

Petitioner Webinar: Overview of the 2016 Application

State Charter Schools
Commission of Georgia



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2016 Review Cycle Timeline

February 2016 – application release

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graph TD; A[February 2016 – application release] --> B[May 16, 2016 – application due date]; B --> C[July 11-22, 2016 – expected petitioner interviews]; C --> D[September/October 2016 – expected SCSC Action]; D --> E[August 2017 – expected school opening];
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SCSC Review

- There are six stages of SCSC review:
 - Legal Compliance Review
 - Substantive Review
 - Interview
 - Post-Interview Actions
 - SCSC Staff Recommendation
 - SCSC Vote
- This process takes several months and you will hear very little from the SCSC.

SCSC Review: Legal Compliance Review

- SCSC staff reviews each petition for its adherence to all state and federal laws applicable to the petition and the charter school.
- This includes laws related to the submission of the petition and laws related to the operation of school if opened.
 - Ex: local submission requirements and operation as a non-private, non-sectarian school
- Technical requirements of the petition are also reviewed.
 - Ex: inclusion of all required appendices
- SCSC staff will notify any petitioner of the legal deficiencies in the petition.
- The petitioner may remedy the identified legal deficiencies and submit a revised state charter school petition to the SCSC for review in a subsequent petition cycle.

SCSC Review: Substantive Review

- SCSC staff conducts an in-depth evaluation of the charter school's mission, educational program, and proposed innovation as well as an examination of the charter school's business operations.
- SCSC staff also evaluates the charter petition to ensure that it is consistent with state education goals, including enhancing public educational opportunities to meet the growing and diverse needs of students and to provide the highest academic quality to increase student achievement and positive outcomes.
- Additionally, SCSC staff examines the charter school's proposed budget, funding sources, business partnerships, facilities, and any other operational aspect of the school.

SCSC Review: Substantive Review

- Examples of what the SCSC looks for:
 - Does the proposed charter school present an academic program (curriculum, learning model, etc.) that will enable the charter school to meet rigorous performance expectations?
 - Does the petitioner articulate a plan for addressing identified student weakness to encourage constant student growth and achievement?
 - Does the proposed charter school present a plan that will ensure the school will be fiscally sound?
 - Has the petitioner provided evidence that the community will support the school with student enrollment?
 - Does the proposed charter school leverage partnerships, including building relationships with other schools, universities, or nonprofit entities?

Passing Legal and Substantive Review: Tips for Success

■ Petitioners should:

- Address all requested topics in your petition.
- Include all required appendices.
- Describe HOW you will implement your program.
- Describe HOW you will comply with applicable law.
- Avoid any implication that the school is religious or sectarian.
- Avoid the delegation of the responsibility of managing school operations to someone (or entity) other than the governing board.
- Avoid the expectation that personnel will work for free or substantially less than that provided by the LBOE.
- Address the concerns of the SCSC when submitting a subsequent petition

SCSC Review: Interview

- SCSC staff will conduct interviews with the governing board and school leader of each charter school for which the legal compliance and substantive petition reviews did not reveal legal or significant deficiencies.
- The focus of the interview will relate to the governing board and school leadership's capacity to operate a charter school that is consistent with state education goals, and to do so in a fiscally responsible manner that fosters a positive school environment.
- The interview panel will include SCSC staff, SCSC Commissioners, and state and national education experts.

Practical Interview DON'Ts

■ DO NOT:

- Prepare a statement or presentation.
- Respond to questions by stating that the answer is in the petition.
- Allow your partners or EMO to dominate the discussion.
- Overly emphasize your passion.
- Bring everyone ever associated with the petition.

Attendance Zone

- A state charter school may have a:
 - Statewide Attendance Zone
 - Or
 - Defined Attendance Zone
- The requirements to submit a petition to a local board of education depend on the proposed state charter school's attendance zone.

Attendance Zone

Statewide Attendance Zone - Bricks & Mortar

- Submit to the LBOE where the school will be located
- Informational Only
- No LBOE action required

Statewide Attendance Zone - Virtual Only

- Do not need to submit to any LBOE
- No LBOE action required

Defined Attendance Zone

- Submit to LBOE where the school will be located
- Also submit to each local school system from which the proposed school plans to enroll students
- LBOE Action Required

Petition Contents

- The petition submitted to the SCSC must be substantively the same as the petition submitted to the LBOE.
 - The form of the petition may differ and the petition to the SCSC should address the school's plan to operate as an LEA, but the substance of the petition, such as mission, organization, and governance should remain the same.
- The petition will consist of:
 - Narrative (less than 100 pages)
 - Budget Template (SCSC budget template)
 - Required Appendices
 - Certificate of Incorporation
 - Board member resumes and conflict of interest forms
 - Agreements with EMO/CMOs

The SCSC Application



**Use the 2016
Application!!!**

Practical Petition Submission DON'Ts

■ DO NOT:

- Designate a statewide attendance zone to circumvent the local school district petition process.
- Fail to submit your petition to the appropriate local board of education.
- Fail to submit a letter of intent or adhere to all other local requirements if you designate a defined attendance zone.
- Submit a petition to the SCSC that is not substantively the same petition you submitted to the local board of education.
- Submit a petition to the SCSC in a form other than that of the current SCSC application.
- Attempt to submit revisions or additional documents after the submission deadline.

Common Pitfalls

- Academic program confusion
 - Standards v. Curriculum v. Academic Model
- Staff recruitment
 - Recruitment challenges on a lean budget.
- Budget Missteps
 - Inaccuracies and unrealistic expenditures
- Phantom Partnerships
 - Include evidence!
- Facilities
 - Reasonable timeline

Questions

