

Maine Charter School Commission Meeting - August 20, 2013

Minutes

The Maine Charter School Commission held a meeting on August 20, 2013, at the Cross State Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta, ME.

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair, Jana Lapoint, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

The following Members were present: Dick Barnes, John Bird, Jana Lapoint, Ande Smith. Excused: Shelley Reed, Heidi Sampson.

Also present: Bob Kautz, Executive Director; Deanne Lavalley, Administrative Assistant; Judith Jones, MACS; Roger Brainerd, MACS; Vicki Wallack, MSMA; Jim Chiavacci and Ed LeBlanc, Maine Virtual Academy; Huseyin A. Kara, Pioneer Charter School, Everett, Massachusetts; Additional attendees at RFP Informational Meeting: Christy & Matt Callahan, Birches Montessori School; Lisa Trainer and Carol DeStefano, Certified Interpreting Services.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Moved by John Bird, seconded by Heidi Sampson, and unanimously voted by those present to approve the meeting minutes from July 2, 2013 as written.

OFFICERS' REPORTS:

A. Chair, Jana Lapoint:

1. Commission Member Status

Ande Smith, Heidi Sampson and Jana interviewed 5 of 6 applicants; one applicant withdrew prior to interview. Laurie Pendleton and Michael Wilhelm were chosen and have agreed to serve. The State Board of Education discussed the candidates and the process for selection. We are now arranging with the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee for the candidates' interviews, which will be late September or early October.

2. Pre-Opening Status

Baxter Academy was the 15th – Using the Pre-Opening Plan for review; dates are essentially used as target dates if warranted. The situation at Baxter was reviewed regarding the certificate of occupancy and the news items.

The assistance of the Department of Education, Special Education Staff, in regard to their participation in the monitoring of established schools and their assistance to the newly opened charter schools was recognized

Harpwell Coastal Academy – Pre-Opening Visit Thursday, August 22, 2013.

Fiddlehead School of Arts and Science Pre-Opening Visit Monday, August 26, 2013.

3. Review of MeANS Visit on August 14, 2013.

The full report is in development; Dick Barnes gave an overview of the visit and some of the findings.

B. Vice Chair, Shelley Reed - Excused:

C. Executive Director:

1. MCSC Calendar for 2013-2014 provided to MCSC Members.

NEW BUSINESS:

10:00 a.m. RFP Informational Meeting

Called to order at 10:06 a.m. by Jana Lapoint. Welcome and introduction of attendees.

To begin the review of the RFP's, it was stated that they contain more restrictive criteria. It is essential to look at the evaluation criteria and scoring rubric while doing your application.

The following excerpts from the application were highlighted in the review of the RFP's:

Introduction

Virtual Charter School RFP Page 3:

The virtual school must present a plan for weekly, live, synchronous interactive contact between and among instructors and students for all courses designed for middle grades and for all core courses for students enrolled in a high school program;

Related criteria for Virtual Charter School is found under A.2 Academic Program.

A.2 Academic Program

Regular RFP Page 10:

Demonstrate how the curriculum ensures alignment with the state's expectations of learning as stated in Maine's system of Learning Results, MRSA Title 20-A, § 6209 Common Core;

Virtual RFP Page 10-11:

Demonstrate how the school provides instruction of all students in all eight content areas of the system of Maine Learning Results and provides a structure that allows and requires all students to achieve proficiency in the state standards in all content areas of the system of learning results.

Explain how teachers will engage with each student in weekly live (synchronous), interactive contact and provide evidence of such contact.

Describe the school's plan to incorporate in-person social interaction among students and school staff.

Co-curricular and extracurricular programs add value and skills to students' lives and enrich the learning experience. Explain any opportunities for enrichment activities that are included in the application.

A.3. Special Student Populations

Regular RFP Page 11:

Virtual RFP Page 13:

Describe the overall plan to serve students with special needs, including but not limited to students with Individualized Education Programs or Section 504 Plans; English Language Learners; students identified as intellectually gifted; and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out.

Regular RFP Page 13:

Virtual RFP Page 15:

Special Education Policies - required Tabs Number 2-9, as with all tabs, essential in your application.

The Special Education Approval Grid can be accessed from Maine Charter School Commission Website: (<http://www.maine.gov/csc/>):

Requests for Proposals / Application Components / Charter School Special Education Program Approval/Monitoring / in document find link for Approval Grid.

For more information regarding Special Student Populations, please contact: Cory King, Educational Specialist, 624-6654 or cory.king@maine.gov.

B. 2 Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Regular RFP Page 17-18:

Virtual RFP Page 19-20:

Describe the plan and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures. Explain the plan for student recruitment and marketing that will provide equal access to interested students and families. Specifically describe the plan for outreach to families in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students of all income levels and other youth at risk of academic failure.

Student recruitment may begin prior to the signing of the charter school contract.

B.6. Parent and Community Involvement

Regular RFP Page 22-23:

Virtual RFP Page 24-25:

Describe how you will engage parents in the life of the school (in addition to any proposed governance roles). Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to or require of parents.

Provide evidence of community support for the proposed public charter school, including information on discussions with the school administrative unit where the public charter school will be located concerning recruitment and operations of the public charter school and possible collaboration with nearby school administrative units.

Provide evidence that the proposed charter school has held public meetings in the catchment area for students to share the mission, vision and academic program of the school and has gathered community and local stakeholder feedback through the meetings, email, website or other means.

C.1 Governing Body

Regular RFP Page 24-25:

Virtual RFP Page 25:

The Governing Board must be independent having legal, fiduciary and oversight authority for the charter school with autonomy over key decisions, as referenced in MRS 20-A§ 2401, sections 6, 9A:

6. *Governing board. "Governing board" means the independent board of a public charter school that is party to the charter contract with the authorizer and whose members have been elected or selected pursuant to the school's application.*

9. *Public charter school. "Public charter school" means a public school formed pursuant to this chapter that:*

A. Has autonomy over key decisions, including, but not limited to, decisions concerning finance, personnel, scheduling, curriculum and instruction.

Evaluation Criteria:

- *Include proper documentation that the entity proposing to hold the charter is a Maine nonprofit corporation and has filed for status as a charitable organization under Section 501C (3) of the Internal Revenue Code or has received a notice of exemption;*

Completion of non-profit status will continue into the Contract Phase of the process.

- Provide IRS Application for 501C (3) in the application.

A Commission Member explained that the Governing Board oversees the work of the school and it is anticipated that the Board would be hands-on with fundraising.

D.1 Budget

Regular RFP Page 27-28:

Virtual RFP Page 30-31:

Discuss how the charter school will be able to demonstrate a cash reserve by the end of Year 3, sufficient to cover expenses for 2 months or more.

The school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated;

D.3 Facilities

Regular RFP Page 30-31:

Virtual RFP Page 32-33:

If a facility has not been selected, specify potential locations that are under consideration and discuss the process and time line for selecting, acquiring, renovating (if appropriate) and take occupancy of a suitable facility.

In responding, please be sure to respond to all instructions and evaluation criteria.

A clear and compelling demonstration that the school's plan for acquisition and maintenance of a facility is financially viable.

D.4 Transportation

Available from Department of Education is a list with approximate funds for transportation dependent on the resident district of the student.

Note: Application should anticipate that 100 percent of students will use transportation.

Regular RFP Page 32:

Present a thorough, realistic and cost-effective transportation plan by proposed school, including transportation of students with disabilities in the manner required to comply with IDEA;

Virtual RFP Page 34:

Note: A virtual charter school is required to provide, or provide for, transportation services that meet at least the following student needs: transportation to and from a testing site for required state assessments, transportation required to participate in in-person meetings and activities required by the school and transportation required by state or federal law or regulation relating to services to students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, transportation to evaluation appointments and transportation to receive related services under an IEP.

E. Education Service Providers

Regular RFP Page 35:

Virtual RFP Page 37:

All applicants are asked to declare whether they intend to contract with an education service provider (ESP). The term "education service provider" refers to any number of organizations that contract with the Governing Board of a school to provide limited services, except for virtual school providers (see below). The major types of ESPs that serve charter schools are education management organizations (EMOs), charter management organizations (CMOs) and comprehensive school design providers.

For the purposes of this RFP, the Maine Charter School Commission defines an EMO or a CMO as any for- or non-profit corporation or LLC that enters into contract with the entity holding the charter contract to provide significant managerial, technical or financial personnel or services in excess of \$25,000 per year. Similarly, any for- or non-profit corporation or LLC that enters into a contract with the charter school entity that

provides instructional materials or services including personnel, in excess of \$25,000 per year shall be considered to be an ESP.

General Comments

Contract Phase (potentially) – March 4, 2014, - June 30, 2014.

Charter School Contract includes:

Tab 23 – Required Elements Pre-Opening Plan

Tab 20 – Projected Enrollment Table

Tab 33 – Budget

Tab 10 – Performance Indicators Measures Metrics

Public Charter School Monitoring Plan

Tab 39 – Closure Plan

Disclaimer: All of the above information is meant to highlight some of the changes in this year's RFP, to address weak areas in previous charter school applications and to answer questions submitted by potential applicants and in no manner does this replace following the RFP in its entirety.

OTHER:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Expense Account Vouchers were turned in at the end of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Richard Barnes, seconded by John Bird and unanimously voted by those present to adjourn at 11:41 a.m.