



# VISION

MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL  
COMMISSION

All of Maine's children will have access to a vibrant ecosystem of diverse schools so that all of them can become happy, healthy and thriving citizens

July 2023 Business Meeting of the Maine Charter School Commission

**DRAFT**

## The Maine Charter School Commission held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Item Number	Agenda Item
<b>1</b>	<b>Call to Order and Declare a Quorum</b>
	<p>The meeting - held in person and via Zoom in accordance with the Commission's remote meeting policy - was called to order by Commission Chair, Norm Higgins, at 1:02pm and a quorum was declared.</p> <p>Commission member(s) present were Norm Higgins, Tori Kornfield, Brian Langley (via Zoom), Tom Keller, Jim Handy, and Leigh Weisenburger Albert.</p> <p>Also present were Lana Ewing, Amy Allen(via Zoom), and Dania Heard.</p> <p><i>Commission member, Jim Handy, read the Commission's Vision Statement.</i></p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Reminders</b>
2a	This meeting is being recorded via Zoom.
2b	We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are being heard.
2c	When speaking, state your name and speak slowly and clearly and loudly enough for the captioner to pick up your comments. Lana or Amy will interrupt if the captioner is having a difficult time hearing what is being said.
<b>3</b>	<b>Comments from Commission Chair, Committee Reports and Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda</b>
3a	<p><b>Comments from Commission Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair Higgins announced that the legislative session has adjourned. He plans to meet with the Education Committee Chair to determine the best time for the Commission to meet with them to present the Annual Report to the Commissioner.</li> <li>He shared that he plans to meet with the Maine School Management Association and the Maine Principals Association as a reminder that Maine's charter schools are public schools and to ensure that charter school students have access to sanctioned activities.</li> </ul>

3b	<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tori Kornfield - Chair, Ad-hoc Nominating Committee - reported that there will be a vote for Chair and Vice Chair later in the agenda.</li> <li>• Tori Kornfield - Chair, School Performance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.</li> <li>• Leigh Weisenburger Albert - Chair, Finance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.</li> <li>• Norm Higgins - Chair, Executive Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.</li> </ul>
3c	<p><b>Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda</b> None</p>
4	<p><b>Meeting Minutes Approval</b></p>
4a	<p>To Consider the Minutes from the June 13, 2023 Commission Meeting</p> <p>A copy of the draft minutes was distributed for review and consideration.</p> <p><b>Moved by Jim Handy; seconded by Tori Kornfield and voted by roll call vote as follows</b> - Leigh Weisenburger Albert (yes); Jim Handy (yes); Tom Keller (yes); Tori Kornfield (yes); Brian Langley (yes); and Norm Higgins (yes) - to approve the minutes from the June 13, 2023 Commission Meeting.</p>
5	<p><b>Public Comment*</b></p>
	<p>Sherry Gilbert - Maine Arts Academy's Board President - thanked Commission staff for assisting members of the Board with Epicenter access. She shared that she was able to complete the required board training modules, but others struggled with accessing the modules and asked the Commission to consider discontinuing them.</p>
6	<p><b>Presentations</b></p>
6a	<p>None</p>
7	<p><b>Executive Director/Commission Staff Report</b></p>
7a	<p>Lana Ewing, Executive Director shared the following school updates:</p> <p><u>Maine Virtual Academy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering American Sign Language courses over the summer, taught by Carrie Pierce, an ASL expert, who also runs a virtual ASL club for MeVA students during the school year.</li> </ul> <p><u>Baxter Academy for Technology and Science</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is hosting two camps this summer - a Minecraft camp and a drone camp in collaboration with an organization called "1,000 Drones for 1,000 Girls".</li> <li>• Through a collaboration with an organization called "Gift of Chess", students have been immersed in chess over the summer. The experience has been highlighted by a master chess player who used to be a former child soldier in Sudan who now takes his talent and works with children all over the world.</li> </ul>

	<p><u>Maine Connections Academy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently in their renewal year and working hard to get everything they need for the Commission. They have received their Year 4 Performance Report and have a chance to respond to any factual inaccuracies that might be in the report. That feedback is required by July 14th, and the Renewal Application will be released on July 17th.</li> <li>• Students are participating in ELA, English, art courses, math, and reading interventions with credit recovery options this summer. Work studies, internships, and independent projects are also happening.</li> <li>• Four members of their leadership team attended a weekend conference in Baltimore where they talked about student engagement, graduation rates, co-teaching, and college career readiness.</li> </ul> <p><u>Harpswell Coastal Academy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's last day was June 9th and their charter contract ended on June 30th.</li> <li>• HCA's Board Chair, Interim Head of School, and Business Manager have continued to meet with Commission staff and consultants regularly throughout the closure process.</li> <li>• They are currently going through a liquidation process with a local auctioneer and are hopeful that they will end with a positive fund balance. After all debts are paid, any remaining funds will be returned to the state Department of Education.</li> <li>• Student files have been transferred as necessary and Commission staff have acquired a number of documents that will be kept on file should questions come up (i.e., employment verifications, transcripts, etc.)</li> <li>• They are required to go through the FY23 audit process with the hope that it will be wrapped up by the end of the calendar year.</li> </ul>
7b	<p>And the following operational updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are busy completing year-end documentation which will be submitted to the Commission through Epicenter.</li> <li>• End of Year visits are being scheduled with those schools that require in-person visits based on the Site Visit Manual.</li> <li>• Results from the Spring 2023 Panorama Survey are ready and will be shared during the August Commission Meeting. Schools have been administering these surveys to families, students, teachers and staff for several years now, but this is the first year that outcomes will be measured on the Performance Framework.</li> <li>• Staff is engaged in interviews for the full time administrative assistant position. The interviews are two hours in length and allow time for introductions, questions, scenarios, and for candidates to complete a series of tasks before wrapping up with questions from the candidates themselves. So far staff have interviewed three candidates with another scheduled for later in the week.</li> </ul>

7c	<p>Media Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Unity public charter school holds first graduation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">centralmaine.com Class of 2023 Graduation Keepsake</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Harpwell Coastal Academy campus buyer revealed, but property's future remains unknown</a></li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report</b>
	None
<b>9</b>	<b>Unfinished Business</b>
9a	None
<b>10</b>	<b>New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance</b>
10a	<p>To Consider the Appointment of Norm Higgins as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission</p> <p>A motion to appoint Norm Higgins as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a one-year term was <b>moved by Jim Handy; seconded by Tori Kornfield and voted by roll call vote as follows</b> - Leigh Weisenburger Albert (yes); Jim Handy (yes); Tom Keller (yes); Tori Kornfield (yes); Brian Langley (yes); and Norm Higgins (abstain) - to appoint Norm Higgins as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a one-year term.</p>
10b	<p>To Consider the Appointment of Leigh Weisenburger Albert as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission</p> <p>A motion to appoint Leigh Weisenburger Albert as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a one-year term was <b>moved by Jim Handy; seconded by Tori Kornfield and voted by roll call vote as follows</b> - Leigh Weisenburger Albert (abstain); Jim Handy (yes); Tom Keller (yes); Tori Kornfield (yes); Brian Langley (yes); and Norm Higgins (yes) - to appoint Leigh Weisenburger Albert as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission for a one-year term.</p>
10c	<p>To Receive and Place on File the Completed Community Regional Charter School Intervention Plan</p> <p>A copy of the intervention plan was distributed for review and consideration.</p> <p><b>Moved by Tori Kornfield; seconded by Jim Handy and voted by roll call vote as follows</b> - Leigh Weisenburger Albert (yes); Jim Handy (yes); Tom Keller (yes); Tori Kornfield (yes); Brian Langley (yes); and Norm Higgins (yes) - receive and place on file the completed Community Regional Charter School Intervention Plan.</p>
<b>11</b>	<b>New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by the Commission)</b>
11a	<p>New Governing Board Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11a.1 Community Regional Charter School - Michael Buja</li> <li>• 11a.2 Fiddlehead School of Arts &amp; Science - Laura Newman</li> </ul> <p>Resignations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiddlehead School of Arts &amp; Science - Joe Mattos</li> </ul> <p>Term Outs:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Regional Charter School - Danielle Denis</li> <li>• Community Regional Charter School - Kelly Lacasse</li> <li>• Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Shannon Webber</li> <li>• Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Jesse Wechsler</li> </ul> <p><b>No formal action required by the Commission.</b></p>
<b>12</b>	<b>Future Topics</b>
12a	<p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of Year Meetings</li> <li>• MCA Renewal Timeline Update</li> </ul> <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EOY 2022-23 Unenrollment Data</li> </ul> <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To Consider the Approval of Maine Connections Academy's Renewal Application</li> </ul>
<b>13</b>	<b>Announcements</b>
13a	<p>Chair Higgins announced the following Committee Assignments:</p> <p><u>School Performance Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tori Kornfield, Chair</li> <li>• Jim Handy</li> <li>• Tom Keller</li> </ul> <p><u>Finance Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leigh Weisenburger Albert, Chair</li> <li>• Brian Langley</li> <li>• James Ford</li> </ul> <p><u>Executive Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norm Higgins, Chair</li> <li>• Tori Kornfield</li> <li>• Leigh Weisenburger Albert</li> </ul>
13b	Important Dates ( <i>None</i> )
13c	<p>2023 Graduation Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Threshold Program</b>/Friday, July 21st</li> <li>• <b>Maine Academy of Natural Sciences - Campus Program</b>/Friday, July 28th</li> </ul>
13d	Next Regular Business Meeting – August 8, 2023 ( <b>Room #103A/B, Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta</b> )
<b>14</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>
	Chair Higgins declared adjournment at 2:44pm with no objections.

\* The Charter School Commission does not allow airing of complaints in public meetings regarding Commission and charter school employees or school employment matters, in order to protect employee privacy, to comply with Maine law and pursuant to our contractual relation with the schools. To the extent that the Commission receives complaints and concerns relating to school employees in writing, those concerns will be reviewed and addressed by the Commission and its staff outside of a public meeting. This meeting is not the appropriate forum for such comments. You are free to direct your concerns in writing to the Commission's Executive Director, if you have not done so already.