

MINUTES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD
Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, June 6, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 6, 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

Board Chairman Tommie Cardin called the meeting to order at 10:00.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was previously circulated to all Board members for review. Ms. Schutte made a recommendation to add an item under New Business related to the approval of a travel card for use by authorizer board staff. Mr. Wilson made a recommendation to add under New Business an item related to the approval of new office space for the Board.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to add those two items under New Business and approve the agenda, as amended.

MOTION: Mrs. Cormack

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 of the April 4th Meeting

The Minutes of the April 4, 2016 meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion for approval of the Minutes of the April 4, 2016 meeting, as written.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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 made a presentation to the Mississippi School Board Association as part of their legislative review. He was well received and hopes that the dialogue between the two agencies created by this opportunity will continue long term.

ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Schutte first recognized the two summer interns who will be working with the Board through the Teach for American Exploring Equity Fellowship program. Chelsea Clark previously taught at Yazoo City High School where she was the U.S. History department chairperson and taught AP U.S. History. She will work on re-designing the pre-opening process, as well as some document collection and designing a system for that. Emma Gould taught elementary school in JPS for four years and will begin law school in the Fall. She will work on creating the electronic pamphlet containing all of the laws and policies applicable to charter schools in Mississippi. That will be available on the Board's website for use by prospective applicants.

As a legislative update, Ms. Schutte reported that Gov. Bryant signed SB 2161, which take effect on July 1st, and she highlighted the revisions that would affect the charter school board as follows: (1) office space - will allow the authorizer board to obtain suitable office space; (2) charter school enrollment - the law now states that a charter school must be open to any student who resides within the boundaries of the school district in which that school is located, as well as any student who resides within the boundaries of a school district that was rated C, D, or F at the time the charter school was approved, or at the time the student enrolled; (3) lottery - the charter school lottery information was revised to state that a charter school shall give enrollment preference to underserved students as defined in the law to ensure the school meets its required underserved student composition; (4) graduation requirements - the law now contains language that would require schools serving grades 9-12 to meet or exceed the graduation requirements set by the Mississippi Department of Education for a regular high school diploma, as was already required by the Board in its RFP; (5) teacher licensure requirements - the language regarding teacher licensure requirements was clarified to state that no more than 25% of the teachers in a charter school may be exempt from state teacher licensure requirements, and within 3 years of employment with a charter school a teacher must have, at a minimum, alternative licensure; (6) charter school teachers' retirement - charter schools teachers may participate in the state PERS retirement system if the board of their charter school chooses to opt in for participation by the entire school; (7) charter school funding - for students who are crossing district boundaries to attend a charter school, in order to calculate the local amount of funds that are delivered, a pro-rata is determined by MDE and is delivered to the charter school from MDE and that amount is

then reduced from the local school district's January payment; (8) conversion charter schools - the law now clarifies that if a conversion charter school applicant is successful in being allowed to convert to a public charter school, the local school district owning the facility must offer to either sell or lease the facility to the conversion charter school at or below fair market value; (9) facilities fund – the law now includes charter schools as eligible recipients for state grant funds for facilities – though not yet funded by the legislature, this law gives charter schools the opportunity to participate in that if they do; and finally, (10) charter school reprisal protection – protects interested local school district employees or teachers from unlawful reprisal if they are involved in the creation of or participation in a charter school.

Dr. Coleman-Potter asked for clarification with regard to the charter school enrollment and the fact that “any student who resides in the boundaries in the school district in which that school is located” will include children who are currently enrolled in private or parochial schools but moves into a charter school. Specifically, when the allocation is written from the school district, would it be written to include an allocation per pupil for that child who previously attended a private or parochial school although the school district had not been previously receiving MAEP dollars for that child? Ms. Schutte explained that the student would be included in the per pupil allocation. To determine the MAEP number, they use the contract enrollment, which would include that child for the number which MAEP is funded on, and for the local funds they look at the average daily membership of month one and that child would be included in those counts. The school district will be funded on the prior year ADA calculation so they will have year before that goes into effect for them.

Mrs. Cormack requested clarification of the term “geographical boundaries” and Ms. Schutte stated that that refers to the boundaries used by the current school district for determining enrollment eligibility. In terms of crossing district lines, it refers to the boundaries of a C, D, or F school district.

Ms. Schutte reported further that she and Mr. Wilson have viewed potential office space on the 2nd floor of the Robert E. Lee state office building that includes a suite style office space offering a reception area, conference room space, space for an executive director's office and space for 3 additional staff persons, storage and a break room. There is a larger meeting space available in the building, and parking is available in the garage next to the building. It is located across the street from MDE and near the Capitol Building. Pursuant to SB 2362, the space is being offered to the Board rent free.

Next, Ms. Schutte reported that she has been working on behalf of MDE on the charter schools program grant and it was submitted the Tuesday after Memorial Day. Funds would be available to fund new charter schools with \$250,000 available for a planning year, \$275,000 to be used in year one and an additional \$275,000 to be used in year two. This would allow the maximum award that the U.S. Department of Education allows per school through this grant. The proposal is for a 5-year grant totaling \$10,025,300. The Board will be notified later this Fall about the award and funds would start October 1, which means that schools approved by the Board this year would be eligible for these funds. Mr. Franklin emphasized the importance of staying in

contact with the state representatives in Washington and encouraging them to support the effort of the Board to be awarded this grant.

Next, Ms. Schutte offered an update on her hiring efforts for a deputy executive director. She stated that she has conducted several telephone interviews with potential candidates but is continuing to reach out to both national and local connections in order to find qualified candidates.

Ms. Schutte then reminded the Board that the Charter Schools Conference will be held on June 26-29 with early registration due before June 10th.

Finally, Ms. Schutte reported that there is an issue with the Board's website, which is hosted by Mississippi Interactive. Currently, they are unable to log into the site and make any administrative changes without actually making the changes in the code. She is hopefully the issue will be resolved soon.

ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Applications Committee

Mrs. Cormack reported that four full proposals for eight schools have been received by the Board. One is from a new operator, Shades of Elegance, who proposes to open a K-8 school in Sunflower County Consolidated School District. The remaining three proposals are from existing operators: Collegiate Academies from New Orleans who has proposed a 9-12 school in the JPS school district; Mississippi Preparatory Academy (also called I Can Schools) from Ohio who has applied to operate three K-8 schools in the JPS school district; and Excellence 2000 out of Dallas, who has applied to operate three K-12 schools in Jackson, Bovina and Vicksburg. Today, three of these applicants will be considered during New Business to confirm their eligibility and completeness and to consider advancing them to stage two of the process or to deny their proposals, those three being Shades of Elegance, Collegiate Academies and Mississippi Preparatory Academy. They have each submitted complete proposals with the required eligibility information. Excellence 2000's proposal remains incomplete. Specifically they have failed to submit a most recently audited financial statement and proof of citizenship for some of their board members and staff members, which is legislatively mandated.

B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Dr. Coleman-Potter had to leave the meeting early so Ms. Schutte offered a report of where the schools currently in operation stand within the performance framework timeline. She stated that Reimagine has concluded its school year and their annual site visit was conducted in the Spring. Midtown will conclude its school year on June 15 and has also had their annual site visit. The committee is in the process of collecting performance data on these schools to incorporate into the annual performance reports. She stated that the committee will also be bringing before the Board in July a revised ongoing monitoring protocol.

ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2016 Request for Proposals: Completeness and Eligibility Confirmation

Mrs. Cormack moved that the Board deem the proposals presented by Shades of Elegance, Inc., Collegiate Academies, Inc. and Mississippi Preparatory Academy, Inc. as complete and eligible and approve them to move forward to stage two of the 2016 RFP cycle.

MOTION: Mrs. Cormack

SECOND: Dr. Elam

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

Mrs. Cormack next moved that the Board deem the proposal presented by Excellence 2000 incomplete and ineligible and adopt a resolution to deny Excellence 2000's charter school proposal for the 2016 RFP cycle.

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.

B. FY16 Budget Revisions

Ms. Schutte presented both the most recently amended FY 16 budget current through April 30th and a proposed budget amendment needed to clear up some year-end housekeeping items. The first is the reduction of the legislative appropriation by \$1,292.00, as well as a reduction in MAEP funds delivered to all schools which amounts to \$162.95 as the charter school board's share of that reduction. She stated further that funds have been moved within the budget to fully expend the 2016 appropriation, specifically proposing that \$30,000 be placed into a grant program for the schools that will be operating in the coming Fall (providing \$10,000 each) and \$20,000 for office furnishing for the new office space. She explained that those extra funds were the result of the Board not yet hiring the additional staff during the FY 16 budget year as had been planned for in the initial budget.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve the proposed budget, as amended.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

Dr. Elam questioned whether the \$20,000 allotted for office furnishings for the new space would be an adequate amount considering the size of the space and the amount of furnishings needed and whether it was wise to continue to provide grant funds to the schools already in operation when those funds had initially been designated as "start-up" grant funds when provided last year.

Following extensive discussion, Mr. Wilson moved to revise the proposed FY16 Budget to allow \$35,000 for office furnishings and \$15,000 in start-up grant funds to be dedicated only to the newest charter school, Smilow Prep.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Elam

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

C. FY 17 Budget Approval

Ms. Schutte presented a proposed budget for FY17.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve FY17 budget, as presented.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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

D. Approval of Invoices

Mrs. Schutte presented invoices for travel reimbursements and Cornerstone invoices for April and May.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to approve payment of the invoices, 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.

E. Authorization of Travel Card

Ms. Schutte explained that the MS Department of Finance and Administration provides a travel card for state agencies to be used for travel related expenses only, in lieu of using personal accounts and later requesting reimbursement of those expenses.

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to authorize the use of a travel card by Board staff.

MOTION: Mrs. Cormack

SECOND: Dr. Elam

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

F. Office Space

Mr. Wilson moved that the Robert E. Lee office space offered by the Department of Finance and Administration be accepted as of July 1, 2016, and that the \$35,000 budget allotment be spent on office furnishings.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Elam

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 with Southern Echo asked when the annual performance report prepared by the Performance and Accountability Committee will be finalized and available to the public. Ms. Schutte stated that the Board is mandated to publish that report on or before October 1st. She asked for clarification on the three operators that were advanced to stage two of the RFP cycle. Mrs. Cormack provided that information.

Ashley McKay requested clarification on the name of Mississippi Preparatory Academy, also known as I Can Schools. Mrs. Cormack provided that information.

ITEM IX. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board will be held on July 11, 2016 at the office of the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning.

ITEM X. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Cardin requested a motion to adjourn.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 11:01

ADOPTED, this the 11th day of July, 2016.



TOMMIE S. CARDIN, Chairman