



STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION OF GEORGIA

SEPTEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

SCSC Meetings

The last monthly State Charter Schools Commission was held on August 26, 2015. The meeting minutes are available [here](#). The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 30, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) Board Room. The 2015 Commission meeting calendar is available [on the SCSC website](#).

New State Charter School Openings

Congratulations to DuBois Integrity Academy, Foothills Education Charter High School, Georgia School for Innovation and the Classics, International Charter School of Atlanta, and Scintilla Charter Academy on their school openings this fall!



Governor Nathan Deal, SCSC Deputy Director Gregg Stevens, and other leaders at the Scintilla Charter Academy ribbon cutting in Valdosta, Georgia



School leaders cut the ribbon at DuBois Integrity Academy in Riverdale, Georgia



School leaders and students celebrate the opening of International Charter School in Roswell, Georgia.

As the new academic year begins, all state charter schools should send updated contact information for board chairs, school leaders, and administrative personnel to Katie.manthey@scsc.georgia.gov.

Petition Approvals

The SCSC approved charter petitions for Brookhaven Innovation Academy, Liberty Tech Charter School, and Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School at its August meeting. Brookhaven Innovation Academy will locate in the city of Brookhaven and serve students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Liberty Tech Charter School will locate in Fayette County and serve students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will locate in Randolph County and begin serving students in Kindergarten through 9th grade. The schools will have statewide attendance zones, meaning the schools will welcome students from any school district to attend and all students in the state will have an equal chance of enrolling in the schools. All three schools plan to open in the 2016-17 school year. One additional petition is pending for action before the SCSC.

SCSC Performance Framework

The SCSC has developed a **comprehensive performance framework** to serve as the **primary accountability tool** for assessing **academic, financial, and operational performance of state charter schools**. The performance framework was the chief recommendation of a National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) evaluation of SCSC policies and practices, undertaken to assist the SCSC in continually improving and refining its authorizing practices. The goal of the performance framework is to increase transparency and objectivity by clarifying SCSC accountability expectations and by providing schools with an annual assessment of where they stand in terms of charter renewal. Specifically, the performance framework clearly defines and establishes the SCSC's expectations for:

- **Academic Performance** on both achievement and growth,
- **Financial Performance** in terms of near-term viability and long-term sustainability, and
- **Organizational Performance** in critical areas such as governance and legal compliance.

The performance framework is posted for review on the [Comprehensive Performance Framework page](#) of the SCSC website. **Please note that the SCSC plans to adopt the Comprehensive Performance Framework at its meeting on September 30, 2015.** If you would look to provide feedback on the framework, please do so as soon as possible but not later than September 28, 2015, by sending your feedback to gregg.stevens@scsc.georgia.gov.

U.S. Ed Charter School Program Grants

Charter schools that meet the federal eligibility requirements and are in states without an active CSP grant (Georgia) may now apply directly to The U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Ed) by October 6, 2015, for a federal CSP Planning, Program Design, and Implementation grant.

Please note that Georgia has applied for a CSP grant in the 2015 CSP competition and were told by U.S. Ed that we will find out by September 30, 2015, if we are an approved grant recipient.

If Georgia is approved, charter schools that meet the federal eligibility requirements must apply for a federal CSP implementation grant through GaDOE. In addition, any Georgia charter school that applied for a grant in the Non-SEA competition would have to withdraw their applications from that competition and apply directly to GaDOE.

Schools that are interested in a federal CSP Planning, Program Design, and Implementation grant should apply to the non-SEA CSP competition in case Georgia is not awarded a CSP grant.

SCSC Survey of Development Needs

The SCSC invites all state charter school administrators and governing board members to participate in a survey assessing school needs. The SCSC will use the results of the survey to inform trainings and development opportunities available to state charter schools in the 2015-16 academic year. Please access the survey [here](#).

Please contact Lauren Holcomb at lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov with questions.

Training Opportunities

The [2015-2016 SCSC Training Agenda](#) is now 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 if you wish to attend a training session.

Webinar for Newly Approved Schools

**Invited: Board Members and Administrators of Newly Approved State Charter Schools
October 14th at 2 p.m.**

The SCSC will host a webinar for representatives of newly approved charter schools to discuss expectations of boards throughout the planning year. SCSC staff will review the SCSC school opening checklist and provide an overview of available resources. Webinar access information will be emailed directly to school contacts.

Governance Training

**Invited: Board Members and Administrators of Operational State Charter Schools
November 4-5 and February 10-11**

Georgia law, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2084(f), requires every member of a governing board of a state charter school to participate in annual governing board training. For FY16, state charter school governing board members may fulfill this obligation by one of two methods.

1. State charter school governing board members may attend one of the two governing board training opportunities provided to state charters by the SCSC *at no charge*; or
2. State charter school governing board members *may use their own funds* to contract for a minimum of 12 contact hours of training from a provider that is approved by the State Board of Education to deliver governance training to charter schools. Training content must reflect the topics covered at the SCSC Governance Training. Review the [SCSC Guidance on Governance Training](#) for a complete list of requirements and to ensure compliance.

The SCSC strongly encourages state charter school governing board members to attend one of the governance trainings conducted by the SCSC as these trainings provide board members the unique opportunity to discuss issues and concerns directly with their authorizer. Further, the SCSC staff's unique understanding of the compliance issues facing state charter schools ensures that SCSC training sessions are always topical, relevant, and timely.

The 2015-2016 SCSC Governance Training dates and locations are below. Please RSVP to lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov to attend.

November 4-5, 2015*
The Lodge at Little Ocmulgee State Park
Helena, Georgia
<http://www.littleocmulgeelodge.com/>

February 10-11, 2016
Atlanta Evergreen Marriott
Stone Mountain, Georgia
www.marriott.com/atlantaevergreen

**Space is limited. Attendees who wish to attend this session are encouraged to RSVP early.*

[Charter Schools Financial Management Certification](#)
Payroll and Purchasing Courses
Invited: School Business Managers, Leaders, and Board Members
November 10 and 12

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government Charter Schools Financial Management Certification is a six course program that equips participants with the unique skills and knowledge needed to financially operate a charter school. The Payroll course will focus on the Fair Labor Standards Act, new employee documentation, compensation calculation through the W-2 process, benefits including insurance and pensions, payroll taxes and remittances, payroll deductions, reporting and recording payroll, internal controls related to payroll, and payroll resources. The Purchasing course will focus on topics important to the purchasing process, from determining needs to receipt of purchased goods and services. Also discussed are alternative purchasing methods, required documentation, and ethics. Find more information on the program [here](#).

To attend a training session or for more information, contact [Lauren Holcomb](#), SCSC Director of Organizational and Resource Development, via email or at (404) 656-2822.

Reporting Deadlines

The following reporting items are due in September and October:

- **Finance:** DE046 Final Transmission
- **Title Programs:** Neglected and Delinquent Annual Report; End of Federal Fiscal Year – Associated Title Reports due; Beginning of Federal Fiscal Year – Associated Title Budgets Due; Title II, Part A Completion Reports
- **Other:** SLO Submission Window Reopens for Target Adjustments Based on Pre-Assessment Data; 2015 Cohort Withdrawal Update
- **Data Collections:** Pre-ID; FTE Data Survey; CPI; FTE; Student Class – Class Size; Student Record – Data Cleanse

The [FY16 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.

Please direct questions about reporting items to [Terence Washington](#), SCSC Finance and Operational Accountability Manager, via email or at (404) 656-2837.

CVIOG Charter School Financial Management Certification Graduates

Congratulations to the following individuals from state charter schools who completed The Carl Vinson Institute of Government Charter Schools Financial Management Certification Program.

Brenda Messer, Georgia Cyber Academy
Erica Jones, Ivy Preparatory Academy
Candy Yu, Graduation Achievement Charter High School

The CVIOG Charter Financial Management Certification is a six course program that equips participants with the unique skills and knowledge needed to financially operate a charter school. Find more information about the program [here](#).

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](#).

Charter School Grants

United States Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced a \$4 million grant competition for planning and launching high-quality public charter schools through the [non-state educational agency grant program](#). In addition, operators of existing high-quality public charter schools can receive funding to share information with other schools about best practices.

The Department's [Charter Schools Program](#) has supported the launch of thousands of public charter schools across the country focused on high-need students. The purpose of the program is to increase financial support for the startup and expansion of these public schools, build a better national understanding of the public charter school model and increase the number of high-quality public charter schools across the nation.

Applications for the [non-state educational agency grant program](#) are due **Oct. 6, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. ET** and details are available in the [Federal Register notice](#). Grantees will be announced in December. To learn more, visit the [non-state educational agency grant program](#) page.

2015 RTI Fall Conference: Leadership/Coaching and Math

Student Support Team Association for Georgia Educations (SSTAGE) and the Georgia Department of Education

SSTAGE, in partnership with the GaDOE, will host its fall conference on September 16 at the DuBose Porter Center at Oconee Fall Line Technical College in Dublin, Georgia. Workshops will focus on the Response to Intervention Approach and Improving Instructional Systems and Supports in Math. Registration fee includes continental breakfast and lunch and SSTAGE membership for 2015-16. More information is available [here](#).

13th Annual Georgia Charter Schools Conference

Georgia Charter Schools Association

The Georgia Charter Schools Conference is the only statewide gathering of the entire Georgia charter schools community. The 13th annual conference will be held at the Atlanta Marriott Century Center from February 3-5, 2016. GCSA welcomes charter school leaders, governing board members, authorizers, business partners, petitioners, teachers, and business managers to gather and learn about new programs, products, and techniques as well as share best practices and network.

GCSA is currently accepting Presentation Proposals. In addition to useful breakout sessions and inspiring keynote addresses, GCSA will celebrate a Charter School Teacher and Leader of the Year. More information is available [here](#).

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.

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