

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 November 16, 2012, at the Cross State Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine. The following members were present: James Banks; Richard (Dick) Barnes; John Bird; Jana Lapoint; Shelley Reed; Heidi Sampson and William Shuttleworth.

CALLED TO ORDER:

Chair, Jana Lapoint called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

Richard Barnes, Vice Chair, will be conducting the official vote on Baxter as Jana Lapoint chaired the review team for this application.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Recommendations by review team – Baxter Academy

Public Charter School Review Team Chair's Summary for Recommendation
Applicant_Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Recommendation__The review team was split 2-1 in its recommendation. In favor, John Bird & Jana Lapoint, opposed Jim Banks.

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 Statement is clear. concise and vision statement is aligned with Baxter's goals as a rigorous, college preparatory high school promoting student ownership of learning through curriculum focused specifically on science, technology, engineering and math. Baxter's long range goals 5-10 years are laudable. On first appearance, the "Targeted Student Population" seemed aggressive but when taken into consideration that the only growth population in the State appears to be Southern Maine and the extensive Marketing plan provided, the student class size seems attainable. The academic program which focuses on " student centered learning" and "project based instruction" is well aligned with learning results and common core standards to guide student progress. This approach also offers students multiple entry points with varying learning styles and academic experiences. The use of Google Aps will also enhance individual learning. Also, the IBET or Integrated Biology, English and Technology program for freshmen is a unique concept that combines principles of the three disciplines toward

common learning goals and objectives. The program requires authentic scientific research and analysis culminating with an IBET project. The internship for Juniors within the community and a senior capstone project are both unique and visionary within our academic world and commendable objectives for students. Not to be overlooked is the use of "Flex Fridays". This will require a well-coordinated approach but with innovative teachers this may prove to be an example for other schools to follow. Special student populations which include students with learning disabilities and ELL have been adequately provided for with the curriculum. Student assessments have been mentioned above. Since the traditional grading system will not be in place, this will present a challenge both to students and teachers and will hold both more accountable for results. The discipline philosophy seems well established to handle the diverse backgrounds of students who may be drawn to Baxter. The concept of the "Vision Keepers" will also aid in providing a more cohesive student body.

Questions, 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: The school calendar is acceptable and the daily schedule is satisfactorily aligned with its mission and vision statement. Baxter has presented a very extensive recruitment plan. The involvement of two Bowdoin volunteers to help with marketing and communications will aid greatly in the recruitment process. The catchment area for Baxter is the only area of the state with an increasing population and therefore Baxter should easily be able to meet their student enrollment goals. The management team has been identified and credentials seem more than adequate. Baxter will be reopening teacher positions in plenty of time for fall opening and have clearly stated what skills they will be looking for in attracting their future staff. Preopening plan has been revised and includes adequate financial safeguards for opening the school. The location is excellent and the building will not require major renovations to be ready in plenty of time for a September opening. All management positions have clearly defined areas of responsibilities. Baxter has reached out to many local organizations and businesses to support their program as referenced in the many letters of support. The area surrounding the school presents a richness not often found with high tech businesses, research institutions, colleges, architectural facilities and many other businesses in such close proximity. The concept of "Vision Keepers" will require both inside and outside support which will strengthen Baxter's program. Potential parents and students to date have been actively involved in promoting the school and will most likely continue to be an asset to the school.

Questions, Concerns

Not a concern but it would be an option to have Baxter look into a longer day if they find that it does not make it impossible for students to attend after school activities in their hometown. Hours on task is

important.

C Governance

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

Strengths

Board members have been increased and seem to cover the 3 “W’s of wealth, work and wisdom. Governance is an ongoing requirement of any good board and as we have seen Baxter is no exception. An innovative system is their “Vision Keepers” fist to 5 approach which is in keeping with their mission and vision statement. They have an impressive advisory list. Hopefully, as they move forward these individuals will become active participants at Baxter.

Questions, Concerns Observations: Baxter will need to continue to define the roles and responsibilities of its board but they are off to a solid start. They might consider adding a parent or student to the Board in a non-voting capacity. Also, they could strengthen the committee process. They have created a large advisory board but need to demonstrate how extensive will their expertise be utilized.

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: To Baxter’s credit, the budget has gone through many revisions. This is always an ongoing process dictated by enrollment, fund raising capacity and current unforeseen issues. With the addition of Peter Montano, CPA of McDonald Page to the board, tighter controls and a very conservative estimate of additional revenue have left the first year of operation in the red. In this current year, many not for profit organizations have experienced a drop in gift giving. With only an idea, Baxter has received over \$80,000 in contributions and secured a \$500,000 line of credit without any collateral to back it which is just unheard in today’s financial world. They have created a very aggressive fundraising plan that on paper is well done but the results remain unknown. Baxter has recently submitted two additional requests for large donations. The amount they have raised without a program that people can come and see is laudable. The facilities on York Street are ideally located and the owner of the building has negotiated a new contract with Baxter which will lower their costs. The building will require minor revisions and with the exhibited architectural drawings for expansion, the building will be a fantastic facility. Transportation has been satisfactorily documented but will depend to some degree on where the students reside. Insurance is adequate and the food service contract with “Sprouts” is reasonable. The closure protocol meets State requirements for the closing of a school and plans are satisfactory. (D-7-i-iii)

Questions, Concerns

E Education Service Providers

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Do not intend to contract with an education service provider.</p>
Questions, Concerns

Virtual School Applicants

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Not applicable</p>
Questions, Concerns

Minority Recommendation

The main reason I cannot recommend Baxter Academy for approval is that the revenues are not sufficient to run this large type of school. The financial instability the schools overly relies on tuition, and its fundraising goals are also overly optimistic producing a major shortfall in revenues needed to fund Baxter Academy listed in their budget is over \$200,000 dollars in the first year. Baxter Academy's revenue comes mainly from tuition, which is predicated on recruiting 160 students the first year, which will be difficult to achieve. Raising private dollars is always a challenge, and conservatively, raising \$150,000 is very ambitious and very difficult to achieve. I do not see where this problem will be resolved in the remaining 4 years of the Charter Contract if approved.

Lack of support from community and business leaders from the greater Portland area are missing especially prominent STEM business leaders. It is my opinion that this has been caused partially because the Baxter Academy has not fully engaged the citizens and business community of Portland on this proposed school.

Finally, I will vote to deny the application of Baxter Academy.

James Banks, Sr., Commission Member

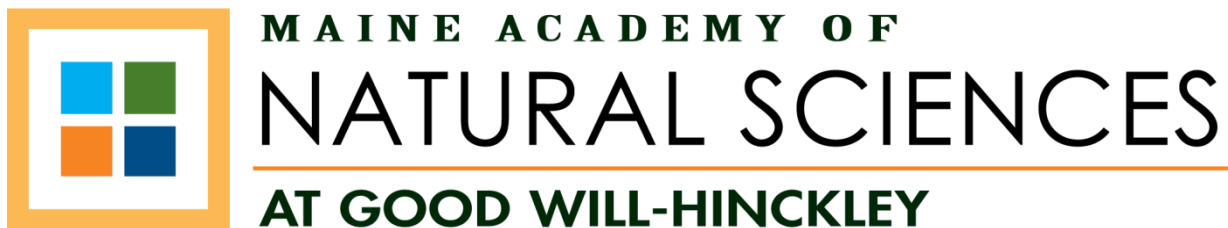
Motion by William Shuttleworth: I move to advance the Baxter Academy Application for Charter School status to contract phase, with the intent that by March 15, 2013, Baxter will provide verification of 150 students who have signed unwavering commitment to enroll and fundraising efforts that will not require a deficit budget for the first year of operation, seconded by Shelley Reed.

Alphabetical vote of the Commission Members called by Richard Barnes, Vice Chair:
Banks: no; Bird: yes; Lapoint: yes; Reed: yes; Sampson: yes; Shuttleworth: yes.
Barnes: no.

Application conditionally approved for a public charter school contract with a vote five (5) yes and two (2) no.

5 minute recess.

B. Approval of MeANS Bylaw Revisions



Motion: Proposed that the MeANS Board of Directors ask that the MeANS Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation be amended to reflect the following change:

ARTICLE 5 – OFFICERS

Section 5.1 Officers. The officers of the corporation shall consist of the Board Chair, a Vice Chair, a non-voting President, a non-voting Treasurer, ~~an Assistant Treasurer~~, a Secretary, a Chair of the Finance Committee and such other officers and assistant officers as the Board of Directors shall deem desirable. No two offices may be held by the same person. In addition to the duties and powers specifically set forth in these Bylaws, each officer shall have such duties and power as the Board of Directors may from time to time prescribe.

Section 5.2 Election and Term of Office. The officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting, or as soon thereafter as convenient and each officer then holding an elective office shall continue to hold said office or offices until his or her successor shall have been duly elected.

Section 5.3 Qualifications. The Board Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary shall be elected from among the Directors of the corporation.

Section 5.4 Vacancies. A vacancy in any office caused by death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, shall be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5.5 “Chair of the Finance Committee: The Chair of the Finance Committee shall have oversight of all financial affairs of the corporation.”

Section 5.6 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall have general charge of the financial affairs of the corporation. The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds of the corporation, subject to such regulations as may be imposed by the Board. The Treasurer may be required to give bond for the faithful performance of his or her duties, in such sum and with such sureties as the Board may require. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all moneys of the corporation in such depositories as may be designated by the Board. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept full and accurate accounts of the receipts and disbursements of the corporation in suitable books of the corporation and shall exhibit such books upon request of any officer or Director for any proper purpose at any reasonable time. The Treasurer shall be a non-voting member.

Section 5.7 Secretary. The Secretary shall have charge of such books, documents, and papers as the Board of Directors may determine and shall have the custody of the corporate seal. The Secretary shall attend and keep or cause to be kept the minutes of all the meetings of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a record of the names and addresses of the Board of Directors. The Secretary may certify all votes, resolutions, and actions of the Board of Directors and of its committees.

Section 5.8 Board Chair. The Board Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall have such other powers and responsibilities as set forth in these Bylaws. In the absence of the chair, the vice chair may act and have the powers of the chair.

Section 5.9 President. The President shall have such authority and responsibilities as designated by the Board of Directors. The President shall be a non-voting member.

MOVED by Jana Lapoint, seconded by Dick Barnes, and unanimously voted by those present to accept the change from Maine Academy of Natural Sciences “MeANS.”

OTHER:

- New Applications: Heartwood, Maine Connections Academy, K-12 Maine Virtual Academy are ready to be picked up for your review. Bob Kautz will contact review team members to help with finding technical assistance in reviewing applications.

More competition with more applicants than slots - will need to be very clear, concrete, refer back to RFP for more precise level of review and feedback. Current RFP has no

discerning competitive element will need to be added in for differentiation in a competitive process.

Do you want to issue an RFP and what do you want it to be?

Commission does have authority to direct people to certain concepts or region by RFP.

Need to begin work first of the year – December workshop agenda.

Report on Chapter 2 discussion in am; approval in the afternoon. Chapter 2 needs to be forwarded for law making.

Chapter 1 initial.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED by Jim Banks, seconded by Shelley Reed, and unanimously voted by those present to adjourn the November 16, 2012, State Charter School Commission meeting at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted by Deanne Lavalley.