

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held August 16, 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, August 16, 2022. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, and Stacey Blanchard. Amy Carlisle, Ed LeBlanc, and Peter Mills were excused. A quorum was not present.

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

Attending from Stride were Todd McIntire, Tom Travia, and Omar Shahid.

Finance Report.

Quarter Four (Q4) Report –Jennifer Hight reported that MEVA presented a slight loss for the FY22 fourth quarter; no summer salaries were included in the report. There was likely a 300K to 450K surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 2022, not subtracting summer salaries.

Stride, Inc. asked for electronic payments versus payments by check, due to difficulties with the U.S. Mail. MEVA planned to grant their request, maintaining the current protocol of Jillian Dearborn reviewing the invoices, and Dr. Browne approving the payments.

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

Credit Recovery, Summer, and Extended School Year (ESY):

- MEVA credit recovery is a year-round effort.
- More than one hundred high school credit recovery courses were completed during SY2021/2023, with about half completed in the Summer 2022 Session.
- Approximately twenty non-credit courses for summer enrichment were completed at the middle school level.
- Approximately one-dozen special education students participated in Extended School Year (ESY) for academics.
- Summer Help Desk for academic support.
- Regular team meetings to monitor students’ progress.
- SY2021/2022 credit recovery courses closed on August 12th.
- SY2022/2023 credit recovery courses open on August 29th, the first day of school, and are available until August 11th, 2023. Students are added as needed.

Donna asked about students’ success with the asynchronous courses. Dr. Browne said that the overall completion rate was very high, though she did not have an exact breakdown available.

SY2022/2023 Launch Highlights:

- August 15th in-person event at the Ballard Center for faculty.
- Teacher collaboration and persistence.
- New products training to support teaching and learning.
- MDOE Compliance trainings, Vector (online), with special education library.
- Modern Classroom Project – teacher mastery experience funded by the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC).

- Accuplacer (College Board) proctoring training to assess students' college readiness.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to target school fit.
- Process Improvement Meetings begin on Monday, August 22nd.

SY2022/2023 Assessment Calendar:

- NWEA – Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11, *Growth and Proficiency (new)*:
- NWEA (Fall) - October 4, 5, & 6, 2022 (Makeup Day - October 7, 2022).
- NWEA (Winter) - January 10, 11, & 12, 2023 (Makeup Day - January 13, 2023).
- NWEA (Spring) - May 9, 10, & 11, 2023 (Makeup Day - May 12, 2023). *Used for the Grade 7, 8, & 10 (new, formerly 11), MEA.*
- MEA Science (Grades 8 & 11) - May 22-26, 2023.
- ACCUPLACER Testing (Grade 12) - On a rolling basis every Wednesday at 3:00pm starting August 31, 2022.

Donna asked if the state had explained why they changed the NWEA - MEA assessment requirement to 10th grades instead of 11th? Dr. Browne said that the MDOE did not provide any reasons, though the MEA Science still applied to 11th grade.

Curriculum Mapping Project:

- Teachers started mapping last school year, in conjunction with building learning standards into their courses in Brightspace. Teachers received feedback and coaching at intervals.
- Teachers were offered the opportunity to continue their efforts during Summer 2022.
- We are utilizing the Chalk platform to house the curriculum maps.
- Chalk teacher training is scheduled for August 17th.
- Christina O'Grady will present our progress on the mapping project.

SY-2022/2023 Curriculum Mapping Goals (Christina O'Grady):

- Maps for every course, with priority focused on the core academic subject areas.
- Each map will be aligned to Maine Learning Results, and when applicable, Common Core State Standards or Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).
- Each map will be aligned to Life and Career Ready Standards.
- Each assessment within a course will be documented on the map and aligned to standards.
- Special Education will take the curriculum maps for the General Education classes and adapt them for their courses.
- The RISE (Self-Contained) program is working on a learning continuum for that program.

Christina O'Grady presented an example map on the Chalk platform. Speaking from experience, Donna said that she recognized all the hard work that went into creating these documents.

Curriculum Mapping Benefits (Christina O'Grady):

- Chalk allows us to take a critical look at the standards that are being addressed, how they are being assessed, and compare that with our NWEA data to identify areas of need.
- We can compare maps across grade spans and within departments to identify gaps and redundancies and start to build toward interdisciplinary projects and assignments.

Dr. Browne informed the board that MEVA had recently completed its special education monitoring cycle, which occurred every three years. Gina Post indicated that the Charter Commission received monitoring results directly from the MDOE and they would contact us if they had any questions.

Special Education Monitoring:

- Program Year 2021-22. Onsite visit by MDOE to review 10 files.
- MDOE monitored 54 Items; 45 applied to MEVA (9 did not apply).
- MEVA received a score of 100% on 32 items. Notable strengths were Disability/IEP Alignment, Postsecondary Transition Services (11 items), Academic Goals, and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
- MEVA received a score of 70% to 99% on 9 items.
- MEVA received a score of less than 70% on 4 items: Academic Present Levels, Functional/Developmental Present Levels, Speech/Language Eligibility Criteria, and Determination of Eligibility within 45 School Days for Procedural Safeguards.
- MEVA is moving swiftly to address deficiencies.
- Targeted special education faculty trainings are planned for fall '22.
- Deadline for completing document corrections and trainings is August 10th, 2023.
- *MEVA is committed to handling every special education case as an exemplar.*
- Continuing our school improvement processes together, with a shared vision of success.

Dr. Browne recalled that during the site visit, when asked how we did, the MDOE said MEVA was right there with the best of them (with respect to outcomes). Lena Vitagliano said that she thought MEVA did well with the monitoring, and it was a true reflection of where the school stood, and what we needed to do to improve. Dr. Browne said that MEVA had already addressed some items (e.g., adding Procedural Safeguards to the agenda of IEP meetings), prior to the visit. Donna advised that (in her experience) the MDOE always found something (for schools to work on). Lena committed to completing remedial items by mid-November; she expected that MEVA would score 100% on all items during the next monitoring cycle

SY2022/23 Enrollment.

The grade level breakdown was added to the presentation and shared, as requested by Stacey Blanchard at the previous board meeting.

Student Counts by Grade Levels – 8/15:

- Grade 7 – 27.
- Grade 8 – 52.

Middle School – 79 (20%).

- Grade 9 – 43.
- Grade 10 – 79.
- Grade 11 – 108.
- Grade 12 – 86.

High School – 316 (80%).

Schoolwide – 395 (*attaining/approaching 390 Cap, plus 10%*). MEVA was on track to achieve its SY2022/2023 enrollment goals.

Donna asked about the first student day. Dr. Browne stated that students begin on August 29th.

Stephanie Emery presented MEVA's retention strategy of winning back students and families who are contemplating withdrawing.

Winback the Student (Stephanie Emery).

"It takes a community to raise up a child", as the old adage says.

The same is true within education, it takes a team to support each student.

Immediate intervention has been recognized as the most effective method in student retention. Every role within the school plays an important part in this effort. Without our students there would be no MEVA.

Withdrawal Mitigation Process (Stephanie Emery):

- Ask why? – Use phrases like, “*Before* you withdraw, tell me about your reason. There may be something we can do for you.”
- Listen for keywords; lack of support, socialization, motivation challenges, tech or navigation challenges and so forth.
- As you listen, empathize – Understand their position and their feelings. Many times, families or students have been thinking about this for a while.
- Advocate for MEVA’s programs – Share information on our clubs, async options, and student support opportunities. See if they are willing to have a team meeting to talk over work credit options, early college opportunities, and so much more. Some students may qualify for early graduation.
- Document, document, document – your mitigation efforts in contact logs within Infinite Campus, then submit an intervention form. Familiarize yourself with the form selections to be aware of the kinds of barriers that lead to withdrawals.
- Rapid Intervention Form.

Dr. Browne pointed out that the Winback methodology was on the ongoing agenda of SY2022/2023 Process Improvement meetings, to keep student retention on the front burner.

Governance.

Independent Third-Party Evaluation Update and Timeline.

Dr. Browne said that Dr. Mary Madden planned to give her 3rd party report at the September board meeting. If the board approved of the report, then Dr. Madden will present the results at the MCSC business meeting in December. Dr. Browne committed to distributing the report to board members in advance.

Board Training Platform Update.

Donna informed the board that the trainings were located on the Epicenter portal, and the board should be up to Module 7. The Charter Commission expected board members, the chair and treasurer to take the trainings.

Board Goals.

Donna said that she had not received any additional information at this time from other board members on board goals. Per the By-Laws, the board of directors needed to hold an annual meeting to re-elect seats. Dr. Browne and Donna planned to organize the timeline and agenda for that meeting, which shall occur in September.

Public Discussion. None.

Adjournment. Nick motioned to adjourn. Donna agreed to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore