



**APPROVED 05/22/15**

**Maine Connections Academy, Inc. (MCA)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Friday, May 1, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Held at the following location and via teleconference:  
75 John Roberts Road, Suite 11B  
South Portland, ME 04106**

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**I. Call to Order**

Ms. Volk called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. when all participants were present and able to hear each other. The meeting was open to the public.

Board Members Present: Julie Hannon and Carol Weston (in person); Amy Volk and Amy Linscott (via phone);

Board Members Joined During Meeting: Nick McGee (via phone);

Guests: Karl Francis, School Leader; Heather Neal, Financial Consultant; Dr. Steven Guttentag, Connections President (in person); John Larouche, Board Counsel (via phone); Rachel Graver, Pat Laystrom, Shawn Soltz, Megann Arthur and Heather Woodward, Connections staff (via phone).

**II. Public Comment**

There were no comments at this time.

**III. Routine Business**

a. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Volk asked the Board to review the Agenda distributed prior to the meeting. There being no changes noted, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the May 1, 2015 Maine Connections Academy, Inc. Board Meeting, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Approval of Minutes from the March 20, 2015 Board Meeting
- c. Approval of Minutes from the April 3, 2015 Special Board Meeting
- d. Approval of Staffing Report

Board members indicated their intention to consider the Minutes from the March 20, 2015 Board Meeting, the Minutes from the April 3, 2015 Special Board Meeting, and the Staffing Report at the same time. Ms. Volk asked Board members if they had any questions, or if any of these items required any further explanation. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Minutes from the March 20, 2015 Board Meeting, Minutes from the April 3, 2015 Special Board Meeting and Staffing Report, are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. Oral Reports

- a. Principal's Report

Mr. Francis reviewed with the Board some highlights from his written report, as provided with the Board materials, including planned end of year activities and outreach efforts.

- i. Update on Student Escalations

Mr. Francis noted the data on this topic included in his written report.

- ii. Update on Field Trips

Mr. Francis highlighted some of the upcoming field trips planned, and Board members had discussion on the purpose of student activities.

- iii. Update on Graduation Plans and End of Year Activities

Mr. Francis noted the data on this topic included in his written report.

- iv. Quarterly School Operations Metrics

Mr. Francis outlined some of the data included in the Board materials, highlighting the school's performance as compared with other Connections' partnering schools of similar size and years in operation. Board members discussed the metrics data with Mr. Francis.

- v. Update on Outreach Activities

Mr. Francis noted the data on this topic included in his written report.

vi. Approval of the 2015-2016 School Year General School Handbook

Mr. Francis briefly highlighted points in the memo regarding the General School Handbook and asked the Board whether they had any questions on the Handbook. Board members had discussion on the Internet Subsidy Policy, and potential revisions that may still be coming to that. There being no additional discussion, he recommended the approval of the 2015-2016 School Year General School Handbook. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the 2015-2016 School Year General School Handbook, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

vii. Approval of the 2015-2016 School Year State Specific School Handbook

The Board discussed the State Specific School Handbook. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the 2015-2016 School Year State Specific School Handbook, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

[Mr. McGee joined the meeting via phone at 10:38 a.m.]

viii. Approval of MCA 504 Policy

Mr. Francis presented this item to the Board. He reviewed the background to the creation of the Policy, including increased transparency of compliance with federal standards. He advised that the policies and procedures listed have enriched the services provided to the applicable group of students. A member of the Board requested additional time to review the policy during the meeting.

The Board indicated their intent to hear the Financial Report.

b. Financial Report

Ms. Neal reviewed the financial information contained in the Board materials with the Board, providing specific information on the budget and forecast for the school year. She reviewed the balance sheet, revenue and expense statements.

[Mr. McGee joined the meeting in person at 10:50 a.m.]

Ms. Neal further reviewed specific expenses, invoices and funding levels for the school. Board members had discussion on the school's budget, state funding and specific line items of interest.

The Board had discussion on the internet subsidy currently provided to qualifying students based on financial need. There was additional discussion on potentially changing the procedure for supplying an internet subsidy, and revising to require students to request and show need prior to receiving the subsidy. Board members discussed specific language amendments to reflect the need for internet subsidy payments

to be provided on a request basis for students with a need. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Revision(s) to the Internet Subsidy Policy as included the school handbook(s), as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board indicated that the necessary reviews had been completed and they were ready to consider the MCA 504 Policy. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the MCA 504 Policy, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed the current budget, the budget development process for the 2015-2016 school year, the subsidy provided by Connections to the school, and specific services provided by Connections within the Educational Products and Services Agreement. Mr. McGee presented additional detail to line items in the budget regarding management services provided, including facilities services.

[Ms. Volk left the meeting at 11:10 a.m. and asked Ms. Hannon to chair the meeting in her absence for the remainder of the meeting]

Board members had extensive discussion with Mr. Francis on the school's experiences with specific services listed in the budget.

[Dr. Guttentag joined the meeting at 11:22 a.m.]

The Board continued their discussion on services provided by Connections, and potential adjustments to the budget for the next school year.

i. Approval of Connections Academy of Maine, LLC Invoice for March

Mr. McGee reviewed in detail the March invoice as drawn from the financial report provided in the Board materials, and reviewed earlier in the meeting. He then asked the Board members whether they had any questions on the invoice or if any items required further explanation. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Connections Academy of Maine, LLC invoice for March, in the amount of \$255,240.81, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

ii. Review and Approval of Board Treasurer to Hire Audit Firm for the 2014-2015 School Year

Mr. McGee presented this item to the Board. He reviewed the three firms who were reviewed during the RFP process, and the scoring matrix used to assess each audit firm.

[Ms. Linscott left the meeting at 11:44 a.m.]

Ms. Neal reviewed the terms of the contract, including the proposed three-year contract term, with an option to extend for an additional two years. Mr. McGee also reviewed the fees proposed and scope of services to be provided, and that Smith and Associates had received the highest score

based on their scoring matrix. Board members discussed the need for language within the contract to allow for an "opt out" for certain circumstances. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that Smith and Associates be engaged as the audit firm for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

iii. Update on Revisions to School Fiscal Policies

Ms. Neal advised that additional information for Board consideration will be provided at a future meeting.

iv. Update on Budget Planning

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

c. School Leader Review Process Update

Ms. Graver briefly reminded the Board of the annual school leader review process and timeline. She further reminded Board members that the process includes feedback from the Board through a survey, a link to which will be emailed to the Board soon after this meeting. She discussed with the Board members the importance of Board member participation in the review process.

**V. Consent Items**

Ms. Hannon asked the Board members whether any items from the Consent Items should be moved to Action Items for discussion, or tabled. There being no changes noted, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the Consent Item:

- a. Approval of Curriculum for the 2015-2016 School Year; was hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**VI. Action Items**

The Board noted that no additional action was needed at this time.

**VII. Information Items**

a. Board Planning for the 2015-2016 School Year

Ms. Woodward discussed the planning for the 2015-2016 school year that Connections Academy has been working on with the school.

i. Proposed Meeting Schedule

The Board held extensive discussion on the meeting schedule for the upcoming school year. Ms. Woodward advised that the consideration of the Board meeting schedule for the 2015-2016 school year will be included on the June Annual Meeting agenda.

ii. Board Composition

Board members discussed current Board composition and recruiting efforts, as well as the Board attendance policy currently in place.

b. School Visit by Dr. Steven Guttentag

Mr. Francis introduced Dr. Guttentag to the Board. Board members welcomed Dr. Guttentag and thanked him for his attendance at the meeting and visit to the school.

c. Legislative Update

Ms. Hannon asked Ms. Laystrom to provide the Board with an update on the recent legislative activities in Maine, which may impact the school.

**VIII. Adjournment and Next Meeting – June 5, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.**

Ms. Volk noted that the Board was at the end of its agenda. The next Board meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The Board being at the end of its agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m.