

Maine Learning Innovations

Draft Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held July 19, 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, July 19, 2022. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Ed LeBlanc, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, Peter Mills, and Stacey Blanchard. Amy Carlisle was excused.

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.

Minutes. Nick motioned to approve minutes for the June 21, 2022, governing board meeting. Peter seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Finance Report.

Preliminary Quarter Four (Q4) Report –Jennifer Hight reported that finance was working on final billing and payroll. MEVA was in good financial shape. The new state grant system (Grants4ME) seemed to be working well. The FY22 Audit was scheduled for the week of September 19th. Donna inquired about MEVA’s financial carry over number. Jennifer said she was still working on that figure, and she was planning to share this information with the board at the August 16th meeting.

Check Signatory Discussion – Jennifer suggested obtaining large check approvals via email by either the board chair or treasurer that could be attached to invoices; the approvals would be documented for the auditors and still meet the policy requirement. Currently, some checks were held up due to dual signature delays and mail delay barriers. Donna asked if check approvals could be done in DocuSign or could we maintain an email record somehow? Dr. Browne suggested developing a tracking process for the emails or keeping record of the emails in a file (for the auditors). Donna said that this would likely fall under the responsibility of the treasurer. Dr. Browne reported that MEVA’s checking account now displayed pictures of all checks, which were a record. Jennifer asserted that we needed two people responsible instead of just one in the event the treasurer was out sick or on vacation and/or unreachable. The issue was timeliness in being able to pay bills \$10K or higher. Nick said that more definition/clarity of board roles was needed within this process. Nick stated that he was available to serve as the secondary person in this process, since he was near the Ballard Center or within the region often. Donna proposed increasing the parameter to cover checks greater than \$15K (rather than \$10K) needing secondary approval by the treasurer or board chair’s designee. A review of board member roles and responsibilities was planned for this September anyway, and at that time the board could review and appoint designees. Donna asked Jennifer to put a check signatory motion together so that it can be addressed at next month’s meeting (August 16th).

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

SY 2021/22 Progress Report.

Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) Reports and Data Submission - Charter districts were required to submit reports and data to the MCSC for review. MEVA’s report and data submission completion throughout the 2021-2022 school year, as of 7/11/2022: Submitted 100%; On-Time 100%;

and Accurate 100%. MEVA submitted one hundred percent (100%) of reports accurately and on time this school year to the MCSC and Maine Department of Education (MDOE).

SY2021/2022 Results:

- Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) has improved results for the 2021/2022 School Year. This is evidence that our recent faculty expansion, curriculum development, and persistent interventions are working. We are making a strong year-round effort to accomplish our mission and achieve our Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) performance measures.
- It is important to note that MEVA's student population is primarily disadvantaged (55%), predominantly rural, and enrolling no earlier than the seventh grade. These factors provide us with both challenges and opportunities.
- Our focus remains on serving students' individual needs and bolstering their virtual instructional access, as we prepare them for postsecondary educational and career opportunities, with a view towards encouraging their living and working in Maine.

Chronic Absenteeism & Target:

- Grade 7 – 6.66%.
- Grade 8 – 8.77%.
- Grade 9 – 3.89%.
- Grade 10 – 5.71%.
- Grade 11 – 9.34%.
- Grade 12 – 8.73%.
- School – 7.56% (*Prior Year 10.60%). Exceeded MCSC Target.*

Average Daily Attendance & Target:

- Grade 7 – 97.4%.
- Grade 8 – 96.2%.
- Grade 9 – 97.6%.
- Grade 10 – 96.7%.
- Grade 11 – 96.8%.
- Grade 12 – 94.2%.
- School – 96.45%.
- MS 96.76% (*Prior Year 98.7%). Met MCSC Target.*
- HS 96.37% (*Prior Year 95.3%). Exceeded MCSC Target.*

MEVA invests significant time encouraging students to achieve their career and college goals. The school has improved Chronic Absenteeism and Average Daily Attendance metrics and has met and/or exceeded MCSC targets in these areas.

Preliminary Graduation Rates.

Four Year Rates (YOY Change):

- 2022 – 95.70% (+25.96).
- 2021 – 69.74% (+5.64%).
- 2020 – 64.10%.

Five Year Rates:

- 2022 – 82.19% (+11.14).
- 2021 – 71.05% (+0.95%).
- 2020 – 70.10%.

Six Year Rates:

- 2022 – 71.05% (-3.69%).
- 2021 – 74.74% (+16.58%).
- 2020 – 58.16%.

MEVA is exceeding the state average graduation rate in the Four-Year cohort. The key, Dr. Browne states, is to maintain this progress year over year.

MCSC Targets Met or Exceeded:

- Student Attendance (Chronic Absenteeism & Average Daily Attendance).
- Enrollment (Retention & Re-Registration).
- Postsecondary Readiness (4-Year Graduation Rate & Career Readiness).
- Financial Performance and Stability (Near Term Measures, Sustainability Measures, & Financial Audit).
- Board Governance and Stewardship.
- Facilities Management.
- School Culture and Climate.

NWEA

- We improved our NWEA fall to spring growth results from the previous year in math (4/5 grade levels); reading (5/5 grade levels); and language usage (4/5 grade levels).
- Fall to spring growth comparison of subgroups: special education, economically disadvantaged, and gender, performed within the target intervals. The Section 504 subgroup had wider overall disparity; however, the high school performed better than the middle school, and was within the target range.

Our NWEA results indicate that MEVA has turned the corner on the pandemic. Areas of sub-group weakness are due to the Section 504 students struggling with health issues.

ESEA Targets – Semester 2 Passing Rates:

- Middle School Math – 89.3%.
- High School Math – 87.2%.
- Schoolwide Math – 87.7%.
- Middle School English – 82.5%. Needs attention.
- High School English – 93.5%.
- Schoolwide English – 91.0%.

The data is indicating that Middle School (MS) students need more attention and support, which will be addressed this coming school year. MS English is showing weakness in passing rates, especially the 7th grade (80.0%). However, MEVA has met its ESEA goal of eighty percent or higher (80.0%+) schoolwide passing rates for math and English.

Opportunities and Plans:

Looking ahead to SY2022/2023, we believe that our largest opportunities are:

- (1) Continuing to improve students' NWEA fall to spring growth, by addressing students' learning losses, and
- (2) Bolstering retention and recurrent enrollment at the middle school level (grades 7 & 8), bringing these measures in line with the schoolwide results. (*Retention data by grade level was presented at the last meeting on June 21st*).

The curriculum mapping project, co-teaching teams, guidance counselors, and intervention/communication practices (including summer programming) are active, ongoing solutions that promise to make a difference in our School Year 2022/2023 outcomes.

New MCSC Performance Framework Highlights, adopted on July 1st, 2022:

- Amended Charter Contract.
- NWEA applies to grades 7 & 8 only. However, MEVA will continue to administer NWEAs to grades 7 - 11, aiming for 95%+ participation. The MDOE is utilizing NWEAs for grades 7, 8, & 11 for the MEA.
- Accuplacer math and reading for all graduating students. College readiness is assessed.
- Reporting Accuracy and Timeliness.
- Three Year Financial Plan. Two Year Budget.
- Governing board training participation.
- School-designed, mission-specific, indicators.

Dr. Browne reported that Donna had signed the Amended Charter Contract. She planned to distribute copies to the board once the final document was received from the MCSC.

MEVA had drafted a mission-specific goal and was reviewing it with the MCSC this week.

Mission Specific Indicators/Goals (Proposed):

- MEVA's mission focuses on individual ("each") student's growth and development.
- Our proposed 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.
- Separate indicators/goals for each grade level (7, 8, 9, 10, & 11), math, reading, and language usage.
- Growth results will be tabulated for each grade level by generating the **MAP Student Growth Summary Report** in the winter (progress check) and the spring (final).
- Co-teaching teams will use the granular data to address individual students' needs/gaps.

MEVA Mission and Vision:

School Mission – Maine Virtual Academy's (MEVA) mission is to develop **each** student's full potential with learner-centered instruction, research-based curriculum and educational tools and resources to provide a high-quality learning experience for grade 7-12 students who are in need of alternative educational options. MEVA will develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with specific learning goals to meet each student's needs. MEVA's rigorous curriculum is aligned to the eight Maine content areas, the Maine Learning Results, the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.

School Vision – MEVA will be a leading 21st century public charter school in Maine and will improve student learning outcomes through **individualized instruction**, as evidenced by student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness, and the demonstration of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and self-direction. MEVA will empower students to acquire the academic and life skills needed to succeed in post-secondary education and career opportunities. Our graduates will be prepared for college or other postsecondary career training opportunities

SY 2021/22 & SY2022/23 Enrollment.

Enrollment update as of 7/18/22:

91 students approved.

34 applications in progress.

10 outstanding seat offers.

MEVA was on track to fill the school for SY2022/2023. The goal was to hit four-hundred-twenty-nine (429) students, our enrollment target, by October 1st, 2022, Count Day. Stacey asked about the grade level breakdowns in enrollment. Dr. Browne said that this information will be shared at the next board meeting (August 16th). Dr. Browne mentioned that incoming (new) students were evenly distributed across the grade levels, by coincidence, as MEVA offered seats in order of application dates. However, the upper grade levels (11 & 12) in high school had higher overall numbers, consistent with previous years.

Governance.

MEVA Student & Parent/Legal Guardian Handbook SY2022-2023. Nick motioned to approve the MEVA Student & Parent/Legal Guardian Handbook SY2022-2023. Peter seconded, all in favor, so moved.

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

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

- a. IHBG Home Schooling.
- b. IHBGA Home Schooling—Participation in School Programs
- c. HCDA Post-Secondary Enrollment Options.
- d. IJJ Instructional and Library Materials Selection.
- e. IJJ-E Challenge of Instructional Materials Form.
- f. IJNDB Student Computer and Internet Use and Internet Safety.

Peter seconded, all in favor, so moved.

Board Training Platform Update. Donna reported that board training was located on the Epicenter platform. Recent trainings included information on a law regarding virtual meetings. The four (4) qualifiers were removed. However, the law stated that we had to give people and the public the ability to attend the meetings in a staffed place, along with providing meeting materials, if requested. MEVA committed to review and create a policy surrounding these requirements.

Board Goals. Donna reported that the Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire was sent out to all members. The results were summarized and distributed. Donna asked for any thoughts/feedback on the self-assessment results, and if everyone had a chance to review them. Only two (2) of the six (6) board members responded to the questionnaire. It was difficult to get meaningful averages based on two (2) responses. Donna asked how the board should proceed after reviewing the two (2) scores. Most assessment scores resulted in being middle of the road. Nick stated that the results were expected given the minimal involvement. Stacey said that she expected results to be a little higher. Donna mentioned the importance of board members being present and active. MEVA leadership and faculty worked hard to achieve outcomes; board participation validated their work. Donna committed to drafting some board goals ahead of the next meeting (August 16th). There was an expectation that when she sent a mandated survey or task that it was not left to one person doing the work.

Resignation and Retirements. Jenna Greenbaum, World Languages Teacher, moved to Massachusetts, where she grew up, and changed her focus to school librarian. Donna thanked Jenna for spending her first year out of college teaching at MEVA.

Nominations of Professional Staff – SY2022/2023. Dr. Browne reported two new hires: Louise Gosselin-McMillan, World Languages Teacher, who backfilled Jenna’s position. Louise was fluent in French and Spanish, and Carrie Pierce was an experienced, part-time, American Sign Language Teacher (ASL). Offering ASL expanded MEVA’s opportunities for students to study multiple years of a language, improving their college/career readiness.

MEVA had no more openings this year unless someone resigned unexpectedly.

Public Discussion. None.

Adjournment. Nick motioned to adjourn. Stacey seconded, all in favor, so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore