APPROVED

Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday August 13, 2024 at 1:00 PM

Location
Room # 103, Cross Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta or via Zoom

The **Vision** of the Maine Charter School Commission is that ***"Innovative public charter schools will provide Maine students with an equitable opportunity for an excellent education where students are valued, supported and challenged."***

The **Mission** of the Maine Charter School Commission is ***"To authorize, monitor and support innovative public charter schools that provide a dynamic, high-quality education for every student."***

Reminders:

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

Any person seeking special accommodation for the public meeting should contact Sue Whipkey at (207)816-2187 or susan.whipkey@maine.gov.

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

Directors Absent
None

Directors who arrived after the meeting opened
Leigh Albert

Guests Present
Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Susan Whipkey

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

Leigh Albert arrived at 2:15 PM.

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 Aug 13, 2024 at 1:06 PM.
Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 6/11/24 Commission Meeting Minutes

Tom Keller made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Commission Meeting on 06-11-24.
On page 11 of 57, change "Angus" to "Angus King"
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

II. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tori reported the following:

- The committee reviewed the Panorama Survey Results and noted concern for ACADIA Academy and Fiddlehead.
- The committee recommends not to approve the NWEA Map waiver.
- The committee recommends Maine Arts Academy can move forward with their request to add grades 7 & 8.

B. Finance Committee

James and Brian reported the following:

- Joe Drago presented an analysis of the 3rd Quarter Scores, provided an ACADIA status report and discussed the CRCS new facility project.
- Amy presented the final reconciled FY24 MCSC spending report.
- The committee discussed MeArts Academy's request to add grades 7 & 8 beginning in 2025 and recommends they move forward with the addition. The full Commission vote will occur in the September meeting.

C. Executive Committee

Norm mentioned a change of structure for staff to discuss further in the Executive Director portion of the meeting.

III. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

Edward Polewarczyk, Maine House District 47 representative attended to learn about Charter Schools. The Commissioners provided him an overview on the operations of the Commission.

Sherry Gilbert from Maine Arts Academy reported on the school's excitement about the renovations of their new building.

IV. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

Lana reported the following:

- Casey Bauer, ACADIA's executive director has resigned. She offered thanks for his services and best wishes to him.
- Ecology Learning Center and Maine Virtual Academy are both in renewal. They each continue to meet the document review deadlines, and their applications will be submitted on August 30. The Year 4 reports will be reviewed by the School Performance Committee in September and will be included in the evidence provided to the Commission for the October renewal vote.
- The Maine Connections Academy 5 Year Contract has been signed. Congratulations to them for starting the next 5-year term.
- Baxter Acadamy's science teacher Katie Straight is a Semifinalist for the Maine Teacher of the Year. She is currently Cumberland County Teacher of the Year.

B. Organizational Updates

- Eight Letters of Intent ("LOI") to apply for a new charter school were received. The application due date is February 13. The Commission will have a review team (to be formed). David Hartman will provide training to the team who will make finalist recommendations during the April Commission meeting. Capacity interviews and public hearings for the finalists will take place prior to a May Commission vote on the new charter school to open in the fall of 2026. Norm spoke about interest level from local college administrators, particularly in workforce development and expanding educational opportunities in Maine. He will update Mike Brennan on the application process.
- Lana reminded Commission members that per statute, members are not to engage with applicants at this stage in the process.
- Tom relayed that the terms for 3 Commissioners expire in May of 2025, the month of the vote.
- Amy, Joe and Lana have been attending end of year meetings with the administration and board members of each school. They review the Performance Framework detail and advise on where schools are doing well, where there are areas of improvement and growth, and where they need to focus attention. The results will be part of the annual reports which will come before the Commission for approval in the November meeting.
- The School Performance Committee determined to not extend the NWEA testing waiver for this coming year to the schools that have requested it. The Commission remains unconvinced the Maine Through Year Assessment provides reliable growth data to impact instruction and so the students will be required to take the NWEA Map assessment.

- Now that the Commission's Mission, Vision and Values Statements have been revised, a new strategic plan will be launched in early 2025. Professional development to draft the plan will be scheduled in December with Naomi Ruben DeVeaux who is contracting with the National Charter Schools Institute. Tentatively, the PD will be scheduled on the morning of December 10th, prior to the monthly Commission meeting.
- Staffing update - Sue Whipkey has taken on additional financial responsibilities. She was offered and has accepted the newly created Budget Manager role.

V. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. Spring 2023 Panorama Survey Results

Lana reviewed the Panorama Survey results where the schools are compared to like schools nationally on a percentile basis. The results and action plans to address any concerns are discussed during the End of Year Meetings with school leadership. Data leads to improvement because schools know what to improve.

VI. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider the Appointment of Norm Higgins as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission

Jim Handy made a motion to appoint Norm Higgins as Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

B. To Consider the Appointment of Leigh Weisenburger Albert as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission

Brian Langley made a motion to appoint Leigh Weisenburger Albert as Vice Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission.
James Ford seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

C. To Consider the Approval of the Proposed Changes to Internal MCSC Policies and Procedures

Jim Handy made a motion to approve the proposed changes to Internal MCSC Policies and Procedures.
Tori Kornfield seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

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

VII. New Business Requiring Notification to the Commission (No formal action to be taken by Commission)

A. New Governing Board Members

- *Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (Daniel Strader)*

B. Board Member Resignations

- *Community Regional Charter School (Tonya Arnold)*
- *Ecology Learning Center (Michael Shell)*

C. Board Member Term Outs

- *Baxter Academy for Technology and Science (Thorn Dickinson)*
- *Ecology Learning Center (Laura Graham)*

- *Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (Kimberly Allen)*
- *Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences (Ben Kramer)*
- *Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Dana Doran)*
- *Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (Mike Muir)*

VIII. Next Month's Topics

A. Next Month's Topics

- SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports Addendum
- SY2023-24 End of Year Unenrollment Data
- To Consider the Approval of Maine Arts Academy's Request to Expand Grade Levels to Include Grade 7 and Grade 8

- Annual Monitoring Reports will be received in November

IX. Announcements

A. Important Dates

- 9/17/24 Public Hearing for Renewal - Ecology Learning Center (2:30-4:00pm/42 Depot Street, Unity)
- 9/26/24 Public Hearing for Renewal - Maine Virtual Academy (1:00-2:30pm/ZOOM)
- 12/9/24 Governing Board Strategic Planning PD Session (10:00-12:00pm)
- 12/10/24 Commission Strategic Planning PD Session (10:00-12:00pm)

B. Upcoming Business Meetings

- **September 10, 2024** *(Maine Arts Academy, 310 Cony Road, Augusta) or Zoom*
- **October 8, 2024** *(Cross Office Building, Room #103, Augusta) or Zoom*
- **November 12, 2024** *(Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences, 25 Shaker Road, Gray) or Zoom*

X. Executive Session

A. Annual Performance Review

At 2:18 pm, Norm Higgins called the Commission members into Executive Session to discuss the Executive Director's annual performance review. The members came out of Executive Session at 3:15 pm.

XI. 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 3:16 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.