

## **Maine Learning Innovations**

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held November 21, 2017

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a regular 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, Peter Mills, and Ed LeBlanc. Absent were Amy Carlisle and Kevin Pomerleau.

Also present were: Melinda Browne and Jillian Dearborn from local staff, CFO Jennifer Hight, and Patti Ashley from K12. On the phone were Sarah Berger and Fadia Afaneh from K12.

**Minutes.** Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, minutes for the meeting of October 17, 2017, were unanimously approved with three amendments: On page 1, the upcoming audit from K12 will concern Special Ed and not Title programs. On page 2, the spelling of Kylie Tudela's name was corrected. Also on page 2, the reference to every high school student receiving an IEP was changed to ILP.

### **Finance**

Jennifer provided an overview of financial management. Our finance assistant, Tanya Lacroix, has left. Through Capital Area Staffing, we have temporarily employed Jillian Dearborn who has experience in both finance and human relations. She is doing well. Jillian is reviewing invoices in detail, administering payroll and handling reports to MePERS.

Jennifer was absent for about two months for family reasons but has lately been spending about four hours per week at the school spot checking invoices, coding entries before posting and overseeing finance. Jennifer suggests that it may be reasonable for her own services to continue at this level (a few hours per week) without need to bring in someone else from her firm to work more hours at a lesser rate.

Several of the staff laptops seem to be wearing out and we have ordered two new ones from Virtual Technologies, K12's supplier. Patti says that Ben from K12 recommends that we also purchase a battery backup and server at a cost of about \$6500. Sarah and Jenn agree that the average lifecycle for a laptop is about 3 years; but it has not yet been that long on those that we started with in 2015. It has been our practice to have K12 order them for us through Virtual Technologies. Before purchasing a backup system, Ben will prepare a schedule of what we need with suggested prices. We may need to have Ben speak directly with us to explain why our computers should not be bought on the open market. According to Patti, Ben needs to have the computers adapted by the vendor in certain ways before they may be placed into service.

### **Head of School**

The reduction in turnover at the beginning of the year is a tribute to our special efforts to bring students on board and spend more time introducing them to on-line education right at the beginning. This year, we have decreased by 2/3 the number of withdrawals among new sign ups.

We are also seeing much stronger daily participation than in the past. Our log in rate for the beginning of the year has been up to 90%. We lost some ground after the wind storm hiatus but are trying to gain it back. We are pushing kids to come to class rather than to listen to the recording.

Jillian has done a lot of good work on the HR files. Melinda is focusing on upcoming state audits for Special Ed and the Title programs. Results of the internal Special Ed audit from K12 were reasonably good. From a compliance perspective, our results are excellent.

Alice Schlosser, our Registrar provided by K12, retired from the school effective at the end of October. A replacement will be sought to begin after the turn of the year. Interim duties of the position are being assumed by Fadia and other staff.

An individual graduation plan for each high school student is being developed. Out of our 310 high school students, we have only 46 left to do. Reviews should all be complete by the end of December.

Melinda met with Gina Post last week to plan for the Commission's annual monitoring report. She believes the Commission is pretty positive about the functioning of the school. In reviewing the performance measures, it may

be time for the Commission to step back a little and be more focused on results and test outcomes rather than the details of administering the school.

Melinda is currently working on teacher evaluations. She proposes to hire another Title teacher in English and a third Special Ed teacher. We are using our interventionists as co-teachers to step in to assist regular teachers within the same classes and then run the breakout classes for the students who need special help. This relieves regular teachers from having to worry so much about kids who are not able to keep up. The addition of two more interventionists should enable us to accommodate an enrollment increase from 390 to 420 next year without additional staff.

We have recently received differentiation instruction from K12 coaching teams. Teachers have asked to modify the K12 curriculum to do a better job of differential instruction.

Upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, it was unanimously voted to authorize the hiring of a new Special Ed teacher and a new Title 1 teacher in January and to request of the Commission authority to move up from 390 to 420 students next school year.

Melinda said that next Friday morning, a team trainer from K12 is coming to do DiSC training and team building for teachers and staff.

Peter agreed to suggest some language toward a more uniform policy on flexible working from home.

### **Program Manager**

Fadia says that our enrollment has fallen off by only a few students from 390 because of withdrawals. Melinda reports we are presently at 381 students, thus down by 9 from October 1. Admissions for the second semester which begins February 1, will start right after the turn of the year. Even though we will have only a few places to fill, the registration work will fall to Fadia since K12 does not plan to fill the registrar's position until January.

All three NWEA tests during the year are now given on-line. The fall test for math and reading carried a 95% participation rate. The MEA tests for 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will still require that students travel to a test site.

### **Governance**

Peter agreed to reach out to parents to see if we can find another board member to serve.

The office space we presently have seems reasonably adequate even if we climb to 420 students next year. If we need additional space, there are individual finished offices on our floor that we could rent as necessary.

**Executive Session.** At 3:19 PM upon motion by Donna, seconded by Ed, the Board voted unanimously to go into executive session pursuant to 1MRSA§405 for the purpose of discussing the duties and evaluation of appointees and employees of Maine Virtual Academy.

At 3:30 PM, the board came out of executive session and adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Mills, Secretary