



# STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION OF GEORGIA (SCSC)

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## JANUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

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### SCSC Meetings

The State Charter Schools Commission did not meet in December. The Commission last met on November 19, 2014. The meeting minutes are available [here](#). The next Commission meeting is on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the State Charter Schools Commission Conference Room. The 2015 Commission meeting calendar is available [on the SCSC website](#).

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### 2015 Petition Cycle

The application for the 2015 petition cycle is tentatively scheduled for release on February 25, pending Commission approval.

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### Recognition of Best Practices

The SCSC would like to highlight the best practices of state charter schools. If your school has implemented a best practice that has led to data-driven student achievement gains, please submit information via email to [lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov](mailto:lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov). SCSC staff will select up to one school per month for inclusion in the newsletter.

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### Training Opportunities

The [2014-2015 SCSC Training Agenda](#) is available on the [Training Opportunities](#) page of the SCSC website. This draft list is intended to assist schools in planning and dates/topics are subject to change. Presentations and materials from SCSC trainings are available on the [Training Presentations and Materials](#) page of the SCSC website.

Please RSVP to [lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov](mailto:lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov) if you wish to attend a training session.

### Petitioner Boot Camp

January 27, 2015

Marriott Macon City Center, Macon, Georgia

Invited: Potential SCSC Petitioners

This training session is for those who plan to submit a charter petition to the SCSC or want to learn more about chartering. Attendees will learn what makes a successful charter petition, common mistakes and misconceptions, and hear directly from successful state charter petitioners.

### **School Governance - Mandatory**

**February 5-6, 2015**

**Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, Georgia**

**Invited: Governing Board Members and Administrators**

State charter school board members and administrators are required by law to attend the SCSC School Governance Training. Topics will include the roles and responsibilities of school board members and administrators, ethics, school funding and budgets, audit requirements, strategic planning and succession planning, among others. The SCSC will reimburse travel expenses in accordance with state guidelines.

### **Charter Schools Financial Management Certification Program**

**Introductory Accounting**

**February 25-27, 2014**

**Atlanta, Georgia**

**Invited: School Business Managers and Administrators**

The SCSC will offer a full scholarship to state charter business managers and/or administrators who wish to enroll in the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's Charter Schools Financial Management Certification Program. Courses must be completed within a three-year period. The Introductory Accounting course will introduce participants to basic accounting concepts for governmental funds. Topics covered include – accounting equation, chart of accounts, double entry accounting, accounting systems and records, fund accounting, basis of accounting, payroll and benefit accounting, and case study. Visit the SCSC website to see the full [program overview](#).

*To attend a training session or for more information, contact Lauren Holcomb, SCSC Director of Organizational and Resource Development, at [lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov](mailto:lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov) or (404) 656-2822.*

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## **Reporting Deadlines**

The following reporting items are due in January and February:

- **Superintendent's Test Certification - Fall**
- **Second Semester SLO Window Reopens for Adjustments**
- **SLO Statements Visible in the Platform**
- **Data Collections:** Pre-ID, Student Record

The [FY15 Reporting Calendar](#) is available on the SCSC website. For help accessing the GaDOE portal and with any application functionality issues, please contact the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Information Systems Customer Support Center at 1-800-869-1011 or [dticket@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dticket@doe.k12.ga.us).

*Please direct questions about reporting items to Terence Washington, SCSC Finance and Operational Accountability Manager, at [terence.washington@scsc.georgia.gov](mailto:terence.washington@scsc.georgia.gov) or (404) 656-2837.*

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## [SCSC Releases Charter School Lottery Guidance](#)

Just in time for the upcoming enrollment season, SCSC staff released guidance describing the best practices for conducting charter school student enrollment lotteries. The guidance explains important requirements of law, rules, and SCSC expectations. Moreover, the guidance discusses how to conduct a student enrollment lottery, using enrollment priorities, maintaining wait lists, and student enrollment after the lottery. The guidance is available on the SCSC website [here](#).

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## [GaDOE Charter Schools and Charter Systems Annual Report](#)

The GaDOE District Flexibility and Charter Schools Division 2014 Annual Report is available [here](#). The report is an overview of Georgia's charter schools and charter systems, compiled by consolidating data from each charter school and charter system report, along with academic assessment data. The report is prepared annually for the Georgia General Assembly on behalf of the State Board of Education, as a requirement of law.

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## [Affordable Care Act Requirements](#)

Reporting requirements related to the Affordable Care Act under Internal Revenue Code Sections 6055 and 6056 go into effect for calendar year 2015. Employers with 50 or more full-time employees (including full-time equivalent employees) will use **DRAFT** Forms 1094-C and 1095-C (located at [www.irs.gov/draftforms](http://www.irs.gov/draftforms)) to report the information required regarding offers of health coverage and enrollment in health coverage for their employees.

One aspect to consider regarding the reporting requirements for **DRAFT** Form 1094-C is how a district will document the hours worked of employees that currently are not offered health insurance. For example, if substitutes are paid based on days worked instead of hours worked, the district will need to consider how those days worked will be converted to hours worked to determine eligibility for health insurance coverage.

Due to the reporting requirements, GaDOE recommends using an hourly rate when feasible to capture the activity of various employees. However, if an hourly rate is not practical, please understand that **a conversion process to report eligibility to the IRS will be necessary.**

For PC Genesis users, GaDOE PC Genesis group released instructions on September 30, 2014 for the ***Print Balance Sheets (After Updates) Export Option***. These instructions addressed a work around for calculating an hourly rate based on the daily rate for various groups of employees. For your convenience, these instructions will be released by GaDOE with the PC Genesis updates on December 30, 2014. If your district operates on a financial system other than PC Genesis, please ensure the software vendor offers the capability to capture the hours worked for 2015.

**DRAFT** Form 1095-C, Part III, requests information for each employee and covered individuals. The GaDOE is requesting information from the State Health Benefit Plan to determine what reports can be provided to meet the covered dependent reporting requirements of **DRAFT** Form 1095-C, Part III.

If you provide health insurance outside of the State Health Benefit Plan, please consult with your provider to determine how this information will be captured and reported.

GaDOE will provide updates regarding these reporting requirements as information becomes available. If your district has specific questions related to these federal requirements, please contact your school district attorney.

*Please direct questions to Scott Austensen, GaDOE Chief Financial Officer, at (404) 656-2492 or [saustens@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:saustens@doe.k12.ga.us).*

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## HiQ Data Release

The HiQ data for 2015 will be released by GaDOE on Friday evening, January 16, 2015. GaDOE has emailed important and helpful guidance to assist LEA personnel in verifying and signing off on the accuracy of the 2015 HiQ data. Included in the document is guidance for the following:

- **Ensuring Access to the HiQ Data System for LEA Personnel**
- **Verifying the Accuracy of the HiQ Data for 2015**
- **Editing Records to Correct Inaccurately Reported Assignments**
- **The Principal and Superintendent HiQ Data Approval Process**

Principals and superintendents will be required to sign off on the HiQ Data. It will be up to the Title II, Part A LEA Coordinator to determine when (on or after May 1, 2015) to release data to principals and superintendents. Your data release to principals gives principals read-only access to their specific building-level HiQ percentage data, as well as to their list of teachers and paraprofessionals and assignments. Not only does this enable the Title II, Part A LEA Coordinator to make any additional corrections, but this also completes each principal's HiQ data verification for the year. Once you release your data to your principals, you will be able to see, at any time, the status of the sign-offs.

Superintendents may sign off prior to the closing of HiQ (June 30, 2015), if they choose. However, they must sign off no later than August 31, 2015. GaDOE recommends coordinators request that principals sign off on their building level data by June 15, 2015, in case the superintendent chooses to sign off prior to the HiQ closing. **Please note that the HiQ system will close at midnight on June 30, 2015. No edits can be made after that date.**

### Technical Assistance

Please contact your Title II, Part A Education Specialist with your questions regarding HiQ requirements and editing records in the HiQ system. For HiQ technical issues with the HiQ system only, please email [HiQ@gapsc.com](mailto:HiQ@gapsc.com) and cc your Title II, Part A Education Specialist.

To assist you in ensuring accuracy of your HiQ data, the GaDOE/GaPSC is offering the following repeated HiQ webinars:

Jan 21, 2015 10:00 AM EST

<https://global.gotowebinar.com/ojoin/3139270987245908993/7219257361071105541>

Webinar ID: 153-715-395

Jan 22, 2015 2:00 PM EST

<https://global.gotowebinar.com/ojoin/8433623984150117121/7219257361071105541>

Webinar ID: 154-183-571

Feb 17, 2015 2:00 PM EST

<https://global.gotowebinar.com/ojoin/7658006491684372993/7219257361071105541>

Webinar ID: 154-237-691

Feb 18, 2015 10:00 AM EST

<https://global.gotowebinar.com/ojoin/5918724232077609473/7219257361071105541>

Webinar ID: 153-205-971

Please direct questions to Avis King, GaDOE Deputy Superintendent at (404) 651-7277 or [aking@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:aking@doe.k12.ga.us).

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## GaDOE School Climate Survey

School climate surveys for the 2014-2015 school year are now available. Data from the **Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0**, the **Georgia School Personnel Survey** and the **Georgia Parent Survey**, along with other sources, will be used in the calculation of a **School Climate Star Rating** which is a diagnostic tool within the CCRPI. Each of the surveys is administered online through the provided URL address. As soon as the school administrator enters the URL address into the web browser, a drop-down menu will appear and the school administrator will use the drop-down menu to select their school district and their school. If there are new schools that wish to participate that are not included in the drop-down menu, please contact GaDOE using the contact information below.

**The surveys will remain open through Friday, February 27, 2015.** It is critical for all schools to participate in each of the surveys.

- **Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0**

There are two versions of the Georgia Student Health Survey (GSHS) 2.0. The first version is for middle and high school students (grades 6 – 12), and the second version is a short survey for elementary students (grades 3-5). **At least 75% of students at each grade level (3-12) must participate in the GSHS 2.0 to be eligible for the School Climate Star Rating.** Please make plans for your elementary, middle and high school students to participate in the GSHS 2.0. Survey responses are anonymous and will be submitted directly to the Georgia Department of Education for analysis. The survey is offered at no cost to all Georgia public school districts and private schools that wish to participate. We will let you know soon when the Spanish version of the student survey is available. The URL addresses for the elementary, middle and high school surveys are posted below.

**Access the surveys through the links below:**

[Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL \(grades 3-5\)](#)

[Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 - MIDDLE SCHOOL \(grades 6-8\)](#)

[Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 - HIGH SCHOOL \(grades 9-12\)](#)

- **Georgia School Personnel Survey**

The **Georgia School Personnel Survey** (GSPS) is modeled after the student survey and includes 31 questions. The GSPS is for all teachers, school administrators, certified staff members and other classified staff members (paraprofessionals, office staff, cafeteria workers, custodians, etc.) who work at least 50 percent of the day in the school. **At least 75% of your teachers and administrators must participate in the survey to be eligible for the School Climate Star Rating.** Most teachers should be able to participate in the GSPS using their classroom computer. The survey is also accessible using an iPad or smartphone. Survey responses are anonymous and will be submitted directly to the Georgia Department of Education for analysis. Data results from the Georgia School Personnel Survey will not be available to the public and will not be posted online. Access the survey [here](#).

- **Georgia Parent Survey**

The **Georgia Parent Survey** is also modeled after the student survey and contains 24 questions. A Spanish version of the parent survey will be available soon. Parents will be able to complete the survey using their personal computers, smartphones or iPads. For parents that do not have access to the Internet, school administrators might consider scheduling dates and times to allow parents to complete the Georgia Parent Survey at school. All parents should be encouraged to participate in the Georgia Parent Survey because the data will be used to calculate the **School Climate Star Rating**. However, there is no mandatory participation rate for parents. Survey responses are anonymous and will be submitted directly to the Georgia Department of Education for analysis. Data results from the Georgia Parent Survey will not be available to the public and will not be posted online. Access the survey [here](#).

A survey participation website has been developed to allow schools to monitor their survey participation rates. The survey participation website was emailed directly to superintendents.

Federal law requires that the student survey questions be made available for review by all interested parties; therefore, copies may be reproduced and made available to parents or other parties upon request. Copies of the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 questions are available [online](#). Please ensure that all parents/guardians know about the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0 and are given the option to opt out if desired.

Please contact Marilyn Watson and/or Jeff Hodges with questions at [mawatson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:mawatson@doe.k12.ga.us)/(404) 651-7179, or [jhodges@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jhodges@doe.k12.ga.us)/(404) 463-7891.

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## State Charter Collaborative Communities

The GaDOE has created a schedule of Collaborative Communities for state charter schools in the 2014-15 school year focused on special education. The information presented will assist schools in the five focus areas for implementation of IDEA: the Identification Process, Services and Supports, Student Progress, Parent Engagement, and College and Career Readiness. **Two attendees** may participate from each school. Register at [www.mresa.org](http://www.mresa.org) or contact Raylicia Davis at [raylicia.davis@mresa.org](mailto:raylicia.davis@mresa.org) with questions.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	PARKING
2/11/15	10:00 - 2:00	Chick-Fil-A	5200 Buffington Road Atlanta, Georgia No Parking Fee
5/6/15	10:00 - 2:00	Chick-Fil-A	5200 Buffington Road Atlanta, Georgia No Parking Fee

**Chick-fil-A will provide a complimentary Continental Breakfast and Lunch each day.**

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## Funding and Professional Development Opportunities

SCSC staff have identified the following grant and professional development opportunities that may be of benefit to state charters. A list of SCSC-identified ongoing grant opportunities is available [here](#).

### **FY16 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Georgia Department of Education**

The GaDOE's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program is pleased to announce the release of the FY16 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Request for Proposal (RFP). This competition seeks to fund applicants who will operate 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. Please visit the [U.S. Department of Education website](#) or [GaDOE website](#) for more information regarding 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC rules, regulations, and guidance.

Applicants will have the option of completing and submitting their 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC proposal(s) entirely online. Please visit the [21<sup>st</sup> CCLC RFP website](#) to view the FY16 RFP and Technical Guidance regarding this option. Although applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their proposal(s) online, hard copy submission(s) via mail or hand delivery is still available. Please visit [the GaDOE website](#) to download the FY16 RFP and its associated forms.

Everything needed to submit a proposal is included in the RFP itself, however please see below for some important suggestions and upcoming dates:

- It is strongly recommended all online applicants read the online RFP and Technical Guidance prior to beginning their proposal(s). Both of these documents can be found on the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC RFP website homepage.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit an Intent to Apply online, via email, or via fax no later than October 24<sup>th</sup>. Although not required, submitting an Intent to Apply will provide our staff the additional information necessary to help facilitate the RFP process.
- **The application is due by 2:00 p.m. on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015.**

Contact: [21stcclc@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:21stcclc@doe.k12.ga.us).

### **Federal Grant Asset Redistribution Opportunity State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia**

The SCSC on behalf of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) must redistribute assets purchased by Scholars Academy Charter School using federal Charter School Program (CSP) grant funding following the school's closure at the conclusion of the 2014 Fiscal Year. Charter schools that are operating in Georgia in the 2014-2015 school year or have a charter approved by the State Board of Education to operate in the 2015-2016 school year by the application deadline may apply to receive, at no cost, furniture and equipment previously used by Scholars Academy Charter School. The application and equipment inventory is available on the SCSC website under the Grant Opportunities and Resources tab [here](#). The deadline to submit applications is January 31, 2015.

### **2015 Winter Conference Georgia Association of Educational Leaders**

Registration is now open for the 2015 conference, *Politics and the New Discipline*. The conference will be held January 25-27, 2015 at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia. Speakers will include Ruby Payne, William Daggett, Phillip Hartley, Avery Niles, Heather George, Brooks Coleman, and Lindsay Tippins. [Information and Registration is available here](#).

### **2015 Georgia Charter Schools Leadership Conference Georgia Charter Schools Association**

The Georgia Charter Schools Leadership Conference is the only statewide gathering of the entire Georgia charter school leadership community. The next conference is Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at The Busbee Center at Gwinnett Technical College in Lawrenceville, Georgia. GCSA is expecting 250 charter school leaders, governing boards, petitioners and business managers.

Georgia's charter school leaders and founders will have the opportunity to hear dynamic speakers and attend focused and timely breakout sessions. In addition, GCSA will honor the Charter Leader of the Year, Charter Teacher of the Year, and announce the 2015 Charter School of the Year. To learn more about this annual event, go to [www.gacharterleadershipconference.org](http://www.gacharterleadershipconference.org).

### **Project Based Instruction Summit Georgia Charter Schools Association**

Charter schools are required to be innovators and think tanks to help lead school reform, but they don't have to reinvent the wheel. Join experienced public school educators and leaders (from the charter and public sector) as they share what they have learned about the ins and outs of running authentic, inspiring and successful project-based schools. Presenters will lead sessions on school culture, integrated thematic units and assessment. GCSA will also have presentations on school reform models such as Expeditionary Learning, Museum Model, and Critical Friends Groups. Attendees will have the opportunity to observe project-based learning in action if they decide to tour the school. Georgia's 2014 Charter

School of the Year, Brighten Academy Charter School, is the proud host of this event taking place on February 27, 2015. To register go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/project-based-instruction-summit-registration-11226535871>.

**DonorsChoose.org**  
**Online Fundraising Drive**

DonorsChoose.org is an online charity that makes it easy for donors to find meaningful projects to support. Public school teachers from every corner of America post classroom project requests on the website site, and donors can give any amount to the project that most inspires them. Schools can register their own projects at [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org).

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