

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held June 18, 2019

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened at 2:00 PM, June 18, 2019, in the Maine Virtual Academy offices in Augusta. Members attending in person were Peter Mills, Donna Madore, and Ed LeBlanc. Amy Carlisle attended by phone.

Also attending in person were Melinda Browne, Dee Pouzol, Nicole Hart, Whitney Lantz, Caroline Ridout, Fadia Afaneh, Jillian Dearborn, Patti Ashley, Jen Clark, and Mike Susi. On the phone were Sarah Berger and Alicia Uth.

Minutes. Upon Motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, minutes for the meeting of May 21, 2019, were approved.

Financial Report. Patti Ashley reported that K12 is converting to a Netsuite accounting package, an Oracle based system that will roll out in the fall. It will not change our approval process. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, the financial package presented by Patti was approved.

Head of School. On May 30, MeVA received a day long visit from the Charter Commission including two consultants, Joseph Mattos, an experienced school administrator, and Joseph Drago who reviewed school finances. Before the Commission issues our four-year report, Melinda will provide a summary of our past year. It has gone well.

Later, the Commission will send us an application for renewal. This is our opportunity to make changes or other requests of the Commission. For example, should we propose offering Career and Technical Education. Last year, Connections asked permission to offer more grades and to increase enrollment. Both requests were denied.

After our application is filed in the fall, we must schedule a public hearing in front of the Commission. Peter suggested that we avoid the public hearing format adopted for Connections. The Commission set it up so that the schedule remained open all afternoon even though people with anything to say appeared at the beginning and then left. We should ask the Commission if we can set the hearing to begin at a specific hour and then close it down after everyone who shows up has been heard.

If our application is approved, we then negotiate with the Commission to draft a new contract.

Our Panorama surveys have yielded 100% participation from staff and 80% from parents. This places us ahead of Commission averages.

Capital Improvement of Facilities. In taking over the new wing on the southwest side of the second floor, we hope to have the painting and floor cleaning done by August 1 so that teachers and staff will have time to begin occupying the space before the school year begins. LD 513 puts a statewide cap on virtual education at 1000 students between the two schools. Thus, our enrollment is unlikely to be much higher next year than this.

Nicole Hart, who is a Title I Math Teacher, chaired the Comprehensive Needs Assessment planning team to prepare our self-evaluation and to set future proficiency goals. Jen Clark said that no one except Mike Susi on the team had more than one year's experience at the school. Melinda suggested that teachers not on the team should review the preliminary draft and make input now before it is submitted.

Fadia Afaneh's Report. We have gained ground in retention. At this point, we have 347 students signed up for next year, an increase of 4% from where we were last year at this time. We are focusing on enrolling more 7th and 8th grade students. The Commission has suggested that we reach out to Lewiston and downeast to Ellsworth. We will remain capped at 390 students for the coming year.

We anticipate huge tech improvements for next year. The new laptops for students are twice as fast as the old ones. They have built-in tech support and a Help Wizard for Blackboard Connect.

The school handbook and operations manual have undergone a few updates. The Child Find policy from the Special Ed Manual is now in our student handbook. Mike Susi wrote a summary of dual enrollments for situations involving CTE or special courses. A note at the beginning says that we will translate the handbook as necessary and there is a link for text to speech.

In response to Donna's question about how we do outreach, Fadia said we rent tables at local festivals and Melinda emails to current families. In terms of racial profiles, Maine as a state is 94% white. MeVA is 91%.

Teach from Home Policy. Whitney Lantz, Mike Suzi and others made a case to allow Alicia Uth to continue managing her art program full time from her studio in Gorham. She has spent two years building an important hands-on program that did not exist before and is now a major appeal for many students. The alternative art curriculum from K12 is mostly history based. Alicia helps her students to create whole portfolios. This past semester, she had 172 students in four preps: 23 in Digital Art, 81 for Foundations & Drawing, 53 in middle school, 15 for Studio Art, and 17 for Gifted & Talented art.

Executive Session. At 3:45 PM upon motion by Donna, seconded by Peter, it was unanimously voted to go into executive session under 1 MRSA §405, sub-§6, ¶A to discuss the compensation, employment, and duties of employees of Maine Virtual Academy.

At 5:00 PM, it was unanimously voted to close the executive session and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary