

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Monthly Meeting  
Thursday, September 25, 2014

The monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 25, 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, Co-Chairman  
Krystal Cormack  
Johnny Franklin  
Dr. Karen Elam  
Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter

Dr. Carey Wright was unavailable to attend.

Board Chairman Tommie Cardin called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was previously circulated to all Board members. Chairman Cardin requested the addition of two items under New Business, the first being the approval of invoices and the second being the approval of a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and IHL.

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

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

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

ITEM II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval of the Minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

### ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chairman Cardin started by extending his congratulations to the members of the Board for the completion of their first year of service. He summarized the accomplishments of the Board over the past year stating that the Board was organized on September 19, 2013, and officers were elected at that time. Bylaws were subsequently adopted, three ad hoc committees were formed, accounting systems established and funds were received from grants from the Barksdale Foundation and Mississippi First, as well as legislative appropriation funds. The RFP committee developed the first RFP, application toolkit and scoring rubric, all prior to the statutory deadline, and the first application cycle resulted in 31 letters of intent and 12 eligible applications being worked through the process ending in the selection and authorization of the first charter school in the State of Mississippi, Reimagine Prep. A search for an executive director was conducted, and an offer of employment has been extended to a prospective executive director candidate. The RFP has been revised and the second application cycle is now under way. These accomplishments were made possible through partnerships with NACSA and Cornerstone Consulting, as well as the diligence and hard work of each member of the Board, and Chairman Cardin thanked each member for their commitment.

Chairman Cardin further stated that going forward the committees will need to be revamped from ad hoc to standing committees to bring them in line with the Bylaws, and he will have a proposal for that during the next meeting.

He proposed at this time the addition of a new ad hoc committee, the Operator Liaison Committee, whose purpose will be to identify and serve as liaison for potential new operators, both locally and out of state, to educate them about the laws and opportunities that exist in Mississippi and assist them in the process, as well as identify operators already running successful charter schools in other states and advise them of the opportunities that exist in Mississippi. Chairman Cardin proposed making Dr. Elam the Chairperson for that committee and appointing Krystal Cormack and Chris Wilson to serve as members.

Dr. Coleman-Potter stated that she believes that the duties assigned to this committee as described by Chairman Cardin should actually be considered administrative duties that would fall under the responsibility of the incoming Executive Director. She stated that the Board's purpose is to set policy and to handle the governance portion of this work and not to oversee and monitor operators or even recruit potential operators. She cautioned the Board on crossing the line into the administrative operation of the agency.

Chairman Cardin agreed and stated that his vision is that once the Executive Director takes office, these administrative duties will shift to her and this committee will serve in an advisory and consultant capacity.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to authorize the Chair to appoint the Operator Liaison Committee, an ad hoc committee.**

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**SECOND: Mrs. Cormack**

**There being no further discussion and following a vote in favor, Dr. Coleman-Potter abstaining, the motion carried.**

#### ITEM IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### A. RFP and Application Committee

Mrs. Cormack reported that emails have been sent to all board members with regard to the letters of intent and applications received to date. Those have been reviewed and the applications are moving to the second stage of the process.

She listed the letters of intent accepted via the online portal by the deadline of August 15, 2014. Those include:

Emerge Community STEAM Charter School (Tunica);  
Emerge Community STEAM +E Charter School (JPS)  
Excellence Academy STEM Charter Elementary School (North Panola)  
Inspire Charter School (Columbus)  
Midtown Public Charter School (JPS)  
Phoenix Early College Charter School (Natchez/Adams County)  
Community Charter Center for Excellence (Amite and Jackson Counties)  
Dubois Prep Academy (Tunica)  
Powells Charter Schools (Coahoma, Amite, Calhoun, Quitman and Yazoo Counties)  
The Academy of Arts and Sciences Mississippi (Natchez, Jackson, and Moss Point)

Applications were due on or before September 15, 2014, and the following seven applications were received:

Excellence Academy STEM Charter Elementary School (North Panola)  
Community Charter Center for Excellence (Amite and Jackson Counties)  
Emerge Community STEAM Charter School (Tunica);  
Emerge Community STEAM +E Charter School (JPS)  
Dubois Prep Academy (Tunica)  
Inspire Charter School (Columbus)  
Midtown Public Charter School (JPS)

Mrs. Cormack stated that overall this was a very smooth process and that shifting to the fluid review system greatly improved the speed at which documents can be submitted. There was one issue, however, in which an application was not fully received and uploaded by the deadline. The Committee conferred with the Chair and made the decision, based on the fact that the bulk of the application had been received, to allow the applicant to submit their application although the deadline had been missed.

With regard to completeness and eligibility standards, Mrs. Cormack stated only Community Charter Center for Excellence (Jackson and Amite) was determined to be ineligible due to the lack of submission of IRS determination letters. All other applications were found to be complete and eligible and will move forward to stage two, which consists of the Board's opportunity to work with inside and outside evaluators to review the applications and ensure that they meet a minimum quality threshold before time and resources are spent on further evaluation. Ratings will be provided on each application and a determination will be made as to whether each application meets the criteria of the minimum quality threshold. They will be rated as substantially adequate or substantially inadequate. Those findings will be finalized by October 10<sup>th</sup> and will be presented at the October board meeting. Mrs. Cormack requested that the Board, under new business, ratify the findings of those applications that are eligible and complete to proceed to stage two.

Mrs. Cormack asked also that a point of clarification be made and that it be noted for future prospective applicants that the 48-hour remedy period in stage one of the application process is not a period of time in which applicants are allowed to continue writing and supplementing their incomplete application materials. It is simply a period of time within which minor corrections can be made to the materials that have been submitted. She stated that this process will be revamped for future application cycles, and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

B. Fundraising Committee

Mr. Franklin summarized the proposed 3-year fundraising plan that had previously been circulated to the Board members for review. Included in that plan is a 3-year fundraising goal of \$300,000, a timeline, and identification of the various mechanisms for raising monies and potential external funding sources.

Chairman Cardin requested that the memorandum be amended to indicate the \$25,000 identified as having been donated by the Gates Foundation "indirectly through MS First" be shown simply as having been donated by MS First.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve the fund raising proposal as presented by Mr. Franklin with the addition of MS First.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

ITEM V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ratify Applicant Eligibility

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve the applicants identified by the RFP Committee as complete and eligible to move forward to stage two of the application cycle.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

B. Election of Officers

Chairman Cardin stated that the Board Bylaws indicate that officers are to be elected for one-year terms and now is the time to elect a new Chairman and Vice Chairman for the coming year.

Chairman Cardin requested nominations for the position of Vice Chairman. Dr. Coleman-Potter nominated Krystal Cormack.

**There being no further nominations for this position, Mr. Franklin made a motion to accept Mrs. Cormack as Vice Chair by acclamation.**

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

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

Chairman Cardin requested nominations for the position of Chairman. Mr. Franklin asked that the current Chair, Tommie Cardin, continue in that position for the coming year.

**There being no further nominations for this position, Mrs. Cormack moved to close the nomination.**

**MOTION: Mrs. Cormack**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

**Chairman Cardin requested a ratification of his nomination as Board Chair.**

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

C. Budget

Denise DeRossette of Cornerstone Consulting Group summarized the steps taken thus far in establishing the accounting system for the Board's fund, as well as the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding with IHL, which is still in draft form and will have further revisions before it is available to be presented to the Board for consideration.

She further discussed the draft Budget that has been circulated to the Board members for review, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit A.

Chairman Cardin spoke to the approval of the executive director's salary by the State Personnel Board stating further that, with regard to the relocation expenses, the decision was made that a simple reimbursement of those expenses would be easier to manage than establishing a set amount that would be allotted and paid to the prospective applicant. A formal offer has been

extended, including the proposed reimbursement arrangement, to Marian Schuttie, and to date Chairman Cardin was awaiting a form response from her. The proposed start date would be November 3, 2014.

**Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve the proposed FY 15 budget as presented.**

**MOTION: Mr. Franklin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

D. Memorandum of Understand with IHL

Consideration of this item was deferred until the October meeting.

E. Approval of Invoices

Consideration of this item was deferred until the October meeting following approval of the MOU

#### ITEM VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Sayer, Southern Echo, asked how he could get the list of applications that are moving to stage two. Mrs. Cormack stated that she had emailed it to him after it was ratified. Further, he asked how he can get copy of memo on fundraising that was just approved. Chairman Cardin stated that he would consider that a public records request and it will be provided, as such.

#### ITEM VIII. NEXT MEETING

The next regular monthly meeting will be held on October 14, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. at MS Department of Education. There will be no regularly scheduled meeting in November, and the December meeting will be held on December 12, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. also at the MS Department of Education.

ITEM IX. ADJOURN

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

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Franklin**

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

ADOPTED, this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2014.

  
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TOMMIE S. CARDIN, Chairman