

MINUTES OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, June 4, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 4, 2018 at the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board Office located at 239 N. Lamar Street Suite 207, Jackson, MS 39201. In attendance were:

Krystal Cormack, Board Chair  
Dr. Karen Elam, Board Vice-Chair  
Dr. Carey Wright  
Chris Wilson  
Leland Speed  
Dr. Jean Young  
Tommie Cardin

Executive Director Marian Schutte participated in the meeting. Deputy Director Stewart McMillan was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was previously circulated to all Board members for review. Chair Cormack made a recommendation to revise the agenda to include a closed determination for Executive session following the committee reports. She also made a recommendation to add an item in new business if there are any decisions made in Executive session related to personnel issues.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to make these revisions and approve the agenda, as amended.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**

**SECOND: Mr. Speed**

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

ITEM II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes of the April 9<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting

The minutes of the April 9, 2018 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 board meeting.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Mr. Speed**

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

**B. Approval of Minutes of the Special Called May 22<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting**

The minutes of the May 22, 2018 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 board meeting.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

**ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT**

Chair Cormack reported that the June 4<sup>th</sup> board meeting would be Ms. Marian Schutte's last meeting, and she thanked Ms. Schutte for her support in moving the MCSAB from start up to an enduring institution. Additional board members expressed their thanks. Chair Cormack, Ms. Schutte, and Ms. McMillan have been meeting weekly to create a robust transition plan.

**ITEM IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Schutte shared that it was her honor and pleasure to serve at the will of the board. She has committed to being as helpful as possible in the transition, including offering support when a new Executive Director is hired.

First, Ms. Schutte noted that Mississippi hosted the National Alliance Community of Practice meeting in Jackson, Mississippi last month. The Community of Practice consists of states with newly established charter school laws (Alabama, Kentucky, and Mississippi). The work will closely align with activities in the Charter Schools Program Grant, especially focused on building a charter school support sector.

Second, Ms. Schutte recommended that the Request for Proposals for the Strategic Communications work be extended due to the small interest and lack of any official proposals. She shared that she and Mrs. McMillan will continue to cultivate interest.

Third, Ms. Schutte shared that the Southern Poverty Law Center has filed an intent to appeal the Chancery Court's ruling that stated that the state and local funding was constitutional, so we should anticipate this in the coming month or so.

Dr. Elam requested an update on the Charter School Program (CSP) Grant Coordinator position. Ms. Schutte confirmed that the job description was posted, and an offer had been made to one candidate who turned it down. The CSP Grant Coordinator is still posted on the website, but Ms. Schutte has reached out to the U.S. DOE to see if the CSP Grant Coordinator position could be moved to a contract consultant position. This staffing adjustment would require changing the CSP grant budget to move the funds for the CSP Grant Coordinator from salary and personnel to contractual. Chair Cormack will keep the board apprised of updates.

#### ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam presented an overview of the 2018 Request for Proposals process. The Authorizer Board received 16 Letters of Intent for 17 schools followed by a submission in early May of 9 proposals for 12 schools. Ms. Schutte reviewed these proposals to determine if they were complete, and she reported that all proposals were incomplete in some capacity. After a 48-hour remedy window, the proposals were reviewed again for completeness. Dr. Elam is bringing forward a recommendation to accept seven complete proposals and deny two incomplete proposals. The Applications Committee proposes that the following seven proposals are complete and should be moved forward to Stage 2: Ambition Preparatory Charter Schools, Girls Club and Learning Center, KMartin Group, MS Delta Academies, SR1, Mississippi Community Education Center, and RePublic Schools, Inc. The Applications Committee proposes that the following two proposals are not complete and should not be moved forward to Stage 2: Randy J. Naylor Memorial Foundation and Technology Innovative for Today's Youth.

Dr. Elam will share the motion in New Business to approve the seven complete proposals and deny the two incomplete proposals. The next phase of the 2018 Requests for Proposals Process will be the Stage 2 Threshold Evaluation will be conducted by NACSA with external reviewers.

##### B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson noted that the Performance and Accountability Committee was not able to meet, so Ms. Schutte would provide a report on the spring site visits.

Ms. Schutte provided a reminder of the overview of the Site Visit components included in the Ongoing Monitoring protocol, which includes classroom visits, facility walk through, policy checks, and a school leader and board member interview. Ms. Schutte also shared that the school's current accountability rating as well as the accountability rating and standards needed for renewal are shared at each site visit. All three of the schools had successful visits that did not include any issues that would be elevated to a Notice of Concern or Notice of Breach. The

overarching takeaway is that all of the schools are working to improve their academic progress. Reimagine Prep and Joel E. Smilow Prep are using the NWEA Map for their school selected indicator, and Midtown Public Charter School is using the STAR Assessment for their school selected indicator. All schools have added additional reading and math instructional time.

Mr. Cardin asked a question about the timing of the test score release dates. Dr. Wright shared that the districts will get their results in July and be given a window to review. The results will be released in August or September this year, which is a shorter turnaround time than previous years. Ms. Schutte shared that MCSAB will receive the results at the same time.

Dr. Elam asked for an update on the Midtown Public Charter School leader. Ms. Schutte shared that they were going to be interviewing school leader candidates in early May.

Dr. Elam asked about summer school options at the charter schools. Ms. Schutte shared the professional development schedule for the charter schools and the longer school year utilized.

Chair Cormack shared that she went to meet with Dr. Todd Burnham at the University of Mississippi. Dr. Burnham is the administrator of the Mississippi Principal Corps Program. They train and prepare leaders, and Chair Cormack talked to him about connecting with the charter schools. She connected Dr. Burnham with the talent individuals at each of the charter operators.

#### ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. Executive Session

**Chair Cormack requested a motion for a closed determination to consider going into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel issues.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Mr. Wilson**

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

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

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

During executive session, the Board discussed personnel issues. No action was taken.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to come out of Executive Session.**

**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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

B. 2018 Request for Proposals: Completeness and Eligibility Confirmation

Ms. Schutte shared that the action today is to confirm the completeness and eligibility of the applications after the remedy window.

**Dr. Elam requested a motion to approve as complete and eligible to move forward Ambition Preparatory Charter School, Girls Club and Learning Center, KMartin Group, Mississippi Community Education Center, Mississippi Delta Academies, RePublic Schools, Inc., and SR1 to Stage 2 of the 2018 Request for Proposals cycle.**

**MOTION: Dr. Elam**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

Mr. Cardin asked for information about the new and existing operators in the complete proposals, other than RePublic Schools, Inc. Ms. Schutte shared that Ambition Preparatory is a local non-profit whose leader went through the Building Excellent Schools program. Girls Club and Learning Center applied the year prior, and they are a local non-profit. KMartin Group is a local non-profit. Mississippi Community Education Center operates New Summit, a private school in Mississippi. Mississippi Delta Academies is led by a woman from Greenwood, MS who previously worked at the Achievement School District in Tennessee. SR1 applied the year prior, and they are a non-profit from Canton, Mississippi that has an after-school program.

Dr. Wright asked about the Girls Club and Learning Center to confirm that the applicant wants to open from Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Schutte confirmed these grade levels. Chair Cormack asked Ms. Schutte if she has talked to Girls Club and Learning Center about the fact that the state does not fund Pre-K, and Ms. Schutte confirmed this action.

Mr. Cardin shared that he was pleased that there were two operators that have reapplied from previous cycles and made it further along in the process.

**There being no additional discussion and following a roll call vote in favor by participating members, the motion carried.**

**Dr. Elam requested a motion to deem Randy J. Memorial Foundation and Technology Innovative for Todays Youth as incomplete and ineligible and to adopt a resolution to deny Randy J. Memorial Foundation and Technology Innovative for Todays Youth proposals**

**MOTION: Dr. Young**

**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

**There being no additional discussion and following a roll call vote in favor by participating members, the motion carried.**

Dr. Elam requested a confirmation that the proposals would be available to the Authorizer Board and the public. Ms. Schutte confirmed that the complete proposals will be posted on the MCSAB website. Ms. Schutte also shared that she notified the local superintendent in each district where there could be a charter school at the letter of intent and complete proposal stage. Chair Cormack asked how this was communicated to the superintendents. Ms. Schutte shared that it was communicated via e-mail. Dr. Wright recommended that there be a letter drafted to the superintendent and the board chair of each district.

**Dr. Wright requested a motion that there be a process change to include a letter sent to the superintendent and board chair of each of the districts where a complete proposal was received.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Mr. Cardin**

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

Chair Cormack shared that she could own this action item based on Ms. Schutte's transition, and she will confirm with the board when this is complete. She confirmed that this is not a requirement; however, this action is taken in a show of partnership.

C. 2017 Charter School Program Grant: Grant Award

Ms. Schutte directed the board members to the budget narrative section of the 2017 Charter School Program (CSP) Grant and reminded everyone that Clarksdale Collegiate was the only eligible applicant for this cycle. Ms. Schutte shared the \$900,000 request, which is the total request for the planning year, year 1, and year 2. The design of the CSP grant is to pay for items associated with one-time startup costs. Salaries are only allowed in the planning year, so you will see this delineated. There are funds for equipment, technology and materials. All of these items are tied to goals in the project description. The requested action is to approve the award of \$900,000 to Clarksdale Collegiate pending U.S. Department of Education final approval.

Chair Cormack asked for confirmation of the process moving forward. Ms. Schutte confirmed that the \$900,000 amount is the maximum amount allowed for FY 17 if a charter school operator has at least 100 students per grade level.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the CSP grant award pending U.S. Department of Education approval.**

**MOTION: Dr. Wright**

**SECOND: Dr. Elam**

Mr. Cardin asked for clarification of the oversight of the expenditures to ensure compliance over the terms of the grant. Ms. Schutte shared that the Authorizer Board is responsible, and this responsibility would fall to the CSP Grant Coordinator. She is recommending that there be a

consultant hired to offer support since this role has not been filled. The grant is reimbursement based only, and the approved grantees will have to submit the proper documentation and invoices to be able to be reimbursed for the appropriate amounts for each expenditure.

Dr. Wright asked if the CSP Grant Coordinator would review and determine that all of the expenditures are allowable. Ms. Schutte confirmed that we are waiting for U.S. DOE approval to do a final check and make sure all expenditures are allowable. We do not want to approve the subgrant application with any expenses that are not allowable, and there is a double check with the submission of appropriate documentation prior to reimbursement.

Dr. Elam asked for confirmation of the structure of the CSP grant and the number of potential subgrantees. Ms. Schutte confirmed that the grant would allow for two subgrantees, so we would be able to roll over one and potentially award three subgrantees for the upcoming year. The grant is a five-year grant, and we are guaranteed the funds for the first two years. The grant is triaged so that the total potential grant awards over the five years is fifteen.

Mr. Cardin wanted to confirm that the CSP grant would be a three-year grant and our contract with each approved applicant is a five-year agreement. Ms. Schutte confirmed that the CSP grant is a startup grant that can cover startup expenses in the planning year and funds in the first two years of operation. This grant will help schools to be more financially stable and make purchases prior to the start of the first year.

Mr. Wilson asked about the timeline for the CSP grant. Ms. Schutte shared that we delayed the release of the CSP subgrant application due to the state contract changes. In typical years, the CSP subgrant application would be released in the summer, and the Authorizer Board would discuss the subgrant applications in October. Chair Cormack shared that there would be approvals in September and then the CSP subgrant approvals in October.

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

D. FY19 Budget Proposal

Chair Cormack shared that Ms. Schutte would present the FY19 budget that they had worked to draft and discuss the changes for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Schutte shared that this budget is based on the FY19 revenue, but it does not include the roll over admin fee until we know what is spent in FY18. We will need to modify and include the additional funds. You will see this reflected in the other fees category as this amount is much lower than normal.

Ms. Schutte reviewed the budget to share areas that had stayed the same and areas that had changed. Salaries, fringe, and workers comp have not changed. The travel for in state has stayed the same, but the travel budget for out of state travel has changed. Chair Cormack requested this change so that board members could go visit other charter schools and build relationships with them. In the contractual category, there is intern stipends for summer 2019,

employee training, membership category (NACSA annual dues), postage, and wireless (cell phone bill). Additionally, this category includes the NACSA contract that was approved in the May meeting, Bellwether contract related to data analysis for the annual report, Cornerstone contract related to back office support, Epicenter for our submission portal, communications for the strategic communications work, and other fees. The commodities and equipment stay the same except for additional funds for a computer purchase for a new Executive Director.

Ms. Schutte also discussed the guaranteed and estimated revenue. The FY19 allocation is \$237,000, and the previous year's three percent admin fee reserve is currently left blank until the FY18 expenses are finalized. The state admin fee is the 3% of MAEP and the local admin estimate is the estimate that we will put in the budget in December and need to modify in January. We do not put any estimates into a budget to approve.

Ms. Schutte presented the Charter Schools Program Grant Budget. She shared that this grant is on the federal fiscal year and that the budget for the upcoming year would be similar with the addition of the \$900,000 roll over. The personnel, commodities, and equipment have not been currently utilized so these will roll over for future grant activities.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the FY19 budget as presented.**

**MOTION: Mr. Wilson**  
**SECOND: Mr. Speed**

Chair Cormack asked if the money for the salaries and fringe in the Charter Schools Program Grant budget would roll over. Ms. Schutte confirmed that there would be an option to roll over the funds. She also confirmed that the CSP grant budget breakdown is that 90% of funds go to the subgrant, 7% of funds go to technical assistance, and up to 3% of funds can be used for administrative support.

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

E. Approval of Invoices

Ms. Schutte presented invoices for approval: 1) Board Member travel to today's meeting; and 2) Executive Director travel for June; 3) Deputy Director travel for June and July, NAPCS conference; 4) NAPCS Conference Registration.

**Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the invoices as presented.**

**MOTION: Mr. Speed**  
**SECOND: Dr. Wright**

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



E. Executive Director Job Description

Chair Cormack shared the Executive Director job description and requested edits and revisions. Chair Cormack would like to add supervision and oversight of authorizer staff, and she would like to add an item related to CSP grant oversight. The date, address, and Chair information need to be updated on the job description. Mr. Wilson confirmed that this role is a critical relationship building role. Ms. Schutte requested that there be an additional bullet point requesting an awareness of national charter school best practices.

Dr. Elam asked about the timing of the hiring timeline listed in the job description. Dr. Wright advocated for putting a deadline for applications. There was a discussion about the release date for this job description, and the decision was made to release the job description at the July 9 board meeting after there was additional discussion about the hiring process and requirements.

**No action was taken at this time.**

ITEM VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ITEM VIII. NEXT MEETING

Ms. Schutte noted that the next meeting will be Monday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am at the Authorizer Board's office.

ITEM IX. ADJOURNMENT

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


**MOTION: Mr. Cardin**

**SECOND: Mr. Speed**

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

**The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.**

ADOPTED, this the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2018.

  
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Krystal Cormack, Chair