

MINUTES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD
Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, June 5th, 2017

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 5th, 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
Johnny Franklin, Vice-Chair
Tommie Cardin
Chris Wilson

Participating via teleconference were:

Dr. Karen Elam
Dr. Jean Young

Executive Director Marian Schutte also participated in the meeting. Dr. Carey Wright was unable to participate.

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. Ms. Cormack discussed the need for the board to have a conversation and requested an executive session to discuss a personnel matter be added to the agenda.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to add an executive session to discuss a personnel matter to the agenda following public comment.

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin
SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

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 April 3rd Board Meeting

The minutes of the April 3rd, 2017 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3rd, 2017 board meeting as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Franklin

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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

B. Approval of Minutes of the May 5th Special Board Meeting

The minutes of the May 5th, 2017 special board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 5th, 2017 special board meeting as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

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 shared that she and Ms. Schutte will be traveling to the National Charter Schools Conference in Washington D.C. next week. She is eager to participate in her first conference as board chair and will report back after learning from different authorizing environments. Mr. Wilson requested information about rural charter schools. Ms. Cormack shared that she would update board members on any information gathered from the conference at the next board meeting.

ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Schutte welcomed board members to today's Authorizer Board meeting.

She updated the board on the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools conference in Washington D.C. from June 11-14th. Ms. Schutte noted that this conference is mostly framed around charter school advocacy but there will be a variety of groups there from charter school operators to charter school authorizers. She also noted that she is working with Searcy Milam Morgan with Mississippi First to set up meetings with groups that will be there and to build excitement about Mississippi as a potential place to open charter schools.

Ms. Schutte then introduced and welcomed Melissa Sinclair. Melissa is one of the board's Teach for America Summer Collaborative interns. She is currently a fourth grade teacher in the Sunflower County Consolidated school district. She will be working on two items for the Request for Proposals process: a detailed FAQ document as well as an annotated application. The other intern, Lauren Thomas, will

begin later this week and she will go through the same project plan process where she will identify an area of work needed and design a project plan to address this need.

Ms. Schutte also updated the board on the U.S. Department of Education's CSP grant process. The Authorizer Board worked with both Mississippi First and the consultant approved by the board to complete and submit a quality application on May 18th. Ms. Schutte noted that 18 additional states have applied for the funds. Due to new regulations with ESSA, states with existing grants are eligible to submit again. Ms. Schutte also detailed the letters of support received: Governor, Lt. Governor, NACSA, Senator Cochran's office, Mississippi First, Building Excellent Schools, Mississippi Department of Education, and Teach for America: Mississippi. The proposal was for \$15 million dollars with 90% of those funds being used for subgrants to charter school applicants. Seven percent of the funds go to technical assistance and three percent go to administrative support and overhead. The review process will take place this summer and the U.S. Department of Education will make decisions up until September 30th. The consultant rated and scored the application against the rubric and she noted that the Board had a very strong application according to her past experience. Mr. Franklin asked if any other legislators were contacted for support. Ms. Schutte stated that she will contact them and ask for letters of support to be sent to the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Young asked how many funds are available for awards. Ms. Schutte stated that the U.S. Department of Education presented in their webinar that they expect to make approximately 8 to 10 awards at approximately \$10 million dollars each.

ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam presented the results of the 2017 Request for Proposals process through the Complete Application stage. The Authorizer Board received 9 Letters of Intent for nine schools. The Authorizer Board received six proposals for seven schools. All applicants are new operators. Complete proposals were received from: Clarksdale Collegiate, KC Schools Inc., Shades of Elegance, and SR1. Incomplete proposals were received from: Girls Club and Learning Center and Success Prep Incorporated. Five out of six applicants were deemed initially incomplete. Three out of five of the applicants remedied these issues during the 48-hour remedy window. However, Girls Club and Learning Center was still missing components of their Financial Plan Workbook and Success Prep Incorporated was still missing their Educational Program Capacity section, Summary Scope and Sequence Attachment, Curriculum Summary Attachment, and components of the Financial Plan. The Board's business today is to confirm the eligibility and completeness of proposals and move them to Stage 2 of the process or to deny proposals.

B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson noted that the Performance and Accountability Committee met this past Thursday. Mr. Wilson updated that Site Visits had taken place this spring as part of the Ongoing Monitoring protocols. He noted that there were no issues that rose to the level of concern in the Intervention Ladder at this time. He also noted that all schools participated in state testing. Mr. Wilson also shared that Ms. Schutte

had drafted a contract amendment policy and protocol that would allow for schools to modify their contracts with the Authorizer Board if necessary. The Committee expects to bring this proposal forward at a future meeting after addressing some questions. He also noted that Ms. Schutte also presented a draft school closure protocol that addresses what would happen if the Authorizer Board were to close a charter school. He stated that this is a protocol to have in place before there are any issues that relate to closure. He noted that the Committee expects to bring this protocol forward at a future meeting after researching additional issues.

ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2017 Request for Proposals: Completeness and Eligibility Confirmation

Ms. Cormack noted that board members have information on the proposals received and comments from applicants in their meeting documents today.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve Clarksdale Collegiate, KC Schools Inc., Shades of Elegance Inc., and SR1 as complete and eligible to move forward to Stage 2 of the 2017 Request for Proposals cycle.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Dr. Elam

Ms. Schutte presented information on the 2017 Request for Proposals process and noted that providing applicants the ability to speak in person at the meeting or submit comments in writing has always been a part of the Request for Proposals process but that these are the first two applicants who have taken advantage of this step in the process.

Ms. Cormack abstained from voting. There being no additional discussion and following a roll call vote in favor by participating members, the motion carried.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to deem Girls Club and Learning Center and Success Prep Incorporated as incomplete and ineligible and to adopt a resolution to deny Girls Club and Learning Center and Success Prep Incorporated's proposals.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Dr. Young

Ms. Cormack presented letters submitted to the board. Success Prep Incorporated requested to be deemed provisionally eligible to continue. They noted that prior to their school opening they will be able to complete their missing items and would like more time. Girls Club and Learning Center has requested more time for their budget for after they have completed their enrollment. Mr. Franklin noted that all applicants were given extra time to correct their proposals and for the Executive Director to encourage them to stay involved in the process. Dr. Young asked what would happen if the Authorizer Board would give additional time. Ms. Schutte stated that it would shorten time for the external reviewers to

review full applications and the Board would have to schedule additional days in the RFP timeline. Ms. Schutte presented that applicants could proceed with incomplete proposals through the process but without these items the independent evaluation team wouldn't be able to completely evaluate them. Ms. Cormack noted that one challenge that is specific to charter schools and their success is financial planning and operation. She noted that due to the missing components she would need additional information in order to feel comfortable allowing them to move forward.

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

B. Charter School Contract Revision: Midtown Public Charter School

Ms. Cormack presented that information from Midtown Public Charter School was located in board meeting documents. She recognized Dr. Kristi Hendrix to present on Midtown Public Charter School's enrollment expansion contract revision request. Dr. Hendrix presented Midtown Public Charter School's request to increase total enrollment by 36 students. Fifth grade enrollment would stay small and somewhat self-contained. Sixth through eighth grade enrollment will increase from 52 to 64. This would allow for four classrooms of 16 students per class. She noted that students respond better the smaller classrooms and would allow for more intervention. She also noted that she was at the meeting in place of Babak Mostaghimi. In addition to their request, Mr. Mostaghimi has requested that she read a letter on his behalf. Dr. Hendrix read Mr. Mostaghimi's letter. In his letter, Mr. Mostaghimi requested a waiver to the deadline in order to receive MAEP funding for the increased enrollment. He noted that the additional enrolled students would be eligible to receive local funding but not MAEP funding since the school missed the December 2016 deadline. He requested that the Authorizer Board grant a waiver of the December 2016 deadline since they didn't know a deadline existed. He also requested a policy manual and guidance when this policy manual is revised as well as for information on an approval and appeals process.

Mr. Cardin asked how many additional teachers Midtown Public Charter School would need to hire. Dr. Hendrix stated that they would have four classrooms per grade. They will only need to add one or two additional staff. Mr. Franklin asked if they had received their test results for the 2016-17 school year. Dr. Hendrix noted that they had not received test results yet. Mr. Franklin stated that he was concerned that adding additional students that had not already been enrolled in Midtown's program would be difficult. Dr. Hendrix noted that they anticipate that most students will be below grade level. She noted that their plan in place with intervention will work with these students and they will work with families this summer. Mr. Cardin asked if the principal was returning and what percentage of the total staff was returning. Dr. Hendrix noted that the principal was returning and they are finalizing numbers of returning staff. Principal Filkins is looking through the 95% of teachers who signed an intent to return form and is also assessing where they need additional staff. Mr. Franklin asked what percentage of students are returning. Dr. Hendrix noted that 5% will not return and about half of those would attend the school but have moved and are electing to go to a school that is closer. Mr. Wilson also noted he was concerned about teacher retention as well. He noted that it was June and there were Letters of Intent to return but no final agreements. Dr. Hendrix noted that they do have signed contracts from some teachers and 95% have signed intents to come back but those intents will be evaluated based on evaluations.

Ms. Cormack noted that based on conversation with Dr. Wright that the Authorizer Board has the authority to increase the school's enrollment but not the authority to determine how MAEP funds are distributed. She recommended considering the item in two parts: the contract amendment and the MAEP issue. Mr. Franklin asked who made the decision regarding the December deadline. Ms. Schutte presented that the enrollment in the charter school contract is what is entered into the MAEP calculation for charter schools. She prepares a letter with these amounts and provides it to the Mississippi Department of Education in December. Mr. Cardin stated that the enrollment expansion issue is different from the MAEP issue. He stated that there is already a provision that allows for schools to go over the amount in the contract. Dr. Hendrix stated that while this amount is within the extra 20% enrollment allotment they wish to have it modified in the contract in order to receive additional MAEP funds.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the enrollment increase to Midtown Public Charter School's charter school contract as requested.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

Dr. Hendrix stated that they would have to fundraise in order to account for the funds needed to operate that they won't receive from MAEP. Mr. Cardin stated that he wanted Midtown Public Charter School to have the discretion to modify the enrollment table as they see fit.

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

Mr. Cardin noted that Midtown Public Charter School had two more requests. The first is a waiver of the December MAEP funding deadline. The second is access to a policy manual. Ms. Cormack noted that the Authorizer Board didn't have the authority to give a waiver to the December timeline and that further discussion with Dr. Wright would continue. Mr. Franklin asked who set the December deadline. Ms. Schutte noted that the Office of School Financial Services at MDE gave her the December deadline. They then build the MAEP request off of that data for the next fiscal year. Mr. Franklin then asked if there was a separate MAEP budget for charter schools. Ms. Schutte stated that charter schools are included in the one total request that goes to the legislature. Mr. Cardin noted that it sounds like the Authorizer Board doesn't have any oversight over the MAEP deadline. He stated that it sounds like MDE has the authority. Chair Cormack noted that the Board would have to table the waiver request due to authority on the issue and the board will share the new policy once it's drafted with Midtown Public Charter School.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to encourage the appropriate agency or board to waive the MAEP funding allocation deadline and allow Midtown Public Charter School to obtain additional funding based on its increased enrollment.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

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

C. FY17 Budget Revision

Ms. Schutte noted that there is no revision at this time. She is still waiting on revised proposals from technology companies. She noted that there are two approaches: 1) call a special meeting at a later date to revise the FY17 budget or 2) authorize the Executive Director to enter into any contracts as long as they fall into the budget authority.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to for the Board to approve any contracts for the end of the FY17 fiscal year at a special meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

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

D. FY18 Budget Proposal

Ms. Schutte presented the FY18 budget for approval. The budget features the appropriation for FY18, the 3% authorizer fee for the FY16, FY17, and the MAEP portion of the FY18 authorizer fee. It also features the same amount of funds for personnel and travel, and follows the same guidelines as in past years.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the FY18 budget as presented.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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

E. Approval of Invoices

Ms. Schutte presented invoices for approval: 1) board member travel to today's meeting; 2) board member and executive director travel to the National Charter Schools Conference; 3) charter conference registration; 4) NACSA membership; 5) Jessica Cohen invoice; and 6) Starkville hotel room conference meeting space for room and food.

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

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Mr. Franklin

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

Ms. Marilyn Young with Southern Echo asked if the backup for the meeting documents would be uploaded. Ms. Schutte noted that she would check the documents online. Ms. Young asked if the notice for the Committee meetings are published. Ms. Schutte stated that all notice for public meetings goes out through the Mississippi Public meeting notice website and you can sign up for those meeting notices online. She also asked if the Board meetings had to follow open meetings laws for a physical quorum. Ms. Schutte noted that Mississippi Open Meeting law allows for members to teleconference in and be counted as part of a quorum. Ms. Schutte read from the statute regarding open meetings law "A quorum of a public body as prescribed by law may be at different locations for the purposed of conducting a meeting through teleconference or video means provided participation is available to the general public at one or more public locations specified in the public meeting notice." She also asked what is the current enrollment for Midtown Public Charter School. She asked if Midtown Public Charter School had received MAEP in past years. Ms. Schutte stated that they had received it and that the Authorizer Board had provided information from their contract to the Mississippi Department of Education.

Ms. Cormack noted that the Board's next meeting will be July 10th and this board meeting is Mr. Franklin's last board meeting. She thanked him for his service and for his dedication to the students of Mississippi. Ms. Schutte presented Mr. Franklin with a token of the board's thanks for his service.

ITEM VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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: Mr. Wilson

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

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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

ITEM IX. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will be held on July 10, 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 X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cormack requested a motion to adjourn.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 12:41 pm.

ADOPTED, this the 10th day of July, 2017.



Krystal Cormack, Chair