

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held January 24, 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, January 24th, 2023. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, and Tina Meserve. Amy Carlisle, and Peter Mills, were excused. A quorum was present.

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

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 December 20th, 2022. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Finance Report.

FY22 Form 990. Dr. Browne informed the board that the Form 990 was our Not-For-Profit Corporate Tax Return, which needed to be approved by the board and documented in the minutes. The FY22 Form 990, prepared by Wiplfli, LLP, was sent to the board a few weeks ago for review.

Nick motioned to approve the FY22 Form 990. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

FY24 (Two-Year) Annual Budget/Three-Year Financial Plan Discussion.

Dr. Browne explained that Donna signed a charter amendment last summer for a new performance framework beginning this school year (SY-2022/2023). The new performance framework included a financial plan and budget performance target.

Financial Plan and Budget Performance Target:

- Charter District Leadership publishes a 3-year annual financial plan that includes a 2-year annual budget and a 1-year projection for year 3 that is board approved.
- June 30, 2023: Leadership/Board has a finalized 3-year annual financial plan.
- **Meets Expectations:** Charter District Leadership annually publishes a 3-year financial plan that includes a budget for the next 2-years and a 1-year projection for year 3.

For completing these tasks, Donna requested financial meetings at least once per month starting the second week of February 2023, followed by another meeting in for early March, and so forth. Frequent meetings needed to be scheduled. These meetings were considered public workshops. Donna asked Nick if he was interested in working on this subcommittee. Nick stated, yes, he wanted to participate. Donna thought that Tina’s and Stacey’s input would be important if they had time to attend. No agendas were needed since these were just workshops. However, Dr. Browne committed to posting the financial workshops days/times on the school’s websites once they were decided.

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

Mid-Year Progress on Performance Measures.

- We believe that MEVA is a high performing charter school that is on track to meet its academic, operational, and financial performance measures.
- Major initiatives include Data Analysis, Curriculum Mapping, Win-back the student, and Family Outreach.
- Teachers are customizing their courses in Brightspace, utilizing the creator tools.
- Faculty collaboration is at an all-time high, focusing on data analysis and targeted instruction.
- MEVA’s actions are making a positive difference in our outcomes. However, the mid-year data are informing our continuous improvement efforts.

Retention as of January 23rd: As of January 23rd, since October 1st (10/1/2022) we had fourteen (14) students withdraw (and not return).

Grade	Withdrawals since 10/01/22	Total students on 10/1/22	Retention Rate
7	1	31	97%
8	4	56	93%
MS	5	87	94%
9	1	55	98%
10	4	85	95%
11	4	113	96%
12	0	98	100%
HS	9	351	97%
Total	14	438	97%

Year Over Year Improvement – Retention:

- MEVA retained an additional ten (10) students during the same period, as compared to last year.
- This improvement was due to the faculty’s rapid reporting and outreach efforts.
- MEVA is on track to meet/exceed its performance target of 85% or higher.

Average Daily Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism – Quarter 2:

	Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	Totals
Q2 Reporting – combines 1 and 2 quarters		
mcsOverall	Present 31807/ Enrolled 32770 x100	97.06%
MS	6329/6560	96.47%

HS	25478/26210	97.20%
7th	2293/2333	98.28%
8th	4036/4227	95.48%
9th	4080/4263	95.70%
10th	6362/6491	98.01%
11th	8313/8557	97.14%
12th	6723/6899	97.44%

Chronic Absenteeism		Totals
Overall	22/452	4.86%
MS	6/91	6.59%
HS	16/361	4.43%
7th	0/32	0.00%
8th	6/59	10.16%
9th	4/56	7.14%
10th	3/88	3.40%
11th	4/115	3.47%
12th	5/102	4.90%

Chronic Absenteeism Target:

- Average daily attendance is not a target on the new performance framework.
- MEVA is currently meeting/exceeding its chronic absenteeism target.

Semester-1 Passing Rates:

- Schoolwide = 91%.
- English = 91%.
- Math = 92%.
- Science = 90%.
- Social Studies = 92%.
- Electives = 88%.
- Rates exclude asynchronous (self-paced) and special education courses.
- We are exceeding our target passing rate of 80% or higher.

Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) Recommendation from the SY-2021/2022 Annual Monitoring Report:

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH – Given the impact of the pandemic on academic growth, Maine Virtual Academy should develop clear and specific strategies for closing learning gaps to ensure students are prepared for rigorous academic work.

Dr. Browne reported that MEVA was holding open the Winter NWEA (MAP Growth) window until Friday, January 27th. However, we had summarized initial results as of Friday, January 20th, and shared them with the faculty at the weekly process improvement meeting.

