

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held October 18, 2022

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 3:00 PM, October 18th, 2022. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, Tina Meserve, and Peter Mills. Amy Carlisle was excused. A quorum was present.

Attending from MEVA were Melinda Browne, Donald Fournier, Christina O'Grady, Chelsea Osgood, Stephanie Emery, Lena Vitagliano, and Jennifer Hight.

Attending from Stride were Todd McIntire and Tom Travia.

Opening Items.

Approval of Minutes. Nick motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of September 20th, 2022. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Finance Report.

FY22 Quarter Four (Q4) Report. Dr. Browne provided quarterly reports to the board members. Jennifer said that FY22 was the first year that MEVA utilized QuickBooks. The state also launched a new grant reimbursement system. Jennifer Hight sent a recent email to board members that included full year-end information, which showed \$314K in the black. Payroll increased this past year. If Covid funds (\$206K) were not utilized, then the school was closer to break even. During FY22, MEVA used Covid funding for summer school and vacation camp payrolls, as well as to purchase student computers. Jennifer projected that MEVA was likely closer to break-even next year (FY24). Donna stated that the budget (always) needed to be balanced.

Nick motioned to approve the minutes of the FY22 Quarter Four (Q4) Finance report. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

FY22 Audit. Jennifer Hight reported that the auditors (Wipfli LLP) had experienced staffing/scheduling challenges, which pushed out the auditing work. Auditors asked for additional information from Jennifer and Jillian Dearborn, who were wrapping up these requests.

FY23 Quarter One (Q1) Report. Jennifer Hight said that the Q1 report was not available yet, but she was aiming to discuss the first quarter financials at next meeting.

Administration. Dr. Melinda Browne presented the Head of School Report, which focused on Count Day (October 1st) enrollment and the fall NWEA testing window that was currently in progress.

Current Student Count – October 1st, 2022 (preliminary).

- Grade Level, Count (SE Count, *SE Percentage of Grade Level*).
- Grade 7 – 31 (2 SE, 6%);
- Grade 8 – 56 (20 SE, 36%);

- Grade 9 – 55 (15 SE, 27%);
- Grade 10 – 85 (18 SE, 21%);
- Grade 11 – 112 (20 SE, 18%);
- Grade 12 – 99 (11 SE, 11%);
- Total – 438 (86 SE).
- The Overall SE Identification Rate is 19.6%.
- The Economically Disadvantaged Rate is to be announced.
- State computer-platform issues were delaying finalization of the data, so reporting deadlines were extended to the end of the month.

Pre-Oct. 1st Retention (August 29th – September 30th, 2022).

- 18 non-graduating students withdrew between August 29th, 2022, and October 1st.
- Last year, during the same period, 48 non-graduating students withdrew.
- Major (year-over-year) improvement in pre-Oct. 1st retention of 62.5%.
- Winback and early-intervention efforts are making a big difference in our outcomes. Expanded office staff bolsters school/family communications, as well expedites records retrieval from other school districts.

Fall '22 NWEA Participation to date.

- Schoolwide participation (grades 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11) was 95%+.
- Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) Grades 7, 8 & 10 participation was 96%.
- We met our target participation rates.
- High participation rates inform meaningful data analysis.
- MEVA is tracking continuing students' progress – longitudinal data analysis.
- Fall make up testing is still in progress.
- The fall testing window closes on October 28th, 2022.

NWEA Data Reports – Fall Focus.

- Student Profiles – Complete picture of student's growth and performance, including what a student is ready to learn.
- School Profiles – Overview of school performance by grade level and subject area that help identify areas of opportunity and strength.
- Grade Level Reports – Determine grade-level instructional priorities by academic standards set.
- Teachers are currently working with the Student Profiles and Grade Level Reports.
- The School Profiles are shared at our weekly Process Improvement Meetings with the entire faculty.

Dr. Browne shared examples of the NWEA reports, as well as preliminary student achievement results and trends.

Fall '22 NWEA: Student Achievement Summary

- At least eighty percent (80%+) of students in grades 7, 9, 10 & 11, scored in the low average to advanced bands in math, reading, and language.
- Grade 7: Math 84%; Reading 90%; Language 87%.
- Grade 8: Math 62%; Reading 71%; Language 73%.
- Grade 9: Math 87%; Reading 81%; Language 85%.
- Grade 10: Math 88%; Reading 82%; Language 80%.
- Grade 11: Math 85%; Reading 85%; Language 87%.

Fall '22 NWEA: What overall strengths and opportunities do we see?

- Math Strengths: Grade 10.
- Math Opportunities: Grade 8.
- Reading Strengths: Grade 7.
- Reading Opportunities: Grade 8.
- Language Strengths: Grades 7 & 11.
- Language Opportunities: Grade 8.

Fall '22 NWEA: What instructional strengths and opportunities do we see?

- Math Strengths: Statistical reasoning (7 & 10). Quantitative reasoning (8, 9, & 11).
- Math Opportunities: Geometric reasoning (grade 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11). Algebraic reasoning (9 & 10).
- Reading Strengths: Vocabulary acquisition and use (7, 8, 9, 10 & 11).
- Reading Opportunities: Key ideas and details (7, 9, 10 & 11). Craft and structure (8).
- Language Usage Strengths: Understand, edit for grammar, usage (7, 8 & 11). Understand, edit for mechanics (8, 9, 10, & 11). Understand, edit for purpose and audience (11).
- Language Usage Opportunities: Understand, edit for mechanics (7). Write, revise texts for purpose and audience (8 & 9). Understand, edit for grammar, usage (10 & 11).

What will instruction look like between now and the winter NWEA administration? What goals have been set?

- Teachers will provide individualized instruction/interventions to address each student's gaps/needs. Student's NWEA profiles will inform instruction.
- Teachers will complete/draft their instructional/curriculum maps by January 2023. Grade-level instructional priorities, based on the NWEA reports, will inform the maps.
- Instructional support embedded in core academic course lessons. Weekly targeted small group sessions for MS students. Daily Help Desk for HS students.

NWEA Accountability Measures

- Percentage of students who meet fall to spring growth targets set by the NWEA. Grades 7 & 8. Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) Performance Framework.
- Median Student Conditional Growth Percentile at least 50th %ile for grades 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11. School-specific measures. MCSC Performance Framework.
- MDOE MEA Through Testing, Fall '22, for grades 7, 8 & 10.
- Students' NWEA results factor into IEP goal setting and progress reporting.
- Longitudinal NWEA data analysis will factor heavily into our upcoming charter contract renewal efforts.
- Continuing to administer the NWEA math, reading, and language usage sections to grades 7-11, three times during the school year, was well worth the effort.

Stacey asked if students' NWEA scores transferred between schools. Dr. Browne responded that they do not; we were only aware of incoming students' scores if the other district provided the data in the students' cumulative files. Donna said that not all schools in the state used the NWEA.

Donna expressed appreciation for the faculty's hard work administering the NWEAs.

Dr. Browne informed the board about another charter-contract performance measure that focused on college readiness, as measured by the Accuplacer for graduating students. She committed to sharing the preliminary Accuplacer results at an upcoming meeting. Accuplacer testing was in progress.

Governance.

Facilities Plan.

Donna said that annually the school/board needed to consider MEVA’s facility needs and make any adjustments to suit. Donna asked Dr. Browne earlier this year to survey the staff on their current usage of the MEVA suites. Donna noted that MEVA’s current lease expired on June 30th, 2023.

Dr. Browne shared information about the faculty survey, existing rent, and office amenities.

Facilities: MEVA Rent.

- Our rent for both suites together is \$11,330 per month, which includes electricity and gym access for employees. The rent is not broken down by spaces.

Facilities: Comparison of Suites.

Features	Main (Suite 230)	Campaign Room*	South Wing**
Teacher Workspaces	11 cubicles	None	12 offices
Administrator/Staff/Teacher Workspaces	9 offices	None	2 offices
Reception Area***	Yes	No	No
Conference Rooms	1 large	1 large	1 large
Kitchen	Yes	No	No
Storage Closets	2 locked closets	None/Alcove	2 closets
Approximate Square Footage	4,600 sq. ft.	400 sq. ft.	4,900 sq. ft.

*The Campaign Room (approx. 400 sq. feet) is located next to the South Wing on the right-hand side of the corridor. The room has its own door that opens to the corridor, so it may be utilized independent of the other South Wing spaces.

**Does not include the Campaign Room.

***The MEVA reception area in the main suite is staffed by two administrative assistants during regular business hours.

Tina motioned for Peter to contact the Ballard Center landlord to collect more information on costs and lease renewal options. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

The facilities discussion was planned to continue at the next meeting.

MEVA MDOE Required Policies Review.

Stacey motioned to group MEVA MDOE Required Policies a-h.

- a. Motion to approve JFABD Admission of Homeless Students.
- b. Motion to approve JFC Student Withdrawal from School (Dropout Prevention Committee).
- c. Motion to approve JICH Drug and Alcohol Use by Students.
- d. Motion to approve JICIA Weapons, Violence and School Safety.
- e. Motion to approve JICK Bullying.
- f. Motion to approve JJIF Management of Concussions and Other Head Injuries.
- g. Motion to approve JIC Student Code of Conduct (If adopted as a policy, code JIC).
- h. Motion to approve JK Student Discipline.

Nick seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Nick motioned to approve MEVA MDOE Required Policies a-h. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Associate Maine School Management Membership.

Donna informed the board that Maine School Management (MSM) supported school superintendents with policies and professional development. There were two parts of this membership: superintendent group and board group. Donna had spoken with Steve Bailey (MSM leader) and discussed reasons why charter schools had not been invited to be a part of this organization. After further review of MSM's ByLaws, Mr. Bailey announced that charter schools were eligible to become associate members of the MSM school board group, but voting and legal services were not offered/included. However, access to publications, policy work, and professional development were permitted. Tina was disappointed that MSM did not provide legal advising, but the option to attend their conferences was helpful to obtain great information. The associate member cost for the full board was \$1,920 per year. Donna asserted that the MSM policy resources were supportive. Donna encouraged the board to think it over ahead of (FY24) budget discussions.

Annual Independent Third-Party Evaluation Proposal.

Dr. Browne shared the 2022-2023 Independent Third-Party Evaluation Proposal by Dr. Mary Madden with the board. The cost was \$14,625 for the evaluation, which was slightly lower than the prior year fee (\$15,000). Dr. Madden wanted to research the student experience further in the coming year and to make recommendations informed by this study. Dr. Browne stated that MEVA was incorporating the recommendations from her September 2022 report, presented at the last meeting. Dr. Browne informed the board that the Charter Commission required the two virtual schools to procure an independent evaluation on an annual basis.

Nick motioned to approve the 2022-2023 Independent Third-Party Evaluation Proposal by Dr. Mary Madden. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Dr. Browne committed to sending the approved proposal to the Charter Commission.

Public Discussion. None.

Adjournment. Nick motioned to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore