

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held March 18, 2025

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 4:00 PM, March 18th, 2025. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Cherieann Harrison, Tina Meserve, and Susan Walters. A quorum was present.

Attending for Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) were Melinda Browne, Don Fournier, Christina O'Grady, Lena Vitagliano, Chelsea Osgood, Heather Larchar, Jillian Dearborn, and Stephanie Emery.

Attending from Stride was Tom Travia.

Opening Items.

Approval of Minutes. Tina motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of February 25th, 2025. Cherieann seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Finance Report.

FY24 Form 990:

- The FY24 Form 990 was distributed for your review and approval.
- The document incorporates the final figures from the approved FY24 audit.
- The board's approval of the FY24 Form 990 will be recorded in the meeting minutes to demonstrate compliance.

Dr. Browne noted that FY25 Q3 financials were due in May. The FY24 Form 990 finally came in and was sent to the board for review.

Tina motioned to approve the FY24 Form 990. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

FY26 Budget Planning Update:

- Workshops on 1/13, 2/10, 2/27, 3/4, and 4/7. 2:00 pm.
- Chad Cote, Clark Insurance, attended on 3/4 and plans to attend on 4/7.

Dr. Browne reported that our next budgeting workshop will be on April 7th at 2pm. Chad Cote will be attending this budgeting workshop.

Donna made the point that the insurance costs would not be concrete until after May 1st. This will take time for the board to figure out, plus they will discuss concerns about federal and state funding.

Dr. Browne stated, Chad Cote is from Clark insurance, and he was preparing to go over health insurance plan options for the next year.

Administration. Dr. Melinda Browne presented the Head of School Report.

SY-2024/2025 Progress:

- MEVA received a positive Mid-Year Check-In Meeting Report from Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC).
- The Thriving Pulse Check #2 Survey Results were sent for your review. We utilize this feedback to improve our school.
- We are administering the Panorama School Climate Survey beginning on March 24th. This is a MCSC Performance Measure.
- Re-registration: Ninety-one percent (91%) of students eligible to return have re-registered for SY-2025/2026. We missed having a lottery by twenty (20) students. Seat offers for the next school year are underway.
- MEVA earned National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) approval, supporting students' scholarship opportunities.

The Mid-Year Check-In Meeting Report is based on the January meeting with the commission. Overall, the report was strong. However, MEVA is aware of the areas that need work and is addressing them with action steps.

Thriving Pulse Check Survey #2 was sent by Stride. Forty-eight (48) individuals participated in the survey, which was a substantial number. Feedback from the survey was positive.

The Charter Commission's Panorama School Climate Survey was being distributed on March 24th. Dr. Browne committed to sharing these results when they were published in June.

SY-2025/2026 Re-Registration – Ninety-one percent (91%) of families are returning to MEVA, we exceeded the performance measure. MEVA was close to a lottery, with only twenty (20) students away from having one. This includes factoring in the enrollment increase of four-hundred ninety-five (495) students.

NCAA – MEVA now has approved courses through the NCAA, which will make this easier for students going forward in obtaining scholarships for college.

Teacher Presentation. (Heather Larchar): Dr. Browne said that Heather created math maps for grade 9. Heather has been with MEVA for eight (8) years.

Heather said that she teaches the high school grade levels. Currently, the math department utilizes our own teacher-created materials. We also use and add discussion questions, so students can write about math. Heather offers a general and honors track for students. Students have choices to pick from within the units. Heather has also introduced Gizmos into their units which are worked on outside of class.

The math department has a math intervention program which they pull from the IXL diagnostics. We assign weekly skills. The students' NWEA MAP Growth scores prove that this is working so far. The math department works well and cohesively together.

Donna said she appreciated the teamwork, and adjusting things every now and then.

MEVA Working Social Engagement Plan:

- We distributed a copy of our working Social Engagement Plan for your information.
- The purpose of the working plan is to guide the faculty.
- We continue to make refinements as needed, based on feedback, goals, and experience. Evidence suggests that the plan is helping MEVA accomplish our goals.

Dr. Browne sent the board a copy of the working "Social Engagement Plan" for their review. No additional comments from the board and they have reviewed it.

Governance.

Grade 9 Curriculum Maps:

Donna hoped that the board had a chance to review the extensive work by the school.

Tina motioned to approve the Grade 9 Curriculum Maps. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Title IX Policy Update:

Dr. Browne reported that the Title IX policy was rolled back to the 2020 rule. We were asking the board to approve the change and then acknowledge that we will make basic updates to our handbooks, as applicable.

Cherieann asked if the board is adopting all the revisions, ACAB, ACAB-R and so forth? Dr. Browne replied that these are the policies and associated procedures provided by the Maine School Management Association (MSMA). Stephanie stated that MSMA retained just a couple of elements that relate to the Crown Act enactment and Maine Human Rights within the Title IX policies as required. Schools have also been advised by MSMA and Drummond & Woodsum to keep watch for continual changes and to adjust accordingly are released.

Tina motioned to approve the updated Title IX Policy. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Facilities Plan:

The facilities plan is a compliance item with the commission to show that the board has reviewed it and approves the renewal of the lease. MEVA likes the space and would like to retain it.

Ballard Center Lease Renewal:

Tina provided new members with a backstory regarding seeking alternative options, but it was discovered that MEVA was getting a good deal.

Cherieann asked, what does CAM mean? When was the last time we saw an increase? Jillian said that there was an inflator each year. CAM is our utilities. Ballard Center management had allowed us to keep this consolidated rent and fees that included all the public areas and parking. Tina made the point that overall utilities expenses were going up, so we are not seeing that much of an increase, with respect to our rent.

Cherieann asked if there was a reason they only want to do a two (2) year lease. Jillian asserted that the shorter lease opened the opportunity for Ballard Center management to reevaluate if the economic situation changed dramatically.

Susan inquired how often teachers used the Ballard Center as a resource? How often do students use it? Jillian replied that we use it for testing, plus our in-person staff training day; we have teachers that use the offices on and off. Teachers may come each week. Plus, we store graduation and testing items.

We also added “MEVA meets” Dr. Browne explained that once a month we have opened an option for students to come in and meet and collaborate with teachers.

Stacey asked about storing student technology supplies. Jillian said, yes, we manage the student laptops in house, as well as associated mailings.

Donna asked if MEVA had people in the office daily? Dr. Browne confirmed, yes, the secretaries were present daily.

Stacey moved to approve the Ballard Center Lease Renewal. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Public Discussion.

Dr. Browne asked about the April 15th board meeting plans. Donna said we would not be ready for approval for the budget, was there anything big coming up that we expected to see? Dr. Browne said only the FY25 Q3 financials, but Jennifer would appreciate an extra month. Tina asked, what about the curriculum maps? Dr. Browne reported that grade 10 maps would be on the May agenda and grades 11 and 12 would be ready for the June meeting. Board members agreed to cancel the April 15th board meeting.

Donna reminded the board about their upcoming self-assessment and the Head of School evaluation. Dr. Browne will have her self-reflection done by May 1st and will be provided to the board.

Stacey asked about the annual board training due dates. Donna stated it needs to be done now. Tina suggested that the board could use the April break to get these done. Dr. Browne committed to double checking the training deadline and assignments with the commission.

Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore