

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

May 25th, 2016, 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 at approximately 10:00 am. Chairman Rippner verified that a quorum was present.
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 – Associate General Counsel, Petitions Manager, Katie Manthey – Academic Accountability Manager, and Sarah Beck – Business and Operations Manager.
3. Approximately 30 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. Chairman Rippner then called for approval of the meeting minutes from the April 27th SCSC meeting. Commissioner Tony Lowden made a motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Jose Perez provided a second. There was no discussion, and the minutes were unanimously approved by those present.
5. Chairman Rippner announced an amendment to the meeting agenda to move the consideration of Dubois Integrity Academy’s charter amendment to the front of the agenda. Chairman Rippner then asked Mr. Stevens to present the school’s charter amendment request.
6. Mr. Gregg Stevens explained the amendment to Dubois Integrity Academy’s charter as the school’s adoption of the SCSC accountability framework. Commissioner Tom Lewis motioned for approval of Dubois Integrity Academy’s charter amendment. Commissioner Tony Lowden seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the amendment was unanimously approved by those present
7. Chairman Rippner prompted Director Bonnie Holliday to begin with the updates section of the agenda. Holliday then introduced new SCSC Business and Operations Manager Sarah Beck and new SCSC interns Johanna Hanley and Rennie Laryea.
8. Director Holliday next discussed the summer meeting schedule. She noted that the SCSC has historically not met in June, but suggested that the SCSC may wish to meet in June rather than July to approve the agency’s budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

9. Next, Director Holliday discussed the informal site visit schedule. The scheduled site visit to Dubois Integrity Academy was rescheduled for September of 2016 due to previous conflicts with commissioners.
10. Chairman Rippner requested that Ms. Katie Manthey discuss organizational developments. Ms. Manthey discussed recent and upcoming training sessions. She described the success of recent CVIOG financial management program training session on May 3rd. She then discussed upcoming board training programs on internal controls and budgeting, TKES, and LKES training. These training sessions are set for the dates of July 26-27, July 18-20, and July 24-26, respectively. Ms. Manthey then reminded state charter school board members to submit their sheet by the end of June showing attendance at board training sessions.
11. Chairman Rippner prompted Director Holliday to discuss state charter school accountability reports. Director Holliday explained the new assignment of letter grades to schools that were recently released by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. Director Holliday then asked Ms. Manthey to review the academic, financial, and operational aspects of the accountability reports. Ms. Manthey described the performance framework and SCSC schools' overall, academic, financial, and operational performance, including that four schools met academic performance standards, five schools met financial performance standards, and five schools met operational performance standards. Ms. Manthey added that Mountain Education Charter High School and Pataula Charter Academy met in all three categories.
12. Director Holliday contextualized the performance of state charter schools on the SCSC performance framework. She explained that the framework allows schools to identify how they are measured and discern areas that are in need of improvement. Director Holliday noted that the SCSC expects to see an improvement in the operational and financial portions of the framework for next year because schools are better aware of their expectations. Commissioner Lowden noted that Commissioners wanted schools to identify the actions they are taking to improve achievement. Chairman Rippner requested for Mr. Washington to provide a financial accountability update before continuing the discussion on general school accountability.
13. Mr. Washington stated that the audits for the Ivy Preparatory Academies still have not been submitted because the schools have not been able to provide financial information to their auditors. Director Holliday noted that the auditors may not be able to expedite their work due to the delay in the preparation of financial statements by the schools. Chairman Rippner inquired about discipline options for schools failing to comply with audit deadlines. Mr. Stevens said that the school will lose points in the operations category of the framework and that it constitutes as a breach of the charter contract. Thus, the SCSC could withhold funding, ask for monthly interim reports, or eventually close the school. Commissioners Perez, Lowden, Werner, and Williams expressed concern over the schools who have not submitted an audit by the deadline.
14. Commissioner Lowden expressed a desire to have schools explain to the Commission directly about why they have failed to meet deadlines and goals in the framework. Commissioners concurred with Commissioner Lowden's request to have schools speak to the Commission. Commissioners also expressed support for withholding funding from schools failing to comply with items in their charter contracts. Commissioner Perez also requested that schools

performing well should be able to share their best practices with the Commission and low-performing schools. Chairman Rippner asked staff to prepare a proposal for requiring schools do discuss their performance with the Commission at its June meeting.

15. Chairman Rippner then asked Mr. Stevens to discuss the state charter schools opening in the fall. Mr. Stevens noted that Brookhaven Innovation Academy, Southwest Georgia STEM, Liberty Tech Charter School, and Cirrus Academy will open as scheduled in the fall. Mr. Stevens then noted that Byron Peach Charter High School will not open for the 2016-2017 school year.
16. Chairman Rippner asked Ms. Felts for an update of the 2016 SCSC Petition Cycle. Ms. Felts responded that there were 23 petitions this year including one replication petition. Ms. Felts stated that one school has withdrawn its petition and at least one other petition will be rejected for failing to present a plan that complied with the legal requirements of a charter school. Ms. Felts noted that interview dates for the proposed schools are scheduled for the weeks of July 11 and July 18, and that the Commission will again utilize external reviewers through the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.
17. Chairman Rippner next called for additional items from Commissioners, but no Commissioners offered additional items.
18. Chairman Rippner next called for public comment, but no individuals offered comment.
19. There being no further business before the SCSC, Chairman Rippner adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:45 am.