

MINUTES OF THE
MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZER BOARD
Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, July 9, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, July 9, 2018 at the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board Office located at 239 N. Lamar Street Suite 207, Jackson, MS 39201. In attendance were:

Dr. Karen Elam, Board Vice-Chair
Chris Wilson
Tommie Cardin

Chair Krystal Cormack participated via teleconference. Deputy Director Stewart McMillan participated in the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

ITEM I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A. Adoption of Agenda

The Agenda was previously circulated to all Board members for review. Deputy Director Stewart McMillan made a recommendation to amend the agenda to add the ITS acceptable use policy after the Approval of Invoices in New Business. She also made a recommendation to remove the Request for Proposals: Charter School Program Grant Consultant from the agenda, which was listed as item C in New Business.

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

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

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 June 4th Board Meeting

The minutes of the June 4, 2018 board meeting were previously distributed to the Board members for review.

Chair Cormack shared that on page nine under item E there needs to be the addition of the word "add."

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the minutes of the June 4th, 2018 board meeting.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Cardin

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

ITEM III. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Cormack expressed her gratitude for the support of the board in the Executive Director transition. Chair Cormack met with our attorney, Avery, as well as Tom Hood from the Ethics Commission to make sure that we are creating an Executive Director hiring process in accordance with the new public meeting act requirements. Chair Cormack wants to provide an overview of the hiring process options. Chair Cormack would like to release the job description after this meeting and propose that the hiring process be codified at the next board meeting.

In terms of the hiring process, the first option is to create a formal Personnel or Executive Director search committee that would require posting according to the public meeting process and going into Executive session for any applicant considerations. This committee would then have to come out and share any decisions that were made. The final interview would involve all board members and require that the board members go into Executive session for the interview. The second option is to delegate the Chair to conduct the application review and initial phone interview. This option would allow for an MCSAB staff member and/or an additional board member to participate in this process. The final interview would involve all board members and require that the board members go into Executive session for the interview. The final option is that the board can authorize the Chair, a board member, and an MCSAB staff member to conduct the interviews. There would be no public meeting notice required or executive session. Chair Cormack shared that she did not have a preference. Chair Cormack committed to typing up these options and sharing with the board to review.

Chair Cormack has also connected with Avery Lee and Tommie Cardin to create a standard Authorizer Board contract. Mr. Cardin and Ms. Lee have both reviewed this contract.

ITEM IV. DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Deputy Director Stewart McMillan shared her gratitude for being able to present to the Authorizer Board and that she had three items to discuss.

First, Ms. McMillan shared that the National Alliance for Public Charter School's conference took place in Austin, TX from Sunday, June 17 through Wednesday, August 20. She attended the conference including successful sessions, and she was able to develop interest in the Executive Director role and create pipelines for sharing the job description. Additionally, she connected with organizations interested in the strategic communications work.

Second, Ms. McMillan shared an update on the pre-opening process for Clarksdale Collegiate and Joel E. Smilow Collegiate. Both of these operators are on track to meet all requirements. Ms. McMillan will conduct a final pre-opening process visit at Joel E. Smilow Collegiate at the end of July after they have completed the work on their facility.

Third, Ms. McMillan shared she worked with the Mississippi Department of Education, and she now has a quarterly or bi-annual check-in with each department. She met with each department in late May or early June to make sure there were clear expectations related to required annual submissions for the 2018-2019 school year. Ms. McMillan created an Excel spreadsheet to track all requirements, and she has built this out in the Epicenter platform. This is the first year that we have this resource built out for the full school year.

ITEM V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Applications Committee

Dr. Elam reminded the Authorizer Board that in the June meeting the board deemed that there were seven complete proposals that should be moved to the Stage 2 Threshold Quality Review. The Stage 2 Threshold Quality Review was led by the NACSA external reviewers to look at the proposal across the following seven thresholds: 1) Public Charter School obligations; 2) Student Populations; 3) Startup Plan; 4) Personnel; 5) Financial Plan; 6) Performance History (for existing operators); and 7) Education Service Provider relationship (for applicants proposing to contract with an education service provider).

The Applications committee will present during New Business that the board deem that four of the seven proposals are minimally adequate in all evaluated areas and able to move forward to the Stage 3 Complete Proposal Review and Capacity Interview. These four applicants are Ambition Preparatory Charter School, MS Delta Academies, RePublic Schools, Inc., and SR1.

The Applications committee will present during New Business that the board deem that three of the seven proposals were substantially inadequate in two or more areas and unable to move forward to the Stage 3 Complete Proposal Review and Capacity Interview. These three applicants are Girls Club and Learning Center, KMartin Group, and Mississippi Community Education Center.

B. Performance and Accountability Committee

Mr. Wilson shared that the Performance & Accountability Committee did not meet, so there is not a report for this month.

ITEM VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Executive Director Job Description

Chair Cormack shared that she made updates to the Executive Director job description based on the feedback from Dr. Wright, Mr. Wilson, and Ms. Schutte from the June 4th meeting. Chair Cormack shared that she was open to discussing the proposed deadline for applications.

Mr. Cardin shared that the address for submitting the application needs to be updated to reflect the MCSAB office location.

Dr. Elam shared that the deadline for applications was less than a month, so she thought this was too quick of a timeline. She also wants to discuss where this job description will be advertised.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Executive Director job description.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

Mr. Wilson shared that the last item under duties including the “key liaison” language did not seem strong enough since it is essential for this job to develop strong relationships with key partners. A liaison is someone that talks to and deals with others, and it should be stated that the goal is to develop a positive relationship.

Mr. Cardin suggested that the following language be utilized: “Serving as a key liaison to develop and foster a positive working relationship with partners with-in the state and nationally.”

Dr. Elam requested that this bullet be moved up higher in the list. Chair Cormack shared that she could move this up to the third or fourth bullet point. Mr. Wilson requested that it be moved up to the fifth bullet point.

Mr. Cardin would like to extend the deadline for the application window. His view is that he would rather go through this process methodically rather than rushing the process. Chair Cormack shared that we could push the deadline back to an August 31st deadline.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the Executive Director job description with the requested amendments.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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

Chair Cormack confirmed that she would make these updates and the Executive Director job description would be posted after the edits were made.

B. 2018 Request for Proposals: Stage 2 Evaluation Results

Dr. Elam requested a motion to approve Ambition Preparatory Charter School, MS Delta Academies, RePublic Schools, Inc., and SR1 as eligible to move forward to Stage 3 of the 2018 Request for Proposals process based on their 2018 Request for Proposals Stage 2 evaluation results.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

Deputy Director Stewart McMillan shared that the goal of this phase of the process was that each applicant met a minimally adequate bar across the seven thresholds. Each of these applicants were reviewed by the four external reviewers across the applicable thresholds. Ambition Preparatory Charter School, MS Delta Academies, and SR1 were reviewed across the first five thresholds. RePublic Schools, Inc. was reviewed across the first six thresholds, including performance based on being an existing operator. There is not a report for these applicants as a report is used to share the substantially inadequate findings.

Mr. Cardin asked for a reminder of the proposed operators for each applicant. Chair Cormack and Ms. McMillan provided an overview of each of these four applicants.

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

Dr. Elam requested a motion to deem Girls Club & Learning Center, KMartin Group, and Mississippi Community Education Center as ineligible to move forward to Stage 3 of the evaluation process and that the board adopt a resolution to deny Girls Club & Learning Center, KMartin Group, and Mississippi Community Education Center's charter school proposals based on their 2018 Request for Proposals Stage 2 evaluation results.

MOTION: Dr. Elam

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

Mr. Cardin asked for an overview of the leader and board chair for each of these applicants. Ms. McMillan shared an overview of each of these three applicants.

Ms. McMillan shared that the Mississippi Community Education Center was found substantially inadequate in the Threshold 2: Student Populations and Threshold 5: Financial Plan.

Ms. McMillan shared that the Girls Club & Learning Center was found substantially inadequate in the Threshold 3: Startup Plan, Threshold 4: Personnel, and Threshold 5: Financial Plan.

Ms. McMillan shared that KMartin Group received a substantially inadequate rating for Threshold 3: Startup Plan and Threshold 5: Financial Plan.

Chair Cormack shared her hope that the applicants would make adjustments and potentially apply in future years.

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

Chair Cormack shared that Ms. McMillan would work to send out the appropriate documentation this afternoon. Ms. McMillan shared that the applicants that would move forward in the process would receive an e-mailed letter this afternoon. The applicants that will not move forward would receive an e-mail letter and an official mailed resolution. Chair Cormack will sign the resolution and send these to Ms. McMillan.

Mr. Cardin made a motion that the board authorize the Chair to execute the appropriate resolutions and sign those resolutions.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECONDED: Dr. Elam

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

C. FY19 Cornerstone Consulting Contract

Mr. Cardin recused himself from this discussion and left the room. Based on the number of board members present at this meeting, there was not a quorum to be able to take action on this contract once Mr. Cardin left the room.

Chair Cormack shared that we would table this contract until the next board meeting, and she would connect with Ms. Denise about this update.

No action was taken at this time.

D. FY19 Epicenter Contract

Deputy Director Stewart McMillan shared that Epicenter was the platform utilized for the pre-opening requirements for schools in the pre-opening process as well as the platform used to track all required submissions for existing operators. The decision was also made this year to move the Request for Proposals submission from Fluid Review to Epicenter. This professional services agreement mirrors previous years, including the price staying at \$5,000. If this proposal was greater than \$5,000, then we would have to go through a Request for Proposals process based on the ITS rules.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to prepare and execute the FY19 Epicenter contract pending review from the Authorizer Board's legal counsel.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson

SECOND: Dr. Elam

Chair Cormack asked Ms. McMillan if she was pleased with this platform. Ms. McMillan shared that she was pleased with this platform. She shared that there was not a platform previously for the pre-opening process and existing operator submissions, so this has streamlined both of these submission processes and tracking. In terms of services and support, the contract states that they are available 365 days a year. Ms. McMillan has two direct points of contact and the help line, and she has never had a delay in getting support and sharing best practices. She is also serving on a committee to give feedback on the system.

Dr. Elam asked if we had received feedback from the existing operators related to the Epicenter system. Ms. McMillan shared that we piloted the use of Epicenter with the existing operators in October, November, and December of 2017. She then created a SurveyMonkey survey that was sent to each of the points of contact who used the system to get feedback, and there were no major complaints about the system.

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

E. FY19 MCSAB Office Lease

Ms. McMillan shared that there is a two-page lease agreement for the MCSAB office space at no cost that was previously shared with the board members.

Mr. Wilson requested that the board members be given parking spaces for the upcoming year.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the FY19 MCSAB Office Lease.

MOTION: Mr. Cardin

SECOND: Mr. Wilson

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

F. Approval of Invoices

Ms. McMillan presented invoices for approval: 1) Board Member travel to today's meeting; 2) Deputy Director travel for August and September; 3) Incoming Executive Director and Deputy Director travel to the National Association for Charter School Authorizer's October Conference; 4) FY19 NACSA Membership; 5) NACSA Conference Registration; 6) Epicenter Quarterly Invoice – FY18 Final Payment; 7) Cornerstone Consulting Invoices; and 8) Apple Inc. iPads.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the invoices as presented, excluding the Cornerstone Consulting invoices based on not having a quorum when Mr. Cardin recuses himself from this decision.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson
SECOND: Dr. Elam

Mr. Wilson wanted to discuss the NACSA conference and the National Alliance Conference. Ms. Schutte shared that it would be a good idea for the board members to attend the NACSA conference. Ms. McMillan shared that there were multiple authorizers that had board members that attended, and she was happy to share additional information with any of the board members.

Mr. Cardin asked for the dates of the NACSA conference. Ms. McMillan shared that the dates were October 22, 2018 through October 25, 2018 in Orlando, Florida.

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

G. ITS Acceptable Use Policy

Ms. McMillan shared that the ITS Acceptable Use Policy had been circulated with board members prior to the meeting. This ITS Acceptable Use Policy relates to the use of the iPads for the board meetings, and the policy itself was recommended by Denise De Rossette from Cornerstone Consulting. The recommendation is that each Authorizer Board member and the MCSAB staff members sign the policy.

Chair Cormack requested a motion to approve the ITS Acceptable Use Policy.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson
SECOND: Dr. Elam

Mr. Wilson asked if this ITS Acceptable Use Policy had to be signed today. Ms. McMillan shared that the iPads had not arrived, so the board members just needed to sign the ITS Acceptable Use Policy prior to using the iPads.

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

ITEM VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ITEM VIII. NEXT MEETING

Ms. Schutte noted that the next meeting will be Monday, September 10th at 10:00am at the Authorizer Board's office.

ITEM IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cormack requested a motion to adjourn.

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MOTION: Dr. Elam
SECOND: Mr. Cardin

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

ADOPTED, this the 10th day of September 2018.



Krystal Cormack, Chair