

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, December 3, 2018

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, December 3rd, 2018. In attendance were:

Ms. Krystal Cormack, Board Chair  
Dr. Karen Elam  
Mr. Quentin Ransburg

Dr. Jean Young and Mr. Chris Wilson participated via teleconference.

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

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

Chair Cormack asked to strike items C. Grant Modification- Clarksdale Collegiate and H. ii. School Selected Indicators as it pertains to Joel E. Smilow Collegiate from New Business.

**Chair requested a motion to approve the agenda, as amended.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Ransburg**

**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 October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Board Meeting

The minutes of the October 15th, 2018 Board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 Board meeting.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**

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

ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Cormack expressed her excitement for upcoming initiatives that will soon be moved forward by the Board.

## ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam noted that it was the recommendation of the committee to retain the same Request for Proposals (RFP) process as the previous year, changing only the dates for the deadlines in the process. She explained that significant changes to the RFP would be best considered after a new Executive Director is hired, who could provide more guidance on the matter. She mentioned that there are some major changes to the RFP the committee is considering for the future, and that the committee will conduct research concerning these potential changes between now and the next application cycle.

### B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson noted that at the last Performance and Accountability Committee meeting, Beth Tek from Bellwether Educational Partners presented a proposal for her organization's potential services regarding the annual report. He also noted that the committee discussed the accountability ratings assigned to each charter school, the proposed School Selected Indicators from Clarksdale Collegiate, and a proposal from School Works to conduct site visits.

### C. Grants Committee

Mr. Ransburg reported that at the last meeting of the Grants Committee, the members discussed the Grants Coordinator hiring timeline and process and the need to gather more information concerning a grants budget modification process.

## ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Executive Director Hiring Process

Chair Cormack remarked that the Board has the option of creating a formal Executive Director search committee comprising of two or three members, or use an ad hoc consisting of volunteers from the Board and any contracted staff that may need to be involved in the interview process. Chair Cormack presented a timeline for hiring that includes a December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 deadline for applications to be submitted.

**Dr. Elam moved to allow the Executive Director hiring process to be conducted through an ad hoc committee.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

Dr. Elam asked if Chair Cormack was satisfied with the ad hoc committee consisting of herself and Mr. Cardin in the previous Executive Director hiring process, or if she would have preferred greater input from the Board. Chair Cormack responded that she was satisfied with the previous arrangement. Dr. Elam expressed concerns that expanding the arrangement to a formal committee would require more members to coordinate schedules in order to move the process forward, which may be difficult.

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

**the motion carried.**

Chair Cormack noted that the proposed Executive Director hiring timeline allowed the process to begin that day, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018. She explained that if the timeline is adopted, the first portion of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 would be used to interview Executive Director candidates, and the second portion of the day would be used to conduct the regular monthly board meeting, in order to maximize the already scheduled meeting date. She also explained that currently the Board is scheduled to have a Board Retreat on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 but this can be eliminated if there is no need for a retreat. She added that on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, candidate interviews could be conducted in the afternoon, and the Board meeting in the morning if that is what would work best for the candidates.

**Dr. Elam moved to approve the Executive Director hiring timeline, as presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**

Mr. Ransburg asked about plans for advertising the vacancy. Chair Cormack recalled several advertising strategies that were used in the last Executive Director hiring process. She noted that in the last Executive Director hiring process, there were 38 candidates who applied, and Dr. Elam noted that these candidates applied during a longer application cycle than the cycle that is being proposed today. Dr. Young asked if there was any intention of reaching out to the previous 38 candidates who applied; Chair Cormack responded that she would contact these individuals and invite them to reapply. Mr. Ransburg asked if anyone had concerns about the hiring timeline existing during the holiday season. Chair Cormack remarked that she is hopeful that this won't be an issue due to the fact that the role being advertised is an education role, and many people working in education have extra time off work during the holiday season, which might allow them time to invest in an application that they might not have at any other point in the year. Chair Cormack noted that while she does have concerns that the application period for the role might be too short, the need to hire an Executive Director as soon as possible necessitates that the Board complete the hiring process expediently. She noted that if the Board is not satisfied with the progress of the hiring process on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the deadline could be extended.

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

**B. Grants Coordinator Hiring Process**

Chair Cormack remarked that the Grants Committee is recommending adjusting the Grants Coordinator Hiring Timeline by changing the dates of candidate interviews from December 4<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> to December 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. She remarked that she would reach out to the United States Department of Education to gain clarity on hiring requirements for this role. She also expressed the importance of ensuring a salary offer is cleared with the State Personnel Board in terms of a hiring pin. Dr. Young asked if a bonus could be offered to the person the Board desires to fill this role; Chair Cormack responded that enticements cannot be offered to either Grants Coordinator or Executive Director candidates.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Grants Coordinator Hiring timeline, as amended.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**

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

C. MS First Survey Update & Request for Support

Dr. Angela Bass, Deputy Director of MS First, presented an update on two projects her organization is working on: a public perceptions report and a landscape document of policies and procedures. Dr. Elam expressed concerns that the sample used for the public perceptions report cannot be considered a truly random sample because a portion of the sample is self-selected, as parents contacted for this survey can opt to or opt not to share their phone number for this purpose. Dr. Young expressed concerns that the report would not actually give an accurate representation of the public perception of charter schools in Mississippi, as the people who tend to respond to these surveys are unhappy with the situation at hand, and those who are happy with the situation at hand tend not to respond to surveys at all. Chair Cormack noted that the telephone numbers of parents are directory information under FERPA, so MS First is not actually asking parents to give away information that would have been otherwise private. In regards to the landscape document of policies and procedures, Dr. Bass mentioned that her organization has started drafting a school closure protocol for MCSAB. Mr. Wilson asked how much progress has been made on this protocol, and Dr. Bass responded that MS First had previously submitted a draft of this protocol to the Board. The Board discussed the sample being used to conduct the satisfaction survey, and it was clarified that charter school parents are only a subgroup of the sample of this survey.

**Dr. Elam moved to table the decision to provide further support for MS First concerning the public perceptions report and policies and procedures landscape document.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**

**There being no discussion, the motion passed with four votes in favor and one against.**

D. 2019 Request for Proposals: Release for Public Comment

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to release the 2019 Request for Proposals for public comment.**

**MOTION: Mr. Ransburg**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

E. RePublic High School and Revive Prep: Defer Opening Request

Jon Rybka, CEO of RePublic schools requested that the Board defer the opening up RePublic High School and Revive Prep from 2020 to 2021. Dr. Elam asked Mr. Rybka if he had concerns that the Jackson Public School District may improve to a C accountability grade before 2021, eliminating the possibility for these two schools to open at this time. Mr. Rybka expressed that while he would be delighted to see this improvement from Jackson Public Schools in this timeframe, he speculated its likelihood. Dr. Elam expressed her disappointment that students currently attending ReImagine Prep will have to return to a failing school district upon entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Rybka reported that ReImagine Prep has been working with Empower MS to help 8<sup>th</sup> graders at

Reimagine Prep choose a high school that is best suited for their needs.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the deferral of the opening RePublic High School and Revive Prep from 2019 to 2021.**

**MOTION: Mr. Ransburg**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

F. Charter Contract Amendments

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve Clarksdale Collegiate's amended contract to reflect new enrollment numbers.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**

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

G. School Selected Indicators

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the proposed School Selected Indicator for Clarksdale Collegiate.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**

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

H. Contracts for Consideration

Chair Cormack noted the organization Virtual Chief of Staff has put forth a proposal to temporarily support the work of the board on a month-to-month basis, and their services can include managing hiring processes, prepare for meetings, complete meeting follow-up tasks, strategic planning, and meeting planning. She noted that a Virtual Chief of Staff could potentially manage the RFP process, as well as prepare Board meeting resources. Chair Cormack explained that Ms. Naomi Jozovich who is a potential candidate for this role has instructional and charter school start-up experience. She noted that the Board could choose from other candidates as well. Chair Cormack recognized that the proposal offers Tier One Support, which includes 20 hours of support a month, which can be increased as needed. As part of these 20 hours, Chair Cormack mentioned the Virtual Chief of Staff could potentially conduct round one interviews with Executive Director Candidates and synthesize notes for the Board's review. In response to a question from Dr. Elam, she also noted that while the Virtual Chief of Staff could manage Stage One and Stage Two of the RFP process and provide some support for Stage Three, additional support from NACSA would be needed to manage Stage Three unless the individual hired as the Executive Director has the capacity to manage Stage Three themselves. Dr. Elam asked Chair Cormack's opinion of Virtual Chief of Staff, and Chair Cormack replied that she was pleased the organization came highly recommended from other organizations she had worked with, and was especially pleased that the

organization allowed you to choose your own Chief.

**Dr. Elam moved to authorize the Board Chair to contract with Virtual Chief of Staff pending the Board attorney's review of necessary contracts and to authorize the Board Chair to request either Tier One or Tier Two support from Virtual Chief of Staff at her discretion.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

Mr. Wilson asked what level of support from Virtual Chief of Staff would be needed to onboard a new Executive Director, to which Chair Cormack responded that she thought Tier One support would be sufficient. Dr. Elam questioned if 20 hours a month would be enough support, and Chair Cormack responded that her opinion is that it will be enough support for now, but the level of support can be increased at a later date if needed.

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

Chair Cormack explained that Bellwether Educational Partners has made a proposal for gathering data, conducting analyses, and creating graphic designs for the annual report and accompanying narrative. She noted that the organization will create this report in consultation with the Performance and Accountability Committee, and it is proposed for \$30,650 which is a 10% discount over last year's proposal. Mr. Wilson made note that it is the recommendation of the Performance and Accountability Committee that the Board approve the proposal.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Bellwether Educational Partners proposal.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**

**SECOND: Mr. Ransburg**

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

Chair Cormack reminded the board that typically MCSAB staff conducts site visits of schools. She reviewed the typical schedule for conducting site visits at schools that are in various stages of their charter contract. Chair Cormack explained the importance of quality site visits, as they will be especially helpful in making determinations of renewal for Midtown Public Charter School and Reimagine Prep. Chair Cormack presented the site visit proposal from School Works and noted that the proposal includes gathering documentation from the schools, managing the documentation, and conducting the actual site visits. She reported that for the spring semester, School Works will do half-day visits for schools in year one, two, and three, and will conduct two-day site visits for schools in year four, and School Works will provide an 8-10 page report for each school. She noted that School Works will use the Mississippi Performance and Accountability Framework to conduct evaluations. Chair Cormack remarked that School Works will additionally make recommendations to the Board to improve the MCSAB's site visit protocol for upcoming years; this proposal will cost \$49,700. Mr. Wilson remarked that approving this proposal is the recommendation of the Performance and Accountability Committee. Chair Cormack acknowledged that NACSA recommended the use of School Works for site visits.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the School Works proposal pending appropriate legal review.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

Dr. Elam asked if contracting School Works for site visits was a permanent fixture for MCSAB operations, or if this was a solution proposed only for this upcoming year. Chair Cormack remarked that MCSAB staff members had previously conducted site visits, but she questioned if staff members had the expertise to conduct full facility reviews, and mentioned that contracting this service as a temporary solution would be an improvement. Dr. Elam suggested it would be best to wait until a new Executive Director is hired to determine if staff or a contractor will conduct site visits in the future.

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

Chair Cormack presented the contract for the services of Stewart McMillan, and detailed that the contract included pre-opening support, management of monthly subscriptions, managing correspondence with the Mississippi Department of Education, and onboarding the new Executive Director. She noted that the only change from Ms. McMillan's previous contract to the one being presented was an increase in the hourly rate.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the contract for Stewart McMillan.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

Mr. Ransburg asked if the Board will have the opportunity to ask for additional staff during the legislative session. Chair Cormack responded that the new Executive Director will have the authority to hire additional staff as they see fit as long as the Board moves the budget in such a way that makes this possible. Chair Cormack remarked that her long term vision is to staff the office with an Executive Director and either an Deputy Director or two Directors serving under the Executive Director in addition to a Grants Coordinator. She noted her opinion that with more staff members, many of the existing temporary contracts could be eliminated.

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

Chair Cormack addressed the need to strike item I. i. 5. Contracts for Consideration as it pertains to Educational Materials Specialist.

Chair Cormack presented a letter requesting that the Board allocate an additional \$10,000 to the intern line item in the budget and extend Lauren Hulen's contract until May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the intern contract for Lauren Hulen.**

**MOTION: Mr. Ransburg**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

I. Invoices for Consideration

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the payment of all invoices presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Ransburg**

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

J. Budget Revisions

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve all budget revisions as presented.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Ransburg**

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

K. Closed Determination of Executive Session

Chair Cormack noted that there was no need for a Closed Determination of Executive Session.

#### ITEM VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

#### ITEM VII. NEXT MEETING

Chair Cormack noted that the next meeting will be Tuesday, January 22nd at the Authorizer Board's office, unless there needed to be a special called board meeting.

#### ITEM IX. ADJOURNMENT

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to adjourn.**

**MOTION: Mr. Ransburg**

**SECOND: Dr. Young**


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

**The meeting adjourned.**



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Adopted this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of January 2019.



A signature is redacted with a thick black marker. The signature is written in blue ink and is partially obscured by the redaction. The signature appears to be "Quentin Ransburg".

Quentin Ransburg, Chair

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