



**APPROVED 05/15/2020**

**Maine Connections Academy, Inc. (MCA)  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Friday, April 17, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Held at the following location:**

Via Teleconference due to State Precautions regarding Public Health and Safety  
During COVID-19 Pandemic

**1(800) 747-5150; Code 332-2815#**

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

Ms. Linscott called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. when all participants were present and able to hear each other. The meeting was open to the public.

Board Members Present: Amy Linscott, John Larouche, Carol Weston, Amy Volk, Billy Thompson and Bernice Stockley (via phone);

Guests: Walter Wallace, School Leader; Amy Trunnell, Financial Consultant; Kristie Clements, Laura Johnson, Laura Coleman, Jolie Rotar and Megann Arthur, Online & Blended Learning (OBL) staff (via phone).

**II. Public Comment**

There were no comments at this time.

**III. Routine Business**

a. Approval of Agenda

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

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the April 17, 2020 Maine Connections Academy Board of Directors Board Meeting, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

b. Approval of Minutes from the January 17, 2020 Board Meeting

Ms. Linscott asked the Board to review the minutes distributed prior to the meeting. There being no changes noted, a motion was made by Mr. Larouche and seconded by Ms. Stockley as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Minutes from the January 17, 2020 Board Meeting, as presented, are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

c. Approval of Staffing Report

Ms. Linscott asked the Board to review the staffing report distributed prior to the meeting. There being no changes, a motion was made by Mr. Larouche and seconded by Ms. Stockley as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Staffing Report, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

**Acceptance of Resignation of Board Member, Carol Weston**

Ms. Weston expressed her desire to resign from the Board, effective immediately, and wished the Board and School well. The Board and OBL expressed their appreciation to Ms. Weston for her many years of service and dedication to the school. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Larouche and seconded by Ms. Volk as follows:

RESOLVED, that Ms. Weston's resignation from the Board was accepted, effective immediately, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

[Ms. Weston left the meeting at 10:08 a.m.]

**IV. Oral Reports**

a. School Leader's Report

i. COVID-19 Response Update

Mr. Wallace reviewed with the Board the school's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including resources available for families and staff. The Board discussed the support measures in detail with Mr. Wallace.

1. Remote Instruction Review and Board Acceptance

Mr. Wallace reviewed with the Board the recent requirement by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) to have a remote instruction plan review. Mr. Wallace detailed how the school continues to provide instruction remotely during COVID-19, as it has previously. Mr. Wallace and the Board reviewed aspects of the school's remote instruction programs and plans. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Stockley and seconded by Ms. Volk as follows:

RESOLVED, that remote instruction plan, as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motions passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

2. State Testing Update

Mr. Wallace advised the Board that standardized testing had been cancelled by state mandate for the remainder of the current school year due to COVID-19.

3. Graduation Plans and End of Year Activities

Mr. Wallace advised the Board of the school's preparations to hold the graduation ceremony virtually, with the hopes of holding an in-person celebration of the graduates later in the year.

ii. Authorization for School Leader to Make Temporary Grading Scale, Promotion and Graduation Adjustments

Mr. Wallace reviewed with the Board a proposal for the school to adopt a temporary grading scale of pass/fail or pass/incomplete during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board discussed the temporary grading scale proposal in detail with Mr. Wallace. The Board agreed that teachers should make individual plans for students directly impacted by COVID-19 and the grading scale, and that the promotion and graduation requirements did not need adjusting at this time. There being no further discussion, this item was tabled.

iii. Enrollment and Staffing Update

Mr. Wallace provided the Board with an update on the current enrollment numbers for the school, noting trends. He further updated the Board on staffing levels at the school.

iv. Approval of Revision(s) to the 2019-2020 School Year State Specific School Handbook: Grading Scale Title, Immunization, Wellness, Administration of Medications and Communicable Diseases Policies/Updates

Mr. Wallace and Ms. Linscott reviewed the proposed policies with the Board, noting both of their thorough review of all changes prior to the meeting. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Larouche and seconded by Mr. Thompson as follows:

RESOLVED, the Revision(s) to the 2019-2020 School Year State Specific School Handbook: Grading Scale Title, Immunization, Wellness, Administration of Medications and Communicable Diseases Policies/Updates, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

v. Approval of Revision(s) to the Employee Handbook: Work at Home and Expiration of Credential Policies

Mr. Wallace reviewed these policies with the Board. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Volk and seconded by Mr. Thompson as follows:

RESOLVED, the Revision(s) to the Employee Handbook: Work at Home and Expiration of Credential Policies, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motions passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

b. Financial Report

i. Review and Approval of Financial Report and Connections Academy of Maine, LLC Invoices for January, February and March

Ms. Trunnell reviewed in detail the financial report and invoices for January, February and March. She recommended approval of payment of the invoices, as presented, and indicated that she is removing sales tax charges shown with OBL from any approved invoices. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Larouche and seconded by Mr. Thompson as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Financial Report, as presented, is hereby approved.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the payment of the Connections Academy of Maine, LLC invoices for January (Invoice # 91000004370), February (Invoice # 91000004600), and March (Invoice # 91000004794), as discussed, are hereby approved.

The motions passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

**V. Action Items**

a. Approval of School and Governance Policies as recommended by MCSC to comply with state and federal laws and Authorization for Board President as Board Designee to Finalize Any Remaining Policies prior to the Deadline

Ms. Arthur reviewed the school and governance policies recommended by the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) to comply with state and federal laws, as well as the benefit to authorizing the Board President as Board Designee to finalize any remaining policies prior to the deadline. There being no further discussion, Ms. Volk made the following motion and it was seconded by Ms. Linscott as follows:

RESOLVED, that the school and governance policies as recommended by MCSC to comply with state and federal laws and authorization for Board President as Board designee to finalize any remaining policies prior to the deadline, as discussed, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously via a roll call vote.

**VI. Information Items**

a. Outreach Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Ms. Rotar reviewed with the Board the school's proposed Outreach Plan for the upcoming school year, as included in the Board materials. Ms. Rotar highlighted current and projected enrollment numbers, as well as planned activities for student recruitment.

b. State Account Relations (STAR) Update

Ms. Johnson introduced herself as the new STAR representative for the Board on behalf of OBL and reviewed her qualifications and experience. She further provided the Board with an update on the recent legislative activities in Maine, which may impact the school. The Board discussed the legislative activities and enrollment in detail with Ms. Johnson.

i. OBL Products, Services and Initiatives Update

Ms. Johnson reviewed details within the Pearson Online & Blended Learning's (OBL) 2020-2021 Products, Services and Initiatives memo, as included in the Board materials. She reviewed upcoming program enhancements, planned product roll-outs and specific initiatives that are high on the priority list of OBL for deployment to the school both within the next school year, and beyond. Ms. Johnson further detailed curriculum changes and alignment initiatives, including all the advantages of utilizing Polaris® for curriculum development and improving the student experience. She reviewed the anticipated timeline for the next generation of the school's learning management system to be available, and highlighted specific enhancements being made to the current platform, resulting largely from what's received positive feedback in beta testing.

c. School Leadership Team (PSLT) Update

Ms. Clements presented to the Board on behalf of OBL's School Leadership Team.

i. School Operations Metrics

Ms. Clements presented the quarterly School Operations Metrics to the Board. She reviewed the data included in the Board materials, highlighting the school's performance as compared with other Pearson Online and Blended Learning's (OBL) partnering schools of similar size and years in operation.

d. Board Relations Update/Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year

Ms. Arthur discussed the planning for the 2020-2021 school year that OBL has been working on with the school.

i. Proposed Board Meetings Schedule

The Board confirmed their support of maintaining the current meeting schedule for the upcoming school year. Ms. Arthur advised that the consideration of the Board meeting schedule for the 2020-2021 school year will be included on the June Annual Meeting agenda.

ii. Board Composition

Ms. Arthur discussed with the Board the current composition, including Board member terms that would be up for renewal at this year's Annual Meeting, and encouraged Board members to discuss their intentions regarding terms and renewal with the Board Chair.

iii. EMO Evaluation Reminder

Ms. Arthur reminded the Board of the annual requirement to complete and file the EMO Evaluation by September 30 to the MCSC. The Board expressed a desire to discuss the engagement of an evaluator for the 2019-2020 School Year evaluation during their next Board meeting.

**VII. Strategic Planning**

There was no update at this time.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY BE REQUIRED – Pursuant to MRSA Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405-6 Discussion or consideration of the employment, appointment, assignment, duties, promotion, demotion, compensation, evaluation, disciplining, resignation or dismissal of an individual or group of public officials, appointees or employees of a public body**

Executive session not necessary at this time.

[Ms. Rotar left the meeting at 11:28 a.m.]

[Ms. Coleman left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.]

**IX. Budget Development Workshop**

Mr. Wallace introduced the budget development workshop and highlighted progress made to date on building the school's budget for next year. Ms. Trunnell reviewed the budget scenarios she and Mr. Wallace had created in detail with the Board, including two scenarios regarding ELA instruction. The Board discussed the engagement goal, staffing structure and revenue sources, including Title funding and COVID-19 relief funds anticipated. Board members and school staff members present had discussion on vendors, specific expenses and strategies for cost savings. The Board, Mr. Wallace and Ms. Trunnell discussed the expected timeline of May to have the draft budget ready for Board consideration.

**X. Adjournment and Next Regular Meeting Date – Friday, May 15, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**

Ms. Linscott noted that the Board was at the end of its agenda and concluded all business for the day. The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. There being no further discussion and the Board being at the end of its agenda, the meeting was adjourned 12:06 p.m.