

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 July 2, 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; Jana Lapoint; Shelley Reed; and William Shuttleworth.

Excused: Donald Mordecai

Also present were: Jennifer Pooler, Department of Education

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair, James A. Banks, Sr. called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

- None

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chair, James Banks, Sr.:

- Met with Val Seaberg regarding the funding for the job vacancies. It should be available in about a month.

Vice-chair, William Shuttleworth:

- None

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Consideration of the application for a public charter school
- Baxter Academy of Technology and Science

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

Public Charter School Review Team Chair's Summary for Recommendation

Public Charter School Review Team Chair's Summary for Recommendation

Applicant Baxter Academies of Maine

Recommendation More questions – interview scheduled for 7/17/2012 (original recommendation to approve with changes to the budget).

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

Mission, Vision, Identification of targeted population well described and supported. Richness of catchment area provides a wealth of STEM opportunities. With only one program in Northern Maine, Baxter, is also geographically well situated. A.1vi. Academic program A2xii commendable as all courses are directly tied to Common Core & Maine Learning Results. Assessment in line with recently passed LD1422. Emphasis placed on standard and proficiency based education with capstone projects as part of graduation requirements. A.5 well spelled out the role of Vision Keepers.

Questions, Concerns

Baxter will still need to show for year 11 & 12 how they will complete requirements for PE for graduation along with Art & Design.

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

Both B.1, B.2 is straight forward. It is significant to note that the Management structure positions with responsibility are well thought out. Resumes of management indicate all are highly skilled. The academic staff comes well prepared and includes a teacher with strong ELL qualifications. Pre-Opening Plan revised taking into consideration reducing opening enrollment to 100 students and by opening one floor at a time more manageable. B6i showed enormous strength within the community to partner with local businesses, university, professional and research organizations. High number of letters of support from various segments of the community. All staff reflect the vision and mission of the school.

Questions, Concerns

Once resumes of staff received, staffing concerns were eliminated. Budget was still a problem in administrative area until recent e-mail of June 30, 2012 revealed that Executive Director would forgo salary if Federal Grant of \$175,000 were not granted and Director would only take salary if the Foundation raised additional monies.

C . Governance

C.1. Governing Body

C.2. overning Board Composition

Strengths

The cultural concepts imbedded within "Vision Keepers" tied the role of governance within the school C1ii. The broad expertise of the board is reflected in their resumes. Founding members of the advisory board presented a wide range of expertise both in and out of Maine.

Questions, Concerns

Originally, there was concern over the possible lack of fundraising strength on the board but when the board held their June meeting, the current President, Mr. Jaques stepped down and Andrea Berry became Chair of the Board with extensive fund raising expertise. Along with a Director of Fundraising and Development this would appear to be sufficient.

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

Willingness to review budget downward to 100 student enrollment in first year. June 22, 2012. The budget included the 3% for commission and 1% to be held by district, removal of transportation for first year. Removal of salary for Director, Mr. Jaques until Foundation could raise the money and reduction of some Administrative salary if they did not receive Federal Grant. Mr. Jaques e-mail of June 30 indicated that the startup grant has less than 20 states eligible for approximately 14 – 20 awards. The STEM program is a high priority for President Obama and the awards will be made official by the end of September as stated by Mr. Jaques. There is also another \$100,000 on the secured line of credit that can be used in first year if needed. The facilities location is excellent. No concern about insurance, food service (recommended students should be allowed more than 30 minutes for lunch) and closure.

Questions, Concerns

D.3 Facilities outstanding location but a concern if the building could be readied for a September opening. The owner of the building assured the commission it would be ready at meeting on June 22, 2012. A Certificate of Occupancy would be required to approve final contract. Based on the outcome of the July 22nd meeting, only the first floor will be used and renovated for the initial 100 students. It is further noted that the removal of the transportation funding within the budget is allowed by statute, when possible this figure should be restored. Further noted the removal of Art & Enrichment along with PE funds have been eliminated in first year but restored in year two and three. If the Federal Grant is received the commission would recommend these funds be immediately restored. Still remaining is a concern for the

overall budget although Baxter has shown strong willingness to work within the established guidelines.

E. Education Service Providers

Strengths

Baxter will not be seeking an ESP.

Questions, Concerns

Virtual School Applicants

Strengths

Questions, Concerns

Moved by Jana Lapoint, seconded by Shelley Reed to continue the discussions with Baxter Academy of Technology and Science – interview scheduled for July 17 at 9:00am. Jana Lapoint will compile a list of questions from Commission members for Mr. Jaques to respond to. Unanimously voted by those present. Motion carried.

Recess from 12:30-12:40

The tape recorder did not work past this point; following is a recollection from notes and memory.

