holliday shared that graduation rates were released October 30, and Georgia Milestones Assessment Results were released November 16 and that staff would have a more in depth accountability briefing in

January. Director Holliday noted that the SCSC has begun its compliance monitoring activities for the 2015-2016 school year. Since the October meeting SCSC staff have visited two schools and have a third scheduled to visit following the meeting. After completing monitoring activities for a school, SCSC staff will provide written notice of any findings. The findings, if any, will be used to determine the school's score on the operational component of the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework.

8. Next, Terence Washington provided an update on financial accountability. Mr. Washington noted that the SCSC received draft versions of most schools' audit reports by the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline in their charter contracts. Four schools did not submit on time due to accounting issues. Commissioner Werner asked whether the late schools were penalized. Mr. Washington explained that schools who did not submit on time were sent a letter of potential breach of contracted and lost points in the fiscal viability section of the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework.
9. Chairman Rippner then asked Lauren Holcomb for a research update. Ms. Holcomb informed commissioners regarding the on-going SCSC Value-Add and Beating the Odds Alignment study. The SCSC and GaDOE contracted with Indiana University to analyze and compare each agency's measure for assessing charter schools' educational progress. The researcher for this project has since moved to University of California Riverside and a new contract for the work has been executed. Ms. Holcomb then stated that the SCSC plans to examine the economic impact that charter schools have on their community and the state. The SCSC released a request for research proposals on the topic. The deadline for submission was November 13. SCSC staff received proposals from Kennesaw State University, the University of Georgia, and Georgia State University and are currently reviewing them. Next Katie Manthey gave an update on a study of online charter schools released by the Center for Research and Education Outcomes (CREDO). Ms. Manthey noted that the study showed weaker academic growth for students enrolled in online schools compared to their traditional school counterparts. Chairman Rippner asked how the results of the CREDO will affect the SCSC's ongoing virtual school research. Ms. Manthey replied that the SCSC plans to move forward with a second phase of virtual school research as there are still many unanswered questions regarding online schools.
10. Next, Chairman Rippner asked Mr. Stevens for an update on the Education Reform Commission (ERC) recommendations. Mr. Stevens explained that the ERC is finalizing recommendations for Governor Deal to adjust the state's educational funding formula and key educational policies to improve and streamline K-12 education. Mr. Stevens displayed a PowerPoint presentation describing the key components of the funding changes and policy amendments focusing on how the changes will impact charter schools. Chairman Rippner reminded commissioners and the public that proposed changes will still have to pass through the legislature and signed by the governor before going into effect.
11. Next, Chairman Rippner asked Ms. Felts to explain the first SCSC Recommendation, the SCSC renewal application. Ms. Felts explained that the charter contracts for the Charter Conservatory for Arts and Technology (CCAT) and Ivy Preparatory Young Men's Leadership Academy end on June 30, 2016. SCSC staff developed a renewal application to gather information in order to make an informed decision to renew or decline to renew a school's contract. The renewal process

will also include an interview with the school's governing board and a review team, which will include SCSC commissioners. Ms. Felts emphasized that the driving factor behind renewal will be the school's academic, operational, and financial performance on the SCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework. Ms. Felts then reviewed the proposed timeline for the renewal process noting that dates are contingent depending on when CCPRI data is released. Chairman Rippner called for a motion on the recommendation to approve the SCSC renewal application. Commissioner Lowden provided a motion and Commissioner Lewis provided a second. Commissioners unanimously approved the motion.

12. Chairman Rippner then introduced the proposed meeting calendar for the 2016 calendar year.
13. Chairman Rippner asked for additional items from commissioners and there were none.
14. Chairman Rippner next called for public comment. A representative from Mountain Education Charter School informed the SCSC that he is serving as a charter representative of the Georgia Association of Secondary Principals. There no further comment.
15. There being no further business before the SCSC, Chairman Rippner adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:15 a.m.