

Strategic Planning Notes

June 8, 2015, Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes accepted as written by a Commission vote 7-7-15.

The Maine Charter School Commission held a meeting on **Monday, June 8, 2015**, at the Burton M. Cross State Office Building, 111 Sewall Street, Augusta.

The meeting was called to order by Shelley Reed, Chair at 9:30 a.m.

For opening information see attached Agenda and Ground Rules.

A. Present a brief summary or snapshot of the 6 items.

1. Self-evaluation for MCSC

MCSC Self Evaluation Questions and Results attached.

2. Executive Director Evaluation – most stakeholders (Members and School Leaders) responded to the evaluation, as well as, Bob provided his responses. It is interesting to see with the three groups that we all “know” the same Bob.

For information, please contact Shelley Reed, Chair.

Moved by Jana Lapoint; seconded by Mike Wilhelm and voted unanimously to move into executive session for the Executive Director evaluation.

9:55 a.m. Executive Session ended.

3. Summary of Charter School Information – Number of Students Enrolled 2014-15; Number of Staff Employed; Mission; Vision. Spreadsheet attached.

Numbers and enrollment will change significantly for some schools next year (2015-2016):

Baxter Academy by 40 students to **270**.

Maine Connections by 60+ students to **360**.

Harpswell Coastal Academy by 55 students to **180**.

MeANS by 44 students to **120**.

Maine Virtual is approaching their enrollment cap of **297**.

Side Bar: Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

Bob Kautz: You will be receiving an invitation from the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. In Phil McCarthy's letter to Peter Geiger, Maine State Board of Education Chair, regarding the approval of John Bird and Laurie Pendleton, a request to meet with the Commission for discussion on education policy issues relevant to: Maine's school funding formula – challenges and differences between the programs and performance of virtual charter schools, "brick & mortar" charter schools and Commission work.

June 5, 2015, Letter attached.

4. Draft Calendar

Report writing dates for end-of-year reports – to be approved 7/7/15.

July 30 = Cornville and Fiddlehead.

July 31 = Baxter and Maine Connections (begin after 10 a.m. for Ande).

August 4 = Harpswell (following Business Meeting).

September 1 = MeANS (following Business Meeting).

Maine Virtual

August 11 = Pre-Opening

December 2 = 90-Day Visit

School visits for school year 2015-16 – discussion for change in procedure/timing of?

5. MCSC Budget

March 25 document (attached) shared with the Legislature – Actuals FY 2013, 2014, Actual/Estimated 2015, Estimated 2016 and 2017.

4-3-15 Budget document (attached) with Projections for FY 2016 and 2017.

For Legislature- provided future potential expenditures for the projected revenue MCSC will be receiving for continuing RFP development, application review/approval and the monitoring of 7-10 public charter schools.

State-line positions would be a potential relating to "how do we treat our people?"
How do you embed charter schools in State Government?

FY 2017 would be the first year this could occur with the MCSC funding; presented to the Legislature that the Commission had not made any decision on it. A reserve fund (*unencumbered balance*) of a year's expenses would also be a component of the 2017 MCSC budget.

Ande Smith: I would never showcase that for them. I do not think we are compelled by law to have State-line positions.

Jana Lapoint: When we talked with Sawin Millett about these becoming State positions, he just laughed. The Governor would never approve. We need to stay away from this politically.

Projected Revenue for FY 16 is 408,000 and for FY 17 is 467,000. With a budget of \$298,000 MCSC will have an excess in revenue, which could lead to MCSC reducing the 3% to a lesser figure to allow more money to stay with the public charter schools.

6. Monitoring, Application, Authorizing Discussion of 5-5-15 Notes (attached).

1. Timing of End-of-Year Visit – Monitoring plan and Contract ***is to be done before the end of the school year.*** End-of-Year Visit amended to a During-the-Year Visit for the classroom pieces and then an End-of-Year Visit when all the information is in from the public charter schools (July or August).

Does experience tell us something different? Is a different time of year more beneficial?

2. Schools writing a summary report with their responses to the Performance Measures illustrating how well they have done with the evidence. Trial this year.

3. Visit to classrooms – suggestion that Review Teams visit the classrooms during the school year.

4. Date of required report – Partial reports in June versus it being after the close of the school year when all information is available.

Some reports are due throughout the year in accordance with the Monitoring Plan and this would remain unchanged –financials, test results, etc.

Schools would prefer to write their reports with all information/data available to them.

Process for Two-phase Application.

For access to Federal Grant Funding and based on other states' experience.

To apply for a Federal Grant, you have to have submitted an application.

Also, would give time to the *Founders* to create a more in depth application.

Some states preliminary application (Rhode Island) is just Maine's Letter of Intent.

Need to determine what qualifies as an application.

Indianapolis – it is a letter of intent, but it requires more information than Maine's, contains some essential information; however, not lengthy either.

Judith: Two-month process from Letter of Intent to the full application:

Two-page Letter of Intent due March 6.

Prospectus was due March 20.

Selected applicants notified by end of April.

Full application due May 15.

Application cycle is twice per year.

No mention to the Federal SEA monies tied to this application process. Would applicants be qualified to apply?

BK: An example of a Prospectus could be – What is the School; addressing Governance – Board Capacity, Who is on the Board; Education Program; Leaders for the school? This could average about 39 pages.

Is this worthy to go to a Full-Application phase?

The full-application would be followed by the Commission granting a charter or not.

Roger/BK - NASCA also recommended Michigan's and Chicago's former two-phase process; they are not recommending the "new" version now being used.

B. Small Groups What is working – What needs to improve?

Group One

What's working?

- Application process; tech asst.
- Accountability, good criteria process in place
- Schools
 - 6 schools
 - Have wait lists
 - Positive results
 - Differentiated missions
- Calendar improved
- Self- reflection—→ 2 apps, monitoring growth
- Deliberative process
- Finances —→ Started with support. Now using 3%.
- Good stewards of taxpayer dollars
- MCSC authorizer and resource
- Use state attorney for legal assistance
- Relationship with DOE helpful (SpEd, Commish, Deb F.)
- Sorted out our role as authorizer

What needs to improve?

- Orientation to new MCSC members
 - Binder
 - Laws
 - Process
 - Role

- Monitoring process
 - Timeline
 - Info
 - Their own summary
 - Need MCSC conversation
 - Accumulate info over time
 - Getting materials and data on time
 - Process not a day
 - Who owns what role? (schools vs MCSC)
 - What info. do we really need?
- Personnel – Resources
 - state vs contract
 - Job description – ID goals → evaluation
 - Know our needs, match with skill set
- Public Documents
- 2-step process given a fleshing out beyond letter of intent
- Renewal/ closure/ infraction, breach of contract
- Language in contract and monitoring doesn't agree

Group Two

What's working?

- Evaluations
 - Commission
 - ED
- Commission has a budget
- Cohesion, communication
- Maine Charter School Commission is a role model for other states
- There is greater respect for our work

What needs to improve?

- Application process
 - Timing
 - Content (fewer pages)
- Re-wicker the monitoring
 - Timing
 - Substance
 - Staffing
- Board involvement in budget
- Maintain knowledgeable, active board
- Review contract

- Amendment process
- Changes
- Enforcement

Common Elements between Groups One and Two

- Budget oversight and knowledge/development
- Re-wicker the monitoring
- Contract (infractions, amendments, changes)
- Application (timing, 2-step)

Differing Elements between Groups One and Two

- Orientation (will be addressed by ED and Chair)
- Personnel management – delivery
- Public Documents - Pull together (Sub-committee: John, Mike, Shelley)
- Maintaining our knowledge and staying active

Sub-committees

Monitoring

(sub-committee: John, Laurie, Jana, Gina)

- Schools' self-assessment for review and report
- Timetable
 - When we do what
 - Dissemination of materials (when and who)
- Clarify what we need to know (1st year, 2nd year, etc.)
- Essential Components
- Prep Materials (last year's report/recommendations; duties of each)
- More budget focus and process of review

Contract

(sub-committee: Ande, Nichi)

- Review for elements
- Non-compliance
- Material/non-material Amendment
- Process to making changes to contract – implementation.

Application

(sub-committee: Jana, Mike)

- Consider a 2-phase app. process
- Review for essential components
- Timeline (ours & theirs)

Budget (MCSC-cash flow, expenditures, income)

(sub-committee: Mike, Ande)

- Process for reviewing budget (including timeline)
- Commission member involvement in developing budget
- Consider future budget in light of Mission and Goals
- Identify needs

Public Documents

(sub-committee: John, Mike, Shelley)

- Pull together

Draft Strategic Plan

The 2015-16 Strategic Plan for the MCSC is to enhance and refine its core business processes to better regulate Maine public charter schools and to help assure their educational and operational excellence. Under this plan, the MCSC will address the following lines of effort:

1. Revise the application process to be more effective and manageable;
2. Improve the effectiveness of the school monitoring process;
3. Define and implement a process for development and management of the Commission's budget; and
4. Consider changes to the form of charter school contract to clarify such areas as mechanisms for non-compliance and amendment processes.

Meetings

July 7 Meeting – Plan of Action and Milestones.

- **First thing to do:** 6-8-15 DRAFT Strategic Planning Notes – Review, refine-reword and Approval by Commission prior to 7/7/15 Meeting.

Frame work.

- Business Meetings are kept to three hours; use several hours to do Committee Work.
- July – Frame up our work.
Teams come with a report-out on their plan of action / milestones.
Plan of Action is a What, How and When.
- July 7 Meeting each Committee (Monitoring, Contract, Application, Budget) brings their plan of action and the milestones and the resources needed to accomplish the task.

Scenario of a hypothetical meeting: *****

(Ande Smith): “**Budget**” is more project planning to walk through.
August Meeting – Review the existing budget using basic broad work steps that lead to Output.

- Part of Business Meeting be IPR's – In process Reviews – Under New Business creates a Place holder in meeting.

“Where are we on the budget?”

Each Committee is responsible.

“Mike and I reviewed the budget and here is an issue we need the Commission to talk about:

The Staffing Model –

Are we in or out of the government system?

Are we going to have Gina X 6 or are we going to have Gina x 1.

Are we going to have 12 Administrative Assistants or 2?

Are we going to outsource the school budgets, contract review?”

PLEASE NOTE: October 21 first scheduled day for In-Person Interviews-Public Hearings; Members returning from Colorado on October 22. Two Meetings per day scheduled, as needed, for Friday, 10/23; Monday, 10/26; Tuesday, 10/27.

“Parking Lot” Items:

- Commission with Legislative Committee – Potential questions and concerns in advance. Maybe not until the Second Session of the 127th Legislature.
- Official decision on state/positions
- Review process
- Outsourcing (budget)
- Leg books listing leg.

Adjourn:

Motion by Jana Lapoint; seconded by Nichi Farnham.