

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held September 19, 2023

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, September 19th, 2023. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, Tina Meserve. Amy Carlisle and Peter Mills were excused. Candidate Susan Walters attended and was voted on the board during the meeting. A quorum was present.

Attending from MEVA were Melinda Browne, Donald Fournier, Christina O’Grady, Mehry Mohammadi, Jillian Dearborn, Stephanie Emery, Meghan Crosby, and Chelsea Osgood.

Attending from Stride were Todd McIntire and Tom Travia.

Attending from, Dr. Madden and Associates was Dr. May Madden.

Opening Items.

Approval of Minutes. Nick motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meetings of August 15th, 2023. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Approval of the Slate of Maine Learning Innovations Directors. Must be done annually every September.

Slate of Officers and Members:

- Stacey Blanchard, Secretary.
- Nicholas Gannon, Treasurer.
- Tina Meserve.
- Donna Pelletier, Chair.
- Susan Walters.

Nick motioned to approve the Slate of Maine Learning Innovations Officers and Members. Stacey seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Independent Third-Party Evaluation Report. Dr. Mary Madden presented her report, which continued her research from last year and followed up on the implementation of recommendations, as well as incorporated studies on the student experience. There were some changes made by the school and Stride to improve enrollment processes. The results of those changes were very positive.

Evaluation Purpose and Questions:

1. How well did revisions to the new enrollment process address concerns raised by parents in the 2021–2022 evaluation?
2. How well did revisions to the re-enrollment process address concerns raised by parents in the 2021–2022 evaluation?
3. How did students experience the onboarding process and acclimate to MEVA?

Revisions to Processes for New Enrollment:

1. Parents were provided with a checklist of steps to demonstrate completion of the enrollment process.
2. Parents were reminded to contact school staff if they were experiencing challenges with the re-enrollment process.

Revisions to Processes for Re-Enrollment:

1. The guided walk-through of each step in the process was revised to ensure that it mirrored what parents would encounter.
2. Re-enrollment was consolidated from a two-part process to a one-part process.
3. Parents were provided a checklist of steps for re-enrollment.

Onboarding at MEVA: Why Enroll?

Middle School:

- Mental Health Challenges.
- Did not like last school.
- Bullied.

High School:

- Mental Health Challenges
- Hard time with in-person instruction
- Bad experience at public school

Student Advice:

- Starting something new and talking to new people is challenging, but it will get easier over time—like breaking in a new bike. It might be weird at first but is comfortable after time of use.
- To try to keep up with the work because once you're behind it is difficult to get caught up.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Case Studies: Key Takeaways:

- Each had some type of special need.
- All experienced bullying at their local public school.
- Parents say child's needs are being well met.
- Staff and teachers are always there to help.
- Lack of social connections is difficult for some.
- Involvement in district school extra-curricular activities.
- Parent as coach may be difficult for some.

Recommendations:

1. Continue the changes implemented in the new and re-enrollment processes.
2. Continue to administer the new student survey and consider including more specific questions about aspects of onboarding that students might find challenging (e.g., playing back videos of classes).
3. Explore whether having parents as coaches of their own children is challenging for more than just the parent who raised the issue. Seek to identify if there are commonalities among students whose parents are experiencing this challenge.
4. Explore ways to create connections among students who desire more peer interaction.

5. Explore ways to increase participation in the annual evaluation process. Consider incentivizing parents and students to complete written surveys and participate in in-person interviews with the evaluator.

Stacey motioned to approve the Independent Third-Party Evaluation Report. Nick seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Finance Report. Jennifer Hight was unable to attend the meeting, but she provided the following report, which was read by Donna: Regarding the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss report for the year FY '22-23. We ended the year with a \$415k surplus before depreciation expense (which will be approximately \$10k). Year-end reports have been uploaded to NEO. Information had been uploaded to Wipfli so they can have it ahead of the audit date. The audit will take place the week of October 9th. The Three-Year Projection report was sent to the Charter Commission at the end of August. The Performance Measures Report was also sent to the Charter Commission at the end of August. The figures for 2023 are unaudited and preliminary, so they have changed slightly as we finalized for the audit. We are now working on closing out July and August.

Donna was not certain if the board was ready to approve Q4 or not. Tina asked for clarity on the ESSER funds. Dr. Browne said ESSER funds were used for summer school. Dr. Browne reported that we have not used all the funds yet. ESSER II must be committed by Sept 30th. Stacey said she did not have an opportunity to study financials. Donna made the point that we need Jennifer Hight available to review the financials with us. Donna stated that the board will not vote on this today and will wait until the next board meeting.

Tina motioned to table the Q4 Finance Report. Nick seconded, all in favor, so moved.
Motion to table: Tina Meserve

Tina motioned to approve the Three-Year Annual Financial Plan. (Already submitted to the commission.) Nick seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Dr. Browne presented the review of Annual Financial Performance and Stability Report for Maine Charter School Commission Annual Monitoring.

- Current Ratio Measurement = 9.18 (Exceeds).
- Unrestricted Days Cash on Hand Measurement = 188 (Exceeds).
- Enrollment Variance Measurement = 112% (Exceeds).
- Total Margin Measurement = 7.9% (Exceeds).
- Debt to Asset Ratio Measurement = 0.11 (Exceeds).
- Cash Flow Measurement = One Year \$496,693; Two Year \$35,001 (Exceeds).
- Based on unaudited figures, MEVA is exceeding the financial performance measures.

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

Spring '23 Proficiency Estimate:

- MEVA utilized MDOE published criteria and the preliminary, Spring '23 Maine Through Year results to estimate students' proficiency for grades 7, 8 & 10, math and reading.
- It is our understanding that the MDOE plans to release the official results by early October 2023.

- The next Maine Through Year cycle also begins in October 2023, which requires in-person testing at multiple sites distributed across the state.

Spring '23 Math Proficiency Estimate

Projected Based on MDOE NWEA Newsletter			
	Below	At	Above
7th Grade	8.00%	74.29%	2.86%
8th Grade	42.00%	54.00%	4.00%
10th Grade	4.71%	94.12%	1.18%
Overall	19.41%	78.24%	2.35%

Spring '23 Reading Proficiency Estimate

Projected Based on MDOE NWEA Newsletter			
	Below	At	Above
7th Grade	22.86%	62.86%	14.29%
8th Grade	14.29%	81.63%	4.08%
10th Grade	14.12%	83.53%	2.35%
Overall	15.98%	78.70%	5.33%

Fall '23 NWEA Baseline Data:

- The fall NWEA administration provides us with baseline data to inform our instruction and remediation on a grade-level and individual student basis.
- The fall NWEA data is a snap-shot view of our strengths and weaknesses with respect to students' achievement.
- Year over year schoolwide and grade-level comparisons are not necessarily connected due to combining a mix of new and continuing students.
- We will factor the fall NWEA administration into our ongoing longitudinal data analysis that focuses on cohort performance.

Fall '23 NWEA participation 9/18:

Fall 2023-2024							
	Math	Reading	Language		Math	Reading	Language
7th Grade	96.2%	96.2%	96.2%	7th Grade	96.2%	96.2%	96.2%
8th Grade	89.7%	89.7%	88.2%	8th Grade	89.7%	89.7%	88.2%
9th Grade	93.4%	94.7%	93.4%	10th Grade	94.6%	95.9%	95.9%
10th Grade	94.6%	95.9%	95.9%	Cumulative %	93.5%	93.9%	93.4%
11th Grade	96.3%	92.5%	89.7%				
Schoolwide	94.0%	93.4%	92.0%				

MEVA’s Criteria for Analyzing NWEA Student Median Achievement:

- Exceeds = 66th %ile or higher.
- Meets = 50th % to 65th %ile.
- Approaches = 35th to 49th %ile.
- Does Not Meet = Lower than 35th %ile.

Fall Achievement: NWEA MAP Math

Year	Student Median Achievement Percentile	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
2022-23	46th	40th	26th	49th	59th	52nd
2023-24	49th	37th	38th	44th	54th	55th

Fall Achievement: NWEA MAP Reading

Year	Student Median Achievement Percentile	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
2022-23	55th	61st	43rd	60th	64th	57th
2023-24	53rd	58th	53rd	51st	52nd	54th

Fall Achievement: NWEA MAP Language

Year	Student Median Achievement Percentile	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
2022-23	55th	53rd	42nd	61st	58th	59th
2023-24	54th	41st	55th	46th	56th	57th

Accuplacer Results – 9/14:

Subgroup	College-Ready Reading	College-Ready Math
With 504 Plan	18/21 = 85.7%	16/21 = 76.2%
Without 504 Plan	45/51 = 88.2%	44/49 = 89.8%
Delta	+2.5%	-13.6%
Special Education (SE)	10/13 = 76.9%	8/12 = 66.7%
Non-SE	53/59 = 89.7%	52/58 = 89.7%
Delta	-12.8%	-23.0%
Male	27/29 = 93.1%	26/29 = 89.7%

Female	34/41 = 82.9%	32/39 = 82.1%
Delta	-10.2%	-7.6%
Economically Disadvantaged	13/15 = 86.7%	14/15 = 93.3%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	48/53 = 90.6%	43/51 = 84.3%
Delta	+3.9%	-9.0
Total	63/72 = 87.5% (Meets)	60/70 = 85.7% (Meets)

Accuplacer Results Analysis:

- 72 students (79%) have completed the Reading test and 70 students (77%) have completed the Math test.
- 88% are measuring college-ready in Reading and 86% are measuring college-ready in Math.
- All student subgroups and overall performance have attained the 75% college ready threshold, except for special education math.
- Students who did not meet the college-ready cut score will be provided interventions within their English and math classes. Students will have the opportunity to retake the ACCUPLACER once they have completed the remediation plan.

MEVA is eagerly waiting for Spring 2023 proficiency results from the state. MEVA is committed to administering the NWEA three times per year, assessing grades seven through eleven (7-11), aiming for ninety-five percent (95%) participation, for the purposes of providing as a snapshot of how on both incoming and returning students are doing, informing in instruction and remediation.

Donna asked if staff chased down kids who did not participate. Dr. Browne stated, yes, MEVA had a thorough make-up testing protocol MEVA planned to close the fall NWEA testing window on September 29th. Initial data analysis indicated that there was work to do in the 7th and 8th grades for math achievement; we needed to address students’ needs there.

Tina asked how our spring scores compared between the NWEA and State results. Dr. Browne said that once we have received the state results, we will compare them and do a cross analysis. Dr. Browne reported that we would like students’ achievement in math, reading, and language usage to attain at least the fiftieth (50th) percentile schoolwide and by grade level. Tina made the point that it will be interesting to see the comparison since NWEA uses a national median and the state tends to follow closely to it.

Susan asked if MEVA was unable to compare scores spring to the fall because of the change in population? Dr. Browne said during the academic year, fall to spring there was strong continuity. MEVA’s performance framework required fall to spring comparisons.

Dr. Browne reported that MEVA graduating students were meeting the 75% college ready goal in math and reading, which was a charter commission metric.

Don Fournier, Academic Administrator, presented an update on MEVA’s efforts to refine a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Plan. Data Analysis - Christina will look at the NWEA and Accuplacer data to identify the students in the 0-30th Percentile in Math, Reading, and/or Language Usage. She will identify the students who did not meet the cut scores on the Accuplacer. Data Meetings - Data meetings are scheduled by grade level(s) and content area, the week of September 25th.

The meetings will include lead teachers, SE case managers, and the admin team. Teacher Preparations - Identify the top 5 skills that a student needs to be successful in your class. Email these skills to Don and Christina by 9/20/23 at the latest. Come to the meeting prepared with classroom data. NWEA/Accuplacer do not tell the whole story. What are you seeing in the classroom? Interventions – Using data to identify the weak areas for students. As a team, we will decide at the data meetings if a course placement change would benefit the student. Use the MTSS Progress monitoring form to track the interventions you are trying with the identified students. We are hosting weekly Ed Tech/Support Meetings.

Donna thanked Don and Christina for creating the MTSS plan.

Donna inquired about State Assessments and asked if we are expected to test two times a year for only this school year or is this going forward annually. Dr. Browne reported that so far this frequency is moving forward annually.

Dr. Browne shared the MEVA Academic Assessment Calendar - 2023-2024 School Year:

NWEA (Fall): Math, Reading, & Language Usage	Grades 7-11, September 12-14
I-Ready (Fall): Algebra Readiness	Grade 9, August 28 - September 29
Accuplacer (Fall): Math & Reading	Graduating Students, Grade 12, September 12-14
MEAs (Fall): In-Person, Math & Reading	Grades 7, 8, & 10, October 2-27
NWEA (Winter): Math, Reading, & Language Usage	Grades 7-11, January 9-11
I-Ready (Winter): Algebra Readiness	Grade 9, January 15 - February 16
NWEA (Spring): Math, Reading, & Language Usage	Grades 7-11, April 30 - May 2
I-Ready (Spring): Algebra Readiness	Grade 9, May 1-31
MEAs (Spring): In-Person, Math & Reading and Science	Grades 7, 8, 10, & 11, May 2024

What do we do with all that academic assessment data?

- Virtual NWEAs inform the MTSS process and measure growth in math reading, and language usage.
- I-Ready Algebra helps gauge algebra readiness.
- In-Person Maine Through Year and MEA Science measure proficiency in math, reading, and science.
- Accuplacer measures college readiness in math and reading.
- Assessment results factor into course instructional maps.

Dr. Browne presented the SY-2023/2024 new enrollment updates as of September 19th:

- Seat Offers Made: We are no longer making seat offers and offers previously extended have all expired.
- Families Actively working their application: 11 (none seem to be actively enrolling their student).
- We have a full school.

Student counts by grade:

Grade	New	Returning	Total
7	26	0	26
8	39	29	68
9	35	41	76
10	37	40	77
11	35	74	109
12	25	63	88
Total	197	247	444

Governance.

FY24 School Based Physician Services Review:

- MEVA is beginning its seventh annual contract with Maine General Medical Center for school-based physician services.
- The contract satisfies the MDOE compliance requirement.

Dr. Browne reported that MEVA contracts with Maine General per requirement of the law. MEVA has used this service to consult Maine General for counsel on covid procedures/PPE requirements during the pandemic.

The Annual Independent Third-Party Evaluation Proposal will be ready for the October governing board meeting.

Tina motioned to table the Annual Independent Third-Party Evaluation Proposal. Nick seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Resignations and Retirements. Donna thanked both Amy and Peter for the ten years of dedication to MEVA. Dr. Browne said the next business meeting with the charter commission will make mention of the change of members and give Amy and Peter recognition for their service. Tina asked other board members if we should send a thank you card, since they were not present to hear all the thank-you comments today; it would be nice to send something. Donna committed to arranging something with Dr. Browne.

Public Discussion. Dr. Browne said the next board meeting is on October 17th. Donna requested that Dr. Browne send the list of board meetings for the full year to Susan. Stacey also asked to receive the full list of meetings this year. Dr. Browne committed to sending it to everyone on the board. Tina thanked Dr. Browne for sharing the school newsletter with the board; it was nice. Donna agreed and really liked it.

Adjournment. Tina motioned to adjourn. Donna seconded. All in favor, so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore