

# Maine Charter School Commission Meeting - October 15, 2014

## Minutes

The Maine Charter School Commission held a meeting on October 15, 2014, at the Burton Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta, ME.

### I. CALLED TO ORDER:

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

### II. ROLL CALL:

The following members were present: John Bird, Nichi Farnham, Jana Lapoint, Ande Smith, Michael Wilhelm and Shelley Reed.

Laurie Pendleton participated in discussions via phone from Louisiana.

Also in attendance were Bob Kautz, Executive Director, and Deanne Lavalley, Administrative Assistant.

### III. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Maine Connections Academy – Hiring of teach in Fort Kent – placed under New Business

### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Moved by John Bird; seconded by Mike Wilhelm and voted unanimously by those present to accept the September 2, 2014, Minutes as written.

### V. OFFICERS' REPORTS:

#### A. Chair

Review Team work. Commissioners commended for their many, many hours of reviewing very carefully and thoroughly the three applicants. This is the first time that our recommendations have gone out before this Commission meeting for applicant consideration by the full commission. I want the applicants to understand I feel a great respect for those who put in the amount of hours, sweat and tears into these applications. We recognize that you had the courage to submit your work to us.

OIT meeting – Regarding FOAA Requests and wanting the Commission to be as transparent as possible. MCSC Budget with Deanne and Bob. Presentation for Charter Schools at the MSMA Fall Conference – John Bird, Justin Belanger, Karl Francis, Bob Kautz and myself.

Myth Busting – MSMA published a piece that said Charters are exempt from proficiency-based diploma. Although, Jim Rier might have said the law doesn't say it; Drafters of the first and of continuing RFPs felt very strongly that this is a public charter school and we want out students to have the same advantages. Words that have been in place (in the RFP) since we started regarding high school graduation requirements:

High Schools will be expected to meet the state graduation standards.

Describe how the school will meet these requirements. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, how the student would meet standards and/or the requirements for a proficiency-based diploma and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed state standards, explain the additional requirements.

Four schools that will have to follow the RFP and their Contracts: Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, Baxter School for Technology and Sciences, Harpswell Coastal Academy and Maine Connections Academy.

#### B. Vice Chair

Work with review team colleagues on the application.

OIT Meeting – Regarding email.

Yesterday, State Board of Ed meeting with Jana and Nichi.

Jim Rier shared:

Governor's Office is looking towards putting in another funding mechanism bill. The approach is to make each charter school would be its own SAD – processed just like every other school district. One leap of faith would be the amount would be based on the average of the school's catchment area. Mechanism sounds fair and reasonable and administratively tight.

Jim spoke with Jana and I; he is very appreciative of the school reviews he received – very well done. Thought the investigation rigor might be beneficial for all schools.

#### C. Executive Director

Role of Authorizer to determine the percentage per-pupil allocation for transportation. 9/9/14 Meeting with Suzan Beaudoin, Deb Friedman, Sarah Forster, Rick Bergeron, Deanne and Bob. Waiting for all charter schools to submit the 2013-2014 financial data to the MEDMS system; all schools should be in the system by the end of November. Once that information is in the system, there is a report that will calculate the transportation amounts for each charter school.

Waiting for Early Audits/Financials from each of the operating public charter schools. (Initial report to the Commissioner – Due on or before November 1, 2014).

Participated in the OIT meeting.

Participation with each of the Review Teams.

#### **VI: UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. Job Description for Director of Program Management review and Commission vote.

Up to 40 hours (per week) \$24.50/hour; plus \$4.02/hour benefit allowance; plus recruiting/payroll service fee = \$69,000/year.

Supportive position to Commission; aggressive approach with each charter school; reports, management, collect information from Commission for reports – common approach and manner to reports, analyzing – comparing national standards; etc.

Moved by John Bird; seconded by Mike Wilhelm and voted unanimously by all those present to approve the job description as written and information presented.

Process: Begin to identify people for position; Contract much the same way as Bob and Deanne; Can do it for a period of time, test, adjust – and move forward.

RFP – is the responsibility of the Commission to write and to be approved by Shelley Reed and Ande Smith.

## **VII: NEW BUSINESS:**

Review and Vote on the Public Virtual Charter School Application for School Year 2015.

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

Each of review Chairs will have an opportunity to share strengths and some concerns in the summary statement; a recommendation/motion and second will be made; following will be any discussion by the Commission decision by a majority vote.

If the applicant moves on, the next process is the In-Person Interview and Public Hearing – that vote has to be at least 5 members of the Commission voting in the affirmative to move to the contract phase.

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

1. Acadia Academy (name change from All of ME Academy)  
Grades: Pre-K through 1st Grade, adding Grades 2-6  
Lewiston-Auburn area

School Program Design: A Comprehensive Program providing Evidenced-based Curriculum in academics and social/emotional development with a safe and supportive community, addressing the individual learning needs of all children. Relationship to Applicant Entity: Director of Charter School Development, Director of the Margaret Murphy Center for Children (program of John F. Murphy Homes, Inc.).

Review Team: Nichi Farnham, Chair; Shelley Reed, Laurie Pendleton.

[Please find the full report linked here.](#) (PDF, 791 KB)

Recommendation: The Review Team's recommendation is that the Acadia Academy applications not move forward for further consideration by the Commission.

Motion by Nichi Farnham; seconded by Shelley Reed 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. 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 standards based unit design. During instruction, our classes will be ability group based on the results of progress monitoring with the idea that groups are ever changing depending on the needs of the students. A longer day will allow more time on academics and more opportunities for differentiation. Our GREAT values (Generosity, Respect, Enthusiasm, Achievement, and Tenacity) will be taught and practiced, providing a safe and caring environment where all students feel capable of success. Our leaders and teachers will educate with the belief that all students are capable of learning. This belief will drive curriculum development, instruction, and a classroom environment that will instill a high expectation for learning.

Review Team: Chair, John Bird; Jana Lapoint, Mike Wilhelm.

[Please find the full report linked here.](#) (PDF, 1,004 KB)

Recommendation: We (Review Team) recommend that the Commission not move this application forward to the interview phase of the process; but encourage the applicant to address the issues raised in this report and resubmit another year.

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

## 3. Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA)

Grades: 7-12

Statewide

School Program Design: Maine Virtual Academy's (MEVA) mission is to develop each student's full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a high quality learning experience for grade 7-12 students who are in need of alternative educational options. MEVA will develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with specific learning goals to meet each student's needs. MEVA's rigorous curriculum is aligned to the eight Maine content areas, the Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science

Standards. MEVA will demand the highest level of accountability from our Maine-certified teachers, our education management system and our nationally recognized provider of educational services. The MEVA Board will contract with K-12 Virtual Schools LLC for educational products and selected support services.

Review Team: Chair Mike Wilhelm; John Bird, Ande Smith.

[Please find the full report linked here.](#) (PDF, 350 KB)

Recommendation: The Review Team's recommendation is that the Maine Virtual Academy's application move forward for further consideration by the Commission.

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

B. Maine Academy of Natural Sciences – MeANS, Hinckley

1. Change in leadership – Head of School and Board of Directors.

Rich Abramson new MeANS head of school.

Bill Brown will be Chair Board of Directors and Doug Carr as Vice Chair.

Motion by John Bird and seconded by Mike Wilhelm and unanimously voted by those present to accept the staff and board changes as non-material amendments.

2. Request to set enrollment caps by grade level for the 2015 school year.

Motion by Mike Wilhelm and John Bird and unanimously voted by those present to accept the enrollment caps by grade level for the 2015 school year.

C. Discussion of October 1, 2014, Office of Information Technology Meeting – with Shelley Reed, Ande Smith, Bob Kautz, in regard to the pros and cons of the Commission's use of the Maine.gov email address for Commission business and the MCSC Budget impact.

FOAA – insulating us personally.

Is there productivity benefit from having an OIT product?

We want to do email and keep it separate.

Offered by OIT:

Standard State-issued laptop PC with State Email Account.

State-issued Apple iPad or Windows Tablet with State Email Account.

Personally-owned Apple iPad or Windows Tablet (other models are not supported).

Three of these solutions:

Laptop – can only use the separate device; not able to see it while you are doing any personal work. Another brick to carry around – especially traveling – not always accessible to review frequently. Full functionality for word processing – work products are FOAA documents.

IPad – functionality of it – doesn't do word processing well and would have to have a key board, etc. to make it happen.

Own device – BYOD – only limited devices are serviced by OIT.

Discussion:

Forwarding of all emails to a MCSC email does not capture any meta-data, which does not conform to FOAA requirements. Meta-data is not typically imposed with FOAA requests. Commission has not been mandated to do any one thing; risk management.

This is advice from Sarah Forster.

Discipline has to be to always forward the emails to the MCSC email.

Member has to certify that all emails are contained in the MCSC email account; so many may have to go through all other emails to be sure all related emails have been forwarded; which means there will be many duplicate emails to be sorted through by requester.

Transaction cost of doing business is a FOAA request may have to be delivered.

Emails cannot be deleted – permanently. Be clear about the protocol – document retention policy – cannot delete anything.

Conducting state business and co-mingling with personal that is by nature sort of a problem.

You do have an obligation under the records retention policy to keep certain types of records for a period of time.

If you are conducting state business, it is not your personal email between the two of you and you do not have the discretion to delete that when you are done.

Commissioners' correspondence or setting policy it is permanent. General correspondence is three years. Specific for your type of business – value varies depending on what it is.

The difference between us and other commissions:

MCSC: Documents generated by each of the members of the review team and then submitting them to the whole commission for review. There is a tight correlation between the results of the work and Commission involvement in the work with the requirements of approving a charter; akin to a state entity even though a commission. Sensitivity of the issues; can be challenges from applicants; requests from media or individuals.

State Board of Education: Documents are generally, not exclusively, but generally developed by the Department of Education, who is supporting the State Board of Education.

Other commissions have, generally, staff that is doing the work of the boards and then presenting it to the boards.

Options:

Workshop on FOAA and retention of state records on your own personal devices so they can be provided if there were to be a request – understanding personal responsibilities are in regard to retention of different products on your different personal devices.

Emails – Courtesy Copy (cc) to Maine Charter School Commission to MCSC or Bob.

One of the three options.

Or none of the above and just continue as we are now.

Decision:

Commission business on members' personal devices will be copied to an MCSC repository email account.

Copying materials to repository account moving forward (work prior to the establishment of the repository account will be accessed if requested for a FOAA by each member).

Create a policy on rules that we are going to follow.

If you are doing Commission (State) business, the criteria is to require sending it to the repository account versus personal business.

Any FOAA will require each member to search their own computers, as well as, the MCSC repository account.

D. Maine School Management Association Fall Conference – MCSC Presentation Friday, October 24, 2014, at 1:00 -2:10 p.m. Participants are Shelley Reed, John Bird, Justin Belanger, Cornville Executive Director; and Bob Kautz. Add to list Karl Francis, Principal of Maine Connections Academy.

E. Adjustment to Agenda – Maine Connections Academy hiring of Fort Kent Teacher.

Motion by Mike Wilhelm; seconded by Jana Lapoint and unanimously voted by those present to accept the hiring of the Fort Kent teacher. The Commission would encourage that going forward the common practice be teachers would be located in the MCA teacher/learning center.

#### **VIII: OTHER:**

A. October 27 at 10 a.m. for the Maine Virtual Academy In-person Interview and Public Hearing.

B. Following MVA, Commission Workshop on the revision of the Performance Frameworks.

#### **IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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

B. Next regularly scheduled meeting: Thursday, November 13, 2014, 9:30 a.m.

#### **X. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Roger Brainerd: I asked Bob if the Commission would co-sponsor the Governance Workshop – November 14, 2014, with the Commission Members not paying to attend. The ask is \$500. Costs are: Staff time to develop and transportation. National presenter is donating her time; donated space. Food cost has not been determined.

Bob Kautz: Part of what we have wanted to see MACS do, in so far as, providing learning opportunities for each of the charter schools; using our resources to further improve the actions of the charter schools.

I believe if we give the \$500, it is not underwriting the whole thing. We are using the 3% to help the charters and every one of the charters has wanted improved board governance. Not something the Commission should be doing, but something that MACS should be doing. MACS

being the deliverer and us supporting the mutual effort for the purpose of charter school improvement.

MACS will send MCSC an invoice for \$500.

#### **XI. Adjourn**

Motion by Jana Lapoint; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to adjourn the meeting at 12:50 p.m.