FY2027 Pre-Opening Checklist for State Charter Schools

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INSTRUCTIONS

Pursuant to its charter contract, a state charter school must demonstrate its preparation for operations by making significant progress in completing the SCSC Pre-Opening Checklist. The SCSC Pre-Opening Checklist is comprised of Key Decisions, Priority Milestones, and Ongoing Obligations. **A state charter school must evidence the completion of all Priority Milestones prior to its opening.** A state charter school must demonstrate the completion of Priority Milestones by uploading evidence of completion or providing assurances in the SCSC's administrative portal, Epicenter. If you do not already have access to the SCSC's Epicenter portal, please contact Kristen Easterbrook at Kristen.Easterbrook@scsc.georgia.gov as soon as possible.

If a state charter school fails to demonstrate that it has met *all* Priority Milestones by their respective timelines, the SCSC may suspend the charter school's opening until the charter school demonstrates its ability to meet its obligations under its charter contract.

All deadlines for Priority Milestones occur after the charter school executes its charter contract and prior to the school serving students. The deadlines for Priority Milestones reflect the **latest date** that the school may accomplish the associated task to remain on schedule for a successful school opening; however, schools are encouraged to complete all Priority Milestones as early as practicable. Failure to complete Priority Milestones and/or failure to submit required evidence of completion may impact the ability of the school to open for the 2027-2028 school year. **The SCSC may suspend the opening of a state charter school if Priority Milestones remain outstanding.** Please note that the SCSC reserves the right to amend the Pre-Opening Checklist during the pre-opening year.

Key Decisions and Ongoing Obligations are actions the state charter school should take to ensure a successful school opening, but do not require evidence of their completion to be submitted. Priority Milestones are highlighted in **blue**, and Key Decisions and Ongoing Obligations are in **light blue**.

Importantly, this checklist is not exhaustive of all pre-opening activities, and completion of pre-opening milestones will not guarantee successful operation. Many additional factors will contribute to a school's overall operational success, but all items on the checklist must be completed to remain compliant during the pre-opening period, specifically.

Additional Pre-Opening Monitoring

Generally, the SCSC reviews Pre-Opening Checklist submissions broadly to ensure completion. However, checklist items marked with an asterisk will receive additional review for compliance with the charter contract and applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies. This review is not a comprehensive evaluation but is limited in scope to specific compliance elements. Schools remain responsible for complete compliance and will participate in full monitoring activities once operational. During pre-opening, the SCSC will notify the school of any compliance concerns; however, the school is responsible for making corrective actions and is not required to submit proof of correction unless the SCSC cites a material concern. Although corrective action is not required, schools should note that several of these items will need to be submitted again for SCSC annual operations monitoring and will be deemed a "Finding" if noncompliant. Finally, please note that policies deemed compliant during pre-opening may need to be revised during the school's operational years to reflect new or amended legislation.

The final appendix in the Pre-Opening Checklist contains a chart listing the deadlines for Priority Milestones in chronological order to assist your school in planning.

Please email SCSC Director of New Schools Kristen Easterbrook at Kristen.Easterbrook@scsc.georgia.gov if you have any questions or problems using Epicenter.

KEY DECISIONS

The following items do not have required submissions attached to them; however, they are important decisions regarding your school's operations that should be made by the prescribed deadline.

Decision Item	Additional Information	Timeline
Determine if your school will provide transportation to students	• If transportation will be provided, contact GaDOE's Pupil Transportation Division Director Michael Sanders at Michael.Sanders@doe.k12.ga.us for more information	April 1, 2027
Determine if your school will elect to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan	• Charter schools have only **one** opportunity to elect to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan during the initial charter term and **must do so within six (6) months after the initial charter is approved.** • Charter Schools must complete the application form. After the application is completed, SHBP Employer Services will reach out to the Charter School. • In addition to completing the application, Charter Schools must meet SHBP's onboarding process to become a new SHBP Employing Entity, which generally takes 2 – 3 months, and includes User Acceptance Testing for its internal system to transmit employee eligibility records. • **If your Charter School is interested in participating in the SHBP, please complete the application form here within six (6) months after the initial charter is approved.**	**Application Timeframe:** Within six months after their initial charter is approved. **Onboarding Timeframe:** 2 – 3 months after the initial application is approved. **Coverage Effective Dates:** January 1 or July 1
Determine if and how food service will be provided	• If food service will be provided, contact GaDOE's School Nutrition Division for appropriate processes and approvals • Contact Ramona Stevens at rstevens@doe.k12.ga.us with the GaDOE School Nutrition Division for more information. • **Please note that the School Nutrition Program process takes between six to twelve months to complete.** • Review GaDOE Nutrition's Meal Program Interest video for more information about getting started.	November 1, 2026
Determine if your school will participate in the E-Rate program	• GaDOE's E-Rate program provides discounted internet services to schools. • Coordinate with GaDOE Director Internal Technology Nathan Miller at Nathan.Miller@doe.k12.ga.us	As soon as practicable* *Please note that the E-Rate Process can be lengthy, so schools are encouraged to begin working on this as soon as possible.
If serving high school, begin planning for the accreditation process in accordance with the charter contract.	• Coordinate with relevant accreditation agencies to develop a timeline for accreditation.	As soon as practicable

GOVERNANCE

Denotes preopening monitoring item

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
Provide the current board member and school leadership roster and contact information for Epicenter profile set-up	Pursuant to SCSC Rule 691-2-.03, the governing board membership and procedure for contacting the school's governing board must be easily accessible on the school's website	September 1, 2026	Board member and school leadership roster
Formally approved board policies	Board policies must include (at a minimum): • Grievance Policies; • Criminal Background Checks of Board Members • ***Conflicts of Interest Policies; and** • ***Signed Board Conflict of Interest forms**	October 1, 2026	Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved
Ratify By-laws		November 1, 2026	By-laws; Minutes of the meeting at which they were approved
***Board Meeting Calendar**		May 1, 2027	Board meeting calendar; Minutes of the meeting at which it was approved
Ongoing Obligations	**Additional Information**	**Timeline**	
Maintain evidence of regular board meetings and minutes	• **All** meetings after the execution of the charter contract **must** adhere to the Georgia Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et. seq.) • This includes, but is not limited to, **proper notice** of regular and called meetings, record of meeting minutes, and access for the public. • Pursuant to SCSC Rule 691-2-.03, the governing board meeting calendar, meeting agendas for upcoming meetings, and meeting minutes for past meetings must be easily accessible on the school's website See SCSC guidance document *Public Access to Information on State Charter School Websites* for additional information	Immediately upon approval	
Notify the SCSC if there are members who join or resign from the governing board in accordance with the ***SCSC's Communications Policy***	• The SCSC frequently communicates with Pre-Opening school boards so updated contact information is vital. • Instructions for how to update contact information can be found here. • **Please note that the failure of the school to notify the SCSC of any board changes or substantially change board makeup from the approved petition may result in the SCSC suspending the opening of the charter school**	As needed	

FACILITIES

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
Finalize lease or purchase agreement for school facility	SCSC Rule 691-2-.06 requires state charter schools to: • Submit a final draft lease to the SCSC Executive Director **prior to execution of the lease.** • Submit a copy of the note or bond to the SCSC Executive Director **for review 30 days before closing on a facility's purchase when using proceeds of a loan or bond to purchase a facility**; and • Notify the SCSC Executive Director prior to changing any facility. Additional Considerations: • Schools with a defined attendance zone **must** locate in the district where they submitted for action; and • Schools must locate in a priority area if the school received priority consideration during the petition process. NOTE: Prior to finalizing any facility lease or purchase agreement, schools must conduct their own due diligence to ensure that the terms of the agreement, and any related financing agreements, adhere to the terms of the school's charter contract and do not interfere with the school's ability to meet the financial performance standards contained in the CPF.	December 18, 2026	Final draft lease or purchase agreement
Obtain a Facility Code from GaDOE	Schools should Contact Education Research and Evaluation Specialist, Kelland Waldrep, kwaldrep@doe.k12.ga.us for additional information. • See GaDOE's *Facility Services Resources* for additional information	March 1, 2027	Copy of GaDOE facility approval; Facility code
Obtain a School Code once the facility is approved by GaDOE	• GaDOE issues school codes upon final approval of a school's facility A school code is required to access systems administered by GaDOE and GaPSC, including, but not limited to, the MyGaDOE Portal, PC Genesis, and TeachGeorgia	April 1, 2027	School code
Provide an Update on Progress Towards Obtaining a CO	Schools must provide a written update detailing the current status of the school's Certificate of Occupancy as well as a timeline that indicates when the school anticipates receiving the CO.	May 1, 2027	Written Update on CO; Timeline for receiving CO by July 1
Complete a site visit with SCSC staff	• SCSC staff will conduct a pre-opening site visit to verify that the school is ready to open its doors to students • The school will need to contact SCSC Facility and Asset Manager Robert Watts, Robert.Watts@scsc.georgia.gov to schedule this visit	June 1, 2027	SCSC will consult its records to determine compliance

Prepare a Safety & Emergency Plan	The Safety and Emergency plan must be submitted to the school's local emergency management agency pursuant to O.C.G.A.§20-2-1185 Contact your region's Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) Homeland Security Coordinators at gema-schoolsafety@gema.ga.gov.	June 1, 2027	A copy of the plan; Proof of submission to the local emergency management agency
***School Safety Drill Schedule**	• Intruder drill by October 1 and Fire Drill conducted within the first 10 school days of school. Consult the Office of Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire for information on the Emergency Drill Schedule: Here	June 1, 2027	
Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy	• Please note that given the critical nature of this deadline, schools that fail to provide a Certificate of Occupancy after this date may be required to defer opening until the following school year.	July 1, 2027	Copy of CO
Ongoing Obligations	**Additional Information**	**Timeline**	
Conduct a Facility Finance Review	Prior to Executing any Facility Financing Agreement, all schools are encouraged to review their agreements with independent legal counsel.	As applicable	
Create a plan and procedures to control access to the building		Ongoing	
Ensure adequate signage; ensure that the building is numbered for emergency response		Ongoing	
Provide office furniture, supplies, and technology to support school administration	You can purchase surplus property through the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS)	Ongoing	

STUDENTS & PARENTS

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
***Adopt a Student Handbook and related policies**	Student policies must include (at a minimum): • ***Discipline policies and due process procedures;** • ***Grievance procedure required under federal laws;** • ***Policies required under FERPA and PPRA; and** • ***Child Abuse Policy** • ***Parents' Bill of Rights Policy** • ***Procedural Safeguards** • ***Protect Students First Complaint Resolution Policy** • ***Title IX Notice** • ***Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior Policy** • ***Code of Conduct** • Technology and Acceptable Use policies • Attendance policies; See the SCSC's *FERPA Overview* and *Legal Obligations of a State Charter School* for additional information. Also consult the Monitoring Resources in the Epicenter Resources Center	November 1, 2026	Student Handbook and Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved
***Adopt policies and procedures for serving special populations**	Special population policies must include (at a minimum): • Intake process for serving students with disabilities that have existing IEPs; • Identification and Eligibility procedures for students with disabilities; • ***Home language survey and assessment process for English learners;** • ***Monitoring and service procedures for English learners; and** • ***Notification and service procedures for homeless students.** • See the SCSC's *Legal Obligations of a State Charter School* for additional information. Also consult the Monitoring Resources in the Epicenter Resources Center	November 1, 2026	Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved
Establish policies and procedures for nursing programs, required health services, and screenings, evaluating immunization records	Health policies must include (at a minimum): • School nursing policy; • Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening; • Diabetes Medical Management; and • Immunization Records • See Georgia Department of Public Health's *Immunization Guidelines for Schools and Childcare Facilities* for additional information.	November 1, 2026	Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved

***Adopt policies related to enrollment and student lotteries**	• ***Enrollment policies must be consistent with open enrollment requirements of law and State Board of Education Rules** • ***Admissions application must be available and easily accessible on the school's website pursuant to SCSC Rule 691-2-.03** • ***Lottery policies should detail how the school will conduct lotteries in the event enrollment exceeds capacity. These should include procedures for informing the public of enrollment opportunities; the use of enrollment priorities; maintaining a waitlist; and accepting enrollment offers** • Schools may wish to consider establishing a student application and registration portal to assist with the student enrollment process • See the SCSC's *Charter School Enrollment and Lottery Procedures* guidance document for additional information	December 1, 2026	Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved; Copy of the School's Pre-Lottery Application; Copy of the School's Complete Enrollment Packet

Ongoing Obligations	Additional Information	Timeline
Market your opening to students and parents to ensure adequate student enrollment	See the National Charter School Resource Center's toolkit on marketing your charter school to parents and families.	As soon as practicable
Develop a plan to involve parents and the community in key aspects of the school	See the GaDOE's Family Engagement Handbook for additional information.	Ongoing

FINANCES

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
Complete the Vendor Set-Up process through the State Accounting Office (SAO).	• To receive payments for GaDOE, you must complete the Vendor set-up process for the school. **Please contact Candice Ball (Candice.Ball@scsc.georgia.gov) for instructions when you are ready to submit your school's banking information to SAO.**	November 1, 2026	Confirmation of set-up
Obtain a UEI Number	• To apply for federal grants or receive federal funds, schools must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. • Click here for guidance on how to obtain a UEI Number from SAM.gov. • Please note, this process can take several weeks to complete.	March 1, 2027	Copy of UEI application approval; UEI number
Provide evidence that the school has received applications from students equivalent to at least 65% of the school's enrollment target.	• Enrollment targets should be based on what was submitted in the school's petition. • Application numbers should include all eligible students who have applied to attend the school even if they have not yet completed an enrollment packet as required by the school's enrollment policy (as previously submitted through the Pre-Opening Checklist).	April 1, 2027	Breakdown of applications received by grade level
Confirm the school's Vendor Management Profile and direct deposit information	• Reminder: To receive payments for GaDOE, you must complete the vendor set up process through SAO. • Schools should contact SCSC Business Manager Candice Ball (Candice.Ball@scsc.georgia.gov) no later than April 1st to confirm that the information on file for the school is accurate and correctly associated with the school's physical address and bank account.	April 1, 2027	Email confirmation from SCSC that the vendor information is accurate
Provide evidence that the school has received: 1. Applications from students equivalent to at least 85% of the school's enrollment target, AND 2. Completed enrollment packets from at least 50 percent of the school's enrollment target.	• Enrollment targets should be based on what was submitted in the school's petition. • Application numbers should include all eligible students who have applied to attend the school even if they have not yet completed an enrollment packet as required by the school's enrollment policy (as previously submitted through the Pre-Opening Checklist). • Enrollment numbers must only include students who have completed an enrollment packet for the school as required by the school's enrollment policy (as previously submitted to the SCSC by the December 2 Pre-Opening Checklist Submission).	April 23, 2027	Breakdown of applications AND enrollments received by grade level

For STATE FUNDING ALLOCATION, provide evidence that the school has received completed enrollment packets for 85% of the enrollment target for year one as outlined in its charter contract	• To verify a student for enrollment, the school must obtain the following:
	  ○ GTID for a student that has previously been enrolled in a Georgia public school.
	  • Please note that the school will need to have access to GUIDE in the MyGaDOE portal to access GTID information.
	  ○ Name, address, and birthdate for a student who has not been previously enrolled in a Georgia public school.
	• **A school's verified enrollment count must be at least 85% of the enrollment target for year one as outlined in its charter contract.**
	• Enrollment will be verified using the enrollment policies adopted by the school and approved by the governing board.
		May 12, 2027	SCSC Enrollment and Data Collections Template

	○ In the event the enrollment policy does not include at least one piece of primary source verifiable documentation (e.g. immunization records, utility bills, etc.), the SCSC will verify enrollment utilizing the adopted enrollment policy AND one piece of primary source verifiable documentation.		
Create a draft budget based on expected enrollment.	• Budgets must be adjusted as necessary to reflect changing enrollment.	May 12, 2027	Draft budget based on enrollment
Establish fiscal and internal control policies that ensure board is responsible for oversight of financial management and are aligned with the LUAs Manual and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).	Financial policies must include (at a minimum): • Budget Adoption/Amendment policies (must be adopted prior to adopting a budget); • Procurement/Purchasing policies; • Expenditure policies; • Inventory/Asset Management policies • Internal controls and segregation of duties; and • Reflect appropriate governing board oversight and should not overly rely on or allow undue access by a contracted vendor See the GaDOE's *Financial Management of Georgia LUAs Manual.pdf)* for additional information.	June 1, 2027	Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved
Finalize a budget based on expected enrollment.	• Must be approved by the governing board. • Budgets must be adjusted as necessary to reflect changing enrollment. • A budget that is adopted but not followed will not meet the requirements of this milestone. • Prior to adopting or amending an operational budget, a state charter school must provide at least two opportunities for public input pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167.1 • The state charter school must also make a summary of its annual operating budget proposed and adopted by the governing board on a publicly available area of the school's website pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167.1 See the SCSC's *Legal Obligations of a State Charter School* for additional information.	June 1, 2027	Budget(s); Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved
Ongoing Obligations	**Additional Information**	**Timeline**	
Prior to approving the school's budget, the school must hold two public meetings (that do not occur within the same week) to provide an opportunity for public input.	• A state charter school may utilize regularly scheduled meetings or meetings held for other purposes if the school also utilizes a portion of the meeting to allow public comment on the proposed budget. • The two meetings must be advertised in a local newspaper of general circulation in which other legal announcements for the jurisdiction are advertised. A state charter school with a statewide attendance zone and students residing in 25% or more of the state's counties or students residing in at least three counties that are not geographically contiguous must conduct one meeting in a virtual manner and one meeting in the county in which its primary business office is located. See the SCSC's *Legal Obligations of a State Charter School* for additional information	As soon as practicable (before June 1, 2027)	

OPERATIONS

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
***Establish an official school email system and website**	• This is required to access systems administered by GaDOE and the GaPSC, including the MyGaDOE Portal, PC Genesis, and SCSC's Administrative Portal • The system must be compatible with GaDOE portal requirements and cannot be a generic web-based email solutions (e.g., Gmail or Yahoo) • Contact the MyGaDOE Help Desk with any problems or questions at dticket@doe.k12.ga.us, or at 1-800-869-1011. • You can find guidance on website requirements on the SCSC's website.	March 1, 2027	Receipt for purchase of email solution; screenshot of website
Provide written notification via USPS mail and email to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) of the charter school's opening	• Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 76.788, if the school provides this notification at least 120 days prior to the school's opening and responds reasonably to requests for information, the SEA must provide federal funding to the school within 5 months of its opening date • This notice should be mailed and emailed to the following individuals: ○ Superintendent of Schools, Richard Woods: state.superintendent@doe.k12.ga.us ○ GaDOE Chief Financial Officer, Rusk Roam: rroam @doe.k12.ga.us ○ GaDOE Deputy Superintendent for Federal Programs, Shaun Owen: sowen@doe.k12.ga.us ○ GaDOE Chief Information Officer, Keith Osborn: kosburn@doe.k12.ga.us ○ GaDOE Senior Director for the Office of Charter School Compliance, Allen Mueller: Allen.Mueller@scsc.georgia.gov	April 1, 2027	A copy of the letter sent to GaDOE
***Create a Records Retention Policy for the school.**	• Refer to the Georgia Archives for information regarding retention schedules. • Please note, that while not required, the SCSC prefers that the school attempt to maintain records in a digital format when possible.	April 1, 2027	A copy of the policy

Ongoing Obligations	Timeline
Obtain a surety bond per the terms of the school's charter contract.	Prior to serving students
Identify legal counsel.	As soon as practicable
Become familiar with the SCSC guidance, including reporting timelines and monthly newsletters. • Sign up for the SCSC's monthly newsletters here • Read SCSC guidance here	Ongoing

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
***Adopt a Personnel Handbook and related policies**	Personnel policies must include (at a minimum): • Job descriptions for personnel; • Discipline, due process, and termination procedures; • Grievance procedures; • Acceptable Use policies; • ***Attendance and Leave policies;** • ***Title IX Notice; and** • *** Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior Policy**	April 1, 2027	Personnel Handbook and Policies; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which they were approved
Hire a qualified school leader who meets the requirements of the charter contract	Schools are strongly encouraged to engage a school leader prior to opening student enrollment	April 1, 2027	Resume of School Leader; Minutes of the meeting at which the school leader was hired
Ensure the school leader receives access to the MyGaDOE data portal and can provide necessary data provisioning rights to school personnel in a manner consistent with the school's student data policy	• Failure to gain access to the MyGaDOE portal in a timely manner will affect the availability of funding for the school, inhibit the ability of the school to adhere to important data reporting deadlines that will affect the school's performance on the SCSC's Comprehensive Performance Framework, and prevent the school from receiving critical communications from GaDOE • As noted in the Facilities section, a school must have finalized its facility approval and received a school code to access the MyGaDOE Portal • Once given the school receives access to the MyGaDOE Portal, it must identify individuals that will serve key roles and ensure each has appropriate access and data provisioning rights in the MyGaDOE Portal. The school should <u>designate in the MyGaDOE Portal and communicate to applicable GaDOE divisions the school personnel following roles</u>: ○ Testing Coordinator ○ Chief Financial Officer ○ Accountability contact ○ Title I Director ○ Special Education Director ○ Charter School Administrator (highest level school administrator) To receive access to the MyGaDOE portal, please email Kristen Easterbrook and include official school emails for your school's Superintendent and your school's Portal Security Officer.	April 1, 2027	Copy of Email Request
Recruit and hire an adequate number of teachers and support personnel to match assignments and staffing plan	• Rules of the State Board of Education and Georgia Professional Standards Commission **<u>requires all charter school educators to obtain a clearance certificate issued by GaPSC</u>**	June 1, 2027	Organizational Chart; Staffing Plan; Employee Roster

