

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at the office of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board located at 239 N. Lamar Street Suite 207, Jackson, Mississippi. In attendance were:

Krystal Cormack, Chair  
Johnny Franklin, Vice-Chair  
Tommie Cardin  
Dr. Karen Elam  
Johnny Franklin  
Dr. Jean Young

Mr. Chris Wilson participated by teleconference. Executive Director Marian Schutte also participated in the meeting. Dr. Carey Wright was absent.

Board Chair Krystal Cormack called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.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 adopt the agenda, as presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

**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 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 Meeting

The minutes of the October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review. Mr. Cardin noted a correction that the title of chair be removed from his name in the invoices section.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 meeting, as amended.**

**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 III. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Cormack thanked board members for their attendance. She welcomed the board's newest appointed member Dr. Jean Young from Petal, Mississippi. Dr. Jean Young introduced herself and detailed her education experience in Mississippi. She stated that she is excited to join the board and looks forward to working on this cause.

Ms. Cormack also stated that she and the Executive Director met with the PEER Committee in order to participate in the exit conference of PEER's mandated annual report of charter school and authorizer board funding. She stated that PEER will provide the report to the board before it is released to the public.

She also gave an update on a community meeting and visit with a potential charter school operator, IDEA charter schools. Ms. Cormack met with the group along with Mississippi First since Ms. Schutte was attending a conference in Washington D.C.

ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Schutte welcomed board members and the public to the Authorizer Board's meeting.

She updated the board on her attendance at two conferences since the last board meeting. The first conference was the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' conference in Atlanta, Georgia. She presented at the conference on stakeholder mapping and represented the Authorizer Board. The second conference was the National Summit on Education Reform operated by the Foundation for Excellence in Education. A coalition of education policy makers from Mississippi attended the conference.

Finally, Ms. Schutte presented that the fall site visits for all schools will be taking place in the coming weeks. The Performance and Accountability Committee will meet after those visits and report out the results.

ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam stated that the applications committee has been meeting by conference call and that the Committee has prepared the 2017 Request for Proposals, which will be discussed in New Business.

B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson stated that a number of items from the Performance and Accountability Committee are in process but will be discussed in New Business and those discussions will be lead by the Executive Director.

ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2017 Request for Proposals: Release for Public Comment

Ms. Schutte presented the 2017 Request for Proposals. She stated that there are no substantive changes to the RFP but some small tweaks including a chart detailing eligibility requirements for applicants and enrollment eligibility for students due to the 2016 legislative changes to the Mississippi Charter Schools Act of 2013. She also mentioned that the timeline will remain similar to the 2016 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 provided by Mississippi First. Mr. Cardin inquired about the services provided to applicants. Ms. Schutte stated that Mississippi First has hired an independent contractor, Searcy Milam, who has previous charter school experience. She is providing application development, capacity interview preparation, and connections between operators and potential facilities and funders.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the 2017 Request for Proposals to be released for public comment.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Cardin**

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

B. Charter School Contracts

Ms. Schutte stated that today would be the date to approve the Joel E. Smilow Collegiate for the 2017-2018 school year. However, she deferred to Ravi Gupta and Kate Cooper of RePublic Schools, Inc. for a presentation on Joel E. Smilow Collegiate.

Mr. Gupta thanked the board for the ability to present at today's board meeting. He stated that RePublic Schools, Inc. currently has six schools in operation, four in Nashville and two in Mississippi, and due to a CEO transition and the lack of an identified leader for Joel E. Smilow Collegiate he requested a one year deferral on the opening of Joel E. Smilow Collegiate to the

2018-2019 school year. The school has met all other green lighting requirements but the presence of a strong leader is a key requirement for opening the school.

Mr. Cardin asked for clarification around the grade levels served at each school. Dr. Elam asked for more information about the leader who had previously been identified to lead Joel E. Smilow Collegiate. Mr. Gupta stated that they had incubated a leader that overtime was determined not to be a good fit. RePublic Schools is currently in the process of searching for a leader to fill this role.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to defer the contract of Joel E. Smilow Collegiate to the 2018-2019 school year.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

Ms. Schutte stated that RePublic Schools, Inc. has an additional request to revise the enrollment at both ReImagine Prep and Smilow Prep. Ms. Schutte deferred the presentation again to Mr. Gupta and Ms. Cooper. Mr. Gupta stated due to high demand in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 51 applicants for 6<sup>th</sup> grade are currently on their waiting list, that RePublic is seeking to add an additional section of student at each grade level for both of their schools. Ms. Cooper presented an amendment of revising ReImagine Prep's enrollment from 440 to 600 and Smilow Prep's enrollment from 476 to 600.

Mr. Cardin requested information about the organizations plan to increase staff in order to serve the increased student population. Mr. Cooper stated that the school will add instructional fellows as well as modify schedules. Dr. Elam asked about facility capacity. Ms. Cooper stated that ReImagine Prep will add facility space regardless of the enrollment increase and Smilow Prep has plenty of space in its current facility. Dr. Elam shared concerns about increasing enrollment in light of 2015-2016 academic performance at ReImagine Prep. Mr. Gupta stated that due to data from the 2016-2017 school year the performance is on track to be stronger and the schools expect to make additional growth as they get students to proficient. He also stated that RePublic is focusing on reading results and has shifted to a different reading assessment in order to improve literacy performance.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to increase the total enrollment at ReImagine Prep and Smilow Prep to 600 students at each school.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Cardin**

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

C. Performance Framework: School Selected Indicators

Ms. Schutte presented the proposed school selected indicator for Smilow Prep and the revised school selected indicator, which are one out of four components of the Academic Performance Framework. The theory of action of the school selected indicator is to give schools another measure outside of the traditional assessment. RePublic Schools is requesting to set the school selected indicator for both ReImagine Prep and Smilow Prep to: 100% of students who start the year reading below grade level will meet their identified incremental goal each school year as measured by the Fountas and Pinnel assessment in order to be on grade level by the end of 6th grade. To be on grade level by the end of 6th grade, students must read at a "Y" level on the Fountas and Pinnel assessment.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the presented school selected indicators for both ReImagine Prep and Smilow Prep.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

D. 2016 Annual Report

Ms. Schutte presented the amended 2016 Annual Report. Previously, the board approved the annual report at its September board meeting. The report has been revised to include assessment data released by Mississippi Department of Education in October. Ms. Schutte gave an overview of the amended sections of the report and stated that it will be sent to the Legislature.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the 2016 Annual Report as amended.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

E. FY17 Budget Revision

Ms. Schutte presented an amendment to the FY17 budget. Due to the Governor's budget reduction for all state agencies, the Authorizer Board's proportion of the cut is \$4,383, which is 1.75% of the Authorizer Board's budget. The funds were deducted from the Other Fees category. Ms. Schutte stated that when the Authorizer Board determines the three percent fee from local dollars those funds will be budgeted in the Other Fees category.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the FY17 budget as amended.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

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

F. Approval of Invoices

Ms. Schutte presented three invoices for approval: 1) board member travel to today's meeting; 2) Cornerstone Consulting October invoice; and 3) NACSA invoice for the 2016 Request for Proposals evaluation process.

Mr. Cardin recused himself and left the room.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the invoices for travel, Cornerstone Consulting, and NACSA.**

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

#### ITEM VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cardin returned to the room.

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

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

**There being no further 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: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

During executive session, the Board discussed the annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director.

**There was a motion made by Mr. Cardin and seconded by Mr. Wilson that based on the overall satisfactory job performance of the Executive Director, her annual salary for 2017 should be increased by \$5,000.00 effective January 1, 2017, resulting in a total salary of \$105,000.00 for 2017.**

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**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

**There being no further discussion and following a 4-2 vote, the motion carried.**

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

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

#### ITEM IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

#### ITEM X. NEXT MEETING

The board will hold its annual retreat on January 23, 2016. The next meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will be held on January 24, 2016 in Starkville, MS.

#### ITEM X. ADJOURNMENT

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

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**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 12:45 pm.**

ADOPTED, this the 6 day of January, 2017.

  
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Krystal Cormack, Chair