

MINUTES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD
Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, October 30, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, October 30th, 2017, at the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board Office located at 239 N. Lamar Street Suite 207, Jackson, MS 39201. In attendance were:

Krystal Cormack, Chair
Dr. Karen Elam, Vice-Chair
Leland Speed
Chris Wilson
Dr. Jean Young

Executive Director Marian Schutte participated in the meeting. Deputy Director Stewart McMillan was also in attendance. Mr. Tommie Cardin and Dr. Carey Wright were unable to participate.

The meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was previously circulated to all Board members for review.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

ITEM II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes of the September 11th Board Meeting

The minutes of the September 11th, 2017 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11th, 2017 board meeting as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Elam

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Cormack welcomed the members of the public to today's board meeting. Ms. Cormack stated that she was very excited to announce that the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board has been awarded a \$15,000,000 U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program Grant. The grant is for a term of five years. The majority of the grant is for subgrants to go directly to charter school operators. She noted that the board may need to call special meetings in order to address different requirements of the grant that may come up. She appreciates board member participation and thanks members in advance of these

Chair Cormack also shared updated information on Clarksdale Collegiate's approved charter school proposal. She stated that the board received a letter on September 18th from the Concerned Citizens of Clarksdale and Coahoma County asking the board to reconsider the approval of Clarksdale Collegiate's charter school proposal. They stated their grounds for reconsiderations as: lack of due process both substantive and procedural, public comment was not considered before the board's decision, and that the general public did not have enough time to assess Clarksdale Collegiate's charter school proposal. They also requested ten days to supplement that request. On October 2nd, MCSAB received a petition with further information and affidavits from community members from Clarksdale. Then a motion for a temporary restraining order and a motion for preliminary injunction addendum was filed in federal court. These motions attempted to limit the opening of Clarksdale Collegiate through desegregation case that still exists in Clarksdale. A hearing for the motion was held on October 18th. Judge Mills in Oxford denied both motions to add various new parties to the desegregation case and the temporary restraining order. Judge Mills issued a twelve-page response and Ms. Schutte can distribute that to any board member who wishes to read it. Today, the board may reconsider Clarksdale Collegiate's proposal and a motion to do so can be made during the appropriate time during the meeting. She also noted that MCSAB's attorney has recommended that MCSAB respond via letter that we have received their request and detail the components of the Request for Proposals process. The board will consider a motion to do so during New Business today.

Finally, Chair Cormack also noted that she, Ms. Schutte, and Ms. McMillan hosted two staff members, Elisa Falco and Dana McNally, from the Georgia Charter Schools Association for a meeting this past month. GCSA is visiting other southern states to see if other authorizers and schools could benefit from the services that they offer. One example is their charter school summit which they offer twice a year. They also have school leader calls. We spent time sharing information about our current structure and needs to see where MCSAB could potentially partner with them

ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Schutte welcomed board members and members of the public to today's Authorizer Board meeting. She also thanked board members for their participation earlier during the Communications Strategy meeting.

First, she updated the board on her and Stewart's attendance at the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' conference. They were able to participate in sessions and hear about different ways

that other Authorizers include national best practices in their work. Ms. Schutte also noted that she participated in two panels at the conference: charter school authorizers and their role in charter school group and creating a strong application process. She noted that the conference is a great way for authorizers to connect and share solutions to issues that they often face in their work.

Second, she noted that a student at Harvard's Kennedy School has reached out to the Authorizer Board and is interested in investigating issues with rural charter schools in Mississippi. She plans on visiting Mississippi in December to meet with as many individuals to discuss rural charter schools and their role as a potential solution to rural education issues. She noted that we're excited to see what her research says and how that can help us as an authorizer better support or open additional rural charter schools.

Finally, she noted that she has been working with PEER staff on their required annual report. The board will receive a draft of the report in November and she and Chair Cormack will work together on that process and will update the board when there is additional information.

ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Applications Committee

There was no report from the Applications Committee.

B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson shared that the Performance and Accountability Committee has been working on several items over the past month and half. First, the Authorizer Board has reached out to various entities to perform a more in-depth data analysis for the annual report. The lowest and best offer that aligns to the Authorizer Board's timetable was from Bellwether, an entity that previously conducted these types of data analysis for various groups. Ms. Schutte was also able to negotiate the final proposal for \$3,000 lower than the original proposal. At the appropriate time today, the Committee requests that the board approve the proposal from Bellwether and amend the budget to include funds for this analysis.

Second, he shared information regarding the charter school accountability data. He stated that the performance of the schools overall had fallen short of the board's expectations. He then deferred to Ms. Schutte to share additional information about the charter school accountability results.

Third, he shared information about Clarksdale Collegiate's contract. He stated that the Committee is recommending that the contract for Clarksdale Collegiate be approved earlier than the Authorizer Board's usual timeline so that Clarksdale Collegiate may exercise its right of first refusal to purchase property. Since Clarksdale Collegiate has yet to identify its location, it will need to come before the board and modify its contract before opening. The Committee requests that the board approve the contract today during new business.

ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Charter School Contracts: Clarksdale Collegiate

Ms. Schutte shared that the Clarksdale Collegiate contract follows the usual contract template and features the enrollment and information from their proposal. She also noted that she has worked with the board's attorney to modify the contract since Clarksdale Collegiate does not currently have a facility identified. She noted that this will become the standard contract template for schools in this situation. She also shared that Clarksdale Collegiate has reviewed the contract as well. They will modify the contract in the spring to include these missing components.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Clarksdale Collegiate contract.

MOTION: Dr. Young
SECOND: Mr. Wilson

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

B. 2018 Board Meeting Calendar

Ms. Schutte presented the draft 2018 board meeting calendar to board members. The calendar of meeting dates follows the Authorizer Board's typical meeting schedule of the first Monday of the month unless a holiday falls on that day.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the 2018 board meeting calendar.

MOTION: Dr. Elam
SECOND: Mr. Speed

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

C. Public Records Policy

Chair Cormack noted that the board is currently reviewing and adopting policies as it moves from being more of a startup organization to a full-fledged organization. Ms. Schutte presented a standard public records policy and administrative procedures act policy. She noted that she had worked the board's attorney on these policies.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve and initiate the administrative procedures act process for the public records policy and administrative procedures act policy.

MOTION: Dr. Young
SECOND: Dr. Elam

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

D. Contract Amendment Policy

Ms. Schutte presented the contract amendment policy and form designed for charter schools to make material and non-material amendments to their contract. She noted that this policy and form formalize a process that has already been occurring. She also noted that it clearly states that if charter schools wish to modify their contract enrollment to receive additional MAEP funds that they must submit the documentation to do so by November 1st of the proceeding school year.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve and initiate the administrative procedures act process for the contract amendment policy.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Elam

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

E. 2017 Charter Schools Program Grant Award

Ms. Schutte presented details on the U.S. Department of Education's Charter Schools Program Grant for State Entities. The Authorizer Board was awarded a five-year grant of \$15,000,000. The first two years of funding are guaranteed. Years three through five of funding are dependent on funds being appropriated by the federal government and MCSAB's performance on the grant. Ninety percent of the funds are for startup grants for approved charter school operators. She noted that the board had several tasks related to the grant: accept the grant award, approve the grants coordinator job description, and modify the board's budget.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to accept the Charter Schools Program Grant award from the U.S. Department of Education.

MOTION: Dr. Young

SECOND: Dr. Elam

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

Dr. Elam recommended two revisions to the job description: adding additional information that the grant is limited to five-years and move the qualification of a Master's degree as a preferred qualification and not a minimum qualification.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Grants Coordinator job description as amended.

MOTION: Dr. Elam
SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

Ms. Schutte presented budget revisions to the FY18 budget to include the Charter Schools Program grant funds. She noted that on recommendation from Denise DeRossette at Cornerstone Consulting that the board incorporate the entirety of the grant budget into its own budget in order to clearly determine which funds are being used as the Authorizer Board expends its own dollars and funds from the grant.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the board's budget to include the Charter Schools Program grant budget as presented.

MOTION: Dr. Elam
SECOND: Mr. Wilson

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

F. FY18 Budget Revisions

Ms. Schutte presented budget revisions to the FY18 budget. She noted that the board spent \$7,751 of the board's special fund due to the purchase of audio visual equipment for the board meeting room. This amount has been reduced from the Other Fees category in the budget.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the revisions to the board's FY18 budget to include

MOTION: Mr. Wilson
SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to move \$9,225 from other fees to a contractual line item for the Bellwether contract to conduct further data analysis for the annual report

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the revisions to the board's FY18 budget to include funds for the Bellwether proposal and contract.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson
SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

G. Approval of Invoices

Ms. Schutte presented invoices for approval: 1) Board Member travel to today's meeting; 2) NACSA 2017 Request for Proposals evaluation contract invoice; 3) Brooks Court Reporting invoices; 4) Epicenter first quarter invoice; and 5) Academic Technologies invoices.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the invoices as presented.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

H. Board Committees

Chair Cormack noted that the board elects officers at its September board meeting each year. It then sets committee membership at the following meeting. Ms. Schutte noted that the current members of the Applications Committee are Dr. Elam and Dr. Young. The current members of the Performance and Accountability Committee are Mr. Wilson, Mr. Cardin, and Dr. Wright. Chair Cormack asked Mr. Speed if he would be interested in joining the Applications Committee as its currently has two members.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to add Mr. Speed to the Applications Committee and to establish Chair Cormack as the board's liaison for the Charter Schools Program grant.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

I. Clarksdale Collegiate Proposal – Response Letter to Concerned Citizens of Clarksdale and Coahoma County

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve sending a response letter to the Concerned Citizens of Clarksdale and Coahoma County as discussed during her chair report.

MOTION: Dr. Young

SECOND: Dr. Elam

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

ITEM VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Shelia Dupree shared her concerns related to public records she has requested. She also shared concerns related to the Applications Committee approving the Clarksdale Collegiate proposal before the board meeting. She also stated that she believed Dr. Wright and Mr. Cardin should have recused themselves for the vote on Clarksdale Collegiate's proposal. She also noted that she believes Clarksdale Collegiate had issues in their proposal that should have been resolved before being approved by the Authorizer Board.

Ms. Marilyn Young from Southern Echo asked who is the board's attorney. Ms. Schutte stated that Avery Lee from the Attorney General's office. She also asked how long the public records policy would allow the board to respond to a records request. Ms. Schutte noted that it gives the board seven days to respond. Ms. Young also had questions about the board meeting documents and the process for being uploaded. Ms. Schutte noted that she would show Ms. Young where to sign up for updates.

ITEM VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Cormack made a motion for a closed determination to consider going into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

MOTION: Ms. Cormack

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

During executive session, the Board discussed a personnel matter regarding the Executive Director. No action was taken during Executive Session.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to come out of Executive Session.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Young

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

ITEM IX. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Authorizer Board will be on December 4th at the MCSAB office in Jackson.

ITEM X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cormack requested a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Dr. Young

SECOND: Mr. Speed

There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

ADOPTED, this the 4th day of December 2017.



Krystal Cormack, Chair