

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held February 23, 2021

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 2:00 PM, February 23, 2021. Board members attending were Amy Carlisle, Donna Pelletier, Peter Mills and Kim Whitman. Ed LeBlanc was excused.

Attending from MEVA were Melinda Browne, Donald Fournier, Jennifer Hight, Jillian Dearborn, Lena Vitagliano, Chelsea Osgood, Christina O'Grady, Jennifer Clark, Cheryl Brigham, Stephanie Emery, Lisa Malvicini, and Mehry Mohammadi.

Attending from K12 were Jordan Goldman, Todd McIntire, and Mary Markert. Attorney Bill Ferdinand attended.

Minutes. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Peter, minutes for the meeting of January 19, 2021, were approved.

Legislative Report: Bill Ferdinand recommends that we try to reach out to members of the new Education Committee.

LD 156 would create an immunization exemption for virtual school students. In response to Amy's question, Melinda said there may be a few, but not many, who have enrolled with us to avoid immunization. This is the last year for the philosophical objection to be honored. Next year, only a medical reason will suffice. Amy and Peter recommended that we not testify on this issue.

LD 331 would exempt video and audio recordings of classes from being a public record. Amy and Donna pointed out that FERPA protects privacy. Donna said that a parent can sit in the back and watch even now. Learning coaches are encouraged to observe. Jenn said she often sits to watch her student close by. One could just take a video by phone. Bill says he doubts that it is legal to video a class from a brick and mortar setting. MEVA does rely on recorded classes for makeup purposes.

LD 380 and other bills would raise or eliminate the cap on virtual school enrollment. LD 380 is before the Ed Committee on March 3. Melinda and Peter will attend. Rep. Mike Brennan may seek to link enrollment to meeting metrics.

Finance: Jennifer reported that during this school year we have applied for four sources of funds under CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) and ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund). The bookkeeping and accounting for these funds is complex and creates big swings in journal entries. The funds have helped us to accommodate the 39 students added but not paid for in the present school year. Next year our ED 279 will be based on 430 students which should produce over \$400,000 of additional revenue.

Our 990 is complete and our tax return is filed. We have not received good resumes for the new accounting position. Joe Drago may assist us.

Jennifer took out a two month free trial to experiment with the Intacct accounting system that K-12 uses. It is not expensive and may meet our needs. Every charter school seems to have difficulty finding a suitable financial platform.

Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Donna, it was unanimously voted to approve the 990 and the financial package as presented.

Head of School. Melinda reported on progress with our three strategic priorities: College & Career Readiness; Summer Program Expansion; and Longitudinal Progress Tracking.

Jennifer Clark is our new school counselor. We are providing students with options to earn credits in non-traditional ways, through work study programs, for example. We are looking for additional grant funds to support such efforts. Some of our students are working anyway. The goal is to direct them to higher demand careers. Professional development for teachers is focusing on how to prepare students for post-graduate life.

For summer programs, we plan to offer full credit courses that are being developed by teachers. This will enhance our calendar flexibility.

Christina O'Grady has been evaluating our longitudinal NWEA tracking data. iXL works best to achieve targeted math goals. She has quantified how much time is necessary to achieve optimal results. Beyond a certain point, iXL produces diminishing returns.

For middle school math, Nicole Taylor and Michelle Brigham are working on students with the lowest level skills, those in Special Ed and Title programs. They have instituted daily engagement checks with progress notifications to parents and students. Team meetings are conducted for the under-engaged. Teachers are using NWEA measures of growth to disclose where additional attention is needed.

For high school, we have rich data. Heather Larchar, Nicole Taylor, and Coady Richardson are working with upper level students to see that they are being challenged with an honors program for Algebra I, for example.

Maine DOE has said we need to do the Spring NWEA but may administer some assessments virtually. The Science NWEA (the new assessment for grades 8 and 11) will be administered in person with rented laptops. Because there are no venues available to us for testing, we will need to do students in batches over time at the Ballard Center. Students will not be required to come.

Open enrollment opens soon. We are offering evening registration. We are first reaching out to the 200 students we had on last fall's wait list. Our lottery will be in late March. If we admit 10% over an increased cap allowance, our total enrollment for next year could be 473, which is nearly half of the 1000 cap for both virtual schools.

We intend to budget for 430 students. If we get more, we could use CARES funds to support them because the added number is above our pre-pandemic count. Because the Charter Commission has offered to provide Infinite Campus to the charter schools as a student information system, we may use it to replace Black Board.

Calendar. Melinda presented a proposed calendar for FY 2021-22 that will include 180 instructional days. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Kim, the calendar was unanimously approved.

Charter Commission Enrollment Cap. We are proposing to increase our cap from 390 to 430. With an added 10% allowance, next year's enrollment would be 473. Jeremy Jones recommended that we apply this spring. If the request is granted and the students enroll, we would need four new teachers.

Education Services Agreement. K-12 has provided us a proposed change to the administrative portion of our contract. We will review it, meet with Dan Stockford and respond.

At 3:25 pm, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary