

## **STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION MEETING**

**May 29, 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.
2. Also present were Commission staff members Bonnie Holliday, Executive Director and Gregg Stevens, General Counsel and Petitions Manager. Lou Erste, Director of GaDOE Charter Schools Division was also in attendance.
3. Approximately 30 members of the public also attended the meeting including charter school staff and representatives, Georgia Charter Schools Association staff, charter school business representatives, and members of the media.
4. A motion was made by Commissioner Lowden and seconded by Commissioner Lewis that the Commission approve the meeting minutes from the April 24<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.
5. Chairman Knapp then expressed a desire to amend the agenda to allow for a public comment period prior to adjournment. Commissioner Lewis made a motion to amend that was seconded by Commissioner Hogg and unanimously approved.
6. Chairman Knapp next requested that Bonnie Holliday and Gregg Stevens address the policy adoption items listed under Section III, Sub-section B of the meeting agenda. Mr. Stevens explained that SCSC staff actively sought input from stakeholders throughout the development of the Rules and Regulations and all relevant documents were posted to the website prior to the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Because no suggestions for revision were submitted in the last month, the Rules and Regulations were ready for the Commission's adoption. Similarly, the SCSC bylaws and conflict of interest policy had also been posted to the website for over 30 days, and they were also ready for adoption.
7. Director Holliday then reminded all in attendance of the upcoming June 14<sup>th</sup> deadline to submit petitions for new state charter schools. While the SCSC staff waived the letter of intent requirement this year, informal notice of petitioners' intent to apply is appreciated.
8. A motion to discuss the bylaws, conflict of interest policy, and rules and regulations was made by Commissioner Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Hogg. Chairman Knapp first addressed the bylaws by calling for discussion. Hearing none, he called for a motion to adopt. Commissioner Lowden made a motion to adopt the bylaws which was seconded by Commissioner Hogg and approved unanimously. Then Chairman Knapp called for discussion of the conflict of interest policy. Commissioner Rippner suggested that some guidance be

developed regarding the consequences of noncompliance. Director Holliday agreed and suggested that the SCSC move forward with adoption but amend the conflict of interest policy once the guidance has been developed. At that point, a motion to adopt the conflict of interest policy was provided by Commissioner Hogg, seconded by Commissioner Williams, and approved unanimously. Finally, Chairman Knapp called for discussion of the rules and regulations. Hearing none, a motion to adopt the rules and regulations was made by Commissioner Lewis, seconded by Commissioner Lowden, and approved unanimously.

9. Chairman Knapp then asked Commissioner Rippner for an update on the development of communication protocols for Commissioners. Commissioner Rippner explained that she, Commissioner Tony Lowden, and Commissioner Jose Perez were still collaborating to develop communication guidelines for the Commission, and additional time was needed to craft sound recommendations.
10. Director Holliday then informed the Commissioners that the State Board of Education (SBOE) had notified DOE and SCSC staff of their intention to support the transition of the remaining six (6) State Charters approved by the Commission during the second round of expedited review.
11. An overview of the state's new accountability measure—the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)—was then provided by Director Holliday. This update highlighted the scoring criteria as well as state charter performance in 2012. It was noted that the CCRPI is a more meaningful measure of performance than the previously used measure (Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP) because the CCRPI awards points to schools that demonstrate student growth and progress, achievement gap reduction, and innovative practice. Director Holliday presented data indicating state charters were more likely to outperform their comparison districts in the areas of “Progress” and “Achievement Gap Closure” than on overall “Achievement.” Commissioner Perez suggested a comparison of state charters to schools with similar demographics would be more meaningful than a comparison to the average of all schools within the state charter's attendance zone. Chairman Knapp also noted that the vast majority of state charters have been operational for 3 years or less and may need additional time to improve performance; however, he noted that the Commission should not accept excuses for sub-standard scores. Commissioner Perez agreed that state charters had to deliver results.
12. Commissioner Lowden then provided a report on a recent visit to Scholars Academy in Clayton County. Commissioner Perez, Director Holliday, and Mr. Stevens accompanied Commissioner Lowden on the site visit where they met with the schools governing board, staff, and students. Commissioner Lowden noted the importance of site visits for both the schools as well as for the commissioners. Commissioner Perez and Chairman Knapp agreed that visiting schools is a priority of the SCSC, and Chairman Knapp requested that Director Holliday schedule visits with all state charters before the end of the calendar year.
13. Director Holliday then led a brief discussion of school-level governance issues, and recommended that the Commission evaluate the types of petitions it receives during the upcoming application cycle before making a determination about what level of autonomy is appropriate or should be required at the school level. It was noted that charter networks can provide some much-needed operational efficiencies for stand-alone charter schools; however, that economy of scale may come at the expense of some decision-making authority when a school is not permitted to hold its own charter. Chairman Knapp agreed that the Commission

would need to incorporate the input of multiple stakeholders before developing a policy on school governance requirements.

14. Chairman Knapp next announced the need to elect a vice-chair for the Commission and called for nominations. Commissioner Lewis nominated Commissioner Williams, and Commissioner Rippner seconded the nomination. The nomination was then approved unanimously.
15. Chairman Knapp then announced that the terms of individual commissioners were posted on [scsc.georgia.gov](http://scsc.georgia.gov).
16. Prior to adjourning the meeting, Chairman Knapp invited members of the audience to speak during the public comment period. One individual inquired as to whether a high-performing school would be at a disadvantage in light of the CCRPI's focus on progress and achievement gap closure. Director Holliday assured her that high academic performance would only help a school since "Achievement" still accounts for the majority of the score.
17. There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Perez and seconded by Commissioner Lewis. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:05am.