

**NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD**

**NOTICE** is hereby given of a meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board to be held on Monday, April 4, 2016 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the IHL Board Room at the Universities Center located at 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211. Participation at this meeting may be by teleconference at locations different from the above location pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. §25-41-5(2013) with participation being available to the public at the location set forth above. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct the regular business of the board as set forth in the attached draft agenda.

This the 27<sup>th</sup> day of March 2016.

BY:  
Marian Schutte  
Executive Director

**DRAFT AGENDA**  
**MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD**  
**April 4, 2016**

- I. Call to order
- II. Adoption of the Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes of the March 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting
- IV. Chair Report
- V. Executive Director's Report
- VI. Committee Reports
  - a. Applications Committee
  - b. Performance and Accountability Committee
- VII. New Business
  - a. 2016 Request for Proposals: NACSA Third Party Reviewer Contract
  - b. FY 17 Budget Proposal
  - c. Approval of Invoices
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Next Meeting
  - a. June 6<sup>th</sup>
- X. Adjourn

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, March 7, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, March 7, 2016, at the office of the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, located at 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi. In attendance were:

Tommie Cardin, Chairman  
Krystal Cormack, Vice-Chair  
Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter  
Dr. Karen Elam  
Johnny Franklin  
Chris Wilson  
Dr. Carey Wright

Executive Director Marian Schutte was also present at the meeting. Board Chairman Tommie Cardin called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

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

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to adopt the agenda, as presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mrs. Cormack**

**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

The Minutes of the January 27, 2016 meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 2016 meeting.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

### ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chairman Cardin reported that he and Ms. Schutte had recently had an opportunity to speak at the breakfast gathering of education superintendents and board presidents during the MS School Board Association's Winter Convention, during which he shared an update on charter schools including the approval process, the philosophical approach taken by the Board since its inception, statistical information in terms of the applications that are being submitted, and the application approval process that has been approved for the current cycle. He stated that his comments were well received, that there had been a number of questions, and that the Board had received a strong endorsement from Jim Keefe, counsel for the MSBA, who was very complimentary of the work of the Board thus far. As a result of this positive reception, Dr. Mike Waldrop has asked Chairman Cardin to speak again at the April 25<sup>th</sup> legislative update gathering of the MSBA, which will include all members of the Association. Chairman Cardin expressed his belief that the more communication the Board can have with these organizations and the more information that can be shared, the more likely we will be to bridge the gaps and forge constructive relationships.

### ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Schutte offered an update on the need for additional office space. She has been in communication with the AG representative for the Board who interpreted the language of the statute which dictates that the Board "shall" be located at IHL and that IHL "shall" provide the Board with office space. She stated that she is working with IHL to look for additional space options within the IHL campus.

She next offered a legislative update and stated that there are three bills still alive that deal with charter schools: HB 1043, the teacher certification bill; HB1044 has been amended to include language that states that crossing district lines only applies to students who reside in "D" and "F" school districts, and she has shared her concerns about this bill with the Board via email; and lastly, SB 2161, which contains some technical changes in the law, allows crossing district lines statewide, and allows the Authorizer Board to approve charter schools in "C" school districts without that local school board's approval.

Next Ms. Schutte reported that she is working with the TFA Exploring Equity Fellowship to have one or two summer interns again this year.

Next, she asked the Board members to calendar the National Charter Schools conference, which will be held on June 26-29 in Nashville, TN, and to let her know of any interest in attending.

Lastly Ms. Schutte gave an update on Midtown and Reimagine Prep stating that *The Clarion Ledger* had recently featured Midtown's E-Club students who had worked with Millsaps' Else School of Management students to create and design their own comic book, *The Mighty MidBot*. The students learned to developed characters, story lines and illustrations to create the stories of a robot that works to solve problems in the Midtown area. They held a release party at a local business, and were able to sell copies of their work. She stated further that Reimagine Prep had held their first annual Black History program, which was a great program and well-attended.

## ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Applications Committee

Mrs. Cormack reported that the 2016 applications cycle RFP was released January 29<sup>th</sup>. She stated that the committee and Ms. Schutte have reached out to everyone who has demonstrated an interest in previous RFP cycles, including prior applicants, and they also conducted a prospective applicant webinar on February 11<sup>th</sup> that was recorded and is available through the fluid review portal for anyone who wishes to view that at a later date. She reported that Mississippi First will again be providing technical assistance during the RFP cycle. They were able to secure a grant and hire someone full time to do charter school work independently, including working with potential applicants and giving them support throughout the application process. Letters of Intent are due tomorrow, March 8<sup>th</sup>, and while none have been received to date, four existing operators and six new operators have created fluid review accounts. An update will be sent to the Board members after that deadline. She stated that once that step is complete, the committee will continue to work with NACSA for the 3<sup>rd</sup> party review. The deadline for the submission of completed proposals is May 10<sup>th</sup>.

### B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Dr. Coleman-Potter reported that the committee has been working on a monitoring protocol to be put into place with new charter schools, as well as the existing ones. They hope to have a presentation of that protocol in April.

## ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Job Description

Ms. Schutte stated that, based on the conversations both at the retreat and during prior meetings and a recommendation she received from Mr. Wilson, she has created and circulated to the Board for review a job description for a deputy executive director.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve the job description, as presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Coleman-Potter**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

**Following a lengthy discussion with recommendations and agreement on various amendments to the job description, as presented, Dr. Coleman-Potter agreed to amend her motion to approve the job description, as amended.**

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

### B. FY 16 Budget Revisions

The Budget revision has been previously circulated to the Board for consideration.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve the FY16 Budget revision, as presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

Ms. Schutte reviewed the budget revisions that were previously circulated. She explained that all revisions are being made in the "Other Fees" category with a reduction of \$4,490.00, based on the Governor's required agency budget cuts, and then an increase in the amount of \$17,868 for the 3% authorizer fee received from local funds.

**Following a discussion and a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.**

C. Approval of Invoices

Ms. Schutte presented invoices for board travel for the current meeting and three contractual invoices.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve payment of invoices, as presented.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

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

ITEM VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Marilyn Young, Education Coordinator for Southern Echo, addressed the Board to ask for clarification on a couple of items discussed earlier. First she asked what amount of the budget was cut by the Governor's mandated budget cuts, and Ms. Schutte clarified that it amounted to 1.7% of the Board's \$250,000 allocation. Next she asked what the \$17,000 figure mentioned during the budget revisions discussion represents. Ms. Schutte explained that the \$17,868 represents the 3% of local funds that the charter school received. She next asked for clarification on the amount of the executive director's current salary and the salary approved for the deputy executive director position. Ms. Schutte stated that the executive director's salary is currently \$100,000 and the deputy executive director position salary is \$60,000 plus benefits. Lastly, she asked the Chairman to repeat the amendments made to the job description of the deputy executive director. Ms. Schutte clarified that the amendment was made in the wording of the work experience requirement to be two years professional education experience with preference for additional years and additional administrative experience.

ITEM IX. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on April 4, 2016, in Starkville, Mississippi at the Mississippi State University College of Education.

ITEM X. ADJOURNMENT

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to adjourn.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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Regular Monthly Meeting  
March 7, 2016  
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**There being no discussion and following a vote in favor by all members present and participating, the motion carried.**

**The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.**

ADOPTED, this the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

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TOMMIE S. CARDIN, Chairman



TO: Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board

FROM: William Haft, Erin Reddy

DATE: March 18, 2016

RE: 2016 Charter School Application Process Support

## INTRODUCTION

With the passage of the Mississippi Charter Schools Act of 2013 (The Act), the State of Mississippi has renewed its commitment to creating high quality public education options for children by establishing the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board (the Board or MCSAB). The Board's mission is "to authorize high-quality charter schools, particularly schools designed to expand opportunities for underserved students." (Charter Schools Act § 4(2)(a)). The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) has managed the Board's first two application cycles and worked in partnership with MCSAB's executive director to co-manage the third cycle. This proposal outlines a scope of work and timeline for NACSA to continue supporting the MCSAB process while MCSAB continues to assume substantial process management responsibility.

## SUMMARY

NACSA proposes continued support for the MCSAB's development as a high quality charter school authorizer through support in the following areas:

**Application Process Management.** In collaboration with the Board and executive director, NACSA will support management of MCSAB's 2016 application cycle through recruitment, selection, training, and management of evaluation teams, and delivery of recommendations for approval or denial of each application.

The total estimated cost for this work is \$49,800.

## APPLICATION PROCESS: 2016 CYCLE

NACSA will support management of MCSAB's evaluation of charter school applications submitted during the 2016 RFP process. The primary deliverable will be a set of recommendations to approve or deny each application. The recommendations will be based on the results of a three-stage process. The first stage will consist of eligibility and completeness reviews; the second stage will consist of a threshold quality review; and the third stage will consist of an independent evaluation team review and capacity interview.

An application must meet the criteria at each stage in order to be recommended for approval. An application that does not meet the criteria at any point will not proceed to the next stage, and will be recommended for denial with reasons provided in writing.

**Stage 1: Completeness Checks and Eligibility Determinations.** MCSAB will conduct completeness and eligibility reviews. NACSA will be available to support this work as requested.

All applications deemed to be eligible and complete will proceed to Stage 2 of the review process. Applications that are either ineligible or incomplete will not, as a matter of law, be eligible for a qualitative review.



**Stage 2: Threshold Quality Review.** NACSA will work with the Board to conduct a preliminary qualitative review of all complete applications. This preliminary review will provide a threshold assessment based on leading indicators, such as the soundness of the budget and the pre-opening plan. The purpose will be to determine which applications qualify for a full assessment and interview.

The threshold quality review will be conducted by external reviewers managed by NACSA in collaboration with MCSAB's executive director. The Board will make final decisions on Stage 2 applications based on the results of the threshold quality reviews.

Each application that qualifies for Stage 3 will be assigned to an independent evaluation team comprised of external reviews. For applications that the Board determines have not met the minimum quality requirements, NACSA's reviewers will generate a statement of the basis for denying the application.

**Budget Note:** For budgeting purposes, this proposal assumes seven complete applications will require a threshold quality review including two from operators applying for multiple schools.

**Stage 3: Independent Evaluation Team and Interview.** NACSA will recruit and train independent review teams to review all Stage 3 applications. Teams will have three to four members, including both in-state and national representatives, who have experience and expertise with charter school and/or public education start-up and operations. In combination, the team members will have the educational, financial, and operational expertise necessary to conduct a thorough evaluation of each application.

Evaluation teams will be responsible for evaluating a maximum of four applications each, depending on the number of applications that proceed past Stage 2. NACSA will train teams on the evaluation process and timeline, the evaluation criteria, the mechanics of evaluating an application, the capacity interview process, and recommendation development. We will work with the Board to provide state-specific legal and factual context relevant to evaluating the merits of each proposal.

**Application Evaluation.** Evaluators will be responsible for the entirety of each application to which they have been assigned. Even though reviewers will have different areas of expertise, NACSA expects reviewers to have the opportunity and responsibility to consider the application as a whole, including the alignment between sections. Evaluators will have approximately three weeks to complete their individual reviews. Following completion of individual reviews, the evaluation team will conduct a debrief on each application in order to identify strengths and weaknesses, come to consensus on their preliminary assessments, and identify key issues to be explored through the capacity interview.

**Capacity Interviews.** The capacity interview is critical to a full assessment of the soundness of a charter school plan, and of the applicants' readiness to implement the plan effectively. Evaluation teams will conduct an in-person capacity interview for each applicant team in order to give applicants an opportunity to address questions or concerns raised in the proposal as submitted, and also to assess the capacity of the applicant group to implement the proposed plan effectively.

The Board will be responsible for identifying and securing space for the interviews and for coordination of interview logistics.



# MEMO

**Recommendation Reports.** For Stage 3 applicants, evaluation teams will produce a detailed recommendation report that provides an overview of each aspect of the proposal with analysis of the degree to which the proposal meets the criteria for approval. The reports include ratings of each section of the plan and an overall recommendation of whether the application meets the criteria for approval.

**Budget Note:** For budgeting purposes, this proposal assumes that five applications will proceed to a Stage 3 review, including two applications from operators seeking approval for multiple schools.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

**Online Application Platform.** NACSA will renew the online platform, Fluid Review, which MCSAB has used for the first three application cycles. The cost is \$5,000. This cost has remained the same since the 2015 cycle and reflects a pass through of the actual cost to NACSA.

## MCSAB RESPONSIBILITIES

MCSAB is continuing to build internal capacity to manage application decision-making. As it assumes primary management of the application process, this proposal assumes that the Board will be responsible for a number of core process management responsibilities including, but not limited to, the following:

**Board Orientation.** The executive director will review the process plan with the Board and will remind the Board of its responsibilities as a charter school authorizer, both generally and specifically, as related to application decision-making.

**Eligibility Determinations.** MCSAB will review eligibility documents and make determinations about the legal eligibility of applicant groups.

**Completeness Findings.** MCSAB will conduct completeness reviews and be responsible for initial and final completeness findings.

**Applicant Orientation(s).** NACSA encourages MCSAB to provide orientations for applicants that explain the process and elaborate on the role of the evaluation teams. One purpose of the orientation is to ensure that applicants are informed about and understand the logistics of the process; a second purpose is to provide them with an expanded understanding of how the evaluation criteria will be applied in practice. In addition, the orientation provides an opportunity for MCSAB to get to know and develop rapport with applicants, laying the foundation for constructive, ongoing communication.

**Applicant Communications.** MCSAB will be responsible for ongoing applicant communications, including distribution of third-party evaluations.

**Due Diligence.** MCSAB will be responsible for reviewing the track record of performance for any experienced operators.

## APPLICATION PROCESS BUDGET

The budget is variable based on the number of applications. Typically, the cost of application evaluation is \$7,500 to \$8,000 per application depending on the structure of the evaluation teams, the number of experienced operators requiring due diligence, and other variables.



For budgeting purposes we have assumed the following:

Application submissions: 7

Applications proceeding to Stage 2: 7 (including two applications for multiple schools)

Applications proceeding to Stage 3: 5 (including two applications for multiple schools)

**Budget Note:** The number of applications approved or denied at Stage 3 has no bearing on the cost of the process.

Expense	Assumptions/Detail	Subtotal	Estimated Cost
Stage 1: Completeness and Eligibility Review	MCSAB-managed		N/A
Stage 2: Independent Threshold Quality Review	Assumes 7 complete applications (@ \$1,000 per application)		\$7,000
Stage 3: Full Independent Team Review & Interview  <i>(Assumes 5 applications meet Stage Two requirements)</i>	Stage 3 Review: Team 1 (\$900/application per reviewer: 4 applications <sup>1</sup> ; 3 reviewers)	\$10,800	
	Stage 3 Review: Team 2 (\$900/application per reviewer: 3 applications <sup>2</sup> ; 3 reviewers)	\$8,100	
	Capacity Interview Participation and Prep (\$300/interview per reviewer: 5 interviews; 3 reviewers)	\$4,500	
	Team Lead Stipend (\$650 per application; 7 applications)	\$4,550	
		\$27,950	
Travel	2 evaluation teams for capacity interviews		\$4,100
Recommendation Report Preparation	Includes reviewing, editing, and proofreading all recommendation reports; team lead coordination and management. (5.75 day @ \$125/hr)		\$5,750
Fluid Review	Online submission/review platform		\$5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$49,800</b>

<sup>1</sup> This total includes two single-school applications and one multi-school application. The multi-school application is counted as two applications.

<sup>2</sup> This total includes one single-school application and one multi-school application. The multi-school application is counted as two applications.



**APPLICATION TIMELINE**

The following timeline is based on the timeline published by the Board. NACSA will work with the Board to finalize additional internal tasks and related dates.

STAGE	TASK OR MILESTONE	DATE (2016)	RESPONSIBLE
RFP LAUNCH	<i>Launch of 2016 RFP Complete</i>	<i>January 29</i>	<i>MCSAB</i>
RFP LAUNCH	Prospective Applicant Informational Webinar	February 11	MCSAB
RFP LAUNCH	Deadline for Mandatory Letter of Intent and Eligibility Demonstration	March 8	APPLICANTS
RFP LAUNCH	Eligibility Determinations	March 11	MCSAB
PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	Applicant Orientation Webinar	Early March (TBD)	MCSAB
PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT	Deadline for Complete Proposals	May 10	APPLICANTS
STAGE 1	Initial Completeness Findings Distributed	May 18	MCSAB
STAGE 1	Completeness Remedy/Resubmission Deadline	May 20	APPLICANTS
STAGE 1	Final Completeness Findings Distributed	June 6	MCSAB
STAGE 2	Stage 2 Threshold Quality Assessment	June 7 - June 28	NACSA
STAGE 2	Stage 2 Findings Distributed	July 11	NACSA
STAGE 3	Stage 3 Evaluation Team Proposal Review	July 12 - August 2	NACSA
STAGE 3	Capacity Interviews	August 3-5	MCSAB
STAGE 3	Public Hearing	Mid-August TBD	MCSAB
STAGE 3	Third Party Evaluations to Applicants	August 19	MCSAB/NACSA
STAGE 3	Operator Response to Third Party Evaluation Due	August 26	APPLICANTS
DECISIONS	MCSAB Proposal Decisions	September 12	MCSAB

**Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board**  
**FY17 Budget - \$250,000 with State and Local Funds Estimate - \$363,000**

Category	Estimated Line Item
<b>Personnel</b>	
Salaries	\$ 170,000.00
Fringe	\$ 51,000.00
Workers Comp, etc.	\$ 1,500.00
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 222,500.00</u>
<b>Travel</b>	
In-State	\$ 12,000.00
FICA Match on Taxable Travel	
Non-Taxable Moving Expenses	
Out-of-State	\$ 7,500.00
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 19,500.00</u>
<b>Contractual</b>	
Intern Stipend	\$ 6,000.00
Employee Training	\$ 3,500.00
Postage	\$ 750.00
Advertising/Promotional Expense	\$ 1,000.00
IHL Reimbursement for Space	\$ 3,600.00
Membership Dues	\$ 1,250.00
ITS Services	\$ 1,500.00
Software	\$ 3,000.00
Wireless	\$ 3,000.00
Professional Services - IT	\$ 5,000.00
Professional Services - NACSA	\$ 49,800.00
Prof. Services-Cornerstone	\$ 12,500.00
Other Fees (Court Reporter, etc)	\$ 11,100.00
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 102,000.00</u>
<b>Commodities</b>	
Office Supplies	\$ 6,500.00
Food for Business	\$ 1,000.00
Office Furnishings	\$ 5,000.00
Other Supplies	\$ 1,500.00
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 14,000.00</u>
<b>Equipment</b>	
Computer Equipment	\$ 4,000.00
Office Machines	\$ 1,000.00
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 5,000.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 363,000.00</b>

	<b>Guarnateed Dollars</b>	<b>Estimated Dollars</b>
Appropriation	\$250,000.00	
State Admin Fee		
2515-Reimagine Prep		\$31,405.00
2525-Midtown PCS		\$23,398.00
2535-Smilow Prep		\$20,199.00
Total State		\$75,002.00
Local Admin Estimate		
2515-Reimagine		\$17,317.00
2525-Midtown PCS		\$12,279.00
2535-Smilow Prep		\$9,367.00
Total Local		\$38,963.00
Total Guaranteed Revenue	\$250,000.00	
Total Estimated Revenue		\$113,965.00