

MINUTES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD
Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, April 3rd, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, April 3rd, 2017, at the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board Office located at 239 N. Lamar Street Suite 207, Jackson, MS 39201. In attendance were:

Dr. Karen Elam
Chris Wilson

Participating via teleconference were:

Krystal Cormack, Chair
Johnny Franklin, Vice-Chair
Dr. Carey Wright

Executive Director Marian Schutte also participated in the meeting. Mr. Tommie Cardin and Dr. Jean Young were absent.

Board Chair Krystal Cormack called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

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: Mr. Franklin

SECOND: Dr. Wright

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

ITEM II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes of the March 6th Board Meeting

The minutes of the March 6th, 2017 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 6th, 2017 board meeting as amended.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

Ms. Cormack recommended that page 3 of the meeting minutes be revised from “created Fluid Review” to “created Fluid Review accounts.”

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

ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Cormack thanked board members for their flexibility this morning to hold the board meeting via teleconference due to the severe weather last night and this morning. She noted that the Senate Education Committee confirmed her, Mr. Tommie Cardin, Dr. Karen Elam and Mr. Leland Speed as board members last week. The staff at the Legislature is continuing to work on confirmations for remaining board members. She thanked Senator Tollison and the Senate Education Committee for its hospitality. She also acknowledged Mr. Franklin on his confirmation to the State Board of Education and his celebration of fifty years in education. She thanked him for his service to the children of Mississippi. She also noted the level of support for the Authorizer Board from the Senate Education Committee and a variety of its members. She thanked board members for their dedicated service in this regard.

ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Schutte welcomed board members to the Authorizer Board’s meeting.

She updated the board on the U.S. Department of Education’s charter schools program grant application process. This is the first time the grant will follow the new rules of ESSA which means that the Authorizer Board is eligible to directly apply for the grant this year. Previously, she had worked with MDE to apply for these grant funds. She participated in the webinar hosted by the U.S. Department of Education for eligible applicants. The grant is due May 11th with awards to be made by October 1, 2017. The Charter Schools Program grant is designed for entities to issue subgrants to approved charter schools for planning and development and startup funding for Years 1 and 2 of operation. She noted a few changes to this year’s program: 1) the maximum award amount has been raised to \$900,000; and 2) 90% of the grant is for subgrants, 7% of the grant is for technical assistance, and 3% of the grant is for administrative costs and overhead. She will be working with Mississippi’s charter school supporters as she has in the past to complete the application and apply for these funds.

She updated the board on the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools conference in Washington D.C. from June 11-14th. Since this trip will require a flight, she noted that more advance notification is required in order to plan board member attendance and to please let her know by the end of this month if board members are interested in attending.

Ms. Schutte then deferred a portion of her time to Rachel Canter, Executive Director of Mississippi First, to present the results of Mississippi First's K-12 education poll. She presented an excerpt of the report regarding the charter school questions in the poll. Ms. Canter noted the survey was a scientific survey conducted in November 2016 in collaboration with the Survey Research Laboratory at Mississippi State University. It was a representative sample of Mississippians with 21 survey items and 11 demographic questions. Seven of the twenty-one questions were related to charter schools. She then presented the results of the survey related to the public's familiarity with charter schools, their opinions of charter schools, and their sources of information regarding charter schools. She also noted that Mississippi First has conducted focus groups with groups of parents from Jackson as well as parents of students that currently attend charter schools. She noted that there is a large knowledge gap related to charter schools across the state and that as advocates and public servants there is additional work to be completed by both Mississippi First and the Authorizer Board.

ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam presented that the Applications Committee has met several times since the last board meeting. The Committee received ten Letters of Intent and nine Letters of Intent were deemed eligible to continue. The Committee did extend the deadline for Letters of Intent for one week in order to ensure that applicants had appropriate time to complete the Letter of Intent requirements. She noted that all nine of the eligible operators are new operators and not established in other states. Two of the nine applicants are applicants that have applied in the past: Inspire Charter Schools and Shades of Elegance. The information provided to board members also detailed the locations of the schools as well as the grade levels the schools propose to serve.

B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson stated that there is no report from the Performance and Accountability Committee. Dr. Elam asked if we had the number of students that reenrolled at both of the charter schools. Ms. Schutte stated that we did and that this was also an indicator assessed in the Performance Framework.

ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2017 Request for Proposals: NACSA Third Party Reviewer Contract

Ms. Schutte presented the contract proposal from NACSA for the 2017 RFP process. All work that can be completed by the Authorizer Board has been moved to Authorizer Board staff. The proposal covers Stage 2 and 3 reviewers, the capacity interview process, and report recommendation drafting process. The proposal is based on receiving 8 complete applications and that five applications will make it to the Stage 3 complete review. She then detailed the components of the proposal.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the 2017 Request for Proposals: NACSA Third Party Reviewer Contract.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

Mr. Franklin asked for follow up regarding a conversation between the Executive Director and NACSA staff. Ms. Schutte stated that she had questions regarding the amount of funds for administration and overhead. NACSA presented these amounts based on historical data from previous cycles. She also noted that this is the maximum amount for the proposal which will be revised down if the results of the RFP process differ from the estimates used for the proposal.

Mr. Wilson asked what it meant that no experienced operators had applied. Ms. Schutte responded noting several possibilities: 1) the affect of the lawsuit brought by the SPLC; 2) concerns around school funding and the potential for weighted student funding in resolving those concerns; and 3) significant turnover at the leadership level of one previous experienced operator that has applied in the past.

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

B. FY17 Budget Revision

Ms. Schutte presented revisions to the FY 17 budget. The budget has been reduced by an additional \$5,149 due to the Governor's recent budget cuts. She presented the following changes: 1) an increase in advertising and also a contractual item for public relations; 2) a reduction for the NACSA contract down to the amount of the actual invoice received; 3) conference room services and equipment; and 4) an amount for professional development. She noted that based on these changes and expenditures that the Board will expend the funds of its appropriation.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the revised FY17 budget as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Franklin

SECOND: Dr. Wright

Dr. Elam asked about the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Schutte responded that the fiscal year ends June 30th. Dr. Elam and Dr. Wright asked questions about the professional development item. Chair Cormack detailed that based on the feedback from the school leaders at the visits that additional opportunities for teacher professional development would be beneficial and could be opened to both charter school teachers as well as other public school teachers and potentially be used for charter school and local district collaboration as well as a teacher recruitment opportunity for charter schools. Dr. Wright and Dr. Elam shared concerns about expending funds for professional development. Mr. Franklin suggested that the amount for the professional development remain for flexibility of the Chair and the Executive Director to expend the funds after further discussion.

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

Dr. Wright left the Board meeting via teleconference after this item.

C. FY18 Budget Proposal

Ms. Schutte presented the first draft of the FY18 budget proposal. She noted that no action by the Board is needed at this time. The budget features the appropriation, the 3% authorizer fee from the past two school years. It will be updated as more additional information about the current year's authorizer fee is received. The proposal is very similar to our current budget.

The Board took no action on the FY18 Budget proposal.

D. Approval of Invoices

Ms. Schutte presented three invoices for approval: 1) board member travel to today's meeting; 2) January invoice for Cornerstone Consulting; and 3) February invoice for Cornerstone Consulting.

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

MOTION: Mr. Franklin

SECOND: Dr. Elam

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

ITEM VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEM VIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will be held on June 5, 2017 in Jackson, MS. Ms. Schutte discussed the potential need for a special meeting or meetings to be called to address end of the fiscal year items.

ITEM IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cormack requested a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Franklin

SECOND: Dr. Elam

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 am.

ADOPTED, this the 5th day of June, 2017.



Krystal Cormack, Chair