APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday September 12, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Location
Maine Connections Academy, 8 Science Park Road, 3rd Floor, Scarborough

Reminders:

- This meeting is being recorded via Zoom.
- We ask members of the public to hold comments until public comments are heard.
- 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.

Directors Present
Brian Langley (remote), James Ford (remote), Jim Handy, Leigh Albert (remote), Norm Higgins, Tom Keller, Tori Kornfield (remote)

Directors Absent
None

Guests Present
Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Rachel Spell

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Norm Higgins called a meeting of the board of directors of Maine Charter School Commission to order on Tuesday Sep 12, 2023 at 1:04 PM.

C. To Consider the Approval of Minutes from the August 8, 2023 Commission Meeting

Jim Handy made a motion to Approve the minutes from the.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
A copy of the minutes was distributed for review and consideration.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Brian Langley	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Leigh Albert	Aye
Norm Higgins	Aye
Tori Kornfield	Aye
James Ford	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

- Chair Higgins welcomed Rachel Spell as the Commission's new Administrative Assistant.

III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None

IV. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori Kornfield - Chair, School Performance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.

B. Finance Committee

Leigh Weisenburger Albert - Chair, Finance Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee and a copy of the FY24 Budget vs. Actual/Spending Dashboard was distributed for review.

C. Executive Committee

Norm Higgins - Chair, Executive Committee - reported on the work being done by the Committee.

V. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

None

VI. Presentations

A. Maine Connections Academy

Walter Wallace, Maine Connections Academy's Head of School, shared the following:

- Students who enroll at MCA fit into seven different buckets:
  - Elite/specialty athletes/performers who need a flexible schedule
  - Students who live in areas that can't provide things like an advanced science class
  - Parents who have homeschooled their children, but have "aged out" on knowledge, but still want to keep their student(s) at home
  - Students with physical disabilities
  - Students who are working during the day to help support their families (often in a family business)
  - Students who have had a difficult time in their resident district school (i.e., bullying)
  - Students with extreme anxiety
- MCA sets annual goals which are driven by the Performance Framework. These goals are displayed throughout the school building as a reminder to staff.
- Despite being a virtual school, MCA offers both in-person and virtual field trips and has many clubs available to students.

VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

- Maine Arts Academy began the school year in their new building and reports that the transition has been "smooth". The school will host a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on October 11th.
- MeANS is fully staffed with no open positions.
- Harpswell Coastal Academy has officially closed and board members are working with their auditor to finalize the FY23 audit. They will end with a cash balance of approximately $160,000 and Lana is working with the MDOE to determine how those funds will be disbursed.

- Maine Connections Academy submitted their Renewal Application and staff met with members of the school's governing board and administrative team to finalize year-end data. Focus group visits were held on September 11th and the public hearing for renewal is scheduled for September 26th. The Commission will vote on the renewal at its October 10th business meeting.

B. Organizational Updates

- Staff is interested in releasing a new school application for schools opening in the fall of 2025. The proposed timeline would be as follows:
  - Release the new school application in mid-November
  - Applications would be due in mid-March 2024
  - Commission would make decisions on applications in June 2024 (current statute requires action within 90 days from receipt of the application.
- Lana will be attending the NACSA (National Association for Charter School Authorizers) Annual Leadership Conference in late October. This years conference will be held in Oakland and she will be presenting at a session on Values Based Authorizing.
- A copy of the 2023-2024 Annual Work Calendar was shared. There are 5 key priorities for the school year - 1)searching for a new charter school, updating the strategic plan, refine the performance framework, conduct an internal Commission policy review, and consider whether or not there are any legislative changes that the Commission will pursue.
- Strong drafts of the 2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports are complete using school-reported data. The drafts will be finalized in early October (awaiting results from the Maine Through-Year Assessment), sent to schools for review, and then presented to the full Commission for consideration in November.

VIII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. End of Year 2022-23 Unenrollment Data

A copy of the report was distributed for review and the following was noted:

- The spreadsheet shows the months that students are both entering and exiting the charter schools.
- Exited students are broken down by grade, gender, race/ethnicity, whether or not they have a 504 plan or an IEP, economically disadvantaged, returning or first year student, the reason for leaving, language, and English learner.
- The report is currently in draft form as two schools did not exit students before the August 15th MDOE deadline. Another school exited students as required, but do not graduate students until the end of the July. The state reporting system will not show those graduates until the beginning of the 2023-24 school year.

- Data should be finalized by November and will be shared with the Commission at that time.

IX. Unfinished Business

A. Unfinished Business

None

X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Approval of ACADIA Academy's Request to Amend Bylaws

Tori Kornfield made a motion to approve ACADIA Academy's Request to Amend Bylaws.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
A copy of the request was distributed for review and consideration.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Norm Higgins	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye
James Ford	Aye
Leigh Albert	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Tori Kornfield	Aye

B. To Receive and Place on File the Completed Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Intervention Plan

Tori Kornfield made a motion to receive and place on file the completed Maine Academy of Natural Sciences' Intervention Plan.
Tom Keller seconded the motion.
A copy of the plan was distributed for review and consideration. The School Performance Committee noted the following:

- *They are impressed with the gains that MeANS has made.*
- *Chronic absenteeism is still an area of concern, but the Committee recognizes the improvement from previous years.*

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Leigh Albert	Aye
Tori Kornfield	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye
James Ford	Aye

Roll Call

Tom Keller	Aye
Norm Higgins	Aye

C. To Consider the Approval of Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences' Request to Fund SMARTS Curriculum

Leigh Albert made a motion to approve Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences' request to fund SMARTS Curriculum in the amount of $4,800.
Jim Handy seconded the motion.
A copy of the request was distributed for review and consideration.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield	Aye
Norm Higgins	Aye
Brian Langley	Aye
James Ford	Aye
Tom Keller	Aye
Jim Handy	Aye
Leigh Albert	Aye

XI. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action required)

A. New Governing Board Members

Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences - Marie Reimensnyder

B. Board Member Resignations

None

C. Board Member Term Outs

None

XII. Future Topics

A. Future Topics

October

- To Consider the Approval of Maine Connections Academy's Renewal Application

November

- To Receive and Place on File the 2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports

XIII. Announcements

A. Important Dates

- 9/26/23 Public Hearing for Renewal - Maine Connections Academy, 8 Science Park Road, Scarborough and ZOOM (4:30-6:00pm)
- 10/11/23 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony - Maine Arts Academy, 310 Cony Road, Augusta (2:00pm)

XIV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

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* 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.