Winter ‘23 NWEA Participation as of January 21st:

	Math	Reading	Language
7th Grade (N = 34)	100%	100%	100%
8th Grade (N = 58)	90% (52)	88% (51)	90% (52)
9th Grade (N = 65)	94% (61)	94% (61)	91% (59)
10th Grade (N = 95)	96% (91)	97% (92)	96% (91)
11th Grade (N = 113)	95% (107)	94% (106)	95% (107)
Schoolwide (N = 365)	95% (345)	94% (344)	94% (343)

New MEVA Custom Target – NWEA:

- Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile on the MAP Student Growth Summary Report.
- Separate goals for each grade level (7, 8, 9, 10, & 11), a total of fifteen indicators/goals: The student median conditional growth percentile is the fiftieth (50th) or higher, as of the spring NWEA math, reading, and language usage, for each eligible grade level.

Winter NWEA Growth Results as of January 21st, 2023: Overall Growth by Grade Level Student Median Conditional Growth Percentile (MCGP).

Grade	Math MCGP	Reading MCGP	Language MCGP
7	54 th	33 rd	68 th
8	63 rd	43 rd	42 nd
9	46 th	54 th	61 st
10	34 th	61 st	71 st
11	55 th	57 th	57 th

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

Greatest Opportunity and Challenge:

- Greatest opportunity: 8th grade reading and language usage, and 9th grade math.
- Our greatest challenge: 7th grade reading, and 10th grade math.
- Initial data analysis indicates that we need to focus our attention on growing the upper two achievement bands.

MCSC Growth Target – Middle School:

- At least 60% of students in grades 7 & 8 will achieve their NWEA projected growth from fall to spring in math, reading, and language usage.

- Partially meeting is reaching 50 – 59%.
- Not meeting is below 50%.

Winter NWEA Growth Results as of January 21st, 2023. Middle School Percentage of Students Meeting Growth Projection:

Grade	Math	Reading	Language
7	63%	40%	63%
8	60%	49%	46%
MS	62%	46%	53%

Exceeds = 70% or higher; Meets = 60% to 69.9%; Approaches = 50% to 59.9%; and Does Not Meet = Lower than 50%.

Winter NWEA Growth Results as of January 21st, 2023:

Fall '22 to Winter '23	Math	Reading	Language
Met Projected Growth	62%	46%	53%
Met Projected Growth within RIT Range	78%	65%	73%
Increased RIT by at least 1 point	72%	49%	55%

Greatest Opportunity and Challenge:

- Our greatest opportunity for achieving our MCSC growth target is bolstering 8th grade reading and language usage.
- Our greatest challenge, or barrier to achieving our MCSC growth target, is improving 7th grade reading.
- Initial data analysis indicates that we need to focus our attention on growing the upper two achievement bands.

MCSC Accuplacer Target:

- 75 – 85% of students in their final year of high school will achieve the college ready score on the math and reading Accuplacer: 226 or above in math, and 239 or above in reading.
- Subgroups will perform within 8% of comparison groups.

Accuplacer results as of January 19, 2023:

Subgroup	College-Ready Reading	College-Ready Math
With 504 Plan	38/42 = 90.5%	38/42 = 90.5%
Without 504 Plan	73/88 = 83%	79/88 = 89.8%
Delta	+7.5% (Meets)	+0.7% (Meets)
Special Education (SE)	9/14 = 64.3%	10/14 = 71.4%
Non-SE	102/116 = 87.9%	109/116 = 94.0%
Delta	-23.6% (Does Not Meet)	-22.6% (Does Not Meet)

Male	53/58 = 91.4%	56/58 = 96.6%
Female	61/72 = 84.7%	61/72 = 84.7%
Delta	-6.7% (Meets)	-11.9% (Approaches)
Economically Disadvantaged (ED)	35/43 = 81.4%	39/43 = 90.7%
Non-ED	76/87 = 87.4%	77/87 = 88.5%
Delta	+6.0% (Meets)	+2.2 (Meets)
Total	111/130 = 85.4% (Meets)	117/130 = 90.0% (Meets)

Accuplacer Performance Measure:

- MEVA is meeting the overall Accuplacer performance measure in reading and math.
- We are partially meeting the sub-group measure. Special education students are the largest area of need, as fewer than 75% of them are achieving the college ready scores in both reading and math.

Donna expressed appreciation for the hard work from staff on the good results.

Dr. Browne said that the MEVA faculty were digging into the data and making sure students were doing their best. Faculty met regularly for the purpose of analyzing data and planning targeted interventions. In frequent team meetings with students and parents, faculty shared updates, progress, and results to maintain strong school-family communications and supports.

Dr. Browne reported that the annual report to the Commissioner for the prior school year was on the agenda of the next charter commission meeting. MEVA was doing well and had met most of our performance measures.

Enrollment:

- MEVA will launch its SY-2023/2024 Open Enrollment window on Monday, January 30th.
- We are running advertisements in the Kennebec Valley Journal for two consecutive Sundays.
- The SY-2023/2024 Re-Registration begins on Monday, February 27th.
- Projections and waitlists indicate that we will have a full school on October 1st, 2023. Family interest is strong.
- MEVA meets every two weeks with the Stride enrollment team to review progress data on a wide variety of metrics.

Dr. Browne reported MEVA's progress on the SY-2023/2024 new enrollment and re-registration. Regarding re-registration, the team's efforts were aimed at accomplishing our concurrent enrollment goal of at least 90% of students by the end of March 2023.

Dr. Browne informed the board that the mid-year check in meeting with the charter commission was scheduled for March 1st, 2023, at 10:30 am, via Zoom. We were preparing to present all our data, as well as share our curriculum mapping progress.

Governance.

Facilities Plan.

Jillian Dearborn reported that Jim Day, Ballard Center Manager, had sent MEVA an official lease-renewal proposal. If MEVA was to stay as is and not downsize only a three percent (3%) inflator would be imposed as was normal at each renewal. Jillian said that MEVA's current rate was seventeen (17) dollars per square foot, with the CAMs included. CAMs were the additional costs associated with the maintenance of common areas.

Jillian informed the board that the current lease included all CAM expenses. Jim stated to Jillian that utilities had increased fifty-four (54%) in recent years.

Dr. Browne noted that another factor was MEVA's upcoming charter contract renewal (June 30th, 2025). The advantage for retaining what we currently had was that the new two-year lease expiration date coincided with the expected renewal date. MEVA was living within its financial means and could afford the rent.

Donna reviewed the other office space comparisons, provided by Jillian. The offerings did not necessarily meet the school's parking and other needs. Renovation costs were an additional expense if we moved.

Nick observed that MEVA was in a position where our space was affordable and meeting our needs.

Donna asserted that she was always concerned about the finances, just as the commission wanted from charter school boards. Donna asked what percentage of the budget went towards facility costs? Donna said she was going to send an email to Jennifer Hight to find out.

Stacey motioned to approve the Facilities Plan (sent to the board a couple weeks ago) to maintain MEVA's current space. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Dr. Browne asked Jillian to connect with Jim Day to obtain the new lease agreement for signatures.

MEVA MDOE Policies Review.

Dr. Browne gave a summary of the proposed ACAA Transgender and Gender Expansive Students Administrative Procedure. The procedure was clear that the school did not keep secrets regarding these topics from parents of minors. Full consideration was given to people's rights.

Tina said that all schools needed this kind of policy. Students who enrolled in alternative public education structures often attended because they did not feel that they fit in at their local districts. It was good to be prepared to support all students.

Tina motioned to approve the ACAA Transgender and Gender Expansive Students Administrative Procedure. Nick seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Dr. Browne informed the board of a new policy agenda item for the next board meeting – an Institutional Research (IRB) Policy. This policy focused on the protection of student-specific information when involved in research studies conducted at the school. The policy applied to faculty who were in advanced-

degree programs and utilizing data from their practices. MEVA did not currently have a policy in place for these purposes. Dr. Browne committed to sharing the proposed policy in advance.

Tina shared that in her experience the universities provided the conditions and documents to sign.

Lau Plan. Dr. Browne reported that the MDOE had updated their recommended Lau Plan to reflect the 4.5 score on the WIDA Access as a definition of students' English Language Proficiency. Dr. Browne thanked Donna for catching the discrepancy (at the last board meeting).

SY2023/2024 Parent Student Handbook. Dr. Browne informed the board that the new handbook will supersede any previous handbooks. MEVA had adjusted content over the years and updated versions were posted on the school's websites, with older versions removed. Stacey said that this would eliminate confusion.

Stacey motioned to approve the SY23/24 Parent Student Handbook. Nick seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Job Descriptions. Donna observed that the current job descriptions for middle/high school were grouped together, but qualifications were different. Donna suggested adding the preferred certifications and endorsements specifications for each position. Tina was also partial to having some language surrounding certifications and cited the importance of guiding the Head of School with written documents. Nick wanted to see language pertaining to MEVA's approved certification exemption policy. Dr. Browne committed to revising the descriptions to suit.

Jillian said that desired credentials were included within advertisements for open positions, including requiring the background check (CHRC). Dr. Browne informed the board that the charter commission regularly monitored MEVA's CHRC compliance.

Donna recommended tabling the job description approvals until the next meeting.

Nick motioned to table the approval of the job descriptions. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Public Discussion. None.

Regarding board trainings, Donna informed the board members present that they were all logged into the MCSC Epicenter – which was great. We needed two more members to join.

Dr. Browne expressed appreciation of the board and their involvement. Next board meeting date was February 28th due to school break.

Adjournment. Nick/Donna motioned to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore