

APPROVED



Maine Charter School Commission

Minutes

Monthly Commission Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday November 14, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Location

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, 13 Easler Road, Hinckley or via [ZOOM](#)

The **Vision** of the Maine Charter School Commission is that "*All of Maine's children will have access to a vibrant ecosystem of diverse schools so that all of them can become happy, healthy and thriving citizens.*"

The **Mission** of the Maine Charter School Commission is "*To authorize, monitor and develop unique public charter schools that provide a dynamic, superlative 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.
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Directors Present

Brian Langley, James Ford (remote), Jim Handy (remote), Norm Higgins, Tom Keller (remote)

Directors Absent

Leigh Albert, Tori Kornfield

Guests Present

Amy Allen (remote), Lana Ewing, Rachel Spell

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

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 Nov 14, 2023 at 1:01 PM.

C. To Consider the Approval of the 10/10/23 Commission Meeting

Brian Langley made a motion to approve the minutes from Monthly Commission Meeting on 10-10-23.

Jim Handy seconded the motion.

A copy of the minutes was distributed for review and consideration.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Tori Kornfield Absent

Norm Higgins Aye

James Ford Aye

Tom Keller Aye

Leigh Albert Absent

Brian Langley Aye

Jim Handy Aye

II. Comments from Commission Chair

A. Comments

Reflection of tragedy in Lewiston.

18 seconds of silence for lives lost.

III. Additions or Adjustments to the Agenda

A. Additions/Adjustments

None.

IV. Committee Reports

A. School Performance Committee

Tom presented.

- Considered increased enrollment for MeVa and were supportive in request.

- Discussed annual reports for each school, mid-year reports, and annual report for commissioner.

B. Finance Committee

Amy presented.

- Annual report to commissioner.
- Commission oversight fee. Plan for future, think of putting plan in place going forward. Will help schools prepare. Budget increasing .1% annually until up to 3%.
- Financial health of portfolio, reviewed by Joe Drago.
- Three year financial plans - first year of requiring schools to submit these plans. Staff has been meeting with schools to go over 3YFP.
- Maine Virtual Academy request to increase enrollment discussion (supportive in request).

C. Executive Committee

Norm presented.

- Refine roll of executive committee.
- Legislature: Barbara Bagshaw submitted a change that did not pass. Discussion in future.

Process of Adding 10th School to Portfolio

- Lana proposed amended timeline for application. Draft release of application, 7 months, then official application being released. Would allow for 13 months until due date so schools can have a year to work on and get done.
- Hour long info sessions, webinars, open to public for questions.
- July 1st for official release of application. Letter of intent is due 15 days after official release (July 15th)
- Committee was in favor of this timeline change.
- Other parts of Maine/rural/etc. Seem to be focused on southern Maine. Limited on area. Unless school is very small. Hybrid school? Potential solution?
- Vision of 10th school?
- In rural Maine, populations in schools are declining. Many schools North of Augusta losing population. Southern Maine, school population is growing.
- Hire external help to train MCSC on new application process, use rubric to make determinations based on application. (Rubric is still in revision phase). Review team that consists commission members.
- Has to be brock/mortar because at virtual cap. Hybrid doesn't count, however.

V. Presentations

A.

Maine Academy of Natural Sciences

Matt Newberg presented.

- School is off to a wonderful start.
- Partnered with Acadia. Overnights. Blacksmithing program. Intensive experiences.
- Chronic absenteeism down considerably.
- On track to graduate solid for campus.
- Some open positions with staff.
- Waitlist for threshold program. Blended (remote and teachers home visit) Social anxiety is top factor for students being interested. Some campus students wait to maybe move to threshold program, also teen parents, and students who have issues getting to school even with hub transportation.

VI. Public Comment*

A. Public Comment

None.

VII. Executive Director/Commission Staff Report

A. School Updates

Lana presented.

- Lana thanks everyone for their work in Lewiston area during tragedy.
- Highlight Baxter Academy for an article about a student at Baxter about navigating student admissions for college and how much support she has gotten from her school.
- Student semi-finalist for National Merit Scholarship from Baxter also in an article as well.
- Successful Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at MAA went very well. Excellent student performances.
- HCA final audit complete. Check with remaining balance will be submitted after paying debts. Once accounts settled, board will formally dissolve. In process. Board has thorough and thoughtful in resolving debts and school has shown strong fiscal responsibility in closing year.
- Time to reflect on HCA? Learn from - what to do better, etc. No public formal reflection happened yet but is a good suggestion.

B. Organizational Updates

- Finishing up first quarter of year, Quarter One Summary Report
Progress: All Complete or On Track
Mid-Years Planned

Strategic Planning

New School RFP

Upcoming is MCA (drafting charter contract), draft performance framework revisions, and internal policy review.

- Professional Development Coming up Next Month for Development Session (December 11th) Augusta Civic Center, to Look at Performance Framework, Open to All Board Members and School Leaders.

Look at tool with school data, idea is to see how to use framework to understand and work with.

- Looking at results of self evaluation to discuss strengths and places of development.

- NACSACon

Lana attended on behalf of Maine.

Other state laws vs Maine's laws with charter.

Presented values based authorizing which received good feedback.

- New school application review.

Some changes made.

More categories in mission/purpose sections.

Timeline revision already talked about.

C. Media Updates

VIII. Monthly School Portfolio/Data Report

A. Final SY2022-23 Unenrollment

Presented by Amy

- Unenrollment/Enrollment Project
- Staff keeps track of enrollment monthly, even after 10/1 count.
- Student Demographics. (Language, grade, economic stats, special ed, race, gender, location, etc)
- Better understanding of where students are going and why. (graduating, moving away)
Unenrolled 100 more students than last year but a whole school unenrolled (HCA)
- Schools retaining more students than in past.
- Data will go to commissioner.
- This kind of data can help schools reflect.

IX. Unfinished Business

A. Unfinished Business

None.

X. New Business Requiring Approval and/or Acceptance

A. To Consider Approval of Maine Virtual Academy's Request to Increase Enrollment

- Requesting modest (390 to 450) increase. With MCA now at 500, MeVa's increase to 450 will be nearing state cap of 1000 virtual.
School is in good standing with strong performance.
- School has a waiting list.
- One of the chairs impressed with improvements over the years, tracking closely.

Tom Keller made a motion to approve Maine Virtual Academy's request to increase enrollment.

Brian Langley seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

B. To Consider Maine Arts Academy's Request to Amend Bylaws

- Executive committee, request in three parts.
- Extend board term limits to eliminate officer term limits.
- Bylaws timeline to publish within commission's timeline.

Jim Handy made a motion to approve Maine Arts Academy's request to amend bylaws.

Brian Langley seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

C. To Consider Approval of Dr. Mary Madden's Proposal to Conduct Maine Virtual Academy's Independent Third Party Evaluation

- Virtual schools had third party evaluator proposal from Dr Mary Madden to conduct this year's third party evaluation for MeVA,
- Has to be agreed upon with MeVA.
- Dr. Madden has done work with commission in past that were thorough.

Tom Keller made a motion to approve Dr. Mary Madden's proposal to conduct Maine Virtual Academy's Independent Third Party Evaluation.

James Ford seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Norm Higgins Aye

Jim Handy Aye

Tori Kornfield Absent

Brian Langley Aye

Leigh Albert Absent

Tom Keller Aye

James Ford Aye

D. To Receive and Place on File SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports

- Each school gets an annual monitoring report every year, required to do annually. Reports are long and there are summaries in agenda; school's performance information.
- Generally strong performance within portfolio. All high schools met or exceeded graduation target.
- School year persistence was strong (staying multiple years).
- Chronic absenteeism is improving. 4 out of 10 met or exceeded target. Another 5 schools improved from previous year.
- Release of Maine three year assessment data has been delayed. That data is not available to be included in those reports.
- Two schools double tested their students and both schools met or exceeded academic growth targets.
- Amendment will be made later this year to include this data with re-released reports as full versions.

Tom Keller made a motion to Receive and place on file the SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Reports.

Brian Langley seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Brian Langley Aye

Jim Handy Aye

Leigh Albert Absent

Tori Kornfield Absent

Roll Call

Tom Keller Aye
James Ford Aye
Norm Higgins Aye

E. To Receive and Place on File SY2022-23 Annual Report to the Commissioner

- Role of charter schools and their performance? Report, lots of data, what's going well/what needs improvement.
- Charts are helpful, more accurate data.
- Report provides a good picture of where charter schools are in Maine right now.
- First year with no extension having to be filed!

Tom Keller made a motion to Receive and place on file SY2022-23 Annual Report to the Commissioner.

Jim Handy seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

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

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

A. New Governing Board Members

None.

B. Board Member Resignations

Fiddlehead - Laura Newman

C. Board Member Term Outs

None.

XII. Next Month's Topics

A. Next Month's Topics

- Presentation on 10/1 Enrollment Data.

- At least one third party evaluation happening next month.

XIII. Announcements

A. Important Dates

None.

B. Next Regular Business Meeting

- December 12th at 1:00pm/Cross Building in Augusta, ME or via Zoom

XIV. 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 2:48 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Norm Higgins

Documents used during the meeting

- FY24 MCSC Budget vs Actual Report (Overview).pdf
- NASBE Honors Maine State Board of Educa...pdf
- Bill Lifting Enrollment Cap on Maine's Virtual Charter Schools Slated For Consideration in Legislature Next Year.pdf
- Maine Arts Academy unveils conversion of former veterans' home in Augusta _
Mainebiz.biz.pdf
- Diary of a High School Senior-Navigating college admissions.pdf
- 2022-23 Unenrollment Data-FINAL.pdf
- MeVA - Amendment Request (Enrollment Expansion).pdf
- MeAA - _Amendment_for_Change_in_School_ByLaws_October_2023.pdf
- MEVA 2023-2024 Evaluation Proposal .pdf
- DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - ACADIA.pdf
- DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Baxter Academy for Technology and
Science.pdf
- DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Community Regional Charter School.pdf
- DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Ecology Learning Center.pdf
- DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences.pdf

- DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Harpswell Coastal Academy.pdf
 - DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Academy of Natural Sciences.pdf
 - DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Arts Academy.pdf
 - DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Connections Academy.pdf
 - DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Monitoring Report - Maine Virtual Academy.pdf
 - DRAFT SY2022-23 Annual Report to the Commissioner.pdf
 - MeVA - New Governing Board Member (Susan Walters).pdf
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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.