

Maine Charter School Commission

October 13, 2015, Business Meeting minutes accepted as written by a Commission vote 11-17-15

I. Call to Order

Chair, Shelley Reed, called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

II. Roll Call

The following members were present: Shelley Reed, Chari, Ande Smith, Jana Lapoint, Laurie Pendleton, Nichi Farnham, Mike Wilhelm and John Bird. Also in attendance were Bob Kautz, Executive Director; Gina Post, Director of Program Management; and Heather Fuller, Administrative Assistant.

III. Adjustments to the Agenda

IV. Acceptance of Minutes

- A. Moved by John Bird; seconded by Jana Lapoint and voted unanimously by those present to accept the September 1, 2015, Minutes as written.

V. Officers' Reports

A. Chair

Everyone has been embroiled in going over the last of the Monitoring reports and a draft of the Commissioner's report. Laurie, Shelley, Gina and Bob did have a meeting with Harpswell Coastal Academy and we saw some promising signs. We had met with John, Head of School, and Sally, Chairperson of the Board. Sally is going to make some dramatic changes. We saw that we discussed things and targets that they needed to go over, goals and such. Laurie was articulate that these are the things that need to be done. We have gotten some material back from them in response to our suggestions. We made some adjustments to that we asked them to keep looking at their performance measures and metrics.

B. Vice Chair

Reviewing the Acadia application.

VI. Staff Reports

A. Executive Director

1. Items for future agendas:
 - a. Cornville, I have invited them, tentatively in December, to give a report of what they are doing. I spoke with Justin to see if he would be available for about a half hour presentation. This might be a good agenda item for us to do every other, or every, meeting having the schools give a presentation of what they are doing, what they are planning on doing.
The Commission discussed the suggestion and considered the purpose, timing, and value of such presentations and the business of meetings. The consensus was that presentations be by schools who are to be considered for renewal, preferably in February/March or summer months, that it would provide background for all Commission members before the formal renewal process, and the schools could provide information related to their performance indicators.
 - b. Baxter school cancellation alternative will be an agenda item next month. Commission approval will be requested. They have been working on their proposal that some of the school, days that are cancelled be used for student planned activities and counted as school days. They made a presentation last school year and gave examples of the activities, student presentations and results.
2. NACSA Conference agenda and workshop descriptions are available online and are a good conference preplanning device.
3. MEPRI Virtual School Funding Study have invited Shelley, Ande, Mike and I to meet with them as they initiate this study for the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. The meeting will take place in October.
4. THE MSMA conference presentation by the Commission is on October 23. Shelley, Mike, Karl Francis, and Justin Belanger will be the presenters.

B. Director of Program Management

1. The Performance-Based Diploma workshop: I have been working with Diana Doiron to schedule an abbreviated session for the Charter schools, which will be October 27, 2015. All schools with the exception of Fiddlehead will have one to three people in attendance. This will be located in room 538 and will be from 9-12.
2. School visits have been arranged for all seven of the Charter schools. I will stop in and touch base for an hour or two, talk about things they are proud of or areas they may be struggling with and I will get a tour if there is a new facility, or see something that is new. This past week I visited Baxter and MVA.
Shelley suggested that review teams might like to be kept abreast of when Gina is going to be visiting those schools. Gina will send an email out giving the review teams a heads up.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Final End-of-Year Reports

Shelley introduced this agenda item. Teams have been working hard developing these reports. Gina has been putting together the final drafts and has copies of the End of Year reports for Commission members. End of Year reports for Maine Connections,

Baxter, MeANS, and Harpswell. These are the reports that the review teams wrote, they have been sent to the respected schools, and got back to me with any data mistakes or numbers that may have occurred. Shelley indicated that the Commission members have seen the reports prior to the meeting; they have in fact been back and forth amongst all the members of the review teams.

1. Maine Connections Academy report; Moved by John Bird; Seconded by Ande Smith; voted unanimously by those present.
The report was reviewed by the Review Team Chair, and discussed with the Commission. A copy of the report can be viewed at [MCA 2015 Annual Monitoring Report.pdf](#)
 2. Baxter Academy report; Moved by Jana Lapoint; Seconded by Mike Wilhelm; voted unanimously by those present.
The report was reviewed by the Review Team Chair, and discussed with the Commission. A copy of the report can be viewed at [Baxter 2015 Annual Monitoring Report.pdf](#)
 3. Maine Academy of Natural Science report; Moved by Nichi Farnham; Seconded by Laurie Pendleton; voted unanimously by those present.
The report was reviewed by the Review Team Chair, and discussed with the Commission. A copy of the report can be viewed at [MeANS 2015 Annual Monitoring Report.pdf](#)
 4. Harpswell Coastal Academy report; Moved by John Bird; Seconded by Shelley Reed; voted unanimously by those present.
The report was reviewed by the Review Team Chair, and discussed with the Commission. A copy of the report can be viewed at [Harpswell 2015 Annual Monitoring Report.pdf](#)
- B. MeANS performance measures; Moved to table Ande Smith; Seconded by Nichi Farnham; voted unanimously by those present.

C. Renewal Process-Chapter 3;

The Commission discussed the renewal process and developed points for action and consideration as it prepares for the first application of this procedure. These included -do we have formal processes or not; what seems to be in place so that everybody understands that there is a sequence of events that happens; what guideline is from NASCA; what is it that we need to pay attention to; the first date that is going to come up is June 30, when we will have to make sure that we get the appropriate paperwork out to them and they have an opportunity to respond. Thoughts given about the renewal application included: the renewal application is not a rehashing of everything, because every year we have their performance monitoring report, so it should be what do you absolutely need to tell us; what do you see going forward; what things do you want to change or an area that you feel you really need to focus on; what new thing would you like to do; they do have to go through thinking

about improvements that they want to make; they can also provide us with evidence of what they feel they have achieved, new or highlighted information that they wish to tell us.

Our responsibility once we get through June 30th is issuing a performance report for them. It takes their four years they have completed so far and takes a look at our response to how they have been performing. Also indicated in this process is that no later than September 30th of their fifth year the governing board shall submit the renewal application. Their intended reapply and then they have to go through once again a form similar to that of our regular application. Need to be able to justify why we should give them the opportunity for renewal. Some states give renewal applications and place conditions on them; for example, they were kind of getting to their target so we might give them one or two years rather than the five years.

It was suggested that the staff send a calendar to the Commission members and walk us through what the documents would look like. We can react to it then, as opposed to us walking through it now. Whether it is as a group or collectively we need to be crisp in our minds as to when things are going happen and what those things are. Because the applicant needs to provide additional information other than what the Commission has, there needs to be some kind of format for the process by which we put all that information together. Format that review teams can look at and know that yes here is all the data relevant to all this and what are the targets and we can see whether they have met them or not. This will provide a clear understanding of what we are looking at and have the information. Building a calendar would mean that there is a task and when does it need to be started. We would be stacking up to see where the soft spots have been going into that fourth year. We would be building what they have to do to get renewal around that. We have to be satisfied with knowing they performed according to that fifth year, this is what you have to do to be sure that you get this contract renewed. It may be worth having a session where we talk all this through and perhaps role play a bit with some of the schools. Shelley indicated that she particularly looks at our obvious responsibility being June 30th of the Charter schools fourth year. What we think about their performance and this is looking at everything about them. If a report is being put together, we need to know all the elements of the report. If our report needs to be completed and turned over to them by June 30th, let's think about when does this Commission need to see a calendar and flushing out of what those reports and elements are going to look like. There is a discussion around the timeframe of January or February for working towards June 30th deadline. A suggestion was made that when looking at agendas, the opportunity in dealing with renewal is covered. Chapter 3 process is all legislated to what we go by, however it is broad enough that if we needed to add some details in terms of the actual sub-sections of reports, we would have plenty of room. We provide an RFP for an application; we provide a rubric, with the application. In some semblance, we have to have those kinds of things that are available to the schools so they know how we are going to be looking at it, and they know how they are going to be measured. Section 4 has some reference to Section 2409 in the States statue that have to do with Charter schools so that some of the language would be pulled out exactly from the laws that were passed.

- D. Strategic Plan Activity: There were no meetings in September. Nichi indicated for that for Contract Subcommittee, she and Ande received a draft from Sarah, neither have had a chance to review. Mike reported that the Budget Subcommittee has had discussion regarding the budget and a format that is preferred. We do not know what the exact revenue is because the October 1 count is not in; therefore they cannot generate it to what the exact would be. The other Strategic Plan teams do have some

deadlines that they set for themselves. Our plan is that after every meeting, those teams that are choosing to meet are able to as the room is available.

- E. Update on Harpswell Performance report: There were two items enclosed in the Commission member's packet. The first thing is that the team that met with Sally discussed goals, targets, and about Harpswell Coastal Academy moving forward and resolving some issues they have around the results of the Maine State Assessment versus their own local Assessment. They felt that their students had met the local assessment, but we need to know what it is going to look like for them. The question at Harpswell is if they had small cohorts like all of our Charter schools do, so how do they report realistically about what has happening in the school. They have gone back and forth with how they are reporting on their NWEA data as well as their State assessment data. They met as a team and put together goals and that is the Report of Follow-up Actions Submitted to the Maine Charter Commission by Harpswell Coastal. The letter is our response to the Follow-up Actions report submitted. For example the measures one and two, the State assessment in reading and Math, they were concerned the smaller cohorts, so they wanted to track and compare their sixth graders to their seventh graders. That would be a growth goal, not a proficiency goal. We need to see those comparisons, and this was explained to them by Laurie. The school selected standardized reading, they are using NWEA and they proposed how they reported their base line date for 2014-2015, and it was not the same as what they proposed for their goal going forward. They were told that they needed to correct that because we needed to make sure we were comparing the same slices in the pie. The last concern was their school design assessment program was unclear, so if you note page 4; Proficiency and school designed assessment, their fourteen and fifteen results, 31 out of 33 students 94 percent, their goal is 85 percent. Is that 85 percent of the students, if so why are they proposing it to go down? Or is it 85 percent of the measurement category? So we asked that they clarify that and we are waiting to hear back. Shelley indicated that in talking with them, they did identify a staff member who was going to tracking data, to make sure they were responding to us in a way that their performance measures indicate that they should be. They are meeting with Cornville to see how they use their ingenuity data to create goals. They are attending the NWEA workshop to better understand how NWEA can be used to measure growth. A question was posed by Mike Wilhelm that if a school using one of the performance base line assessments of the State and you have large percentage of students who opt out, what is the school to do? I think they did give us a number of how many students should have taken the test versus how many had opted out of taking the test. So they gave that and then they tried to give the results. Approximately 77 percent of students completed the test. Twenty-four students were opted out by their parents. Bob followed up Mike's question by saying that this is why we have been insisting on all of the schools having something like NWEA, which is more national recognized that can be taking year after year and can be used as growth, not only the opting out but the changes in the State assessment. Laurie commented that she suggested they say a percent of the State as opposed to we are currently at sixty-five percent proficient next year we will be seventy-five percent proficient, the assessment changes and that could put them at jeopardy. Laurie suggested saying that this year we are within ten percent proficiency of the State and next year we will also be within ten percent proficiency of the State. We were asking a whole lot more of the Charter schools than what was coming in as through students across Maine. Process wise, this entire dialogue started because they provided inadequate information as part of our end of year review, which happened in the summer and we are here in October and they still have not provided a

straight answer in response to that. Bob indicated that we were disturbed by reports that they provided us and wanted to have more information as to what was going on, is that an accurate picture. Our request that they provide an additional amount of information with a plan and an explanation than what we had had before because of our concerns with information they gave us. It wasn't so much inadequate as we were concerned about the results and wanted to be sure that with all that was going on, that the results were truly reflective of what was happening at the school. Did they have the understanding to actually put together their results? The original performance measures, they did not report the results at the end of the school year in response to their performance measures. They would give us X when we would ask for Y, and we would have to go back to them and ask for Y. What is our path with these people? Are we going to continue iterating with them and cajoling them? Or do we do something else, we can put them on watch list where we can continue to watch and gather additional information. How long are we going to sit and ask questions before we say something? Shelley indicated that in our discussions, having a person at the Chair of the Governing Board of Sally's caliber and educational expertise is going to greatly help that school. The governing board has stepped up to do is to really own that they are responsible for what is going on. The leadership of the school has now acknowledged that the tasks in order to give us reports in a timely way and appropriate and timely need to be perhaps sub-divided. Those tasks need to be given to people who are going to absolutely assure us that what is in the contract is what is followed. This calls for a person who really stays on top of things. HCA is beginning to put together a clearer picture of the type of skills sets that are needed to accurately provide us with what we need, because that is ultimately what they need to be doing. Laurie would be much more concerned if what they were doing this year wasn't establishing a baseline data if they were reporting on their actions and that is what we asked them for. At this point, it is making sure that we have the right baseline to start with. If we had been asking them for their goal, then it would have been a little bit different, because this is establishing baseline. We do have a little bit of time to get that baseline right. Every other school we have has managed to turn in the data in the performance report more or less in a timely fashion, right? Yes. How concerned and to what extent should we act on our concern? The feeling is that if nothing else on our next agenda, we have to decide from the review team, whether or not we act on them in some way with respect to their contract. Mike suggested that maybe the Commission should send a formal letter to the Board Chair sort of capturing this concern, and the heightened interest we have in this whole issue. At least the board is made aware of how important we feel about accurate reporting, test results, responding to the request of the Commission. Shelley indicated that those people in attendance at the September 18, 2015 meeting had no way of escaping the message that we were delivering. Laurie and Bob did a great job in saying this is what we need, this is what you have given us or this is what you have not given us. We informed them that there were members of the Commission that were very concerned about them moving forward. Those messages are almost better in person than a letter. We can certainly send another letter if you would like. Mike indicated that a letter would recapture what was said at the meeting. Sometimes if you can document a conversation that took place, a concern was expressed in person; you have a record, a memo of understanding. John was saying that what it really comes down to is results. We are glad to know that you are going to make some reforms, that will give broader results, but what is the dead line and what are the results we expect, there is no wiggle room, period. Ande indicated that we need to be firm as to when this ends, and whether or not we do something else with them. John indicated that Sally is spending more time based on what the team got

her to do, but this has been going on for quite some time. Shelley shared that there are lots of good things happening for the students at that school. Jana shared that she goes on the website weekly and by doing that she is able to see that yes they in fact are doing great things. There are also other means of accountability, and that is the piece that we need to see. If you were to see what those kids are involved with you would say “whoa this is good stuff”, now let’s finishing it based on where the concerns are. Laurie said listening to the students sharing what they are doing; it is just this final piece that this is serious and important. There will be a letter drafted, per Shelley. Bob suggested that the review team have some sort of recommendation for the Commission to consider at the next meeting in regarding to a situation status.

- F. Annual report to the Commissioner: This report has reviewed many times. Shelley asked that the layout have more headings for the different sections. Essentially, the report is together, with the exception of reformatting. Hard copies will be given to the Commission members to review. Shelley pointed out that the report has five sections, and each section of the law indicates what we are to cover in the final report. We are to give an Educational summary and financial summary. It addresses our monitoring process, application process, how we review schools, how we work through that. We also have attached to them, all the budget information and the end of year reports. It is looking at how much revenue did you get and how did you spend it. It asks how the Commission has carried out their duties.

There are discussions around whether to vote on this report now or wait until all members have had a chance to review the report. The Commission agreed to complete this agenda at the end of today’s meeting. (See item VIII. D. below.)

- G. Commission Budget Update: There was an itemized budget for the Commission members to review. Bob mentioned that while reviewing the itemized report, the asterisk indicates the amount that was prior to Gina coming on board. The figures represented on this report are through October 9, 2015. The revenue itself is an estimate and is adequate for the planned expenditures. Having reports such as this will give us a sense of where we are at and be able to project ahead.

VIII. New Business

- A. Review Recommendation, and Vote on the Public Virtual Charter School Applications for School Year 2016.

Chair Reed described the procedure that the Commission will follow in determining the status of each application:

Each review team Chair will give an overview of the school; sharing strengths and concerns in the summary statement; a recommendation/motion and second will be made; following will be any discussion by the Commission and a decision to move the application forward would be by a majority vote.

If the applicant moves on, the next process is the In-person Interview and Public Hearing- The Commission is scheduled to consider applications at its November 17 meeting and that vote has to be at least 5 members of the Commission voting in the affirmative to move to the contract phase.

Next step is a vote by the full Commission is taken on the negotiated Contract. If approved, it then becomes a Public Charter School Contract.

1. **Acadia Academy**

Grades; Pre-K through 2nd Grade, adding Grades 3-6
Lewiston-Auburn area

School Program Design: A comprehensive education curriculum in academics in social/emotional development with a safe community, addressing the individual learning needs of each child.

Relationship to Applicant Entity: John F. Murphy Homes and Margaret Murphy Center for Children.

Review Team: Laurie Pendleton, Chair, Nichi Farnham, Ande Smith
Please find the full report included at the end of these Minutes.

Recommendation: The Review Team's recommendation is that Acadia Academy applications move forward for further consideration by the Commission. The recommendation was discussed by the Commission.

Motion by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Ande Smith and unanimously voted by those present to approve the recommendation as written.

2. **Inspire ME Academy**

Grades; 4, 5, 6
Sanford area

School Program Design; At Inspire ME Academy our mission is to *Inspire Greatness*. We believe every student is capable of reaching his or her potential when provided with a meaningful education. We are committed to student success. In order to achieve greatness, we will develop curriculum that not only bridges gaps in students learning but also challenges them to go above and beyond, maximizing their potential. Our curriculum will be developed directly from the Common Core Standards using rigorous standard based unit design. We will teach character education with the same enthusiasm as we would teach academics. Inspire ME Academy will have a positive rewards based discipline structure that encourages strong self-esteem. They will have Foreign Language, Sciences, Social Studies, PE and the Arts. Kindness and community will be celebrated. This will eventually be a 4-8 grade program. It starts out as a 4-6. It has a student body of about 75-125 students.

Review Team: Shelley Reed, Chair, Jana Lapoint, Mike Wilhelm
Please find the full report included at the end of these Minutes.

Recommendation: We (Review Team) recommend that the Commission not move this application forward to the Public Interview and Hearing phase of the process. The recommendation was discussed by the Commission.

Motion by Shelley Reed; seconded by Jana Lapoint and unanimously voted by those present to approve the recommendation as written.

3. **Peridot Montessori Charter School**

Grades; 3 through 8
Hancock County

School Program Design; Peridot Montessori Charter School would inspire the pursuit of life-long learning using principles of the Montessori philosophy of education and human development. Serving children from early childhood through adolescences, they are committed to providing students educational opportunities that allow them to reach their fullest potential. Peridot Montessori will use the Montessori method and philosophy of education coupled with the compatible academic and developmental programs available for STEAM (Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education which would allow each student to work at their own pace in an enriched environment with specially trained teachers.

Review Team: Nichi Farnham Chair, John Bird, Laurie Pendleton
Please find the full report included at the end of these Minutes.

Recommendation: We (Review Team) recommend that the Commission not move this application forward to the Public Interview and Hearing phase of the process. The recommendation was discussed by the Commission.

Motion by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Laurie Pendleton and unanimously voted by those present to approve the recommendation as written.

4. **Snow Pond Arts Academy**

Grades; 9 through 12
Sidney area

School Program Design: Snow Pond Arts Academy aims to transform students' lives and contribute to the cultural capital of Central Maine by providing high quality, comprehensive, college preparatory Academic and Arts education in an inclusive, nurturing, and culturally rich environment for high school age students. Snow Pond looks at education as both the accumulation of knowledge along with the cultivation of engagement, imagination, leadership and collaboration. Through the initial introduction of Music, Theatre, and Dance, an ultimately the inclusion of all the Creative and Visual Arts, Snow Pond will be a witness to the magical power of the Arts to bring people together. There are two themes that have come up as we have probed the applicant further. The first is this is a school that is inspired by several decades of the New England Music Camp operating as Snow Pond Center for the Arts. They have been around for a long time and achieved a wide ranging reputation both in Maine and beyond. Secondly, they have an ambitious program and this is because they are going to offer a blended model. The overarching idea of this is, they can do more by combining on the ground bricks and mortar teachers who will be in charge, but having purchased online services ESP they will use will be K-12.

Review Team: John Bird Chair, Jana Lapoint, Shelley Reed

Please find the full report included at the end of these Minutes.

Recommendation: The Review Team's recommendation is that Snow Pond Arts Academy applications move forward for further consideration by the Commission. The recommendation was discussed by the Commission.

Motion by John Bird; seconded by Jana Lapoint and unanimously voted by those present to approve the recommendation as written.

- B. Maine Connections Academy Request for use AdvancEd for accreditation. They would like to go from New England Associations of Schools and Colleges to AdvancEd for accreditation. AdvancEd works with many Virtual schools. Upon a request to review, Gina and Bob's recommendation is that you accept that switch that they are asking for. AdvancEd is doing accreditation for thirty thousand plus schools. They really feel that they will benefit more from AdvancEd who has focus and experience dealing with virtual schools. The cost and time commitment to New England Association, pose a challenge for school districts. The AdvancEd seems more streamline and to the point. They do have an on sight review, involvement of a couple of days. Their initial cost is much less than New England Association. On a theoretical and practical basis they feel it fits with them better. Shelley asked if this is a material amendment; Bob answered that Commission approval is necessary as MCA is held to it because it is part of their application, and their application is Part A of the contract. They need to have the Commission's approval to make that change

Motion to accept the use of AdvancEd as MCA accrediting body, rather than the NEASC.

Motion moved by Ande Smith; seconded by Mike Wilhelm and unanimously voted by those present.

- C. Light refreshment policy and pre approval process: the policy allows for breakfast, snacks and lunch depending upon the meeting as well as the liquid refreshments of coffee, tea, juice and a very light ensemble (muffins, scones, and fruit).

Motion moved by Ande Smith; seconded by Mike Wilhelm and unanimously voted by those present to approve adopting this policy.

- D. Annual report to the Commissioner: Using last years as the format, Gina and Bob edited some areas as applicable. Ande; requested a change on page 6, last paragraph under B, talks about the performance of all operating Public Charter Schools overseen. The paragraph starts off; in summary, the Commission is pleased the performance of each school. I think I would be more comfortable saying; in general the Commission is pleased with the performance of each school. Shelley; highlights that are new, talking about the addition of staff, changes in staff. There is nothing controversial. Because we are attaching our specific monitoring reports, people can go back and look at the performance. Laurie; page 7 regarding the paragraph that starts; representing the Charter Commission, then the three-member teams of Charter Commission Members assigned to review an application continue to serve that public charter school. In general, sometimes that is the case and sometimes is not because people change. We will submit it to the Commissioner after it has been reformatted and corrections have been made and reviewed by the Chair.

Motion to move the report forward, subjected to the changes requested by the Commission and be submitted to the Commissioner.
Motion moved by Ande Smith; seconded by Jana Lapoint and unanimously voted by those present.

IX. Other

X. Announcements

E. Turn in Expense Account Vouchers at the end of the meeting

F. Reminder of important dates for your calendar:

- Public Interview and Hearing- October 26, 2015
- MCSC Business meeting- November 17, 2015

XI. Public Comment

Renee Morin- Inspire ME Academy-

She has been working on this a long time and has been with the Charter movement in Augusta. Her first question is using last year's application and comments. One in particular was Special Ed. She was informed that the Commission wanted to see their policies. They added a third and fourth policy, and it was not even acknowledged. She asked for an explanation as to why there were so many more things this year versus last year, when the RFP had hardly any changes? Why there are more problems now than the year previous?

Shelley responded that part of that is that you have different people reviewing the application. They work really hard to look at the application with fresh eyes as there were two members that reviewed the application last year. What are the specific things that really need to be there, and I think that emerged wasn't. What learning took place from your first application to your second application, and has there been enough growth across all four sections to warrant a belief that there was significant understanding about all the things it would take to do a charter school.

Renee referenced a comment regarding the governing board not being diverse, she would like an explanation as to how they are not diverse when there is a solid board that is very well rounded, who are dedicated. Renee mentioned donations of a free service from an accountant that is supportive of the program all the way. There has also been the same service from a lawyer in Sanford. Renee mentioned that she did not understand the Science piece nor did she understand the piece missing from the Special Ed. Jana asked her if they gave her what she wants in the Special Ed area would that change the whole outlook of the application, because there are other parts of your application Renee. She looked at Governance and was upset with it. There is just enough missing in each one of these areas to say, we don't have the confidence that we feel we need to go further with the application.

XII. Adjourn

Motion moved by Jana Lapoint; seconded by Mike Wilhelm and voted unanimously by those present to adjourn at 1:49 pm

**Acadia Academy Review Team Report and Recommendation
by
Chair Laurie Pendleton, Nichi Farnham, Ande Smith**

A. Education Plan – Mission; Vision; Targeted Student Population; Academic Program; Special Student Population; Assessment; School Climate; and Discipline

Strengths

1. The mission clearly describes the program they hope to implement; direct instruction connected to extensive experiential learning opportunities.
2. Development Committee has laid out a solid argument that a school of choice is a need in this area.
3. Proposal for a small, community school may be well received.
4. The application presented a desire to educate the whole child academically, behaviorally, socially, emotionally, and physically.
5. The proposal recognized the needs of students from the Lewiston-Auburn area with a focus on low socio-economic, special education, English Language Learner (ELL), and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) involved children.
6. Leverages proven systems, like Saxon Math
7. Academic program supports the mission.
8. Interesting mix of direct instruction and experiential learning.
9. Strong approach to RTI.
10. Individualized instruction through the WINK projects is intriguing.
11. The proposal appears to support self-directed learning with multiple opportunities to demonstrate success, extended learning through after school and summer programs and small class sizes.
12. The combination of using Direct Instruction for basic skill building and then dovetailing with experiential learning is an ambitious approach. It was explained during the interview how the implementation would work for all subjects: math, reading, science, and social studies.
13. Although not reflected in the budget, during the interview, a “no cost” approach to including music and arts in the curriculum was shared.
14. Experiential to motivate students
15. Oriented to behaviorally challenged/learning disabled
16. Strong understanding of the needs of special education students.
17. RTI will be a key component of the school.
18. MAPS will include IEP goals, integrating Special Education services into the regular education classroom.
19. Providing a curriculum for social skills (Strong Kids)
20. Extended school year will be beneficial for students with special needs.
21. Application shows knowledge of special ed. policy/procedures and instructional materials and practices/MUSER
22. Intention is to hire qualified licensed teachers for all student-contact positions
23. MAPS and Pride are unique and interesting.

24. Goals include social and emotional
25. Students play a role in the process.
26. Assessment program supports the school's RTI and MTSS program
27. RTI modeled: lots of discussion of in-stride assessments and responses
28. MAPs will be used to track progress of students and communicate on a regular basis with the parents.
29. Strong PBSI approach
30. Social and Emotional curriculum
31. Use of Community Meeting
32. Address both student and teacher behaviors
33. Positive-Pro-Active approach
34. RTI approach
35. Strong discipline policy

Questions, Concerns

1. Selected many different programs to balance
2. Full of aspirational targets and not clearly stating what it's going to do
3. The individual WINK projects may be a real challenge to implement.
4. Although they say their programs are aligned to Maine Learning Results, they provide no evidence of that.
5. The sheer number of programs and assessments that teachers will need to know may make it difficult to expect the professional development time allocated will be enough to ensure teachers are skilled at all of the programs.
6. Success of the overall academic program relies heavily on the teachers having timely and frequent input into the MAPS program.
7. MAPS program would be used to track behavioral goals/progress along with academic goals/progress. This may not be sufficient enough to address Maine Learning results/assessments.
8. Proposed Pre-k instruction (Building Blocks math curriculum) would need to be more coordinated with Maine's Early Learning & Development
9. It's unclear to how all the programs will work together
10. The sample schedule provided in the application did not include devoted time for math, music, or art. During the interview they did not satisfactorily describe how they would teach these areas.
11. The program they propose for use with ELL's is not WIDA compliant.
12. The school-identified ration that is equal to the local catchment area may not be accurate
13. Coordinator of Teaching and Learning will also oversee Special Education.
14. There are many new programs and processes that will require support for teachers to implement.
15. Special Education Administrator needs knowledge/certification beyond 282 certificate
16. How will goal lines be established for grades and progressions? How will each IEP be matched to necessary standards measurement and movement forward in grades?
17. None noted

Education Plan Summary

Is the Education Plan compelling? Are we convinced that the applicant makes a strong case for the quality of the program?

- The plan proposes a unique approach to educating students in the Lewiston-Auburn area with a balance between directed instruction and experiential learning. The special education approach is strong. The plans for a positive climate are compelling.
- After the interview, it remains unclear how they will implement RTI/behavioral management/direct instruction/experiential learning into a coherent learning experience for all students.

Does the Education Plan support the vision and mission of the school? Describe why or why not.

- The Education Plan supports the mission. The balanced approach to instruction, an RTI model, and a positive approach to building community will help the school realize their vision.
- The challenge in the plan is that they strongly resemble a school built for emotionally, socially, developmentally challenged students, but purport to welcome all students.

B. Organizational Plan - School Calendar and Daily Schedule; Student Recruitment and Enrollment; Staffing and Human Resources; Pre-Opening Plan; Management and Operation; Community Development

Strengths

1. The extended school year will provide much needed support and remediation for “summer forgetting”.
2. Summer program is open to all students free of charge
3. Clear on required elements
4. School calendar and daily schedule provide evidence of opportunity for ongoing professional development for faculty/staff.
5. Development committee has a strong understanding of the needs of the area.
6. Plan to translate materials to meet the needs of residents.
7. Logical plan to recruit students.
8. Small school that will be growing into themselves so they will likely hit their targets with MMCC connection and earned media.
9. Time is allotted for Professional Development
10. Schedule includes additional time at the end of the day for planning and preparation
11. Focused on training teachers to do the thing they aspire to implement
12. Self-aware enough to say teachers with special education background will be hired
13. Comprehensive
14. Demonstrate what they need to execute
15. Will leverage MMCC policy/program to be successful in opening

16. Logical organization.
17. They will benefit from the experience that exists with MMCC in this section
18. Volunteer opportunities and newsletters will keep families informed
19. Student-led conferences
20. Plans to continue building relationships with local businesses
21. Parent Handbook available
22. Very parent-oriented in keeping with their behavioral teaching orientation
23. Training for families

Questions, Concerns

1. The schedule provided in the application had no math in grades 2-6. After the interview, additional materials were provided, which included a revised schedule with math in grades 2-6.
2. May have underestimated the percent of students with Special Needs.
3. \$2,000 marketing budget seems underfunded to carry out their marketing plan.
4. Expectations for staff are high
5. No express thought on art/music/health/PE capabilities
6. No special education director (double hatted on assistant principal/curriculum manager)
7. 40k seems like a good salary, but teachers are expected to work 12 months a year
8. Some tasks assigned to a Director of IT, but that is not included on their staffing list.
9. No building/timelines for renovation which creates some operational risk to opening.
10. Doesn't address all the teachers they will need
11. Administrative staff will be overloaded, creating risk to curriculum execution, especially in IEP/RTI model.
12. Organization chart at Tab 20 suggests board runs the school, which is probably not what they mean, but evinces a lack of maturity in what a board does.
13. Few community partners/school connections identified

Management and Operations Summary

Are we convinced that the school has an effective plan to recruit, retain and grow an outstanding staff?

- With a longer school year, multiple programs, and expectations for monitoring student growth, the expectations for teachers are high.
- School appears to have underestimated their ELL/behavioral/disability draw, which, coupled with their unpracticed use of RTI/direct instruction/IEP for all/experiential learning, will create significant operational risk in delivering the curriculum.

Does the Management and Operations Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Yes, the parent handbook clearly aligns with the school's mission and vision.

C. Governance- Governing Body, Governing Board Composition

Strengths

1. Proposed by-laws included.
2. Board questionnaires indicate a high degree of interest in, and knowledge of, the proposed school.
3. The governing board members bring a variety of experience to the governing body.
4. Board appears to be composed of many educators and education professionals.

Questions, Concerns

1. Does not stipulate the number of members from John F. Murphy Homes. In the interview they stated that the intent is to have no more than 1 or 2 members of the JFMH board on the Acadia Board.
2. Draft bylaws internally inconsistent on number of board members and the numbers of officers on the board
3. No 501(c)(3) application evidenced
4. Bylaws are still in draft form after 2 years as a board.
5. There should be a balance of educators and parents with board members with other skill sets.
6. From 2014 Review Team report: "The proposal did not contain a clear plan for the Board to review and evaluate the success of the school and the school leaders or identify the data to be used in making evaluative determinations." Although the 2015 governance section in the application was stronger than 2014, there are still some areas the board will want to strengthen relating to maintaining clear lines of responsibility between the school executive director and the Governing Board and the Education Services provider.
7. While the board has many education professionals, the board lacks clear school management experience.
8. In the interview, 2 board members did not contribute to the discussion.

Governance Summary

Are we convinced that the Board members and Executive Leadership have the skills, background and understanding of their roles necessary to make this a viable and sustainable public charter?

- No. MMCC Director did substantially all the talking, except for banker interjecting some.

The review team had concerns about the capability of the board to run a school:

- Bylaws are clearly not thought out and are inconsistent
- Independence questionable because of weak bylaws and lack of clear ownership by board of the school and its construct.

Does the Governance Plan support the vision and mission of the school? Describe why or why not.

- Yes. The board questionnaires provide insight into the current board members. They appear to understand and support the mission of the school.

D. Business and Financial Services – Budget; Financial Management; Facilities; Transportation; Insurance; Food Service; Closure Protocol

Strengths

1. The offer of donated space will favorably support the program.
2. Good discussion of 3 financial models (based on facility choice)
3. Strong fiscal partner with an agency that has already developed fiscal accountability policies and procedures.
4. Fiscal administrative staff is well qualified.
5. Has local community banker and JMG finance person on board
6. Offer to receive donated building and at-cost renovations
7. Seemed to understand the budget impacts
8. Van for field trips
9. None noted
10. Want to mitigate their shortcomings by working with good shepherd food bank
11. Plan on having backup food for children who don't bring their lunch
12. None noted

Questions, Concerns

1. Although we had questions relating to the pre-opening budget, the interview was helpful in clarifying this area.
2. The budget provided in the application (the rental option) was one of three the school had prepared based upon facility options. The assumptions used in the version of the budget we were provided (based on renting a building) were explained in further detail during the interview.
3. Didn't provide relevant budget for current facility choice, requiring inference from submitted budget model
4. No provision for line of credit liquidation as its being made by ESP
5. Insolvent operation in year one
6. Taking out ESP-based loan for startup
7. Makes provision for small cash reserve only by not paying down ~\$590k line of credit
8. No CFO selected
9. Outside auditor is JFMs, though JFM CFO said the board could pick someone else.
10. Other than the fact that it is donated, we do not have any other information
11. No picture, plan, or budget presented as of team interview
12. Although the application shared they were pursuing three possibilities for a facility (rental, purchase/rehab, donation of a building), it was clarified during the interview that the donation of a building seemed probable.
13. No Letter of Intent with vendors
14. Awaiting enrollment
15. No coverage limits shown; no binder for Acadia

16. Apparently proposes to be under the JFM insurance umbrella
17. No CFO bonding identified
18. No food service for a likely demographic that is economically challenged and in need of food support.
19. None noted

Business and Financial Services Summary

Are we convinced that the applicant has operating capital adequate to open the school and for the first years of operation and have a viable sustainable model for the next five years?

The review team looks forward to a complete budget reflecting the donated space, otherwise:

- Significant line of credit debt anticipated which dwarfs cash reserve in budget that was presented with no plan for payback
- Line of credit is granted from ESP
- No fundraising plan, though they do have a benefactor with donated building and supposedly submarket renovation cost, which should help.

Does the Finance Plan support the vision and mission of the school? Describe why or why not.

- No, line of credit with ESP and no apparent plan to liquidate it over time.

Education Service Providers

Strengths

1. Relies on JFM, a known entity within the area and likely population.
2. Tab 38 contains terms outlined to serve as the Service Agreement between John F. Murphy Homes, Inc. and ACADIA Academy, Inc. Services areas listed: Nursing Services, IT Services, Payroll, Bookkeeping, Human Resources, Educational Consultation, and Training.

Questions, Concerns

1. There is no evidence that Acadia Academy researched education providers to ensure they had selected the best partners in providing services to the school.
2. In Tab 38 the Service Agreement between John F. Murphy Homes, Inc. and ACADIA Academy, Inc. needs to be in more official "legal language" and needs to include arms-length agreement with ESP, no ability to terminate or to find different/cheaper services from other providers.

Does the Education Service Providers Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Although the ESP has experience that will be beneficial to the school, it is concerning that the board has little latitude to manage the vendor, as shown by lack of an arm's length contract.
- It does to the extent that the implied purpose of the school is to serve the kind of populations that JFM is apparently expert in.

- Board has little latitude in managing the vendor and does not evidence the apparent desire to do so in an arms-length fashion.

Application Summary

Are you convinced that this is a unique viable model that will meet the needs of the students it wishes to serve?

- The school's proposed educational model clearly defines how they propose to meet the needs of students in the Lewiston-Auburn area.
- The program is unique and based on researched best practices.
- Untried delivery model that hopes to do too many things with staffing model that is unlikely to be prepared for the special education cost/impact
- Unclear that it will support all Maine Learning Results, especially in subjects outside math and ELA.
- The budget presented may underrepresented likely special education and ELL enrolment

Discussion;

Shelley; in your report, you do list out some questions that you have that you still need to have more information on whether it is the agreement with Murphy Homes or the expectations of extending teacher's day and time. Of the concerns in the four sections, what is your most significant overarching concern that you would like to see address in moving them forward? Laurie felt that for her it was a clearer understanding of the relationship between the ESP and the school. Also an understanding that the school does have the option that if things are not going the way they should be to dissolve the relationship and go find someone else, that was not clearly defined in Tab 38. Nichi; thought that with this one especially that we were able to get the clarification at the interview and a little beyond that to get clarification and now understands the purpose of the interview. It did make a difference in this case. Ande; saying that it goes forward, I supported that we bring it up to an interview, I don't support the school because you are all now going to be charged with looking a little deeper as we go into that. I thought their education plan was weak, I didn't think it was well explained, so as you read it, you will have to think long and hard about that. They provide some supplemental information, as Laurie said, it seems to do with a lot of aspirational targets, that is the strength I think was mentioned, which is true, by how cohesively will it all hang together and can it be implemented is very unclear. The Board so you are aware when you are reading, had not even been elected when we sat down for this interview. It seems in the supplemental materials they had, they didn't have a set of by-laws, and you didn't have a Board of Directors even come. You had members going to be or aspiring to be but they were not even there. Overall, the patina that I got from the organization is they were not well positioned. They had a lot of the moving parts done but not well positioned to stand up and say this is our school this is what we want and that bled through with some things Laurie said. They didn't present us with the budget, it is fair to say the budget is changing, but they had different budget models that they talked, and they didn't provide us the model that actually ended up happening. Not crisp in the application, I think it is unclear as to what the Board is all about. Didn't give us a budget, although we had enough information to say it is not dispositive. You will need to read it more than you might like so as to form your own decisions as we go with the interviews if that is the will of the Commission. Shelley; if we are supposed to be responding to what's presented in their applications, and use only that information, how much information, these are big things; the relationship between the ESP and the school, that whole relationship. The somewhat academic educational plan rather than being a cohesive, comprehensive plan, those are majors sections. The governing board has the ultimate responsibility for this school and yet if they have not met and

been elected, how much have they had input. My question to you guys is how much input do they actually have on the application itself and do they truly know what their roles and responsibilities are going to be moving forward. Mike; when the application was submitted to the Commission, it wasn't submitted by an elected Board of Directors, it was submitted by a person? Laurie; it was submitted by the development committee. Ande; it is not a development committee of the board, it is a committee that was largely populated by JFM and Margaret Murphy Center staff, with people who would also be on the board. Mike; they expressed interest. Ande; we have resumes of those. Laurie; I didn't read that it was an incoherent education plan. I did the first time I read it direct instruction experiential learning, those are two very diverse approaches, but it was explained, I felt very well in the in person interview about how they were going to do that. Students need to know something, they need to know how to read, write and do math. In order to make those experiential experiences worthwhile, I felt like they explained that well. Nichi; having been on this review team for a second time and felt that the ESP section was much clearer this time. It wasn't in legal language but it did have all the lines drawn out as to who would be responsible for what which is a much improvement over last time. Jana; felt that she liked the reason that they come to us and what they would hope to accomplish, however I have major reservations when a governing board has not been established and understands exactly what they are doing. If it doesn't come from them, where is it going to come from? I truly would need to see more than what I am seeing here and read. I have read their application. Shelley; it seems like the people who might be considering or stepping up to the plate in terms of being the governing board, when you look at their responses, it was all the same, as though someone had answer questions three, four, five and six and all the answers were exactly the same, except for the first two, that said why are you interested in doing this work? That is kind of disappointing. I don't know how much of an honest response from each of those potential governing board members was made. Jana; I would say what is the commitment that they are going to take because it is not an easy job.

**INSPIRE ME Academy Review Team Report and Recommendation
by
Chair Shelley Reed, Jana Lapoint and Michael Whilhem**

A. Education Plan - Mission, Vision, Targeted Student Population; Academic Program; Special Student Populations; Assessment; School Climate; and Discipline

Strengths

1. The mission and vision is concise and shows a desire to inspire and help all students to succeed.
2. Providing free meals and free uniforms levels the playing field.
3. Identifies the target population.
4. Identifies longer school days and time as enhancing student learning opportunities.
5. There is an articulated vision: extended day, extended year, 6 monitoring periods, teacher professional development time.
6. A foreign language will be offered in grades 4-8.
7. A full time foreign language teacher is to be part of staff.
8. Understanding by Design as a sound planning tool is provided as a template for lesson development.
9. Standards based, use common core.
10. Inclusion model.
11. Will use RTI, six week progress monitoring, full time special education teacher for 3 grades, inclusion.
12. Plan sets aside Friday time for teachers to meet to look at data.
13. Every 6 weeks, time is set aside to monitor progress and assess for modifications necessary for student learning.
14. States statewide data is to be used to set goals.
15. Inspire ME intends to have a grading system that is understandable by parents, with quarterly reports.
16. Inspire Me seeks to provide a safe and supportive school by its emphasis on "GREAT" values such as respect, kindness, positive attitude, and will bring character education into the classroom(30 minutes on Fridays).
17. The Head of School will conduct staff development in school climate and be a resource for behavioral issues.
18. The plan addresses parent engagement through volunteer efforts, parent-student breakfasts, performances and movie nights.
19. Discipline will be set through clear expectations, re-direction and time outs
20. Positive reinforcement.
21. Some evidence of parent involvement.
22. Behavioral policies are appropriate.

Questions, Concerns

1. Focus on "college preparatory" does not take into consideration preparation for students that will be entering the workforce.
2. While statistics on the catchment area are presented the application does not present a persuasive explanation of how the proposed mission, curriculum, teaching methods and

- services are likely to meet the needs of the target population.
3. There is limited evidence to suggest the school's plan is directly aligned to all elements of a proficiency-based system.
 4. There is little evidence of direct connection of curriculum to ideology.
 5. Expect teachers to do a lot with minimal resources.
 6. Concern as to how will teachers get up to speed at outset given extensive curriculum expectations.
 7. The application does not provide evidence of a curriculum outline for core subjects- only selected ELA and Math lessons pulled from websites.
 8. No evidence of an understanding of teaching strategies, only suggested lessons and reference to websites such as Engage NY, Eureka Math are presented.
 9. No evidence of recognition of the Guiding Principles, Maine Learning Results as guiding Maine schools is given reference is made to the Common Core which is ELA and Math.
 10. Health and Career and Educational Development are not represented.
 11. Science is included only as an "as often as possible", arts is represented as "a way to add fun and creativity", and there seems to be no allotted time for technology.
 12. Curriculum design hinges on teachers to be hired in July without a foundational basis and given only 2 months before school opens to create classroom content without compensation.
 13. There are few co-curricular and extracurricular programs.
 14. Proposal references Achievement First as a model for the Inspire Me program, but does not provide evidence of the models success.
 15. No curriculum outline as expected, not all curriculum areas are addressed or standards alignment.
 16. Special Education process and procedures are very limited and weak, particularly Child Find, referral and eligibility, continuum of services, and progress monitoring.
 17. Plan does not address an understanding of serving the full range of needs of students with disabilities including the appropriate discipline procedures for students with disabilities.
 18. Plan does not demonstrate an understanding of, and capacity to meet, state and federal requirements regarding the identification and education of students with disabilities and 504 plans.
 19. The use of outdated language indicates an inadequate knowledge of current practices, policies, and procedures for informing a sound special education program.
 20. No continuum of services provided.
 21. No provision for child find, ELL and limited explanation of other processes like referral.
 22. It is unclear how they will address the needs of accelerated learners.
 23. No specific data sets are given for the 6-week progress-check and adjustments.
 24. It is not clear what the Inspire ME system of assessment, both formative and summative, locally and statewide looks like, or what a grading policy addresses.
 25. Fountas and Pinnell (given 3 times a year) and Math homegrown assessments are to be used; it is unspecified how other content areas are to be assessed.
 26. Page 155 of the application expresses Inspire ME's "right to disenrollment of a student if a student's behavior is having an adverse /unsafe effect on the learning community." It does not indicate expulsion procedures according to state statute.
 27. Pro-kindness policies do not include the full spectrum of student behaviors and safeguards.
 28. Unclear how, or if, will parents be involved in disciplinary decisions.

Education Plan Summary

Is the Education Plan compelling?

Are we convinced that the applicant make a strong case for the quality of the program?

- The Education Plan is not compelling and is incomplete. The desire to want all students to feel capable of success is not met by a comprehensive plan grounded in curriculum development, teaching strategies or system of assessment, or special education continuum of services. The curriculum is yet to be developed in this application.

Does the Education Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- The mission and vision speaks to all students succeeding but the plan does not support a comprehensive method for achieving that goal or a clear understanding of differentiation to meet student needs.

B. Organizational Plan - School Calendar and Daily Schedule; Student Recruitment and Enrollment; Staffing and Human Resources; Pre-Opening Plan; Management and Operation; Community Development

Strengths

1. School Calendar indicates more time per day and more days per year exceeding state equivalent of hours of instruction
2. Longer day, longer year means more time on task. Group and regroup of instruction.
3. Inspire Me has a Facebook page and a Web page.
4. Wants to attract low income, under achieving students, wants to attract those not satisfied with the local school results.
5. Inspire ME projected funding for staffing positions, benefits, and staff development.
6. The Marzano evaluation system for the Head of School, and for teachers, is cited to be used.
7. The number of teaching staff to projected student population seems adequate.
8. Provided some health benefits for full-time staff.
9. Pre-opening plan shows some awareness of what is needed for compliance.
10. Delineates the Head of School tasks as school leader, student development, teacher evaluator and behavioral resource.
11. A Dean of Students is to be added in subsequent years.
12. Viable staffing plan considering the size of the school.
13. Board founder and president connected to the community and shared outreach efforts at the interview on October 1, 2015.
14. Typical parent involvement plan.

Questions, Concerns

1. Plan does not articulate specifics about classroom activities given a longer day.
2. Enrollment projections are not supported by evidence of actual potential demand.
3. Community meetings have netted less than modest response.
4. No defined monitoring plan for student attendance and truancy.
5. There doesn't appear to be a connection between out-reach activities described and the target population.
6. Little evidence of local dissatisfaction with area schools.
7. Employee Handbook is a template draft only, and is not specifically geared for their school.
8. Staff development days are specified, but content of an induction, orientation are not specified yet teachers are expected to be developing curriculum and assessments in pre-opening time.
9. Weekly Professional development time depends on volunteers.
10. It is unclear whether there will be sufficient time for professional development considering the curriculum development expectations for the teachers.
11. The expectation for Head of school to be responsible for professional development means that hiring for the position is critical to its success.
12. There is an overly large expectation being placed on the head of School.
13. It is unclear if there is time and resources for staff development.
14. Pre-opening and hiring Head of School and staff does not seem to leave time for curriculum, assessment development, or teacher preparation prior to opening school.
15. Fleshing out of financial policies and procedures has been left to an Operations Manager without guidelines or priorities.
16. Application does not establish a vision and strategy for community involvement.
17. Contact with the local school district has been only on possible transportation arrangement.
18. Community involvement tentative.
19. Parent involvement critical. Not much community involvement articulated. Transportation arrangement with local school system is only tentative.
20. There is not a comprehensive plan to involve the community.

Management and Operations Summary

Are we convinced that the school has an effective plan to recruit, retain and grow an outstanding staff?

- The management and operations plan does not make a convincing argument that it has an effective plan to recruit, retrain and grow an outstanding staff. The plan lacks a framework and an understanding from which policies and practices can be developed.
- There is plan but it is uncertain if the extended year and day will affect recruitment and retention.

Does the Management and Operations Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- The mission and vision express a desire for all students to succeed, yet staff have extensive workloads without a comprehensive plan.
- It looks to parents, as well as staff, to provide programs so that the unique elements of the

vision can be realized.

C. Governance - Governing Body; Governing Board Composition

Strengths

1. Founder and Board members are passionate about the mission and vision of the school.
2. The Governing Board is an independent functioning entity.
3. Has completed 501C3.
4. Board is independent.
5. Has plan to evaluate staff.
6. Governance documents are in order.
7. The Founder and existing Governing Board members show passion for the creation of a charter school demonstrated by their submission of the application which is an extensive effort.
8. Board shows commitment to its vision and mission and willingness to commit time and energy.

Questions, Concerns

1. The Governing Board, which is too small in number, lacks the diverse skills necessary to support the charter school in all aspects of academics, operations, governance and finances.
2. There is not a clear sense of the role of the Advisory Committee in decision making.
3. While there is a plan to evaluate the Head of School, the application lacks appropriate plans to evaluate the success of the school.
4. Governing Board has no defined terms of office or succession.
5. No plan to evaluate school.
6. Not clear the degree to which this small board will have to depend upon planned advisory committee(s).
7. By-laws are just a copy of others and need to be more tailored to fit the needs of this school.
8. With small board membership they do not have the ability to outline roles and relationships at this time.
9. In the Board resumes, members don't express a clear sense of their roles to oversee the operation of a charter school.
10. The existing Board members do not represent the necessary diverse skills to ensure that the organization has a clear plan for the present and future viability of the school.
11. Such a small board places greater demands on each member re: time commitment and involvement.
12. It is unclear how the board will evaluate its work.

Governance Summary

Are we convinced that the Board members and Executive Leadership have the skills, background and understanding of their roles necessary to make this a viable and sustainable public charter school?

- There is no evidence to suggest that the existing Governing Board members have the wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding of their roles to oversee a charter school including educational, financial and legal expertise.
- It remains uncertain whether this Board has the full complement of skills and understanding to be successful. The uncertainty is based on its small size, and the lack of organizational management experience among its members. The application places a heavy reliance on the Head of School and Operations Manager as well as volunteer, pro bono advice to meet its needs.

Does the Governance Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Although the plan reiterates the desire that the charter school wants students to be successful, the Board does not articulate diverse skill sets or strength in leadership to operationalize the mission.
- The plan has been built to support the vision and mission because it acknowledges governance needs to address it, but it remains uncertain whether the plan itself and the Board's expectations of itself can be operationalized.

D. Business and Financial Services – Budget; Financial Management; Facilities; Transportation; Insurance; Food Service; Closure Protocol

Strengths

1. Budget is based on anticipated state funding, does not rely on unknown funding, such as federal grant awards.
2. Budget aligns with the mission and vision.
3. School plans on having public budget meetings and audit available on the website.
4. Contact with bank for line of credit.
5. Plan for cash reserve by the end of year three.
6. Plan to hire Operations Manager who will have knowledge of financial regulations and systems.
7. Actively seeking a facility.
8. Two viable options for facility that are cost effective.
9. Plan to have parents bring students or carpool if outside the Sanford catchment area.
10. Resource for transportation could include York Community Coalition, handicap accessible with a sliding fee.
11. \$25,000 in budget.
12. Possible transportation via Sanford Schools System.
13. Funds allocated for appropriate insurance coverage.
14. Clark Insurance has provided initial cost estimates.
15. All students will be provided with free breakfast, lunch and snacks.

16. Shows evidence of an understanding of process needed for closure.
17. Meets requirements.

Questions, Concerns

1. Application did not include evidence of financial policies or generally accepted standards of practice.
2. No contingency for unexpected expenses, no acknowledgement of unanticipated Special education services, or other emergency costs.
3. No money specifically for substitute teachers.
4. Application does not have evidence of understanding what types of policies and procedures would be required for financial management. This is left to the hiring of an Operations Manager who will have "full authority".
5. No evidence that the school has a system of financial controls or segregation of purchasing, bill payment and reporting of spending.
6. Application does not demonstrate knowledge of facility costs including lease, purchase, renovating that conforms to usage as a school.
7. Uncertain if the plan for acquisition and maintenance of a facility is financially viable if nationally based Charter Group does not come through.
8. Inspire ME has had initial talks with Sanford District Schools for shared transportation but no letter affirming a commitment.
9. It is unclear if the car-pooling option is viable.
10. None noted
11. No evidence of contingency plan for students requiring special foods due to a medical condition.
12. None noted.

Business and Financial Services Summary

Are we convinced that the applicant has operating capital adequate to open the school and for the first years of operation and have a viable sustainable model for the next five years?

- Plans are to have reserve by year 3, but supporting documentation not presented.
- It appears that there is sufficient operating capital to open and operate for the first years of the school. However, the applicant does not adequately address internal financial controls, or the policies/procedures that will be in place, and places considerable financial management responsibility on the operations manager without much mention of the supervision of that position. There remains a question about the degree to which there are contingency dollars in the event of unanticipated costs.

Does the Finance Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- The Finance Plan is not well developed, leaving much to the Operations Manager to develop policies and practices to ensure financial stability to support the mission and vision of the school.
- It supports it to the extent that there appears to be adequate money to support the applicant's plan.

E. Education Service Providers

1. Not applicable

Application Summary

Are you convinced that this is a unique viable model that will meet the needs of the students it wishes to serve?

- The application lacks the depth of knowledge and detail across all four sections Education, Operations, Governance and Finance to be a successful Charter School.
- The applicant has omitted significant components of the required education plan - a curriculum plan for all academic subjects, an assessment system that describes the data used to evaluate student success, a student recruitment plan that correlates with the target population, and a fully formed continuum of services and process/procedural outline for special education and ELL and Gifted and Talented Services. Similarly, there is little or no provision for extra-curricular or co-curricular options.

Discussion;

Ande; what is the special sauce that they were going to bring? Was not quite sure exactly what this was doing to fulfill that. Mike; indicated that if you were to ask the applicant, they would say that their special sauce was a longer school day, longer school year, uniforms for the students. They have a climate school culture; school conduct policy that is called GREAT was set out as a way to get the kids on the same page. Laurie; proposal references achievement versus a model, have they visited Achievement First and talked to the folks at the schools. Jana; shared the same concern. She indicated that because this was the same concern last year that the applicant would have talked with someone at Achievement First. There are six of those schools that exist and would have thought for the board to have taken the time to say, maybe we all need to be there and see what these schools are as they did indicate very clearly that Achieve First is doing some very good things.

Peridot Montessori Charter School Review Team Report and Recommendation
by
Chair Nichi Farnham, John Bird and Laurie Pendleton

A. Education Plan - Mission, Vision, Identification; Targeted Student Population; Academic Program; Special Student Population; Assessment; School Climate; and Discipline

Strengths

1. The well-respected Montessori-style education is currently provided at 3 locations in the county- prek- Kindergarten. The application proposes to carry on Montessori-centered teaching and fill a need in the Ellsworth area in grades K through grade 8.
2. The Montessori based teaching is strengthened by connecting it with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math)
3. The proposed Montessori Compass Program has 3000 lessons.
4. Continuing the Montessori teaching philosophy beyond kindergarten.
5. Program description encompasses the many attractive aspects of the Montessori approach
6. STEAM = STEM with a rich dose of creativity
7. Montessori teaching lends itself to working with the special student population.
8. Montessori philosophy, with its emphasis on individually tailored lesson plans, is a natural fit for working with students with special needs.
9. The Montessori Compass program would help track progress.
10. An aligned curriculum makes teaching to the test unnecessary.
11. Progress report is comprehensive.
12. One basic rule = each person in the school is expected to respect themselves, others and the environment.
13. Peace rose/ talking stick approach to resolving conflict.
14. Use of natural and logical consequences.
15. Children are expected to take responsibility for their actions.

Questions, Concerns

1. The 5 to 10 year plan for the Peridot, Ellsworth, Maine Charter school was not fully thought through. The mission and vision as they apply to creating a charter school under Maine law is incomplete.
2. It is unclear how will customization occur.
3. The proposed Compass Program focuses on Infant to age 12, the proposed school includes 13-14 year olds. Although not written about clearly in the application, the plan for the grades 7 and 8 was talked about somewhat during the interview.
4. The curriculum centered on Compass was not fully -aligned to Maine Learning Results. An approach for completing the alignment was shared during the interview.

5. Although the application states the Montessori approach is aligned to the Common Core standards, it does not indicate how it is aligned to Maine's Science and Social Studies standards.
6. The web link provided in the application for the Compass program provides little useful information.
7. The application does not provide a clear picture of how the academic program will be implemented.
8. Although a plan for working with the Special Student Population was included in the application, the plan was not based on MUSER (Maine Unified Special Education Regulations) - it seemed to be based on another state's regulations.
9. In the application, students requiring special services were not included in the proposed budget; this was explained during the interview.
10. The application did not address the State of Maine assessment requirements.
11. Will use Compass to track student progress, but little is said about how they will use this data to support student academic growth.
12. The sample scope and sequence provided in the assessment subsection includes Spanish. Will the school be offering Spanish? How do these topics relate to Maine Learning Results?
13. These two sections (School Climate and Discipline) were repetitive.

Education Plan Summary

Is the Education Plan compelling? Are we convinced that the applicant make a strong case for the quality of the program?

- Montessori program is interesting, but this application does not provide enough information or supporting documentation to show how it aligns with Maine Learning Results and Maine Law.

Does the Education Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Yes but again, not under the tenets of Maine law
- It might. The plan does not provide enough detail to know if it can be successfully implemented.

B. Organizational Plan - School Calendar and Daily Schedule; Student Recruitment and Enrollment; Staffing and Human Resources; Pre-Opening Plan; Management and Operation; Community Development

Strengths

1. The summer extended-learning opportunities are a plus.
2. The after school opportunities are a positive offering.
3. Daily schedule lives out the Montessori philosophy in practice.
4. Evidence of probable demand for a K-8 Montessori-based charter school - there are currently PreK-K Montessori schools in the area.

5. Comprehensive handbook
6. Annual written evaluation for teachers
7. Effectiveness gauge
8. Proposed teacher training institute in the future
9. Executive Director already on board
10. None noted
11. Covered under Staffing and Human Resources
12. None noted

Questions, Concerns

1. None noted
2. The plan for gathering students does not ensure equal access to all interested students and families who live in the catchment area.
3. Lottery proposal for two-three year-olds is impermissible under Maine law.
4. No evidence of community outreach to see if 151 students in year one is viable.
5. Assumptions are high for homeschoolers without evidence that there are that many home school students in Hancock County.
6. A school should have everything it needs to provide a top-notch program in place from the start. Peridot cannot guarantee it will have credentialed Montessori or special education-certified teachers in year one.
7. Administration thin at beginning (e.g., executive director will run business office)
8. None noted
9. Covered under Staffing and Human Resources
10. The application could have been clearer on how the parents at the Peridot Montessori, Ellsworth, Maine Charter School will be involved versus the example used in the application.

Management and Operations Summary

Are we convinced that the school has an effective plan to recruit, retain and grow an outstanding staff?

- The long-term plan looks solid (especially like the teacher training institute concept), but the staffing plan for year one is a concern.
- Not convinced they will be able to find certified Montessori teachers.

Does the Management and Operations Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Not convinced the school can deliver a top-notch Montessori program without Montessori-trained and experienced teachers from the beginning.

C. Governance - Governing Body; Governing Board Composition

Strengths

1. None noted

2. Clearly have attracted community people deeply committed to the school's mission and vision.

Questions, Concerns

1. The concept of a foundation in anticipation of overseeing a teacher training institute and other long-term initiatives does not justify putting it in place to oversee the school = should have a traditional board in place for this governance role.
2. Board lacks philanthropic firepower, which is a significant problem, given the school's funding needs.

Governance Summary

Are we convinced that the Board members and Executive Leadership have the skills, background and understanding of their roles necessary to make this a viable and sustainable public charter school?

- Excessive reliance on the founding executive director, who wrote the application and dominated the answering of questions during the interview, suggests that board members may lack the diversity of skills needed to oversee the school.

Does the Governance Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- No comments

D. Business and Financial Services – Budget; Financial Management; Facilities; Transportation; Insurance; Food Service; Closure Protocol

Strengths

1. The Stanwood Foundation/community seems supportive.
2. Solid norms for expense categories (i.e., 55% for staff expenses, etc.)
3. Keeping before- and after-school and summer camp books separate (i.e., make them self-sufficient programs)
4. Emphasizes the need for comprehensive transparency
5. The three-pronged approach to securing a facility, with a likelihood of accomplishing Plan A, the preferred alternative.
6. None noted
7. Included in application
8. On paper a good overall program
9. Included in application

Questions, Concerns

1. Fund-raising plan is creative but unconvincing as a means to producing significant philanthropic income.
2. The net budget surplus does not seem realistic in year one, especially given assumptions on grants and other forms of philanthropy.
3. Anticipates special needs students but does not budget for a special education teacher in year one.
4. Need to secure building could put the budget at risk.
5. The separation of financial duties as required by GAAP was talked through during the interview, but was not documented well in the proposed application.
6. The budget in the application assumed grants would be successfully awarded.
7. The Special Education Student line was left blank in the budget provided in the application. This "budget approach" was explained during the interview.
8. None noted
9. None noted
10. None noted
11. None noted
12. Weak closure plan

Business and Financial Services Summary

Are we convinced that the applicant has operating capital adequate to open the school and for the first years of operation and have a viable sustainable model for the next five years?

- Beyond the per-student funding from the state, much of the budget income is based on estimates for which the groundwork has not been convincingly established.

Does the Finance Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- No: Presentation of the budget made it very difficult to follow.
- Budget was based on many unknowns.
- Lack of a significant fund raising plan.

E. Education Service Providers

1. Not Applicable

Application Summary

Are you convinced that this is a unique viable model that will meet the needs of the students it wishes to serve?

- No. While the Montessori model is a proven one educationally across the country, the applicant fails to address the requirements of Maine law in several areas. However, I would strongly favor urging the applicant to resubmit the application next year, provided the concerns expressed in this report are addressed.

Discussion;

Shelley; it seems like there are some gaps in the proposal, that although we know and respect Montessori style education. To assume that you can start a Montessori program and not have accredited Montessori teachers seems like a big stretch. Nichi; though the person presenting most of the application, had opened a Montessori school before, it just wasn't specific to what the Charter School requirements are in the State of Maine. Shelley; indicated that sometimes when people outside come in, they make assumptions that all Charter school law is the same, when it is not. It is highly unique to each State, so we need to see that represented. John; underscoring one thing, Montessori is a reputable education approach. The woman who would be directing this school understands that and knows that very well. She has already referenced the fact that it is lacking in understanding Maine law. The other thing that is painful is, we don't have a school in the Down east area, and this would give us a school in the Hancock area, in a growth area. We do hope they will take the recommendations and come forward again.

Snow Pond Arts Academy Review Team Report and Recommendation
by
Chair John Bird, Jana Lapoint, Shelley Reed

A. Education Plan – Mission; Vision; Targeted Student Population; Academic Program; Special Student Populations; Assessment; School Climate; and Discipline

Strengths

1. Solid philosophical grounding (i.e., Paideia approach), all children can learn and merit the best education possible
2. Impressive breadth of partnerships
3. The school, with a sound mission and vision grounded in education philosophy and research, seeks to support the growth of arts and music in Maine youth, where this state does not have a school totally devoted to the arts.
4. NESSC Global Best Practices drives curriculum (integrated with arts education)
5. Anchored by the Paideia philosophy with its emphasis on core knowledge, inquiry-based/integrated curriculum, etc.
6. Standards based (tied to common core and Maine Learning Results – exceeds standards significantly in the arts)
7. Strong professional development throughout the year
8. The blended model on paper is at the heart of a “gold standard” 21st century education
9. Anchored by philosophical base, based on MLR and Common Core, provided evidence of framework for curricula in core subjects, sample lessons
10. Application shows a realistic understanding of, and healthy respect for, the role special education plays in delivering an effective public education today
11. Assumed that 18 % of student body will qualify for special education services
12. Understanding of requirements, implementation plans, and policies.
13. Use of the positive term “neuro-diverse student” and what these students can add to the learning environment
14. Components of the comprehensive assessment model (i.e., cyclical assessment cycle and data management system)
15. Components of SPAA response to intervention system (i.e., leadership, teaming, curriculum, use of data, service delivery system, monitoring and action planning, and professional development)
16. Role of Power School in the accountability process
17. Time built into the schedule to bolster, enrich, remediate and accelerate student learning
18. Presented a clear, credible and sound plan for measuring and reporting educational performance and progress of students with local and state assessments.
19. Plan describes the cycle of assessment and adjustments necessary for success.

20. Philosophy of when students are not succeeding they are not given the right supports.
21. Habits of Mind approach is a well-regarded tool and fits with mission of SPAA
22. Student problem issues also looked at through instruction, practice, curriculum adjustments, as well as other supports.

Questions, Concerns

1. Vision statement wording contains cumbersome phrasing that obscures the clarity of meaning regarding the transformative power of the arts in overall education as celebrated by people like Elliot Eisner.
2. Maintaining a proper balance between the role of school-based and K12-based teachers in directing and delivering the academic program (some details yet to be resolved with K12 in this regard)
3. As a new entity for a charter school, the blended model raised questions regarding how the Snow Pond teachers and the K12 online program would produce integrated curricula. The 10/1/15 interview clarified many concerns; however, Snow Pond and K12 have details to work out.
4. For those students at risk of dropping out or not meeting graduation requirements, all that is in the application are 30 minute support sessions, not a full system and structure.
5. No description of discipline procedures for students with disabilities
6. Cannot put a cutoff date for referral (April 1 in application)
7. Some outdated information in policies and description of basic special education procedures
8. Need special education administrator who is not head of school
9. K12 role in assessment (balance importance again)
10. Timeliness and coordination of student data from K12 and Snow Pond Teachers.
11. Ensuring that what is laid out on paper is executed with accountability in practice
12. Parent engagement, stated as attending performances and conferences, and going to school to talk about career, seems limited. 10/1/15 Interview applicant spoke to having a parent on the Board, a PTA and using Power School to help share communication.

Education Plan Summary

Is the Education Plan compelling? Are we convinced that the applicant make a strong case for the quality of the program?

- Affirmative on both counts. What is laid out in the application came alive during the interview, and from several different respondents in SPAA leadership community.
- Yes. The Education Plan is compelling and made a strong case for producing a quality program based on educational philosophy, research, assessment, cycle of adjustments and establishing a positive learning climate.

Does the Education Plan support the vision and mission of the school? Describe why or why not.

- Yes. The employment of the blended model in delivering an integrated curriculum, anchored by the Paideia philosophy, is solidly aligned with the school's mission and vision.

- The Education Plan supports the vision and mission by creating a sound basis on which to bring the arts and music program to Maine students by relying on a blended program.

Special Note: The one caveat. Successful execution depends heavily on the SPAA-based teachers playing a leadership role in delivering the education program.

B. Organizational Plan - School Calendar and Daily Schedule; Student Recruitment and Enrollment; Staffing and Human Resources; Pre-Opening Plan; Management and Operation; Community Development

Strengths

1. The two-hour daily block for the arts program
2. The blended program permits a rich array of curricular and extracurricular offerings
3. Meets hours of instruction.
4. Aligns with the school mission and vision providing integration of the arts with core curricula and specific, focused arts time of rehearsals and performances
5. The applicant has spent three years meeting with school and community leaders, prospective families and education partners to assess the overall need and potential reception of SPAA.
6. Catchment area evidence of enrollment potential strong (e.g., 280 home schoolers).
7. The longstanding reputation of SPCA gives the school a “leg up” on credibility.
8. Applicant has built interest through their other programs, discussions with community and school leaders in catchment area.
9. Lots of early indicators that there will be strong demand from high-quality teacher applicants
10. Again, SPCA's longstanding reputation will be a big help in recruiting and retaining a strong faculty for a school with SPAA's mission and vision
11. Presents strategies for recruiting staff
12. Presents a plan for professional development throughout the year
13. Presents a staff performance evaluation plan
14. Key opening responsibilities on chart
15. The organizational model, while complicated, seems well thought through once explained during the interview. It seems designed to ensure the school's independent operation while staying connected to all other entities in the NEMCA umbrella.
16. The lease and shared services agreements seem well designed (e.g., NEMCA will collect the revenue and pay all of the bills for all entities).
17. Lists duties for administrating school
18. Model for management includes Oversight Committee to address concerns and resolve issues.
19. Impressive array of community partnerships stemming from NEMCA's longstanding presence in the region.
20. Community partnerships developed by NEMCA programs and relating to the charter school provide a strong component.
21. Communication has been established with catchment area school districts to facilitate potential collaborations in arts programming.

Questions, Concerns

1. Adjusting schedule to use adjuncts and allowing for other non-Snow Pond students to attend after-school program
2. Most student recruiting is through existing network. 10/1/15 interview helped to define other avenues.
3. Need development of staff employment policies
4. It is not clear that there is time provided at the beginning of school to train in K12 operations and integrated curriculum efforts.
5. A narrative would expand understanding of how pre-opening relates to mission and vision and other programs.
6. What looks good on paper will work in practice if all entities are committed to the overall mission of the organization and to transparency in all aspects of the operation
7. The 10/1/15 interview provided some clarification regarding concerns of relationship with entities of music camp, music school
8. Agreements in application will need to be fully communicated
9. Need to have more information on strategies for informing parents about the school's development.

Management and Operations Summary

Are we convinced that the school has an effective plan to recruit, retain and grow an outstanding staff?

- Yes. They have already begun effective outreach activities and go into that undertaking with a lot of credibility – i.e., SPCA's experience and positive reputation.
- Community partnerships developed by other programs and relating to the charter school are strong component.

The application speaks to recruiting in professional sites, outlines an application process, provides for professional development, and a performance evaluation plan.

Does the Management and Operations Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Yes. The school's management and operations plan is an integrated one among entities that share a common cultural commitment.

The vision and the mission are supported by the management and operations plan through scheduling and hiring appropriate staff.

C. Governance - Governing Body; Governing Board Composition

Strengths

1. Founders' Council a good way to strengthen governance without enlarging the board.
2. Oversight Committee ensures that the shared services agreement is transparently observed
3. Best practices documents from respected sources utilized in drawing up bylaws, establishing board committees, etc.
4. Lots of good boilerplate material on governance.
5. Academic Excellence Committee a good idea.
6. Standards for effective charter school governance are well articulated.
7. Charter School operation is consistent with the organization's overall mission and operation
8. Application included Board on Track governance materials.
9. Eight (8) directors now on way to 15 by the end of the year.
10. Rob Moody's experience at MeANS and Good Will Hinckley a plus for SPAA and SPCA because the former has already faced issues similar to those confronting Snow Pond.
11. Recruiting efforts to date suggest that the school is primed to attract talented people with the variety of skill sets needed to oversee this ambitious operation.
12. Outside group helped recruit talented board members (Bull Moose Group)
13. No board members with overlapping membership on any other SPCA entity (helps ensure SPAA independence).
14. Composition and membership skill sets of Governing Board members inspire confidence to oversee the operation of a school and maintain its sustainability.
15. Board members are aware of their duties and have taken an active part in the application.

Questions, Concerns

1. New England Music Camp, Snow Pond Music School and Charter School will have organizational relationship. 10/1/15 interview helped to relieve concerns regarding Snow Pond Arts Academy as an independent functioning entity.
2. Important to regularly evaluate the performance of the board and school leadership and formalize the process with an annual written assessment that includes evaluating interrelationships between/among the NEMCA entities.

Governance Summary

Are we convinced that the Board members and Executive Leadership have the skills, background and understanding of their roles necessary to make this a viable and sustainable public charter school?

- Yes. As was evident in the interview, the SPAA board contains members with the kind of varied professional backgrounds essential to good oversight and exercising all other elements of fiduciary responsibility.
- Yes. Resumes of the Board Members demonstrate a diverse and strong skill set and during the 10/1/15 interview financial, educational, and operations questions were directed by the Head of School to specific individuals who showed their capacity and understanding of the issue directed to them.

Does the Governance Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Yes. Both the organizational chart and makeup of the SPAA board and other NEMCA entities strongly enhance the school's chances for success (e.g., Oversight Committee, skill sets of board members, passion for the mission and vision, etc.).
- Yes. The Governance Plan supports the mission and vision by establishing people with the necessary skill sets and the organizational structure to frame the work.

D. Business and Financial Services – Budget; Financial Management; Facilities; Transportation; Insurance; Food Service; Closure Protocol

Strengths

1. NEMCA oversees all facilities and all aspects of the shared services agreement.
2. Targeted grant requests are submitted to avoid overlapping requests
3. While the philanthropic goals/targets are necessarily ambitious to ensure a top-notch school, NEMCA's four plus decade experience strongly suggests that SPAA will be able to meet them. If not met, NEMCA has the capacity to see the school thru until the tide turns.
4. Budget priorities are consistent with the mission and the vision of the school with music program well-funded in the budget.
5. Evidence that the school leadership understands appropriate financial responsibilities among administration and governing board.
6. Oversight Committee ensures that the shared services agreement is transparently observed.
7. Rob Moody' s experience at MeANS and Good Will Hinckley a plus for SPAA and SPCA because the former has already faced issues similar to those confronting Snow Pond.

8. The lease and shared services agreements seem well designed (e.g., NEMCA will collect the revenue and pay all of the bills for all entities.
9. Existing trained personnel and systems in place.
10. School has a previous superintendent until permanent head of school is hired.
11. Shared lease and services agreements.
12. 40-acre campus serving the NEMCA operating as the SPCA and other entities for 80 years.
13. Existing campus and facilities, renovation planned out for winterization and expanded use of space.
14. Anticipate RSU 18 contract and van service.
15. Evidence of Insurance proposals.
16. Budget supports insurance expenses.
17. Using existing NEMC Association, which has past experience, for food service of lunch and snack.
18. Standard language shows a system of transition in case of a closure.

Questions, Concerns

1. An operating budget surplus/reserve not shown in year three budget as required because philanthropic targets underreported. Reporting actual results at the end of the fiscal year should ensure the required surplus.
2. None noted
3. None noted
4. Transportation options for students outside the catchment area not discussed. Lack of transportation may limit participation.
5. None noted
6. Did not describe how students who are not able to provide themselves with lunch will be accommodated, plan figures 50% free lunch, 50% will supply own lunch.
7. No contingency plans for students requiring special foods due to a medical condition (or accommodations).
8. Application seems to give responsibility of record transfer to other school districts.

Business and Financial Services Summary

Are we convinced that the applicant has operating capital adequate to open the school and for the first years of operation and have a viable sustainable model for the next five years?

- Yes. NEMC has a history of raising significant resources to fund an ambitious range of programs. SPAA should furnish an attractive fundraising opportunity.
- Snow Pond Arts Academy through its budget and its relationship with NEMC and its capacity for fundraising demonstrates the capacity to have the operating capital needed.

Does the Finance Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Yes. Its ambitious scope and the NEMC's impressive physical plant offer SPAA a great opportunity to create a top-notch public charter school.
- The Finance Plan supports the vision and the mission with the arts supported in the budget and by an existing facility.

E. Education Service Providers

Strengths

1. K12 curriculum matches up well with SPAA's educational philosophy and programmatic ambitions.
2. K12 is a known online provider delivering core knowledge content.

Questions, Concerns

1. Evidence has not been provided of the ESP's success in serving the needs of arts students.
2. The ESP does not provide a detailed explanation of the performance evaluation measures and timelines.
3. There remain details to be worked out regarding SPAA and K12 arrangements.
4. Unclear as to how K12 will be providing training to the school staff in the one week before school and subsequently in the school year.
5. The provision of services by K12 for students with identified special needs has not been addressed.
6. The application does not address the relationship between the Governing Board, the school leadership team and K12 or how SPAA will monitor and evaluate the performance of K12 or the internal controls that will guide the process of how the Board and school leadership will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations.

Does the Education Service Providers Plan support the vision and mission of the school?

- Yes. The K12 curriculum matches up well with the School's philosophy and program.
- Yes. The ESP supports the vision and the mission of the school by addressing core content issues; also, on-the-ground teachers will provide the integration, and both entities will provide data to assess student proficiency and progress in the academic areas specifically.

Application Summary

Are you convinced that this is a unique viable model that will meet the needs of the students it wishes to serve?

- Yes. If approved, SPAA will become the first public secondary school in Maine devoted to liberal arts education with a special emphasis on the arts.

Discussion;

Laurie; what parts of the curriculum will K12 be delivering? Shelley; responded with; the core knowledge pieces. Laurie; is it Language Arts, ELI Math, Social Studies, Science. John; they are hiring on the ground teachers for all those programs. K12 is not running the program in any area of the school. Shelley; I think that what we get out of the interview, was looking more at, what do you mean a lending program? What are your on the ground teachers going to be doing? They walked us through us the process of integrating things. Are you going to have separate, okay this is Math time, this is Arts time? No they are going to take and have the core knowledge delivered, and yes have their teachers weave in all this of period; if you are studying a period of history, what is the literature that goes with that? What is the music of that period? It looked like the teachers at their school are really going to be weaving everything, so it is a more fluent. Laurie; how much time have they given the teachers to create this curriculum? Bob; the curriculum will be the K12 curriculum. The teachers will be integrating what's going on with the Arts. Laurie; so how much time that is no easy feat. When are the teachers going hired? John; they will have the teachers in place, they understand that the teachers need to delivering the education of the students. K12 will provide the curriculum. But they are going to be running their classrooms, so there will be some online education, but they will be operating in a classroom setting. Laurie; Am I hired as an LA teacher, a ninth grade teacher? John; we asked the question because they have a very short time before training. What we were told, yes it is a short time, but they will have professional development built into the calendar all during the school year. Shelley; I think that their one week of solid training had more to do with the K12 operation core content. This would allow the on the ground teachers understanding of what was happening in the virtual instructions periods, so they would know how to back that up with their students. Laurie; did they have an example of what a curriculum unit would look like? John and Jana both indicated that they did not recall an example. Shelley; that is why we asked them questions. They had the whole first section of wonderful educational research and theory and pedagogy. They went in to some sample lessons, what I didn't find in their application was Oh ESP, K12. We did ask them lots of questions and we were satisfied that they would have the time devoted to the professional development and being able to weave in the different subjects to make it truly integrated, as that is what I would be really looking for. What does it mean blended place, otherwise you are just delivering virtually your academic program. Laurie; they didn't have to do any the application that is require of an online school? Shelley; right. Laurie; it is like buying a text book. Instead of buying a text book they are buying a curriculum. Ande; I am taking Trig, how do I learn Trig? I go to K12 online products, and then I go into class and the teacher try's to somehow meld the parts into the Trig I just learned or answer questions? Or are they teaching me Trig and I am using the textbook that K12 provides, however it comes. John; these are not Art teachers in a classroom with these students; they are teachers who are in these disciplines, so they are hiring Math teachers. The K12 course is like a textbook, but it is online and you have lessons and you go back and forth and you do a lot of stuff yourself. You come in to the classroom, and that is where accountability for what you are learning or not learning can be measured. That is where enrichment can take place, but it is not going to be enrichment coming from someone who is not a sculptor, it is going to be coming from somebody

who knows Math. So if it is Trig, I would assume they know Trig. Laurie; is K12 doing this anywhere? Is their program being used in that way? It is not their teacher's right? John; I think when we looked at K12, they do participate in some blended models around the country, but I do not know the specifics. Bob; it is not using K12's teacher's, it is using their teachers K12's virtual program. John; it is not the way K12 operates in the virtual schools. You have online chats with people at the center. You are actually at the school, going in a classroom. Nichi; did you guys explore the special education student in this model? Does the online work well? Two Arts? Nichi; so the person that is not real great at music yet, did they talk to that model? John; you saw the strengths and understanding. Peg came away and some of the concerns that are expressed come out of some of hers and ours. We have some concerns, but essentially Peg felt that they get it but have some work to do. They can't put a cutoff date like April 1st on the application. There is some other outdated policies and Peg observed those. I think in terms of their understanding of what they have to do and being realistic about the number of kids they can attract, they felt going in they were sound. Shelley; I also felt that they also have some specifics that they have yet to be worked out between who is going to be responsible for what in terms of K12 and the teachers on the ground. The teachers on the ground are going to be assuming lots of responsibilities and then they are going to be reaching into the core content for such things as what is K12 going to be offering those Special Education students? What is going to be happening within the school for the special education students that are physically in that setting? They have the full range in thinking you can also have an arts question in there in terms of, not everybody coming to this school is going to be a master. In the courses they listed, they had beginning music class all the way up to the full range. Then when they include them some of the three to five time was actual getting a change to put practice as a group, the performance kinds of parts. Otherwise they would have to fit the full spectrum of the beginning clarinet player, or you are an expert and here are some different ways. Nichi; these schools are open to everybody, so you are going to have a mix of talent for those couple of hours. Mike; seems that this idea would beg for some form of team teaching. Special Ed teachers working with a Music teacher who is working with centenary teachers. I don't know if that was in the application, but that sounds like it is what is needed to make this work. John; one of the things that disappointed me and I made reference to, is in the first part of the education plan, their vision statement and their overall vision for the school. Because they are going to be in a terrific position to show how important the arts are to every learner. The arts are important to being a better lawyer, doctor. I didn't find that reflected in the statement, although I would bet they would have a lot of those elements in the school. I am sorry it is not more stated to take advantage of that. That is the kind of school they are creating where that can be true. Not everybody will go on to be a classical musician, but they will get a lot out of music training and go on to be a lawyer or doctor. Shelley; as we are thinking about it to choose whether to move them forward or not, I think those questions are good because this would be the first blended model. I think we have to of specific questions about how to get out that information that is in the day to day life. John; I think we set the table with the questions we asked, but I can already tell from the questions you folks are raising that if we move them forward, they are going to get a lot out of the process with us. Ande; did they contemplate that people are going to board in? Shelley; not at this time, but they have future plans for perhaps creating a private setting that would also interact with the components, but it is not on the radar right now. John; they have the potential to do it. Bob; they also have experience with the New England Music Camp having done a lot of outreach with RSU's in the area in putting on supplemental programs available to kids from those different school districts. They speak to the success they have had with students that go from very gifted in the arts, but maybe challenged with Special Ed needs and how they have been successful because the arts create a venue that fits very well with a number of the Special Ed conditions. So a lot of what they had in the application was based upon those experiences that they had that have shown the power of all this working well.

