

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held September 15, 2020

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 2:00 PM, September 15, 2020. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Ed LeBlanc, Peter Mills, and Kim Whitman. Amy Carlisle is on vacation.

Also attending were Melinda Browne, Donald Fournier, Jillian Dearborn, Lena Vitagliano, Jennifer Hight, Lizzie Malvicini, Chelsea Osgood, Cheryl Brigham, Christina O'Grady, Todd McIntire from K12, and Bob Kautz from the Commission.

Minutes. Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Donna, minutes of August 18 were approved.

Finance. Jennifer reported on management of COVID funds. \$290,000 must be spent by December 30. We have two years to find purposes for the remaining \$90,000. Federal rules require that an invoice must be submitted in justification for each expense.

FY 21 Budget. The proposed financial budget for fiscal year 2021 was reviewed. Upon motion by Donna Pelletier, seconded by Ed LeBlanc, the financial package was unanimously approved and Jennifer Hight was authorized to upload MEVA's FY 21 budget package to the Maine Department of Education.

Capital threshold. Our present capitalization policy is to set up depreciation on any asset purchased for \$1000 or more. Jennifer recommends that it be raised to \$5000 as GAAP allows. Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Kim, it was unanimously voted to establish \$5000 as the threshold for capitalization and to write off any fully depreciated assets that are below the \$5000 threshold. The annual audit started virtually last week and will be complete in October

Head of School. NWEA is at 85% participation for new students this fall. The Rauch Unit scale, or RIT, is an indication of student level, an achievement point at which they can answer 50% of the questions. It is norm referenced to the performance of many students throughout the nation. Testing norms are reestablished every five years. It was just done in 2020 and this fall begins a new screening cycle.

Don said that we are enhancing the use of iXL together with NWEA. Melinda said that iXL provides a daily normative assessment. The Commission is encouraging use of NWEA three times per year. MEVA's winter test this year will be during the week of January 15, a week later than before.

MEA Refresher. 7th and 8th graders take two test series published by eMPower, one for English Language Arts & Literacy and the other for Mathematics. MEVA's results for both in 2018-19 were below state averages. In math, 80% were either below or well below state expectations. Statewide 64% of students fell behind in math. ELA Literacy scores for MEVA students were somewhat closer to the state average, 54% below expectations for MEVA versus 44% for the state as a whole.

Juniors in high school take the SAT both in ELA/Literacy and in Math. MEVA's scores were below state averages in both but especially so in Math where 91% of MEVA students were below expectations versus 67% statewide. In ELA/Literacy, 57% of MEVA students were below expectations whereas the state average was 46%.

Special Education. Lena Vitagliano has just taken over as special education administrator and has been extremely busy conducting intake meetings for new students. She has not seen such complexity in the level of need as is demonstrated by our students. They are diverse. She has just completed a flurry of

intakes for 44 students, including meetings and phone calls with parents, and gathering of paperwork and documentation.

Many parents have been uncertain about whether their students should remain in a virtual setting. Because of options within their school districts, MEVA has lost a few of them. However, they received a lot of support from us to help consider their choices. We have 4 or 5 students still left for intake. Overseeing this process at the beginning of the school year is certainly more than part time work.

We have 70 special education students. Some are also Section 504. We have sixteen in self-contained programs. Case loads are manageable with current staff of six teachers and one ed tech. They vary in levels of experience. We expect to test all of our students with NWEA. Such testing is always an opportunity to improve instruction.

We have access to good research-based assessments with which to measure progress. It is our job to re-examine instructional methods if we fail to see adequate progress.

Administratively, we are focusing on IEP writing. The IEPs we have received on new students are highly varied, making it hard for us to maintain structure. Some of them adopt as many as 15 goals as opposed to only 3 or 4 manageable ones. We need our IEPs to rely on baseline data with goals that are achievable.

We are blessed this year by having an ed tech on staff who had been assigned to a student who is no longer with us. Some of our students come from a one-on-one experience which we don't offer.

We have bi-weekly progress meetings for students and I meet with staff each week. We are in continuous contact with families who are contacted at least once monthly by a teacher. The big challenge is lack of face to face contact. Approximately 17% of our enrolled students are identified for special education.

Program Management & Enrollment. Stephanie Emery says we have 427 enrolled students and should have our allotted 429 by October 1. We have a supply & demand issue with computers with some delays in getting them out to students. Five are still waiting, which is not too bad. Melinda says K12 is still shipping. One student is homeless. Every computer is assigned by serial number. When they come back, K12 refurbishes them.

Kim said that her daughter uses her own PC and doesn't seem to need one from K12. Melinda said that buying a tablet can be a CARES fund expense. Todd McIntire recommends avoiding Chrome Books. K12 has found them hard to certify for all uses. Jillian pointed out that we would be on our own for tech assistance on a machine that is not from K12.

Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Donna, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary