



APPROVED 2/10/2017

Maine Connections Academy, Inc. (MCA)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RETREAT  
Friday, January 13, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

Held at the following location and via teleconference:  
Larouche & Dyer  
5 Community Drive  
Augusta, Maine 04330

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**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Ms. Linscott called the retreat to order at 9:30 a.m. when all participants were present and able to hear each other. The meeting was open to the public.

Board Members Present: Amy Volk, Carol Weston, Nick McGee, John Larouche, Amy Linscott and Bernice Stockley (in person);

Guests: Doug Bourget, School Leader; Linda Leftrict, Sylvia Pryor, Alan Chapman, Laura Johnson, Rachel Graver, Amanda Jay, Pat Laystrom, Heather Woodward, Sarah Savage, Kenneth Helt and Megann Arthur, Connections staff (in person) and Shon Hocker, Connections staff (via phone).

Ms. Laystrom welcomed all attendees and thanked the Board members for the opportunity to address the priorities previously established with presentations on services provided to the school by Connections. Ms. Arthur briefly introduced all attendees in the room.

**II. MCA Student Recruitment: Outreach in Detail**

Ms. Leftrict provided a brief introduction and overview of her team members who contributed to the day's presentation, as well as the topics to be discussed and inquiries to be addressed.

Ms. Pryor reviewed with the Board data collected to date on interested families in Maine, as well as those students who have enrolled. She detailed the conversion rates of prospective students to those enrolled, and the projected enrollment goals and strategies for the school. Ms. Pryor reviewed the previous year's outreach plan summary; she discussed the application process improvements, website upgrades, reorganization of human resources and additional areas updated to improve the student and family experience.

Mr. Chapman reviewed the multiple channel approach to increase awareness of the school's program to families in the state. He advised the Board of the parent surveys and avenues of feedback that are major drivers of the approaches to outreach. Board members inquired about the advantages of year-round television advertising to increase awareness of the school. Mr. Chapman reviewed the public relations services and channels for family engagement. Board members discussed the rates of website engagement of families. Mr. Chapman reviewed regional marketing tactics, and members of the Board asked if families were able to "test drive" a sample course and/or get a hands-on experience of the school's program. Mr. Chapman explained the videos that are available for review by prospective families and the hands-on experiences available during the onboarding process.

Ms. Leftrict presented to the Board on the marketing research and analytics team and their work for the school. Board members inquired about the target of marketing efforts, and whether it was aimed at the child or the parent.

There was additional discussion about the social media options available to increase awareness of the school. Ms. Leftrict provided a detailed review of the Net Promoter Score (NPS), the sum of the school's promoters minus any detractors, and factors that have been found to affect Connections schools. Board members briefly discussed what educational options had substantial study results of their NPS.

Mr. Chapman provided a conclusion of the outreach services by highlighting plans for 2017 marketing and outreach for the school. Board members reviewed takeaways and inquired about student retention efforts specifically and student satisfaction.

### **III. MCA Student Enrollment: From Interest to New Student**

Ms. Johnson provided a detailed presentation on the services, tasks and activities of the enrollment team's services for the school. She reviewed the customization of services and collaboration with other groups within Connections and the school to maximize resources and continuously improve the family experience. Board members inquired about the temporary staff training for those peak times of year for student enrollment. Ms. Johnson reviewed the three primary groups responsible for customer support: customer care, outbound support and student teach support. She further reviewed the three primary areas of the enrollment department: enrollment operations, process and data management and The Board discussed the ways the Maine laws surrounding student enrollment can be prohibitive to families and also cumbersome and inefficient at times from an operational standpoint.

Ms. Johnson advised the Board on the school's compliance with open enrollment requirements and guidelines from the state. She discussed the lead generation support provided to the school. Ms. Johnson advised as to how the data from the annual Parent Satisfaction Surveys are used to continuously improve the enrollment process and procedures. She reviewed the information required from families to complete enrollment.

### **IV. Working Lunch**

### **V. MCA Human Resource Support from Connections**

Ms. Savage presented to the Board on Human Resource (HR) services provided to the school. She reviewed the Talent Acquisition team, and their focus on many aspects of the hiring process such as training and development, employee engagement and new hire documentation. She further reviewed the Systems and Rewards functions of payroll, reporting, benefits administration, leave management, wellness, compensation, onboarding and offboarding, and the HR Helpdesk. Ms. Savage also advised the Board about the Service Delivery subsection of HR, that focuses on the specific partnership with the school and the HR representative who is assigned to support MCA. She reviewed with the Board the HR compliance functions that are included in the services provided to the school, and also discussed some intricacies of Maine HR law.

Ms. Savage opened the discussion up to questions about the HR services and questions or concerns about the school's staffing and employee retention. Board members inquired about the annual local salary analysis process and employee retention strategies. There was additional discussion on the state charter law and the exclusion of all charter school teachers from the state retirement system.

[Ms. Weston left the meeting at 1:00 p.m.]

### **VI. Treasury Services in Depth**

Mr. Helt presented this item to the Board. He reviewed the memo included in the Board materials that provided a detailed list of those specific services provided under the Treasury Services line item in the school's fee schedule from Connections. He responded to inquiries regarding specific financial services provided to the school, including grant support and accounting services.

[Ms. Volk left the meeting in person and joined via phone at 1:25 p.m.]

## **VII. Introduction to Strategic Planning**

Ms. Woodward introduced the advantages of the Board developing a long-term strategic plan. She discussed the reasons why school boards often engage in strategic planning and the advantages in doing so. Ms. Woodward further reviewed the components of a strategic plan, and highlighted the aspects of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis in the strategic planning process.

Ms. Woodward reviewed the long-term objectives of a strategic plan, and the common three to five-year timeline to focus on for achieving the school's vision. She reviewed potential objectives, including student academic performance, improving the relationship with the school's authorizer and increasing the school's size. She reviewed a template action plan that was recently adopted by the MCSC.

The Board reviewed the advantages of completing a strategic planning process, as well as began to brainstorm potential high level objectives that couple benefit the school. Board members indicated strong support of creating a strategic plan in the near future, and presenting that plan to the MCSC prior to the start of the next school year.

## **VIII. Break**

[Ms. Volk, Ms. Woodward, Ms. Laystrom, Ms. Lefrict, Ms. Pryor, Mr. Chapman, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Savage, Mr. Helt left the meeting at 2:10 p.m.]

## **IX. Regular Board Meeting**

Separate minutes are kept for the regular board meeting.

## **X. Adjournment and Next Regular Meeting – February 3, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.**

Ms. Linscott noted that the Board was at the end of its agenda.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. The Board being at the end of its agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 3:44 p.m.