

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held January 16, 2018

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened in the Maine Virtual Academy offices in Augusta at 2:00 PM. Members attending in person were Donna Madore, Ed LeBlanc and Peter Mills. Amy Carlisle attended by Skype.

Also attending in person were: Melinda Browne, Fadia Afaneh, Jillian Dearborn, from local staff; teachers Kelli Boucher, Chelsea Osgood, and Keirsten Harte; and Patti Ashley from K12. Attending by phone were teacher Kylie Tudella and Liz Roth who is K12's northeast regional representative while Sarah Berger is out on maternity leave. Attorney Bill Ferdinand attended the beginning of the meeting for his legislative report. CFO Jennifer Hight called in later during the meeting for her report.

New hires. Melinda reported that we have recently hired the following new people:

Lizzie Malvicini will work three days per week to provide clerical assistance.

Stephanie Emery has been hired by K12 as our new full time registrar to replace Alice.

Jillian Dearborn, originally hired through a temp agency, has accepted our offer of a full time position with MEVA to provide HR and accounting services.

Minutes. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, minutes for the meeting of January 4, 2018, were approved.

Legislative Report: Bill Ferdinand reported on the Legislative session and gave advice for how to manage Monday's charter school visit to the Hall of Flags. He suggested having a one page flier available perhaps with a power point display prepared with Fadia's data. We should emphasize our successes and performance data in helping struggling students.

Head of School Report: Melinda reported that our application for a Gifted and Talent grant was approved yesterday. Our recent desk audit on special education went well. Our success with retention this year should help to improve our testing performance in math. Last year from October 1 to January 30, we had 67 withdrawals. This year, we had only 34.

Math bridge problem

Keirsten Harte described what we might call a "bridge problem" in transitioning from the first to second semester junior high math curriculum from K12. Under the new "Summit" courses, students lose access to the first semester's content as they move into second semester work. In the high school curriculum, the first semester units may be uploaded for retention.

Amy suggested the problem might be solved just by getting K12's agreement not to charge for re-authorizing student access to the first semester's curriculum. Liz Roth said that might be possible and will look into it.

Kylie said that the courses are rigorous. Pre-algebra is taught in 7th grade and 8th graders must take Algebra I. Many of our students need something more foundational, for example Foundations 1 and 2 from the high school curriculum.

Fadia explained that special needs students use foundational courses with greater differentiation. We don't have self-contained classrooms. The Summit curriculum was designed to align with Common Core. 8th grade math is not really a true algebra I course. Keirsten said that she thought the high school Algebra I course was easier than what is being presented to 8th graders.

Kelli said that in her special ed role she sits in on all junior high math classes. Many of her students have no clue how to engage in the class. She agrees that the 8th grade curriculum is quite advanced for many of our students. IEP goals for some of her students require making progress at the second or fourth grade levels. It is frustrating not to be able to help them.

Peter ended the discussion by stating that it is important to work through this to provide content that meets the needs of our students at various levels, even though we are a small school where it is always a challenge to provide multiple preparations. Progress on this issue will be reviewed at our next meeting.

Special Education Policies

Melinda presented for adoption three new or revised policies on Special Education:

1. Restraint and Seclusion
2. Referral of Children with Disabilities
3. Child Find.

Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, the policies were adopted.

Financial Report

Jennifer has consulted with Joanne Allen at DOE about how we may be allowed to invest surplus funds. Amy will look into whether we may adopt a collateral agreement to insure funds in excess of \$250 thousand.

Reimbursement policies for Professional Development courses

We presently reimburse for professional development costs up to \$1500. Donna said that Augusta reimburses at the University of Maine rate for up to 9 credits per year for probationary teachers and up to 12 credits for other teachers. The University charges \$1300 for a three credit course. Kelli said that as a special ed technician she was reimbursed for up to 6 credits.

Melinda suggested we might allow up to \$4500 for tuition only, excluding books and other costs, provided that the teacher earns at least a B-. Donna said Augusta requires a C grade to qualify.

The issue was tabled so that staff may consult with teachers and work up a policy for consideration at the February meeting,

Computers

Fadia pointed out that MEVA receives free tech support from K12 as part of our contract. Because of the age of our computers, we need to spend about \$25 thousand between now and June of 2018.

Budget for fiscal year 2017-18

Upon motion by Donna Madore, seconded by Ed LeBlanc, the report of revenue and expenses for the second quarter of this fiscal year was accepted.

Upon motion by Donna Madore, seconded by Ed LeBlanc, it was unanimously voted to ratify the submission and uploading of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18 as presented at the board meeting of June 20, 2017.

Upon motion by Peter Mills, seconded by Ed LeBlanc, it was voted to eliminate the second signature requirement for checks making routine payments for health insurance premiums and pension contributions to MainePERS.

Health insurance

Amy reports that our agent affirms that members of our group are being hit with a double deductible. In August, the deductible was increased from \$500 to \$1000 but it was not reset. Melinda says that it does not appear that a large group policy among all the charter schools may not be feasible. We would need 50 members from each school. Amy and Peter will speak with agent Chad Cote about how to improve our health package for the coming year.

Enrollment cap

Melinda is sending data to the Commission to help them decide whether to authorize an increase in MEVA enrollment for next year.

At 4:12 PM, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary