



May 17, 2021

Dear SECA Family,

For the last two years the Savannah Exploratory Charter Academy Governing Board has worked tirelessly to create an outstanding educational opportunity for students and families on the Southside of Savannah. It is important to us that the school we provide to your child is the best educational opportunity available. We believe that our scholars deserve excellent instruction in a safe and collaborative environment that encourages learning and growth. Unfortunately, we will need to delay the opening of SECA until Summer 2022.

We are endlessly grateful that you share our vision and joined us on this journey, and we assure you that our expedition continues towards an opening in August of 2022. Our commitment remains focused on a wonderful, safe environment where your scholar can learn in a meaningful way and thrive, and we are adamant that we will not rush to open SECA until the school's facility is prepared to promote student success. The students of Southside Savannah deserve the best available options.

In February 2020 when we selected our goal to open in August 2021, COVID-2019 had not yet changed the world. As COVID-19 took hold, we experienced and overcame many challenges but felt confident in our ability to open as scheduled. Despite the pandemic, SECA found the perfect location, great partners and continued to move forward. As we began to see an end to the pandemic, we were very confident of SECA's progress towards opening. At that time, we were able to begin our lottery and enrollment process.

As we shared with our stakeholders, it has always been SECA's philosophy to start with success and grow with its students. Our goal was to offer a short-term facility solution as we invested in our academic program and saved money for our permanent home. Unfortunately, the financial aspects of the pandemic made construction very expensive and fundraising more difficult. Nevertheless, we continued to identify solutions through budget cuts and adjustments to a modular facility. As we continued to enroll students and prepare for construction, the price of building materials continued to rise. Additionally, the terms provided by SECA's financial partners would not allow the school to meet all its financial obligations. As a result, the SECA Governing Board determined that delaying its opening

to secure more favorable funding terms was the best solution to deliver on its promise to its students, families, and staff.

Before making that decision, we wanted to explore all possible options for providing families the SECA choice for the upcoming school year. Because of its unique program and dedication to Project-Based Learning, SECA had a great deal of interest from families across Savannah, and the Governing Board desired to serve those who had chosen SECA. Unfortunately, at the deadline for SECA to submit its projected enrollment to receive state funding, the school had not received completed enrollment packets from many families. We explored a proposal with the State Charter Schools Commission to open a micro-school (small number of students); however, we could not identify a sustainable path forward. They told us that while they sympathized with our situation and recognized that we were trying to do the right thing for our enrolled students, they couldn't allow it because it was not sustainable.

At the end of last week the Governing Board made the difficult decision to defer opening until the 2022-2023 school year. While the decision was challenging, we believe that it is best possible solution to ensure SECA provides Southside Savannah access to a rigorous and supportive academic environment for generations. Unfortunately, this decision also means that SECA will not be opening in August, and you will need to make arrangements for your scholar for next school year.

As disheartening as this news is to all of us, there is some good news we can share. By deferring our opening, we also open additional financial options that will allow us to build our permanent facility and open in 2022 with a brand-new, permanent school building. We can also tell you, that if you chose, we will hold your spot for next school year and your scholar will be welcome into our new facility with open arms.

We were waiting until the end of the school year to begin the transcript request process, as a result had not begun it. If your child is currently enrolled in SCCPSS you will not need to do anything, they will naturally progress to their next grade level at their current school next year. However, if you are not currently enrolled in SCCPSS, you will need to enroll them for next school year.

We know you have a lot of questions and we want to answer all that we can, we are available to answer your emails at info@secawise.org or registrar@secawise.org.

Best regards,

The SECA Governing Board