

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held November 26, 2019

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened at 2:00 PM, November 26, 2019, in the Maine Virtual Academy offices in Augusta. Board members attending in person were Peter Mills, Donna Madore, and Ed LeBlanc. Amy Carlisle was excused.

Also attending in person were Melinda Browne, Don Fournier, Patti Ashley, Jillian Dearborn, Kim Whitman, Christina O'Grady, Chelsea Osgood, and Cheryl Brigham. On the phone were MEVA Treasurer Jennifer Hight and Auditor Danielle Tibbetts from Wipfli,

Minutes. Upon Motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, minutes for September 17 and October 22, 2019, were approved.

Audit Report. Danielle Tibbetts reviewed the audit report which contains a clean and unmodified opinion. MEVA's current ratio is a favorable 6.7 to 1. 2 to 1 is typical for non-profit organizations. All of MEVA's assets are categorized as "unrestricted" because restrictions are imposed by donors and MEVA's revenue is generated not from donors but from the state's tuition allocation. Liquidity is strong in that funds on hand would support 8 months of current expenses. 3 to 5 months is more typical of non-profits. Although MEVA's funds on hand are undesignated, its reserves are needed to address space requirements for the coming five years and the school is continuing to search for additional teachers and administrators in a tight market to meet current staffing needs.

Financial report. The Board reviewed the written presentation of financial data from Patti Ashley. Jennifer reported that as a result of discussions with the Commission, we may add in a year-to-year comparison of year-to-date data to our periodic financial reports. We are on automatic extension for the 990 tax return. It will be ready for the Board to review in the coming month. Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, the financial report was approved.

Health Insurance. Chad Cote from Clark Insurance joined us on the phone to review health insurance options for 2020. After lengthy discussion with participation from all three teachers present, and upon motion by Peter, seconded by Donna, it was voted to authorize three optional plans for 2020: a PPO plan with a \$1500 deductible; an HSA plan with a \$2800 deductible; and an HMO Tiered plan with a \$1500 deductible. In addition, we will renew the same dental plan as last year. It was further agreed to make accident and critical illness insurance available to those who wish to pay for it in bi-weekly payments.

Head of School Report. Melinda reviewed with us the Commission's conditions for MEVA's renewal. In the past, we have not been collecting in one place the longitudinal data to show progress of students who have been enrolled with the school from year to year. The Commission needs us to collect and report this data on a regular basis. While tabular data is useful, graphic presentation would be illustrative. Peter endorsed the significance of NWEA formative assessments as the primary way for the school to demonstrate student progress and value added. The school's MEA scores are extremely poor but this is in large measure a reflection of where students stand when they come to us. We have a special burden to demonstrate that students gain from their experience with MEVA. In response to Donna's inquiry, the teachers present agreed that the NWEA is useful as feedback guidance for instruction.

iXL is yielding mixed reviews from students. A few resist the idea of such rigorous work at the beginning of each school day; but the teachers feel that iXL is proving its worth. Teachers are reinforcing with students their need to engage. Some students are learning how to use iXL to set goals for themselves

and measure their own progress. The point is not the test score but mastery of the skills and knowledge being presented.

The Commission has required that we retain a director of Special Education. Peter pointed out that we need a full time person who can administer not only Special Education but also Title I instruction, gifted and talented, and IDEA and Section 504. These accord with the job description for which we solicited candidates last May. If we start advertising early this year, we may be able to attract a suitable candidate.

The Commission recommends developing a formal plan to evaluate the Head of School. Sarah Berger has circulated a suggested template. Donna will provide examples of how evaluations are done in other systems. Teachers are commonly evaluated under a PEPG format.

In regard to the Commission's recommendations for strategic planning, the third party evaluation report anticipated this spring from Lisa Plimpton should provide important guidance.

Donna posed a number of good questions concerning staffing levels. We are presently short-handed on special ed, and on high school math, social studies and science. The high school English teacher we have just hired is also qualified to teach social studies.

The Commission is drafting a new contract for the school's next five years. They will also supply us with their annual monitoring report from last year even though we have just received the Commission's four-year report that encompasses the same period.

Program Manager's Report. Stephanie Emery is on vacation. Melinda reported that we are now opening enrollment for the second semester to start January 27. We want to get the new students geared up two weeks before the semester starts.

Executive Session. At 3:40 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 and board members of Maine Virtual Academy.

At 4:01 PM, it was unanimously voted to close the executive session.

New Board Member. Upon motion by Peter, seconded by Ed, it was unanimously voted to admit Kim Whitman as a fifth member of the Board of Directors.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mills

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