

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING

August 28, 2013, 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 Commission Chair Charles B. Knapp. Chairman Knapp verified that a quorum existed and that all members of the commission were present except Commissioner Jose Perez. Commissioner Perez arrived at approximately 10:15.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday--Executive Director, Gregg Stevens--General Counsel, Lauren Wright—Director of Organizational and Resource Development, Terence Washington—Accountability Manager, and Daniela Belton—Business and Operations Manager.
3. Approximately 15 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives, Georgia Charter Schools Association staff, and charter school business representatives.
4. A motion was made by Commissioner Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Williams that the Commission approve the meeting minutes from the July 31st SCSC meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Chairman Knapp next requested that Bonnie Holliday address the items listed under Section II of the agenda. Director Holliday announced the publication of the SCSC's first monthly newsletter. Ms. Wright then explained that the SCSC newsletters were intended to synthesize important information regarding deadlines, funding opportunities, and other news on a monthly basis. These newsletters are emailed to all state charter schools and are available on the SCSC website.
6. Director Holliday then provided an update on recent state charter school site visits. On August 19th, Director Holliday, Mr. Stevens, and Commissioners Perez and Lowden visited Provost Academy's Atlanta headquarters and Magic Johnson Bridgescape lab. Provost seeks to provide quality virtual education options for all students—including those "at risk" students who have dropped out or who have been largely unsuccessful in traditional public high school settings. Commissioner Lowden noted that the visit provided a unique opportunity to see a snapshot of the virtual school experience. On August 26th, Director Holliday, Mr. Stevens, Chairman Knapp, and Commissioners Rippner and Lewis visited Mountain Education Charter High School's Jasper, GA campus. MECHS has served a truly alternative population for over a decade, and works closely with all school districts in which they serve students. Commissioner Lewis noted that the MECHS set the standard for the type of collaboration that should occur between a state charter and a local district, and Commissioner Rippner added that the relationship between state charters and local schools districts does not always have to be adversarial. Chairman Knapp then commented that certain components of the CCRPI may not appropriately measure the

performance of schools like Provost and MECHS who serve as “last chance” institutions for students who have previously dropped out or have indicated an intent to drop out of high school. Director Holliday acknowledged that the SCSC staff is working to determine A) what constitutes an alternative population, and B) what types of performance measures would measure achievement and improvement for those students. She also confirmed that the issue of alternative accountability would be further discussed at the SCSC retreat in October.

7. Director Holliday then reminded Commissioners that the following state charter school site visits had been scheduled: Ivy Preparatory Academy Kirkwood & Young Men’s Leadership/ Atlanta, GA (September 17th, 9am-1pm,) Atlanta Heights Charter/ Atlanta, GA (September 24th—10am-12pm), Coweta Charter Academy, Coweta Co., GA (October 1st—10am-12pm), and Heritage Preparatory Academy/ Atlanta, GA (October 23rd, 10am-12pm). Director Holliday will coordinate with commissioners who are able to attend.
8. Director Holliday next gave a brief update of the petition review process and provided copies of the interview schedule during which state interview panelists will talk with representatives of petitioning groups regarding the ideas set forth within their SCSC applications. These interviews will take place Monday, September 9th – Wednesday, September 12th in the SCSC conference room on the 14th floor of the East Tower in the Floyd Veterans Building. Each interview panel is comprised of SCSC staff members, at least one commissioner, various state-level education and policy actors, and a national charter school expert. Mr. Stevens explained that he would serve as the lead interviewer during all discussions, and he discussed an interview guide that would go out to all interview panelists following the meeting.
9. Director Holliday announced that the SCSC intended to provide several trainings to school-level faculty, leadership, and governance board members throughout the 2013-2014 school year. To determine the areas in which schools need professional development, the SCSC administered a needs assessment survey to all state charter schools. Ms. Wright noted the results of the survey indicated that schools need training in general governance, state reporting, data utilization, and federal program implementation—including Special Education. Ms. Wright will be working to coordinate these trainings in coming months, and Dr. Knapp requested that commissioners be informed of dates and times when finalized so that they might attend if possible.
10. At this point, Chairman Knapp requested that Director Holliday review the Funding Items on the agenda. Director Holliday then asked Mr. Washington to provide an update on Title I Funding and Facility Grant Awards. Mr. Washington explained that no new information had become available with regard to Title I allocations to virtual schools since the last meeting, but he noted that SCSC staff were following the issue closely. He also explained that Facility Grant Awards would be announced in September, and some SCSC schools should receive funding.
11. Next, Mr. Washington announced that the SCSC would soon post a Consolidated State Reporting Timeline so that state charter schools would be able to consult a single source for information on important data reporting requirements and deadlines. This timeline will be completed and posted prior to the September SCSC meeting.
12. Chairman Knapp then noted that the SCSC meeting schedule required adjustment as the regularly scheduled November meeting date was the day before Thanksgiving, and the December meeting date was Christmas day. He requested that Director Holliday follow up with

commissioners by email to coordinate alternate dates and times for meetings in November and December.

13. Prior to adjourning the meeting, Chairman Knapp invited members of the audience to speak during the public comment period, and Matt Arkin from Georgia Cyber Academy gave a statement related to Title I funding for his school by commenting that he expected the matter to be resolved promptly by the Georgia Department of Education in accordance with federal guidelines.
14. There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hogg and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:45am.