	• If a state charter school has not ensured that all staff have received clearance certificates prior to serving students, the *SCSC will require the state charter school to complete additional corrective action* **Note: <u>All</u> school personnel (including non-instructional staff) must have criminal background checks and fingerprinting as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1** See the SCSC's Pre-Opening Schools Fingerprinting & Background Check Information guidance for more information.		
***Hire a CFO**	• Refer to the school's charter contract and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084 for CFO requirements for state charter schools	June 1, 2027	CFO Resume
Establish necessary accounts with the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia	The initial TRS contact for new state charter schools is Cherie Brown. Cherie's email address is (Cherie.Brown@trsga.com)	July 1, 2027	Evidence of enrollment in TRS
Ensure that all school staff are hired and have received the appropriate certificates and background checks	• Rules of the State Board of Education and Georgia Professional Standards Commission **<u>requires all charter school educators to obtain a clearance certificate issued by GaPSC</u>** • If a state charter school has not ensured that all staff have received clearance certificates prior to serving students, the *SCSC will require the state charter school to complete additional corrective action* • **Note: <u>All</u> school personnel (including non-instructional staff) must have criminal background checks and fingerprinting as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1** See the SCSC's Pre-Opening Schools Fingerprinting & Background Check Information guidance for more information.	July 1, 2027	Employee Roster; Procedure for obtaining criminal record checks
Ongoing Obligations	**Additional Information**	**Timeline**	
Board members and staff attend TKES/LKES training	• Ensure at least two board members are credentialed in the Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES) • Ensure that the school leader and another school administrator are credentialed in the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES) If appropriate board members and staff are not credentialed in TKES/LKES prior to serving students, *<u>the SCSC will require the state charter school to complete additional corrective action.</u>* Note: if the school does not receive TKES/LKES training by the designated GaDOE deadline, the school will be responsible for paying for its TKES/LKES training. Contact GaDOE Teacher and Leader Support and Development's, Sequita Freeman, Sequita.Freeman@doe.k12.ga.us for additional information.	Coordinate compliance with TKES/LKES with GaDOE	
Finalize teacher contracts (if applicable)		Prior to hiring staff	
Ensure that personnel records are adequately safeguarded		Ongoing	

Ensure all staff is appropriately trained	In addition to professional development training designated by the school, staff should also be trained in areas such as: • Identifying and appropriately serving students with disabilities; and those who may be experiencing homelessness. • Identifying cases and reporting procedures for suspected instances of child abuse and neglect; • Suicide prevention strategies; and • Emergency and severe weather response • Specific laws require the training of all staff on an annual basis on certain topics (such as child abuse and suicide prevention) while others require schools to have a certain number of trained individuals (such as diabetes management) • Consult your school's legal counsel as well as the SCSC's Legal Obligations of a State Charter School for more information and specific requirements	Ongoing

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
***Adopt a school calendar**	• The school calendar must include the instructional equivalent of 180 school days • An established school calendar is an essential tool for student recruitment and enrollment • Schools should be aware that starting later than surrounding districts may hinder student enrollment in the charter school and provide the school with less instructional time prior to state assessments • See SCSC Guidance Regarding Instructional Days at Brick-and-Mortar State Charter Schools	December 1, 2026	School Calendar; Minutes of the meeting(s) at which it was approved
Obtain a Student Information System	• Contact GaDOE to ensure the SIS you choose is compatible with the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) • Operational state charter schools frequently site establishing an SIS, tying into SLDS, and getting training on SLDS, as one of the most critical steps in preparing for operations. Doing so as early as possible increases efficiency and alleviates duplicated efforts as the school begins serving students As a reminder: The Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) is designed to help districts, schools, and teachers make informed, data-driven decisions to improve student learning. SLDS is a free application that is accessed via a link in the district's Student Information System (SIS). Contact the MyGaDOE Help Desk with any problems or questions at 1-800-869-1011.	April 1, 2027	Receipt for purchase of SIS
Develop a strategic plan and timeline for implementation of the curriculum and instructional methods	The Appendix includes the requirements and guidelines for the requested submission	July 1, 2027	Educational Program Update- See Appendix for more details
Ongoing Obligations	**Additional Information**	**Timeline**	
Choose/draft/adopt necessary student learning objectives (SLO), or similar Pre to Post measures that allow the school to measure growth, in order to implement TKES/LKES	Contact GaDOE Evaluation System Specialist, Sequita Freeman, Sequita.Freeman@doe.k12.ga.us for additional information.	Coordinate compliance with TKES/LKES with GaDOE	
Begin drafting your Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)	• Parental involvement is required to create your draft plan • The due date for the final plan will be set by GaDOE's Federal Program office	Coordinate compliance with Federal Programs with GaDOE	

TRAINING

Priority Milestones – MANDATORY	Additional Information	Deadline	Required Submission
Ensure all governing board members attend SCSC governance training	All governing board members **MUST** receive annual governance training in compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(f). Year 0 schools are **required** to attend SCSC governance training in the **2027 fiscal year** by SCSC Rule 691-2-.03(4)(b)	Consult the SCSC Training Opportunities page for information regarding training dates.	N/A *SCSC will consult with its records to determine if the school attended*
Attend the SCSC's New School Orientation	All governing board members **must attend SCSC New School Orientation**. Please consult the SCSC's Training Opportunities page for more information regarding the training.	Consult the SCSC Training Opportunities page for information regarding training dates.	N/A *SCSC will consult with its records to determine if the school attended*
Register the school's System Test Coordinators to attend the 2027 State Assessment Training for System Test Coordinators	Attendance at the GaDOE State Assessment Training for System Test Coordinators is required for all System Test Coordinators	Required submission due July 1, 2027 *Training is typically held in July*	Registration confirmation
Register school leader and data management personnel to attend the 2027 GaDOE Data Collections Conference	Attendance at the GaDOE Data Collections Conference is required as part of the school's charter contract.	Required submission due July 1, 2027 *Conference will be held in August 2027*	Registration confirmation

Ongoing Obligations	Additional Information	Timeline
Ensure appropriate personnel attend relevant LEA-related trainings provided by GaDOE	Refer to the GaDOE website and division-specific newsletters for more details. Additional GaDOE training resources can be found here.	Ongoing
Attend SCSC offered trainings	The SCSC training calendar is available here: https://scsc.georgia.gov/resources-guidance/training-opportunities	Ongoing

APPENDIX A – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM UPDATE INSTRUCTIONS

To ensure state charter schools are prepared to operate high-quality academic programs in year one of the charter contract term, the SCSC requires newly approved state charter schools to submit an educational program update illustrating the school has made the necessary plans to achieve SCSC expectations.

Please submit a copy of the school's implementation timeline as outlined below and respond to the questions that follow.

Implementation Timeline

The implementation timeline is meant to illustrate the school has accomplished or is on track to accomplish the necessary tasks required to ensure a successful implementation of the educational program. There is no specified format for this document, however, the timeline should include: the "owner" of the task (i.e. the individual responsible for the task's completion) and the date on which it was/will be accomplished. If upon submission the reported completion date for a task has passed, please note whether the related task has indeed been completed. For all tasks that are not complete upon submission of this update, please include details regarding what actions are underway in order to meet the established timeline. At a minimum, the timeline should track the school's completion of the following key tasks:

- select and procure curriculum
- develop/acquire benchmark assessments
- develop/acquire lesson plans
- define the grading structure
- create a professional development schedule
- develop a system and process to analyze assessment data and other educational outcomes (refer to the SCSC CPF for academic goals)

Questions

In addition to submitting the above documents, please respond to the questions below in 300 words or less.

1. Have any changes in the educational program occurred since the execution of your charter? (i.e. changes in curriculum, instructional methods, innovative features)
    - If changes have been made to the curriculum, please describe the steps you took to ensure that it is aligned to state standards and aligned with the school's overall mission.
    - If changes have been made to the instructional methods or innovative features, please describe the steps you took to ensure the staff are prepared to utilize the new methods/features and how they align with the school's overall mission.
2. The SCSC recognizes that it may be difficult to execute all components of certain educational programs in the school's first year of operations. For example, STEM programs may require the procurement of equipment that is not budgeted for until year two of the charter. Please describe any delays the school foresees in rolling out the educational program and the rationale for the timing of implementation.

APPENDIX B – TIMELINE OF SUBMISSIONS

The chart below outlines all the required submissions in the SCSC's Pre-Opening Checklist in chronological order.

Deadline	Area of Requirement	Requirement
September 1, 2026	Governance	Provide the current board member and school leadership roster and contact information for Epicenter profile set-up
October 1, 2026	Governance	Formally approve board policies
November 1, 2026	Governance	Ratify by-laws
	Students & Parents	Adopt a Student Handbook and related policies
		Adopt policies and procedures for serving special populations
		Establish policies and procedures for nursing programs, required health services, and screenings, evaluating immunization records
	Finances	Complete the Vendor Set-Up process through the State Accounting Office (SAO)
December 1, 2026	Academic Program	Adopt a School Calendar
	Students & Parents	Adopt policies related to enrollment and student lotteries
December 18, 2026	Facilities	Finalize lease or purchase agreement for school facility
March 1, 2027	Facilities	Obtain a Facility Code from GaDOE
	Finances	Obtain a UEI Number
	Operations	Establish an official school email system and website
	Governance	Provide current board member and school leadership roster and contact information
April 1, 2027	Operations	Provide written notification via USPS mail and email to GaDOE of the charter school's opening
		Create a Records Retention Policy for the school.
	Finances	Provide evidence that the school has received applications from students equivalent to at least 65% of the school's enrollment target
		Confirm the school's Vendor Management Profile and direct deposit information
	School Personnel	Adopt a Personnel Handbook and related policies
		Hire a qualified school leader that meets the requirements of the charter contract
		Ensure the school leader receives access to the MyGaDOE data portal and can provide necessary data provisioning rights to school personnel
	Facilities	Obtain a school code once the facility is approved by GaDOE
	Academic Program	Obtain a student information system
April 23, 2027	Finances	Provide evidence that the school has received applications from students equivalent to at least 85% of the enrollment target AND evidence that the school has received completed enrollment packets from at least 50% of the school's enrollment target
May 1, 2027	Governance	Board Meeting Calendar
	Facilities	Provide an Update on Progress Towards Obtaining a CO
May 12, 2027	Finances	For STATE ALLOCATION, provide evidence that the school has received completed enrollment packets for 85% of the enrollment target for year one as outlined in its charter contract
		Create a draft budget based on expected enrollment.
June 1, 2027	Facilities	Complete a site visit with SCSC staff
		Create a School Safety Drill Schedule
	Finances	Establish fiscal and internal control policies that ensure board oversight over financial management
		Finalize a budget based on expected enrollment

	School Personnel	Recruit and hire an adequate number of teachers and support personnel to match assignments and staffing plan
July 1, 2027	Facilities	Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy
	School Personnel	Establish necessary accounts with the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia
		Ensure that all school staff are hired and have received the appropriate certificates and background checks
	Academic Program	Develop a strategic plan and timeline for implementation of the curriculum and instructional methods
	Training	Register school leader and data management personnel to attend the 2027 GaDOE Data Collections Conference
		Register the school's System Test Coordinators to attend the 2027 State Assessment Training for System Test Coordinators
SCSC Training Dates	Training	Attend Governance Training and New School Orientation based on Pre-Opening Checklist Requirements

APPENDIX C – PRE-OPENING MONITORING SUBMISSIONS

The chart below outlines all the required submissions in the SCSC's Pre-Opening Checklist that have additional monitoring review criteria. See the specific tasks in Epicenter for additional details.

Deadline	Pre-Opening Monitoring Items
October 1, 2026	Governing Board Conflict of Interest Policy - Monitoring
October 1, 2026	Board Signed Conflict of Interest Forms - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice and Policy - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse Policy - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	Parents Bill of Rights Policy - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	Protect Students First Act-Complaint Resolution Policy - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	Student Reporting of Alleged Sexually Inappropriate Behavior Policy - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	Code of Conduct - Monitoring
November 1, 2026	McKinney Vento Public Notice of Educational Rights - Monitoring
December 1, 2026	Section 504 Grievance Procedures - Monitoring
December 1, 2026	Procedural Safeguards Notice - Monitoring
December 1, 2026	English Learners (EL) Procedures - Monitoring
December 1, 2026	School Enrollment Packet - Monitoring
December 1, 2026	Admissions Application - Monitoring
December 1, 2026	School Calendar - Monitoring
April 1, 2027	Records Retention Policy - Monitoring
April 1, 2027	Family Medical Leave Act Notice - Monitoring
April 1, 2027	Title IX Notice - Monitoring
May 1, 2027	Pre-Opening Website Monitoring
May 1, 2027	Governing Board Meeting Calendar - Monitoring
June 1, 2027	School Safety Drill Schedule and Report - Monitoring
June 1, 2027	CFO Resume/Curriculum Vitae - Monitoring