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STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS FOUNDATION TACKLES CHARTER SCHOOL FACILITY CHALLENGE

Report will propose research-based solutions to the lack of affordable charter school facilities

ATLANTA – The charter sector will soon have new solutions to the most persistent challenge facing charter schools in Georgia and across the nation – the lack of affordable facilities. The State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia (SCSF), in coordination with Level Field Partners and with support from the Walton Family Foundation, is launching a statewide analysis of the charter school facility landscape to assist charter schools in overcoming barriers in providing safe and affordable buildings for students.

“This analysis represents a critical first step in addressing the charter school facility challenge,” said SCSF President and CEO Laura Bollman. “Charter schools must dedicate a portion of their earned per pupil revenue toward facilities leases, debt service and capital improvements. This obligation coupled with a lack of adequate buildings and fair financing options places a significant burden on schools. We aim to level the playing field so that charter school leaders can direct their public dollars toward educating students, rather than leases, landlords and loans in such copious quantities.”

Charter school leaders commonly encounter challenges finding buildings that meets the needs of their schools. In a 2017 SCSF survey of state charter schools, boards and school leaders ranked facilities as a substantial hurdle to financial sustainability and growth. A shortage of acceptable buildings leads to financial strain as schools seek financing for improvements, renovations or development, often with unreasonable lending and development terms. A 2011 report, [*Shortchanged Charters*](#), found that, on average, Georgia charter schools spend the equivalent of five teacher salaries per year on facilities.

Level Field Partners will examine the total amount of Georgia’s public education dollars spent by charter schools on facility costs through leases, debt service and other facilities-related expenditures, as well as the market and lending terms available to schools. The final report will provide recommendations to reduce facility costs and maximize the public education dollars spent on charter school students in classrooms. School leaders, charter support partners and policymakers can use the findings to inform the facility acquisition process and advocate for more equitable opportunities for charter schools and the children they serve. The SCSF intends to launch a technical assistance program to provide consulting in the areas of facility and financing at no cost to schools.

“Our goal is to point to data-driven, tangible recommendations and potential initiatives designed to alleviate the most pressing aspects of the facilities challenges facing charter schools in Georgia, and provide a roadmap for implementing those action steps so that affordable access to high quality facilities is no longer a burden on the charter school sector in Georgia,” said Level Field Partners Co-Founder David Endom.

The analysis will launch immediately and the report is expected in early 2019.



The State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to supporting high quality state charter schools serving children throughout Georgia by leveraging resources to help schools launch, build capacity and grow. www.scsfga.org

Level Field Partners provides best-in-class technical assistance for all stages of the charter school real estate development and financing processes. Services are tailored to each client's specific needs with a focus on delivering the best programmatic and financial outcomes possible for charter school clients.

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