

State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia

Staff Recommendation for the 2014 Petition Cycle August 27, 2014

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| School: | Fulton Science Academy High School |
| Attendance Zone: | Fulton County |
| Grade Levels: | 9-12 |
| Staff Recommendation: | SCSC staff recommends that the petition for Fulton Science Academy High School be denied . |

Rationale:

1. The governing board of a state charter school is critical to the success of the school. State charter school governing boards must be comprised of members who understand school operations as a Local Education Agency (LEA) and are committed to proper oversight of the school and school leader. Unfortunately, the petition review process and interview did not establish Fulton Science Academy High School's governing board was capable of holding the school leader accountable or was knowledge about school operations. This is of particular concern as the school's track record as locally-approved charter school by Fulton County Schools indicates consistent problems with the governing board's oversight of school administration. Indeed, the governing board's lack of supervision over school operations ultimately led to the attempt by Fulton County Schools to terminate the charter for Fulton Science Academy High School. Despite this history of inadequate governance, it appears that Fulton Science Academy High School has not appropriately strengthened its governing board capacity to the level required for a charter school that operates as an LEA.

While the school's petition adequately described the appropriate role of the governing board, the interview revealed great disparity in the understanding of a governing board of a charter school that operates as an LEA. Both the petition and interview were heavily reliant on the expertise and experience of the school administrator. Without effective oversight by the governing board, the fiduciary commitment of the state charter school to its students and the general public lacks necessary checks and balances. As the petition and interview did not demonstrate that the Fulton Science Academy High School governing board could properly oversee the operation of the school and hold the school leader accountable, SCSC staff will recommend that the SCSC deny its petition as a state charter school.

2. Neither the information provided in the petition nor the responses provided in the interview indicated why Fulton Science Academy High School and its students would benefit from operating as a state charter school rather than a locally-approved charter school. Instead, the interview indicated that the school's relationship with Fulton County Schools and possible closure is a motivating factor in the school seeking authorization by the SCSC. The SCSC is committed to high-quality charter

schools throughout the state and upholding the accountability standards of local school districts that, like Fulton County Schools, have demonstrated a commitment to support and encourage high-quality charter schools.

**Link to Petition and
Related Materials:**

[Click here to view Fulton Science Academy High School](#)
