

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held July 16, 2019

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened at 2:00 PM, July 16, 2019, in the Maine Virtual Academy offices in Augusta. Board 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, Fadia Afaneh, Jillian Dearborn, Patti Ashley, and Mike Susi. On the phone were Jennifer Hight and Alison Branch, K12's director of Northern Compliance and Operations.

Minutes. Upon Motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, minutes for the meeting of June 18, 2019, were approved upon condition that two errors on the second page be corrected: the spelling of Fadia's name and the fact that both the MeVA Handbook and the Operations Manual should be mentioned as having undergone updates.

Financial Report. Jennifer Hight said that accounts are almost closed for the fiscal year. The audit begins in the first week of August. In June, we received \$78,000 from the Commission to be carried over into next year. The Commission is funded by deducting 3% from the entire sum allocated by the Legislature to charter schools. Because they did not use the entire 3%, they rebated what they had left.

Tyler Backus from DOE says the state has not been applying the Special Ed formula correctly. They should be using actual expenditures rather than estimates. We will make sure that only our actual costs are charged.

The Board unanimously acknowledged an action taken earlier by email: To authorize and approve the filing of our budget for FY 21 as previously distributed and reviewed.

Our Special Ed designation rate is 12 to 15%. Our Gifted and talented budget is based on a two year projection.

Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Peter the Financial Report was unanimously approved.

IXL Presentation by Dee Pouzol. Dee reports that she has had good luck using a personalized learning program with her 28 Special Ed students and would like to expand our subscription to the entire school. Each one of her students made gains from October to May based on NWEA assessments.

IXL provides students access to skill building in math, English, Social Studies, and Science. It derives from each child's NWEA assessment and can be used by students at all levels of ability. She has found it user friendly and not cumbersome. It is based on Common Core. NWEA discloses which segments of IXL may be best used by the student to make progress. It is a tool to be applied in supplement to regular instruction. Mike Susi says kids respond to it in a competitive way almost like a video game. Donna says that Augusta schools are using it. When a specific weakness, such as two digit subtraction, is identified, the program peels away to get at precisely what the child cannot do and focuses remedial instruction on it.

Fadia raised questions about the continuing utility of other programs that the school subscribes to. Dee said that based on her recent experience she would prefer to subscribe to IXL rather than to continue with others. IXL would cover 400 students for three years for \$21,420. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for further discussion and approval at the August meeting.

Head of School. The final draft of the Commission's four year progress report on MeVA will be received this week. Melinda has few concerns about renewal. An adverse note is that our four-member board is too small. The charter application forms will be forwarded to us soon and is due to be returned by the end of September.

Staff who are working this summer include John, Christine, Whitney, Dee, Lizzy, Mehry and Mike.

Our goals for next year include reaching 100% for achieving expected growth for each student and improving graduation rates. Mike is preparing lists of those severely at risk, those who are merely behind and those who are on pace.

We have about 15 seniors who are 8.25 credits or more behind where they need to be. Some are working on their fifth or sixth year of high school. Six credits is the most anyone can do in a single year. 4.5 credits is an average year's load. A total of 17.5 is required to graduate.

Mike Susi said we are now able to identify at risk students in freshman year. Carla Hamilton and Alicia Uth have exerted superhuman efforts in getting seniors ready to graduate.

Melinda said that many are joining the school as 9th or 10th graders with deficiencies. We must adopt a methodical approach to reducing deficiencies each year. We are using the social-emotional survey from Panorama to identify factors that may be impeding progress. The Commission provides us with Panorama at their expense but no other school is using the social-emotional survey. Dee said she has another such survey for Special Ed students.

Kiersten Harte has resigned. The only original teachers now left are Mike Susi, Kristen Tripp and Kiley Tudela. Nicole Harte will take over 7th and 8th grade math. Nicole had the highest test gains in math for her high school kids. The school has hired six new teachers. We have an opening left for high school math. Heather Larchar and Nicole Harte were our dream team for HS math.

Melinda says that Bob Kautz has expressed concern about a reported data invasion of K12 data and suggests we reassure parents.

New Office Space. Jillian says the work is being done by John's General Contracting. The entire space is being repainted. Each office will have an accent wall. The painting should be done by the end of the week. Then, the floor people will come in to strip, clean and re-wax. The furniture is here. Ben has wired up the space.

Executive Session. At 3:05 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 3:45 PM, it was unanimously voted to close the executive session and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary