

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, December 4, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Tommie Cardin  
Leland Speed  
Dr. Carey Wright

Mr. Chris Wilson participated via teleconference. Dr. Jean Young was unable to participate. Executive Director Marian Schutte participated in the meeting. Deputy Director Stewart McMillan was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 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: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

**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 October 30<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting

The minutes of the October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review. Dr. Elam suggested a minor correction to the meeting minutes.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 board meeting as amended.**

**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.**

### ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Cormack welcomed board members and members of the public to today's meeting. She shared that last month Mississippi Today hosted two panel discussions on charter schools. One meeting was held in Clarksdale and the other was held in Indianola. She noted that they were a wonderful opportunity to talk to about charter schools with the public. The Clarksdale panel featured Chair Cormack, Amanda Johnson from Clarksdale Collegiate, Rep. Jay Hughes, and Jackie Mader from the Hechinger Report. The Indianola panel featured Rachel Canter from Mississippi First, Sunflower County School District Superintendent Miskia Davis, Elyse Marcellino from Empower Mississippi, Rep. Abe Hudson, and Jackie Mader from the Hechinger Report. The panels provided opportunities for discussion as well as an opportunity for the public to ask questions.

Chair Cormack also presented Executive Director Schutte and Deputy Director McMillan a small token of the board's appreciation for the holidays.

### ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Marian Schutte welcomed board members and members of the public to today's meeting. First, she updated board members on the Harvard Kennedy School student who will be visiting Mississippi over the next two weeks to work on a project related to rural charter schools in Mississippi. She will also be examining rural charter schools in other states to see what lessons we can adapt and apply here in Mississippi.

Second, Ms. Schutte updated the board on PEER's annual report process. Ms. Schutte has received the initial draft of the report and has participated in the comment process with PEER. PEER is considering the report at its December meeting so the report will likely be public towards the end of December. MCSAB will also have the opportunity to provide a written response which will be included in the final report with PEER's recommendations. The report is still confidential at this time since it isn't public but Ms. Schutte shared that she is happy to discuss the report with any board member.

Third, Ms. Schutte participated in Teach for America's SPARK summit for participating and alumni corps members. She participated in a job fair to look for candidates for the Grants Coordinator position and to talk to first and second year teachers about the Exploring Equity Fellowship / Internship that MCSAB has participated in for the past four years. She also participated in a law and policy roundtable session where HOPE Institute gave a keynote and then first and second year teachers could sit down with the organizations that work in law and education policy.

Fourth, Ms. Schutte noted that she has created a job opportunities section on the website for the Grants Coordinator position. She detailed that the board has received some initial interest and is conducting phone and in-person interviews. She will keep the board updated as the process progresses. She also noted that she is continuing to work with the U.S. Department of Education and the National Charter Schools Resource Center.

#### ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam shared that the Applications Committee met last month to discuss the 2018 Request for Proposals process. The Committee is recommending the 2018 Request for Proposals for Public Comment during today's new business and will continue its regular meetings in January once the 2018 RFP is finalized and released.

##### B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson shared that the Performance and Accountability Committee met last month to discuss the fall site visits. Mr. Wilson deferred to Ms. Schutte for an update on the fall site visit process. Ms. Schutte gave an update on the site visit protocol and site visit process for the 2017 fall site visits. She noted that all visits included classroom visits across grade levels and subjects, a policy and procedures audit, a facility walkthrough, and an interview with the school leader and charter school board members. The conversations focused this year on academic performance and the renewal requirements each school must meet in order to have their initial five-year contracts renewed.

Dr. Wright asked about the overall impression at the schools. Ms. Schutte shared that all of the schools have made significant changes to address gaps in their performance. They have hired additional staff, made curriculum changes, and have increased time and focus on literacy. She noted that each operator is conducting progress monitoring through a variety of measures. Midtown Public Charter School is using the STAR assessment as well as NWEA MAP. RePublic is using the Fountas and Pinnell assessment quarterly, NWEA MAP on a quarterly basis, daily exit tickets, and their own created benchmark assessments measuring unit achievement.

Mr. Wilson shared that the Committee also discussed RePublic Schools' school selected indicator revisions and the Joel E. Smilow Collegiate contract which will be discussed during today's new business.

#### ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Charter School Contracts: Joel E. Smilow Collegiate

Ms. Schutte presented the contract for Joel E. Smilow Collegiate. She shared that the contract follows the board's standard template for contracts. RePublic Schools is seeking a revision to the initial contract from the initial proposal from 99 students to 115 students. This modification aligns to their current enrollment structure which they have modified in the past.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Joel E. Smilow Collegiate contract as presented.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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

B. Performance Framework: School Selected Indicators – RePublic Schools Inc.

Ms. Schutte shared that RePublic Schools is seeking to revise their school selected indicator for both ReImagine Prep and Joel E. Smilow Prep. The school selected indicator is one of four components of the Academic Performance Framework. The goal of the school selected indicator is to give schools another measure of performance outside of the statewide assessment. RePublic Schools is seeking to set the school selected indicator for both ReImagine Prep and Smilow Prep to: 75% of students meet their individual growth goal in reading, as set and measured by the NWEA MAP assessment. Mr. Jon Rybka, CEO of RePublic Schools, spoke to the rationale behind revising the measure and the rigor of the revised measure.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the revised school selected indicators for ReImagine Prep and Joel E. Smilow Prep.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

C. 2018 Request for Proposals: Release for Public Comment

Ms. Schutte presented the 2018 Request for Proposals. She stated that there are no substantive changes to the RFP but some small tweaks based on feedback collected from previous applicants and Mississippi First. She also mentioned that the timeline will remain similar to the 2017 timeline. The plan is to release the RFP for public comment today, officially release the RFP in January with Letters of Intent due in March. Complete applications will be due in May with the evaluation process happening over the summer. The board will make final decisions at its September meeting. Ms. Schutte presented that the timeline allows greater time for applicants to take advantage of support and technical assistance.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve and release the 2018 Request for Proposals for public comment.**

**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.**

D. Public Records Policy

Ms. Schutte presented the final public records policy and administrative procedures act policy. The board received no public comment on the proposed policies. The proposed policies are ready for final approval.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the final public records policy and administrative procedures act policy.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Mr. Cardin**

**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: Request for Proposals Approvals

Ms. Schutte detailed that the Charter Schools Program Grant featured seven percent of funds for technical assistance. MCSAB is releasing a RFP for these contracts as a best practice. MCSAB proposed in the grant proposal that it would contract with an outside organization to conducting parent surveys and procedures development. Ms. Schutte detailed the components of the RFP.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Request for Proposals for surveys and procedure development.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Mr. Cardin**

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

Ms. Schutte detailed the second Request for Proposals that is for an outside organization to provide technical assistance for applicants during the application process, charter school operators during the school year, and potential operator recruitment.

**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 approve the Request for Proposals for operator and applicant technical assistance and operator recruitment.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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

F. Mississippi First Communications Strategy Contract Extension

Ms. Schutte shared that Mississippi First has requested the full month of December to prepare their communications strategy proposal and then present this proposal at the January retreat. In order to do so, the Board needs to approve a no-cost contract extension to January 31, 2018.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Mississippi First Communications Strategy contract extension to January 31, 2018.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

**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) Executive Director and Deputy Director travel for November and December; 3) Mississippi First Communications Strategy Contract invoice; and 3) Cornerstone Consulting – October.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the invoices for board member and staff travel and the Mississippi First Communications Strategy Contract.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

Mr. Cardin recused himself from the meeting and left the room.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the invoice for Cornerstone Consulting.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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

ITEM VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Cardin returned to the room.

There was no public comment.

ITEM IX. NEXT MEETING

Ms. Schutte noted that she had been working with Chair Cormack and Vice-Chair Elam on the retreat which will take place in Oxford, MS. The next meeting of the Authorizer Board will be on January 23<sup>rd</sup> in Oxford. The Board will also hold a retreat on January 22<sup>nd</sup> in Oxford.

ITEM X. ADJOURNMENT

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to adjourn.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

**The meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.**

ADOPTED, this the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 2018.

  
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Krystal Cormack, Chair