

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, August 11, 2014

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday August 11, 2014, at the office of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, located at 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi. In attendance were:

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

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.

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

**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.**

ITEM II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the July 10, 2014 meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval of the Minutes of the July 10, 2014 meeting.**

**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.**

### ITEM III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion of Mrs. Cormack, seconded by Mr. Wilson, all Board members present and participating voted unanimously **to close the meeting to determine whether or not it should declare an Executive Session** for the purpose of the discussion and consideration of a personnel matter.

On motion of Dr. Elam and seconded by Dr. Wright, all Board members present and participating voted unanimously **to go into Executive Session** for the reasons reported to the public and as stated in these minutes, as follows:

Discussion and consideration of a Board personnel matter.

On motion of Mr. Franklin, seconded by Dr. Wright, all Board members present and participating voted **to close the Executive Session and return to Open Session.**

**The Board returned to open session at 1:30 p.m.**

**During Executive Session, the Board conducted interviews for the position of Executive Director. No official action was taken during Executive Session.**

### ITEM IV. CHAIR REPORT

There was no report given by the Chair.

### ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. RFP and Application Committee

Mrs. Cormack reminded everyone that Letters of Intent are due on August 15, 2014, and all Letters of Intent are to be submitted through the online forum. She stated that the Board needs to be prepared to ratify the completeness review findings during the September meeting. Complete applications are due on September 15, 2014 through the online forum. Following that deadline, a full evaluation of the applications will be conducted.

Mrs. Cormack reported that during the last week of July she and the Board's summer intern took the time to conduct telephone conferences with the two applicants who were denied during the previous application cycle in order to provide them with feedback and rationale for the Board's decision and to help them prepare should they be interested to reapply during this or a subsequent application cycle.

Finally, she reported that the Committee is making efforts to prepare for round two of the RFP process. They are preparing to conduct eligibility checks, a process that has been moved to the Letter of Intent stage, and are also gathering reviewers in order to be prepared to move forward with the second stage of proposal reviews.

B. Executive Director/Consultant Search Committee

Chairman Cardin reported that the Board conducted interviews of prospective candidates this morning during executive session. He anticipates a motion coming forward during Old Business dealing with this search.

C. Fundraising Committee

Mr. Franklin reported that he met this previous week with Chairman Cardin and Kathryn Stewart, followed by a conference call with Dr. Elam and Mr. Wilson, during which they discussed formulating a long range plan for fund raising with a projected budget for needs. He anticipates distributing a proposal to the Board members soon and asked that the Board be prepared to discuss a complete plan at the September meeting.

ITEM VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Executive Director Search

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion resulting from the Executive Session. Mrs. Cormack made a motion to authorize Chairman Cardin to enter into negotiations on a possible job offer with a prospective Executive Director candidate.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

B. NACSA Invoice

Dr. Elam reviewed the expenditures included in the invoice received from NACSA for services rendered to date in the amount of \$44,350.00. Dr. Elam explained that the total amount of costs incurred was \$84,350 but NACSA has applied \$40,000 of unused grant funds to this invoice.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval for payment of the invoice received from NACSA for services rendered to date.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Mrs. Cormack**

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

C. NACSA Contract

Dr. Elam summarized the proposed NACSA contract that had been previously disseminated to the Board members for review.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval of the proposed contract with NACSA as presented by Dr. Elam.**

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**SECOND: Mrs. Cormack**

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

Mrs. Cormack asked for clarification on the terms of the contract and the period of services covered under the invoice above. Dr. Elam stated that the invoice approved above covers services rendered through the end of June. The contract being approved picks up the first of July. She stated that NACSA has been operating under good faith since that time. Chairman Cardin stated that upon payment of the invoice approved above, that previous contract will be concluded and what is being considered now constitutes a new contract with NACSA.

**D. Reimagine Contract**

Dr. Coleman-Potter and William Haft with NACSA summarized the contract that was circulated to the Board members during the July meeting.

Dr. Elam asked at what stage of review and development does the Committee considered this contract to be. Dr. Coleman-Potter stated that if this is a four stage process, they consider this to be the second stage with the fourth being the final phase. She stated that someone needs to begin the negotiations with Reimagine because there are areas of the contract that cannot be completed until those negotiations take place. She further stated that there needs to be a legal sufficiency review of the contract based on Mississippi statute and code, and she recommended that Chairman Cardin complete this step.

**Mrs. Cormack made a motion to authorize the Chairman to begin contract negotiations with Reimagine Prep subject to the legal sufficiency review.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Dr. Coleman-Potter**

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

As an information item, Chairman Cardin stated that the Board's financial consultant has been asked to prepare a budget for the current fiscal year and he hopes to have that available for circulation to the Board members soon and asked the members to be prepared to possibly discuss and adopt a budget at the September meeting.

He also asked the Board members to be prepared to elect new Board officers during the September meeting, as directed by the Bylaws, as that will be the one year anniversary of the formation of the Board and its first formal meeting.

ITEM VII. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Invoices from Cornerstone Consulting**

Kathryn Stewart summarized the invoices that have been received for payment from Denise DeRossett for financial planning services as follows:

Invoice through end of June: \$892.25

Invoice for the month of July:\$166.00

(Invoices are separated because the state begins a new fiscal year on July 1.)

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve payment of these two invoices to Cornerstone Consulting.**

**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.**

#### ITEM VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Sayer with Southern Echo made a couple of requests of the Board in terms of the framework of the contract with Reimagine. First, he was concerned with the fact that there is no clear explanation in any materials he has seen to date as to how the disciplinary process will work. He stated that it is his hope that the charter schools will go out of their way to ensure that students with academic or behavioral difficulties are retained and supported rather than pushed out. He hopes that the efforts made by the first schools can serve as a model for future charter schools in terms of “putting a foot on the pipeline of school house to jail house.” Additionally, he stated that Reimagine made in its proposal specific reference to compliance with the laws governing students with disabilities and, because this is a particular problem in Mississippi, it would be helpful if this first school could develop a model to show how this compliance will work to keep these students in school and in the mainstream to the extent possible.

Dr. Coleman-Potter stated that the school’s plan for addressing the needs of children with disabilities or those needing special education is contained in their applications. The contract contains specific language that speaks to non-discriminatory practices with regard to ELL children and those children who were traditionally underserved in public education as well as special education. That language, however, centers around compliance and, because it is a contract, it does not indicate specifically what the service would look like, but that information is found in the application.

Mr. Sayer stated that he would like to see more transparency with the school’s plan for addressing the needs of not only special education students or disabled students, but also those students who simply have academic or behavioral difficulties so that parents can anticipate what will happen when they are there and know ahead of time to what standard the school will be held accountable.

Mrs. Cormack stated that following the approval of the charter application she reached out to Mr. Gupta and asked for information from the Nashville Prep school that she could share with the Board that would address some of those concerns about discipline and expulsion rates. She was referred to [www.nashvilleprep.org/blog](http://www.nashvilleprep.org/blog) and the resource called “A Parent’s Guide to the Nashville Prep Report Card.” She stated that that resource is where one can find their state

report card data from last year (current year is not available). An overview that was shared with her indicates that they have never expelled a student, their overall suspension rate is lower than the district's, and their suspension rate for African-American students is lower than that of the district, as well as the state.

ITEM IX. NEXT MEETING

The September meeting will be held on Thursday, September 25, 2014 at 10:00. Notice will be posted on the website.

Subsequent meetings were scheduled based on deadlines in the RFP as follows:

October meeting: Tuesday, October 14, 2014 10:00 a.m.

November: No meeting is scheduled at this time

December meeting: Friday, December 12, 2014 10:00 a.m.

ITEM X. ADJOURNMENT

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

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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

**The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.**

ADOPTED, this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014.



\_\_\_\_\_  
TOMMIE S. CARDIN, Chairman