Chair, James A. Banks, Sr. called the meeting back to order

- B.** Consideration of the application for a public charter school
 - Cornville Regional Charter School

Meeting turned over to Jana Lapoint, review team chair.

(Below is the review team summary for recommendation)

Public Charter School Review Team Chair's Summary for Recommendation

Public Charter School Review Team Chair's Summary for Recommendation

Applicant **Cornville Regional Charter School**

Recommendation **The review team makes no recommendation**

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

Mission, Vision, Identification of targeted student population very clear. The creation of a small rural school is not unique but laudable. Also, personal learning plans, commitment to strong family, community and teacher collaboration is also desirable to everyone. The academic program of individualization, integration of arts/music into the everyday program, commitment to service learning, project based instruction and the use of the longer day has distinct advantages to all students. The development of your community garden is a definite advantage of service learning for all students. A.5 The school seems to have strong community support, volunteers and a unified philosophy regarding discipline, making the school the center of the community and putting students first.

Questions, Concerns

Will the population continue to grow to support the school? School may not have the breadth of services to deal with very involved, multiple-handicapped students that may require one to one intervention and/or out of district placement. It will be vital that the school commit to regular assessment of student learning and growth. If school chooses NWEA, it should be administered at least twice a year to gauge growth. Informal, teacher made assessment and student portfolios tied to personal learning plans are excellent as an ongoing, but non data based charting of student learning. There needs to be assurance that both formative and summative assessment is in place so that there is clear evidence of student learning. The student code of conduct along with the development of conflict resolution would be more effective if worked out with the entire staff and then presented uniformly to all students at same time. The commission must also recognize that it has not been proven that the public schools in MSAD 54 do not provide common teaching times, differentiated learning strategies, service learning, parental involvement, a child centered approach, an emphasis on personal pride or personal learning plans.

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

School schedule and calendar is a strength of the school. While Cornville and surrounding community seems to be strong in support of enrolling their children, the school must be prepared for other students within the geographic catchment area to seek enrollment.

Questions, Concerns

Since we do not have resume of teachers there needs to be a strong emphasis placed on experienced teachers to carry out the academic program of the school. Staff is limited and everyone will be required to take on many tasks. Staff development is another area of concern. B.4, The preopening area has been addressed but the budget remains somewhat thin. The upfront costs need to be carefully watched.

C. Governance

C.1. Governing Body

C.2. Governing Board Composition

Strengths

The advisory board seems to be strong but the key is the Board of Directors. It is very clear the board has been deeply involved with the school to date. Also the interest shown by volunteers to aid in so many different ways is exceptional but also must be seen as not necessarily sustainable.

Questions, Concerns

The board going forward may need more board development and a consultant to address the long term plan to sustain this school and commitment to a process of continual improvement.

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

There seems to be progress made in the overall assessment of the building with a plan put

together before opening. Also, the line of credit of \$50,000 is beneficial to help jump start the school. The initial fundraising over the past year shows a board commitment to funding the school. Closure protocol would be determined at the time of any issuance of a contract and is not a concern at this time other than to acknowledge the requirements that are necessary compliance with student records being sent to returning school within one week.

Questions, Concerns

The budget is extremely tight. The school director is volunteering their time, yet their responsibilities are huge. There do not seem to be adequate contingency funds for the worst case scenarios that affect and impinge schools. The teacher salaries are all entry level salaries, raising the concerns that the best and most talented teachers will realistically be drawn to communities that pay higher. Also, there appear to be no teacher benefits in the first year. There are also limited funds for special education. Transportation costs, unless a contract has already been framed, appear to be lower than expected. Also, various pickup locations for elementary school children may be difficult. Food service budget does not have lines for repairs and maintenance to equipment, a constant problem in any school kitchen. Facilities appear to be in good shape. Prior to any potential contract, it would be essential to have a commissioner inspect the school's facilities, including the heating plant, kitchen and roof.

E. Education Service Providers

Strengths

The school will not be seeking and ESP.

Questions, Concerns

Virtual School Applicants

Strengths

Questions, Concerns

MOVED by Richard Barnes, seconded by Jim Banks to approve the Cornville Regional Charter School application and begin the negotiations to enter a contract. Roll call

called: Jim Banks-yes; Richard Barnes-yes; Shelley Reed-yes; Linda Doyle-no; Jana Lapoint-no; William Shuttleworth-no. Motion failed.

OTHER

- None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Several people spoke in favor of the Cornville Regional Charter School.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED by Shelley Reed, seconded by Richard Barnes, and unanimously voted by those present to adjourn the July 2, 2012 State Charter School Commission meeting at 1:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Pooler.