

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held May 21, 2019

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened at 2:00 PM, May 21, 2019, in the Maine Virtual Academy offices in Augusta. Members attending in person were Peter Mills and Ed LeBlanc. Donna Madore joined at 2:37 PM. Amy Carlisle attended by phone.

Also attending in person were Melinda Browne, Dee Pouzol, Chelsea Osgood, Patti Ashley, Jillian Dearborn, Jennifer Hight, and Gina Post from the Commission. On the phone were Fadia Afaneh and Sarah Berger.

Minutes. Upon Motion by Ed, seconded by Peter, minutes for the meeting of April 23 were approved.

Financial Report. Wipfli/Macpage will conduct its audit on August 6, 7 and 8. A new travel policy to be drafted by Jillian is still under consideration. We need to purchase more laptops for new hires and some fireproof file cabinets. Jillian reports that the west wing space is about 5300 square feet. It will cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000 to paint. We need to shampoo the carpet and strip and clean the tile floor. Peter agreed to prepare a simple lease confirming our rental of the west wing from June 1, 2019, through July 31, 2020.

Staffing. Melinda reports that she is interviewing for a 5th Special Ed teacher. She proposes that we hire two more teachers to meet the needs of targeted instruction and to allow teachers to work together in smaller groups. One reason that progress measured by the NWEA has been so successful is that teachers are working under strict protocols for instruction.

Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Ed, it was voted to authorize hiring two more teachers as well as a fifth Special Ed teacher. Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Ed, the financial package was approved.

Report from Gina Post

Frameworks in general. A new performance framework for FY 20 is being formulated. Gina says that it has been a major undertaking. Under the former frameworks, Commission staff were looking at too many indicators to determine whether a school is doing well. We needed to be more selective in judging what factors are important. [Donna joined the meeting.] Gina said that the Commission is now trying to use data that the schools already need to report and thus to use a tidier framework than before,

Academic Proficiency and Growth. The MEA tests for academic proficiency whereas the NWEA tests for growth. We will use a linking study to merge the MEA with NWEA. There is talk of the state changing proficiency standards yet again. Proficiency must include the MEA as a minimum, but the Commission is still dedicated to growth as a primary goal. We can use NWEA for professional development. All nine charters are now using it. The Commission pays for NWEA upon condition that the teachers take three required trainings. Commission staff are working with NWEA to develop a custom report to follow cohorts of students within each school with a goal that 60% to 70% should meet expectations.

Absenteeism. We measure for chronic absenteeism but the schools also want raw attendance data included. Being absent for more than 17 or 18 days in a year is regarded as chronic absenteeism. Some Maine schools have more than 65% chronically absent. Chronically absent includes both excused and unexcused absences. DOE's goal is to see fewer than 10% chronically absent.

Enrollment. The goal is to see that 85% of eligible students as of October 1 are still present on the last day of school. In our first year, it was 60%. Now it is 85%. There is also the matter of current enrollment from year to year. The Commission seeks a graduation rate at 90% or higher within four years. There is also a 5th and 6th year rate. In the “partially meets” category, growth can count. The Commission wants to see 70% of eligible students participate in college courses, AP courses, a certificate program or other post-secondary opportunities before graduation.

Governing Boards. The Commission wants to see boards meet every month or at least every two months. Because the application for a charter school is appended to the contract issued by the Commission, it often seems difficult to amend any of its terms.

Surveys. The Commission is asking schools to submit action plans to comply with Commission criteria. The Panorama surveys are good measures of school climate in each category. It suffices to see a 40% response from parents and a 70% response from teachers.

At present, schools may choose to be evaluated by either the old or the new set of frameworks. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Peter, it was voted to adopt the new framework in its April 26 draft.

MeVA’s renewal hearing. Our renewal hearing is set for November 1. We need our performance report by June 30 with application guidance. The Commission will first release the full application and then they do a visit and a public hearing. Gina will look into advancing the application for renewal if possible. But the MEA results are not out until October.

Spring 2019 NWEA results. We closed the testing window last Wednesday and reviewed results on Saturday. High School was 80%. Eighth grade was good for reading but not for math. Our strategy is to focus on pacing and maps and to connect often with families. Every student from 8th grade up is required to have a graduation plan.

We plan to refine our co-teaching techniques for grades seven through ten. Using Demos, students can share their work with the class. In team teaching settings for seventh and eighth grades, it is sometimes hard for the teacher of record to let go and allow the co-teacher to take over. Students who have exhibited slow growth are being worked with specifically. Next year we will restore the mid-winter NWEA to take place in early December.

Title 1. We have four Title 1 staff members. All four are qualified in math and one is qualified in ELA. Three are for middle school and one for high school.

Melinda presented the annual CEO letter for MCSC. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Peter, it was approved.

Enrollment Data. All families have been contacted for re-registering. 89% are re-registering, 35 of our 5th graders, 43 of our 8th, 49 of our ninth, 50 of our tenth, and 66 of our eleventh. We have 16 new families among seventh graders, 18 new in eighth, 16 in ninth, 17 in 10th and 9 in eleventh. Some are siblings. We plan to send out an email inviting our existing families to send new families in for a visit. Melinda would like to have 65 students in each grade. Seventh grade is a little below that.

Dee Pouzol said that we have about 55 Special Ed students. All but three of this year’s are returning. We

also have twenty 504 accommodation students. Some are with us because of our on-line format. We use Child find to identify those with disability or special needs. We flagged several during NWEA testing.

Executive Session

At 4:15 PM upon motion by Donna, seconded by Peter, it was unanimously voted to go into executive session under 1 MRSA §405, sub-§6, ¶A to discuss the compensation, employment, and duties of employees of Maine Virtual Academy.

At 5:15 PM, it was unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Staffing for next year

Although no formal action is taken by the Board at this time, it was agreed to explore the following staff enhancements for the coming year:

1. Advertise for a **School Principal** to oversee instruction and evaluate teachers.
2. Advertise for a **Director of Student Services** to direct Special Education, 504 accommodations and a Gifted and Talented Program.
3. Advertise for a **Certified Guidance Counselor** to oversee scheduling, student academic placement, and post-graduate planning. The position would require working for 15 days beyond the regular school year.
4. Retain our current **Academic Advisor** to continue as an assistant to the Guidance Counselor on a schedule consistent with that required of teaching staff.
5. Retain a fifth Special Ed teacher and two other teachers as voted on earlier.

Interviewing teaching staff will be done jointly by the Head of School, by the Human Resources Director and by a peer teacher selected by both of them. If a School Principal is on board, then that person will be a fourth joint participant.

Interviewing for a Principal, a Director of Student Services and a Certified Guidance Counselor will be done jointly by the Head of School, the Human Resources Director, a member of the Board and a teacher to be selected by the other three.

Job descriptions will be prepared and circulated and posted when ready.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary