

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held June 21, 2022

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, June 21, 2022. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, Peter Mills, and Stacey Blanchard. Amy Carlisle and Ed LeBlanc were excused.

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

Attending from Stride was Todd McIntire and Wei Wang.

Minutes. Nick motioned to approve minutes for the May 17, 2022, governing board meeting. Peter seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Finance.

Finance Report.

Jennifer Hight reported that she was working on year-end; the Quarter Four (Q4) Financial Report was due to the Commission on August 4th. Jennifer expressed difficulties with the two (2) signature process for checks greater than ten-thousand dollars (\$10K). This continued to be challenging in conjunction with the mail issues and mail getting lost in transit to board members. In a prior board meeting, Stride, Inc. was added to the list of not needing two (2) signatures. Jennifer asked about the board's comfort level on adjusting this process further.

Donna requested clarification; she stated that checks of \$10K or less did not need a second signature. Over \$10K required two signatures except for Stride, payroll-related benefits, and MainePERS, which only needed one (1). Donna inquired with Jeremy Jones on any charter requirements in this process, he referred her back to MEVA's finance person regarding this policy requirement.

Jennifer stated that checks for credit card payments would be important to have a second signature. These were now handled electronically by direct deposit. Jennifer said that auditors referred to what the school policy required in this process. Jen suggested increasing the check limit (requiring only one signature) to twenty-thousand dollars (\$20k) if the board was comfortable with it.

Dr. Browne noted that very few checks were as high as \$20K. Some checks were slightly above \$10K, but most were below. Dr. Browne informed the board that MEVA had a few pending invoices for supplementary curriculum, such as Strivven Media (Virtual Job Shadow), Newsela, and IXL, which were slightly over \$10K. MEVA requested adding these vendors to the approved list for one signature.

Jennifer mentioned that in her auditing experience most misappropriation of funds happened during and post processing. As a result, a better internal control method was for the board to review bank-check lists regularly. Jennifer committed to talking to MEVA's auditors to see what processes they recommended.

Donna said that the board would wait for the recommendation from the auditors regarding having a second person sign or adjusting the existing process.

Jennifer advised MEVA to maintain the two (2) signature process until the policy was formally changed.

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

SY 2021/22 Progress Report. Dr. Browne said that there was a big surprise regarding the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) posting results on the prior school (spring '21) year's state testing, and for fall '21. MEVA exceeded state performance averages for all eligible students (grades 7, 8, & 11) including major subgroups. The MDOE participation target was 95%. MEVA fell a little short with 93.6% in Math and 93% in English Language Arts (ELA). MEVA did, however, exceed Maine's student testing participation. MEVA broke down the subgroups in comparison to the State. MEVA did 22% better than the State with our Economically-Disadvantaged (ED) students' outcomes. Dr. Browne presented slides visuals/graphs from the MAARS portal, the MDOE's data repository. MEVA's Fall '21 participation was 96% compared to 93/94% in prior year during pandemic.

The NWEA was a strategic priority for the school. MEVA aimed to test all the students each (fall, winter, and spring) window. MEVA used the NWEA to measure achievement gaps, fall baselines, winter progress checks, and spring as the summative growth and proficiency.

Donna expressed her appreciation for the hard work of school staff and the work on aligning the instruction to standards.

Spring 2021 Maine Educational Assessment (MEA).

MEVA's Spring 2021 MEA Math results for grades 7, 8, & 11, with Maine (ME) results in parentheses, followed by our percentage-point lead:

- Percentage of All Students Proficient in Math, 90% (ME 81%). +9%.
- Percentage of ED Students Proficient in Math, 91% (ME 69%). +22%.
- Percentage of Female Students Proficient in Math, 93% (ME 81%). +7%.
- Percentage of Male Students Proficient in Math, 87% (ME 81%). +6%.
- Percentage of SE Students Proficient in Math, 61% (ME 46%). +15%.

Spring 2021 Maine Educational Assessment (MEA).

MEVA's Spring 2021 MEA ELA results for grades 7, 8, & 11, with Maine (ME) results in parentheses, followed by our percentage-point lead:

- Percentage of All Students Proficient in ELA, 88% (ME 85%). +3%.
- Percentage of ED Students Proficient in ELA, 82% (ME 76%). +6%
- Percentage of Female Students Proficient in ELA, 91% (ME 88%). +3%.
- Percentage of Male Students Proficient in ELA, 84% (ME 82%). +2%.
- Percentage of SE Students Proficient in ELA, 62% (ME 54%). +8%.

Spring 2021 Maine Educational Assessment (MEA).

- We examined MEVA's subgroup comparisons for Math and ELA, focusing on the percentages of students who were proficient.
- Variances between subgroups were as follows:
- ED Math versus Non-ED Math, +1%.
- ED ELA versus Non-ED ELA, -12%.
- Female Math versus Male Math, +5%.
- Female ELA versus Male ELA, +8%.
- SE Math versus Non-SE Math, -32%.
- SE ELA versus Non-SE ELA, -36%.

Current School Year – Fall ‘21 Proficiency.

MEVA’s Fall 2021 NWEA results for grades 7, 8, & 11, *with Maine (ME) results in parentheses, followed by our percentage-point difference:*

- Percentage of All Students Proficient in Math, 84% (ME 80%). +4%.
- Percentage of All Students Proficient in Reading, 80% (ME 83%). -3%.
- Percentage of All Students Proficient in Language Usage, 85% (ME 82%). +2%.

Current School Year - Spring ‘22 Proficiency.

Spring ‘22 Percentages of All MEA Eligible Students (Grades 7, 8, & 11) in the Low Average to High Bands, *with prior year percentages in parentheses, followed by the percentage point change.*

- Math – 83% (PY 87%). -4%.
- Reading – 82% (PY 83%). -1%.
- Language Usage – 82% (PY 83%). -1%.
- MEVA participation was 97%, compared to 93/94% in the prior year.

Current School Year - Spring ‘22 Proficiency.

Spring ‘22 Percentages of All School Eligible Students (Grades 7-11) in the Low Average to High Bands, *with prior year percentages in parentheses, followed by the percentage point change.*

- Math – 84% (PY 87%). -3%.
- Reading – 83% (PY 82%). +1%.
- Language Usage – 83% (PY 83%). 0%.
- MEVA participation was 96%, compared to 93/94% in the prior year.

Strategic Priority – NWEA Action Steps.

- We administer the NWEA math, reading, and language usage to all students in grades 7-11, three times during the school year.
- We use the NWEA to measure students’ achievement gaps: utilizing the fall administration as a baseline, the winter administration as a mid-year progress check, and the spring administration as the summative growth and proficiency outcome.
- We incorporate the NWEA data into our curriculum/instructional maps.
- We employ data-driven instructional practices to maximize students’ outcomes by building the co-teaching teams, providing training on the teaching techniques, and supplementing the curriculum with targeted practice tools.

Panorama School Climate Survey.

Panorama School Climate Survey, spring ’22, participation and results were shared by Dr. Browne.

MEVA met the survey completion targets. Dr. Browne reported that The Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) was upping the participation targets for next year (spring ’23).

Action steps from the previous year (spring ’21) had been implemented, as this was a MCSC performance measure. Dr. Browne presented MEVA’s new Action Plan for the coming school year (SY2022/2023) that was informed by the spring ’22 results, addressing areas for continued improvement.

Dr. Browne noted that Panorama utilized top-two-box scoring to identify positive results. In other words, respondents who selected one of the top two choices were rated as ‘positive’ with respect to the associated questions. Stakeholder groupings were compared to national percentile rankings for public schools with similar populations, including percentages of disadvantaged students. Only the MEVA family stakeholder group was compared to other Maine charter schools.

Panorama Survey Participation – Spring '22.

- Student – 69.7% (274/393).
- Family – 41.3% (135/327).
- Teacher/Staff – 100% (55/55).
- *Student Target = 65%. Met.*
- *Family Target = 40%. Met.*
- *Faculty Target = 70%. Met.*

Family – 135 Respondents.

- School Climate. 78% (MCSC 75%; Nationally 99th %ile). MEVA Year over Year (YOY) +2%.
- School Safety. 95% (MCSC 86%; Nationally 99th %ile). YOY +2%.
- School Fit. 65% (MCSC 64%; Nationally 80th %ile). YOY +0%.
- *Target School Fit: How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?*
- *Action Plan: Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).*

Students – 274 Respondents.

- School Climate. 76% (Nationally 99th %ile). YOY +4%.
- School Safety. 97% (Nationally 99th %ile). YOY +5%.
- Rigorous Expectations. 70% (Nationally 80th %ile). YOY +1%.
- Teacher-Student Relationships. 78% (Nationally 99th %ile). YOY +3%.
- *Target Rigorous Expectations: How often do your teachers make you explain your answers?*
- *Action Plan: Instructional Maps and Course Development.*

Teachers = 33 Respondents.

- School Climate. 78% (Nationally 99th %ile). *MEVA Year over Year not provided due to the respondent grouping change from the previous year.*
- School Leadership. 68% (Nationally 90th %ile).
- Professional Learning. 70% (Nationally 99th %ile).
- Feedback and Coaching. 56% (Nationally 90th %ile).
- *Target Feedback and Coaching: How often do you receive feedback on your teaching? How much feedback do you receive on your teaching? How much do you learn from the teacher evaluation processes at your school?*
- *Action Plan: Increase teacher/peer observations and feedback. Review teacher evaluation processes; seek faculty input.*

Staff (Includes Ed Techs) = 22 Respondents.

- School Climate. 84% (Nationally 99th %ile). *MEVA Year over Year not provided due to the respondent grouping change from the previous year. The current Staff results included Educational Technicians.*
- School Leadership. 83% (Nationally 99th %ile).
- Professional Learning. 80% (Nationally 99th %ile).
- Feedback and Coaching. 72% (Nationally 99th %ile).
- *Target Feedback and Coaching: How much feedback do you receive on your work? How much do you learn from the evaluation processes at your school?*
- *Action Plan: Increase staff observations and feedback. Review evaluation processes; seek faculty input.*

Post – 10/1 Withdrawal Rates & Retention Target.

- Grade 7 – 18.4% (7/38).
- Grade 8 – 20.5% (9/44).
- Grade 9 – 3.0% (2/67).
- Grade 10 – 9.6% (9/94).
- Grade 11 – 10.2% (10/98).
- Grade 12 – 6.3% (6/96).
- School Withdrawal Rate – 9.8% (43/437).
- School Retention Rate – 90.2% (394/437). *Exceeded MCSC Target.*

MEVA planned to increase support within advisory groups to help catch the students who appear to slip.

Reregistration Rates & Continuity of Enrollment Target.

- Grade 7 – 94.4% (34/36).
- Grade 8 – 74.4% (29/39).
- Grade 9 – 93.0% (66/71).
- Grade 10 – 88.4% (84/95).
- Grade 11 – 96.2% (75/78).
- Grade 12 – 100% (3/3).

School – 90.4% (291/322). *Exceeded MCSC Target.*

Eighth (8th) grade showed weakness in return rate. Win-back efforts were being attempted.

SY 2021/22 & SY2022/23 Enrollment.

Enrollment update as of 6/17/22:

72 students approved.

32 applications in progress.

7 outstanding seat offers.

Enrollment was going strong, MEVA was tracking well in new enrollments, all students who inquired were offered a seat at this time.

Governance.

MEVA MDOE Required Policies. Nick motioned to group Section 4A, a-f, MEVA MDOE Required Policies. Stacey seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Nick motioned to approve a – e, MEVA MDOE Required Policies:

- a. IGA Curriculum Adoption.
- b. IHBA Individual Education Plans [IEPs].
- c. IHBAA Referral and Use of General Education Interventions.
- d. IHBAA-R Referral and Use of General Education Interventions- Administrative Procedures.
- e. IHBAC Child Find.
- f. IHBAL Grievance Procedure for Persons with Disabilities.

Stacey seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Board Training Platform Update. Donna reported that the MCSC had posted a fourth chapter on their board training site, with the subjects surrounding school budgeting. Donna said that the MCSC viewed each school and checked on board member completions. The Commission shared the info with Donna for her review. Donna encouraged Board Members to review the trainings and information on the platform.

Resignation and Retirements. Dr. Browne shared that Jennifer Clark moved out of state; Joel Randazza took another job that aligned to his goals, Caitlin Walker went back to her old position due to the facility reopening from Covid employment adjustments. Donna thanked Jennifer Clark, Joel Randazza, and Caitlin Walker for their service.

Nominations of Professional Staff – SY2021/2022. Dr. Browne reported that Coady Richardson, formerly a MEVA math teacher shifted to a science teaching position in place of Caitlin Walker. Anthony Pranses, Math Teacher backfilled Coady's position. Julie King was a new Special Education Teacher that balanced Lisa Bernardini's shift to supporting the Guidance Department

Donna inquired about open positions and mentioned the Technology Coordinator position. Dr. Browne reported that MEVA was utilizing existing staff to manage student computers and tracking/management. As a result, there was not a need currently. Office IT needs were satisfied by Ben Lannen of Stride who managed the MEVA network and faculty computers.

Public Discussion. None.

Executive Session. Nick motioned to enter Executive Session under 1 MRSA §405, sub-§6, ¶A & ¶E to discuss employee evaluation. Stacey seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Adjournment. Donna motioned to adjourn. Stacey seconded, all in favor, so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore