

Maine Charter School Commission

September 10, 2019 Business Meeting Minutes Approved by Commission Vote on October 8, 2019

The Maine Charter School Commission held a regular Business Meeting in the Augusta Room of the Augusta Civic Center on **Tuesday, September 10, 2019**

1. Call to Order and Declare a Quorum

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Nichi Farnham, at 1:10pm and a quorum was declared.

Commission members present were: Nichi Farnham, Chair; John Bird, Vice Chair; Dr. Fern Desjardins; Shelley Reed; Jim Rier; Jana Lapoint; and Laurie Pendleton.

Also present were: Bob Kautz, Gina Post, Amy Allen and Jasmine Canwell.

2. Members of the Public Are Asked to Sign In

Nichi Farnham reminded those present to sign-in if they had not already done so.

Members of the public present were: Lauren Thompson (*Maine Connections Academy*); Susan Cover (*Pine Tree Watch*); Judith Jones (*MACS*); Roger Brainerd (*MACS*); Wendy Betts (*Shadow Group*); Elizabeth Alma (*Ecology Learning Center*); Vicki Wallack (*MSMA*); Matt Newberg (*Maine Academy of Natural Sciences*); Lisa Packard (*Ecology Learning Center*); Joe Drago – 1:19pm (*Consultant*); Patti Oldmixon (*Baxter Academy for Technology and Science*); Nathen Cloutier – 1:34pm (*Eaton Peabody*); Travis Works (*Cornville Regional Charter School*); Kelli Pryor (*Baxter Academy for Technology and Science*); Chad Strout (*Baxter Academy for Technology and Science*).

3. Reminders:

- ✓ **This meeting is being recorded.**
- ✓ **Please turn your cellphones to silent or vibrate.**
- ✓ **Private conversations should be held in the hallway and not during the meeting.**

4. To Consider Action Relative to Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

None

5. To Act Relative to Accepting as Printed the Minutes of the August 6, 2019 Business Meeting.

No Discussion

Moved by John Bird; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to accept as printed the minutes of the August 6, 2019 Business Meeting.

6. To Accept FY19 Budget vs. Actual – September Report

No Discussion

Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by John Bird and voted unanimously by those present to accept the FY19 Budget vs. Actual – September Report.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None

8. NEW BUSINESS

8a. To Consider Ecology Learning Center’s Application for Contract/Charter Negotiations

Jana Lapoint read a letter of support for the Ecology Learning Center’s application. A copy of the letter is on file in the Maine Charter School Commission Office.

Several members of the Commission spoke in favor of the application and Commission Chair, Nichi Farnham acknowledged the work and effort of the applicant and members of the Review Team.

The Review Team finds that the Ecology Learning Center has proposed a school that will likely be an organizational, financial, and academic success and recommends that the Ecology Learning Center’s application be approved to move to charter contract negotiations.

Moved by Shelley Reed; seconded by Laurie Pendleton and voted unanimously by those present to consider Ecology Learning Center’s Application for Contract/Charter Negotiations.

8b. To Consider and Approve Revised Performance Framework Adding Achievement Gaps as Proposed Target

A copy of the draft revised Performance Framework was presented for review and discussion.

There were several recommended wording edits which will be incorporated into the final approved framework before distribution.

Moved by Laurie Pendleton; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to consider and approve revised Performance Framework adding Achievement Gaps as Proposed Target.

9. REPORTS

9a. Chair – Nichi Farnham

Nichi asked that meetings begin on time and asked for confirmation on location of upcoming meetings.

9b. Vice Chair – John Bird

No Report

9c. Executive Director – Bob Kautz

Portland Press Herald Visit Update

Bob shared that on August 27, 2019 he, Gina, Amy, and Jana met with Greg Kesich of the Portland Press Herald.

Revised Agenda Format Discussion

Format changes to the monthly agenda were discussed. The goals for the new agenda are to provide transparency, better communication and to assign all agenda items to a responsibility or performance framework. The new agenda format will be used at the October 8th, Business Meeting.

SharePoint Access Discussion (with Amy Allen)

Amy noted that the State had agreed to provide SharePoint access to Commission members if interested. Amy will share the Record Retention folder to Commission members before the next Business Meeting.

Budget Discussion (with Amy Allen)

Budget notes explaining each line of the budget in greater detail were distributed for review.

9d. Director of Program Management – Gina Post

Commission Member Handbook

A copy of the Commission Member Handbook was distributed and described. This book will serve as a convenient source of information supporting the Commission members responsibilities.

Graduation Study Update

Gina presented information on a graduate study being performed by Plimpton Research on Maine's charter school graduates.

End of Year Monitoring Visits Update

Gina shared that all end of year visits with boards and administration were complete. The Visit Team consisted of Bob Kautz, Gina Post, Joe Mattos, Joe Dragos, and Roberta Lucas. Site visit reports will be sent to the schools in October.

2019-20 School Opening Updates

Gina noted that all nine charter schools had successfully opened with the following enrollment:

- ACADIA Academy – 226 students
- Baxter Academy for Technology and Science – 412 students

- Cornville Regional Charter School – 307 students, and 7 more expected to start
- Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences – 145 students
- Harpswell Coastal Academy – 192 students
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences – 187 students
- Maine Arts Academy – 200 students
- Maine Connections Academy – 413 students
- Maine Virtual Academy – 380 students

School News

Gina shared the following information:

- ACADIA Academy – Recently hired Tracy Turner as an Administrative Assistant/Facilities Manager.
- Baxter Academy for Technology and Science – Recently hired Chad Strout as the new Head of School; currently searching for a Dean of Students.
- Cornville Regional Charter School – Progress is being made at the new facility located at the Overman Academy building.
- Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences – Has a new Business Manager, Rachel McMullen; adding grade 6 this year.
- Harpswell Coastal Academy – Recently hired Scott Barksdale as the new Head of School; has submitted a request to add grade 5 for 2020-2021.
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences – Has a new Head of School, Matthew Newberg.
- Maine Arts Academy – Has a new sign on the road and office building.
- Maine Connections Academy – Currently looking to hire a principal; in the process of relocating the facility.
- Maine Virtual Academy – In process of completing the renewal application due September 30th, 2019; preparing for the SEL survey through Panorama.

Website Demo

Gina noted that the website is close to completion. Amy, who built the website, reviewed several screenshots of the site that were shown to the Commission. An announcement will be made when the new site goes live.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

10a. Turn in Expense Account Vouchers at the End of the Meeting

10b. Next Business Meeting – October 8, 2019 (*Room #541, Cross Office Building*)

11. OTHER COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

None

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Brainerd from MACS shared that Jed Wallace from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools will be hosting a meeting in Portland on September 26th to discuss the recent impact of state legislation. Roger also shared that the University of New England will be hosting an Education Summit on September 27th. Speakers for the summit will be former US President Bill Clinton and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

The Hall of Flags event will once again be held during National School Choice Week. This will take place on Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

Finally, Roger shared that State Entities Grants were recently awarded as follows -- \$46 million to New Hampshire, \$25 million to Alabama, and \$25 million to Washington State. These grants will assist states with authorizing activities.

13. ADJOURN – Meeting was adjourned at 3:13pm.

Moved by Dr. Fern Desjardins; seconded by Shelley Reed and voted unanimously by those present to adjourn.