

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held March 21, 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, March 21st, 2023. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, and Tina Meserve. Amy Carlisle, Nicholas “Nick” Gannon, 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, Jillian Dearborn, and Lena Vitagliano.

Attending from Stride were Todd McIntire and Tom Travia.

Attending from the Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS) were Robert “Bob” Kautz, Jana Lapoint, Shelley Reed, and Ande Smith.

Opening Items.

Finance Report.

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

- 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.
- MEVA has hosted three planning and budgeting workshops on Feb. 9th and 22nd, and March 2nd. A fourth workshop is planned for May 4th. MEVA is aiming to have the FY24 budget and 3-year financial plan ready for governing board approval at the May 16th and June 20th meetings.

Dr. Browne reported that the board was working through the financial planning process with several set workshops in place. The next workshop was on May 4th, and the plan was to have the FY24 budget and three-year financial plan approved before the end of the fiscal year. Donna said that the reason why we were not having a workshop in April was due to waiting for the federal grant allocations on ESEA and IDEA funding to be released.

Presentation – Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS).

Shelley Reed explained that individuals who had concerns about the current charter school climate, discussed starting an alliance to help support the schools. The group first met in January 2023. There were concerning factors with the legislature, as well as with the stance on charter schools with some of the current charter committee members. MAPCS observed that there were disruptors for charter schools in Maine. The goal of establishing the alliance was to bring improved awareness about charter schools across stakeholder groups. The first alliance meeting identified the need to have better resources, communication plans, and advocacy for the schools. The second meeting focused on the need to develop strategic planning, on how to aggregate data for people outside the charter schools to better understand their missions and outcomes.

There was a great need for schools to come together and share and build opportunities to support each other. Future discussions and meetings will include topics like; external and internal threats, legislative

issues (e.g., LD1089), and opportunities to talk through a recommendation from the National Charter School Alliance, who encourages us to reach out to Senator Susan Collins ahead of the charter renewal. This would be to request additional funding to help towards charter school facilities. Additional goals would be to build alliances with the National Charter School Alliance, working collectively to have our voices heard.

Ande Smith said that he joined the alliance, as the secretary. There was a question as to why are we doing this? The most immediate concern was how do we project a voice of all the charter schools collectively, in outreach and in advocacy, in the face of legislative issues. One thing that was heard in the Maine Alliance meeting a few weeks ago, was to tell our stories rooted in the data. This would help to fill in any voids or misunderstandings and to represent the collective interest. There were a series of bylaws soon to be adopted with this new organization, which outlined many details about how this organization will operate. There was a proposed board of directors that included a representative from each school, and an executive committee to keep things moving forward. This committee would conduct a needs assessment and a cost evaluation to support the mission.

Jana Lapoint agreed that the proposed MAPCS board members making the big decisions should be people appointed from the schools. There were concerns about the difficulty at the state level, we had two members of the commission who had written bills opposed to charter schools in the past. There was another bill, LD1089, which if passed, allowed the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) Commissioner to override any decision of the Charter Commission, based on any concerns relating to the “safety of students” regarding academics and/or attendance. On March 30th this bill was being presented and this was very concerning to the alliance members and the charter schools. This new alliance had a small budget to work with, the goal was to create a resource utilization strategy. Jana summarized her recent discussion with University of Southern Maine (USM) about utilizing their marketing students as an opportunity for them to intern with us, as well as for us to gain marketing/networking supports to help bring things together.

Bob Kautz asserted that this team felt that they needed to stand up and create a way to save charter schools in Maine. The legislature had not done anything positive over the years and defeated proposals again and again. None of the bills out there were to make things better for the schools. Bob inquired if MEVA still had a lobbyist under the Stride network and stated that this individual was welcome to support the alliance’s effort if MEVA became a member. Charters were limited to ten schools in this state, there was no expansion opportunity to reach other areas to provide alternative choices to parents. There were ongoing contradictory situations between the commission and legislation, such as not permitting charter schools to advertise. However, the commission required schools to publish enrollment open dates for public view. We needed to improve on the marketing of charter schools, and we could not do this with the kinds of actions being taken by the current charter commission (school performance) committee or the MDOE. We needed to work together, to open more opportunities across the state. Bob said that he became a believer of charter schools once he observed their successes.

Donna said that the MEVA board was grateful for the presentation and would work towards a decision on becoming an alliance member.

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

Dr. Browne said that the March board update included:

- Student persistence data.
- ESEA Annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

- ESEA School Improvement Indicators.
- Spring 2023 State Testing Plan.
- Summer 2023.

MEVA was maintaining active win back the student efforts:

- MEVA is consistently employing rapid interventions to students who are struggling academically and motivationally.
- We leveraged our advisory groups to reinforce constructive student-teacher interactions.
- Our retention and re-registration data suggest that the MEVA faculty’s efforts are making a positive difference in our outcomes.

Post 10/1 Retention:

Grade	Withdrawals	10/1 Count	Retention
7	1	31	97%
8	4	56	93%
9	2	55	96%
10	4	85	95%
11	4	113	96%
12	0	98	100%
Total	15	438	97%

Re-Registration Results – 3/17:

Total Enrollment:	405
Seniors/Grads Remaining in TVS:	54
Student count based on who is eligible to re-enroll:	351
Registering:	327
Not Returning:	17
Status Unknown	8
Total <i>Response Rate</i> of who is eligible to re-enroll: 344	98%
Percentage of MEVA <i>Students Returning</i> :	93%

Re-Registration by Grade Level – 3/17:

Current Re-Reg by Grade level: 3/17	Registering	% Returning
7th	35	100%
8 th	50	86%
9th	56	89%

10th	89	96%
11 th	97	95%
Total:	327	93%

Prior Year (21/22) Final Reregistration Rates & Continuity of Enrollment Target:

- Grade 7 – 94% (34/36). Compare current year (22/23) +6%.
- Grade 8 – 74% (29/39). Compare current year (22/23) +12%.
- Grade 9 – 93% (66/71). Compare current year (22/23) +4%.
- Grade 10 – 88% (84/95). Compare current year (22/23) +8%.
- Grade 11 – 96% (75/78).
- Grade 12 – 100% (3/3).
- School – 90% (291/322). Exceeded MCSC Target. Compare current year (22/23) +3%.

The eighth-grade improvement was strong evidence that the team’s collaborative efforts to retain this group were working. The team celebrated this outcome at our weekly Process Improvement meeting.

Student Persistence Performance Measures:

- MEVA has improved student persistence, as compared to prior years.
- MEVA is on track to exceed its Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) student persistence performance measures – current year retention and consecutive year continuity of enrollment (reregistration).
- Meeting = 85-89%. Exceeding = 90%+.
- MEVA’s retention is 97%, and re-registration is 93%.

SY2022/2023 ESEA Comprehensive Needs Assessment:

- The MEVA faculty is conducting our annual comprehensive needs assessment (CNA).
- The MEVA CNA is on the agenda of our weekly process improvement meetings.
- We are utilizing mid-year student performance and persistence, and school climate data to inform our discussions and determinations.
- The annual CNA process is a compliance requirement for our ESEA grant application and maintenance.
- MEVA received a low-risk rating from the MDOE on our ESEA grant performance, based on best practices throughout the year, which reflects how well are we operating within their framework.

Dr. Browne noted that MEVA was a Schoolwide ESEA Program, indicating that instructional support extended to all students. MEVA was given a low-risk rating from the MDOE, which was great news, due to the reduced monitoring responsibilities, saving the team time.

Data informing the Comprehensive Needs Assessment included the Winter’23 NWEA data, which was based on 95%+ student participation. We examined both median student growth and achievement, illuminating strengths and opportunities.

Winter ’23 NWEA Participation.

	Math	Reading	Language
7th Grade (N = 34)	100%	100%	100%
8th Grade (N = 58)	91.4% (53)	89.7% (52)	89.7% (52)
9th Grade (N = 64)	98.4% (63)	98.4% (63)	98.4% (63)

10th Grade (N = 95)	96.8% (92)	96.8% (92)	96.8% (92)
11th Grade (N = 113)	94.7% (107)	94.7% (107)	94.7% (107)
Schoolwide (N = 364)	95.9% (349)	95.6% (348)	95.6% (348)

Winter NWEA GROWTH Results as of January 29th, 2023
 Student Median Conditional GROWTH Percentile (MCGP)

Grade	Math MCGP	Reading MCGP	Language MCGP
7	54 th	33 rd	68 th
8	63 rd	41 st	42 nd
9	52 nd	54 th	56 th
10	36 th	61 st	72 nd
11	55 th	57 th	57 th

Winter NWEA ACHIEVEMENT Results as of January 29th, 2023
 Student Median ACHIEVEMENT Percentile by Grade Level

Grade	Math Med. Ach. %ile	Reading Med. Ach. %ile	Language Med. Ach. %ile
7	45 th	51 st	52 nd
8	33 rd	41 st	47 th
9	54 th	54 th	58 th
10	54 th	66 th	63 rd
11	52 nd	60 th	62 nd

MEVA’s Needs.

Growth:

- 7th Grade Reading.
- 8th Grade Reading and Language Usage.
- 10th Grade Math.

Achievement:

- 7th Grade Math.
- 8th Grade Math, Reading, and Language Usage.

FY23 ESEA School Improvement Indicators:

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Planning - Engage Instructional Teams in developing standards-aligned units of instruction.

- Instructional Teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction for each subject and grade level.
- Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery.
- Units of instruction include pre-/post-tests to assess student mastery of standards-based objectives.

State Testing Plan:

- 95% Participation Results.
- Expected in all areas of State Testing this year: MEA Math & ELA (Maine Through Year Assessment - NWEA), and MEA Science (New Meridian).

To achieve the 95% testing participation;

It will take flexibility, willingness, and teamwork of all MEVA Staff to accomplish this goal!

Deter the “No” or the “I can’t attend” responses from families. Let's do our best to make it as reasonably convenient as possible to test.

How?

- Promote Testing – it’s a chance for students to socialize, meet peers and teachers. Make testing fun by doing ice breakers before beginning, do quick games during break.
- Be Willing & Flexible – Call & coordinate with the no shows. Ask what time they are able to come and test within the days you are at the sites. See if they can make it to the next testing window. Be willing to *stay in the area* and meet at a public location close to their home to test or be willing to go to their home to test (staff in pairs).
- Teamwork - Anyone who is not proctoring, should also be available to make immediate calls to no show families and have them attend a test site. Use the test schedules as your guide. Similar set up to last years’ experience with the MEA Science, with date/time slots. Let Test Coordinators know if there are gas/fuel cost barriers or transportation barriers, we can try finding other ways.
- Note: Proctors are responsible to test every student assigned to them. Proctors who complete all their assigned students, please be willing to move on to help the next closest site if they need it.

MEVA was lining up eight (8) testing sites around the state. The testing locations, timelines, and dates were shared.

Summer 2023:

- MS English and Math.
- HS English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Art.
- Extended School Year (ESY) in accordance with IEPs.
- Six Weeks. June 20th – August 4th.
- Regular Education – 9 Teachers/Co-Teachers.
- Special Education – 3 Teachers.
- SY2023/2024 Course development with permission.

Donna asked how many students MEVA was serving this summer? Dr. Browne said approximately one-hundred students, funded with federal relief funds.

SY2023/2024 New Enrollments:

- Seat Offers Made: *109, 2 families declined brings us to 107 offers.*
- Actively working: *29 families.*
- School Approvals: *4 have been approved.*
- There are a lot of people who are just beginning their application process. About 53 in total have taken the next step. Out of this group the 29 above are actively working towards approval status.
- We are on track to have a full school by October 1st, 2023.

Dr. Browne shared that in conjunction with ongoing assessment work at MEVA, Christina O’Grady’s professor encouraged her to publish her paper regarding “How does the NWEA compare to the Accuplacer, is there a correlation?” This research explained how we can predict how students may do on their Accuplacer based on their NWEA scores, asking the question, Are they college ready? The link to the publication was provided: <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/60466/62413> . Future

exploration was planned to drill down into subgroups and see what that data looked like. This would be done as we tested more students to be able to refine the trends.

Dr. Browne noted that the Accuplacer had few statistical data to reference. As a result, the research based at MEVA was potentially very helpful to other interested parties, including the Maine Charter School Commission.

Donna requested that the link be sent to all board members and perhaps sent to the MDOE assessment department, or to the Commissioner to share in their newsletter.

Public Discussion. Dr. Browne said that the next meeting was later in April due to school break. The next board meeting was scheduled for April 25th at 3:00 pm.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore