

State Charter School Commission

111 Sewall Street (physical address)
23 State House Station (mailing address)
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

The State Charter School Commission held a special meeting on June 29, 2012, at the Cross State Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine. The following members were present: James Banks, Sr., Richard (Dick) Barnes; Lynda Doyle; Shelley Reed; and William Shuttleworth.

Excused: Jana Lapoint; Donald Mordecai

Also present were: Jennifer Pooler, Deb Friedman, Commissioner Stephen Bowen all of the Department of Education; Sarah Forster, Attorney General's office

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair, James A. Banks, Sr. called the meeting to order at 1:08 PM.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

- None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOVED by Shelley Reed, seconded by Donald Mordecai, and unanimously voted by those present to approve the minutes from the June 11 and June 15, 2012 meetings.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chair, James Banks, Sr.:

- Explained the four options for hiring the Administrative Assistant and Director – distributed the handout developed by Val Seaberg, DOE, outlining the options.
- Hoping to meet with Commissioner Bowen next week regarding the funding.

Vice-chair, William Shuttleworth:

- None

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Consideration of the application for a public charter school
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

Meeting turned over to Richard Barnes, review team chair.
(Below is the review team summary for recommendation)

Public Charter School Review Team Chair's Summary for Recommendation

Applicant MeANS

Recommendation Approve - with Notation on Governance Structure

A. Education Plan

- A.1. Mission, Vision, Identification of targeted student population and the community the school hopes to serve
- A.2. Academic Program
- A.3. Special Student Populations
- A.4. Assessment
- A.5. School Climate and Discipline

Strengths

All reviewers found the applicant's responses in this section to be strong.

Questions, Concerns

There are minor concerns by one reviewer about the 1) level of academic expectations being no higher than that of the state average, and 2) the use of academic growth assessment tools that are not norms for most Maine secondary schools. The applicant at the 6/15/12 interview and hearing, and subsequent 6/22/12 written response successfully addressed all other concerns.

B. Organizational Plan

- B.1. School Calendar and Daily Schedule
- B.2. Student Recruitment and Enrollment
- B.3. Staffing and Human Resources
- B.4. Pre-Opening Plan
- B.5. Management and Operations
- B.6. Community Involvement

Strengths

All reviewers found the applicant's responses in this section to be strong. There are some questions about the clarity of the delineation of duties between Good Will Hinckley and MeANS as noted in the concerns below.

Questions, Concerns

A number of questions remain unresolved in section B.5, Management and Operations. (See individual reviewers' comments for specifics.) These questions stem from a concern in the area of governance (see below). It is the Review Team's judgment that these questions can be fully addressed and resolved in contract negotiations between MeANS and the Commission.

C. Governance

- C.1. Governing Body
- C.2. Governing Board Composition

Strengths

All reviewers found the applicant's responses in this section to be strong, with the exception noted below.

Questions, Concerns

The Review Team does not feel that the structure of the MeANS Board, as described in Article 2 of its by-laws, ensures sufficient independence from that of the Good Will Hinckley Board of Directors to fully carry out its oversight duties. The Team recommends that in contract negotiations an amendment to Article 2 is adopted that permit the full MeANS Board to nominate and elect the non-GWH members to its ranks.

D. Business and Financial Services

- D. 1. Budget
- D.2. Financial Management
- D.3. Facilities
- D.4. Transportation
- D.5. Insurance
- D.6. Food Service
- D.7. Closure Protocol

Strengths

All reviewers found the applicant's responses in this section to be strong.

Questions, Concerns

E. Education Service Providers

Strengths

All reviewers are persuaded that in the close relationship between Good Will Hinckley and the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, the former corporation does not meet the definition of "education services provider."

Questions, Concerns

Virtual School Applicants

Strengths

Not Applicable.

Questions, Concerns

Addendum to team report:

On the next page is attached the individual Team members' summary recommendations for the MeANS proposal. (*below*)

Are you convinced that this is a unique viable model that will meet the needs of the students it wishes to serve? Describe why or why not.

W. Shuttleworth:

I am in support of approving this application to move to the contract implementation phase. I believe the application is very well constructed, and provides substantial assurances that students will receive a quality educational program at this school. I will want to address the academic goals and the annual student growth in the final contract. Though this school may attract at risk students, with this level of intervention and support, we should expect more than an one year's growth per student. The proficiency attainments are less important. Attendance and graduation rates should equal or exceed state goals, based on the structure and supports given to each student.

As part of the contract, the commission should delegate a commissioner(s) to visit the school to inspect current facilities and look at the site as it aligns with the capital improvement plan.

The school does meet a well-targeted need and could serve as a replicable model for innovation throughout the state to meet needs of students that really need a very different model for their educational success.

S. Reed:

Education Summary: The MeANS proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of at risk youth, their needs and how to address student success.

The plan supports the vision and mission by backing it up with research based strategies for academics and social needs.

Management and operation –from the initial review of the document to the in person interview, many changes were made. Remaining question or concern is the MeANS Governing Board appointed by GWH, would want to see after founding board that the MeANS Board could appoint positions as they become available.

R. Barnes (Team Chair):

The MeANS application meets the criteria of the statute, and its mission and educational plan clearly fits within the purposes set forth in Title 20-A, section 2402 for charter schools. The budget, staffing and all other elements of the plan are well thought out. MeANS has made good use of its prior, one-year experience as a magnet school under a model similar to that envisioned as a charter school.

One caveat remains to be discussed with the full Commission membership before going forward—the relationship between the MeANS governance board and the GWH.

governing board may not be sufficiently separated in order to assure the full independence of the former to fulfill all the terms of a five-year charter, should it be granted.

Moved by Richard Barnes, seconded by William Shuttleworth to approve the application of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences and begin the negotiations to enter a contract with a goal of satisfying the remaining specific concerns, all of which have been noted. Roll call called – Richard Barnes-yes; Lynda Doyle-yes; Shelley Reed-yes; William Shuttleworth-yes; Jim Banks-yes. Motion approved with five votes.

Richard Barnes and William Shuttleworth will begin contract negotiations on behalf of the Commission with the assistance of Sarah Forster.

Commissioner Bowen thanked the Commission members for the enormous amount of work they completed.

Shelley Reed congratulated MEANS.

Jim Banks thanked his fellow Commissioners as well as Sarah Forster, Deb Friedman and Jennifer Pooler.

Recess from 1:28pm-1:39pm

Shelley Reed thanked Judith Jones and the Maine Association of Charter Schools for their undying support and efforts over the past 15 years.

OTHER

- Discuss the SchoolWorks training
 - William Shuttleworth – phenomenal job at providing us with baseline information
 - Need more training for virtual school applications
 - William had correspondence with the Connections Academy president and they would like their application removed from the website.
 - The Commission must receive a request in writing from the Maine Virtual Academy board chair, Ruth Summers, before the request can be granted.
 - William attending training in Minnesota by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools –
 - Phenomenal training - energy level on steroids
 - Multiple training sessions
 - Hopes that all Commission members have the opportunity to attend a national conference
 - In other states the Charter School Commission is considered an elite group – Maine's model is unique

- Most of the info from the conference will be available on their website: publiccharters.org
- Richard Barnes – impressed with the focus on the need to be factual and detailed
 - Helped him sharpen and hone his review technique
- Jim Banks – opportunity to review their sample application was very helpful
 - As I re-reviewed the applications for Monday I notice many things that I wasn't aware of in the past
- Lynda Doyle – it affirmed that we know more than we think we know
- Shelley Reed – it was confirming – that we borrowed the best language from our predecessors as we created our documents
- William Shuttleworth – we should review our RFP based on what we know now
- William Shuttleworth – Maine's charter school law is envied by most of the country-very well written and includes many things that other states laws do not
- Shelley Reed – disappointed with their (SchoolWorks) response to virtual schools
- Richard Barnes – wants a workshop with Jim Rier – thinks it might also be useful for potential applicants
- Jim Banks read the email from Don Dunfee saying he will not make this cycle, but will submit in the fall
- Jim Banks thanked Judith Jones, Roger Brainerd and Erica Mazzeo for their work and effort that they have done to move this agenda forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Judith Jones thanked the Commission and commented that it is great to see this get off the ground. It has been a lot of hard work, but well worth it. MACS will continue to support the Commission as it is able.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED by Shelley Reed, seconded by Richard Barnes, and unanimously voted by those present to adjourn the June 29, 2012 State Charter School Commission meeting at 2:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Pooler.