

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Meeting Minutes
Saturday, September 26, 2020
Maine School of Science and Mathematics
VIRTUAL

Board members present were: K. Beaulieu, J. Chalmers, D. Chuhta, D. Coit, D. Eustis-Grandy, D. Ferguson, Chair; J. Havu, J. Herweh, D. King, D. Pearson, Clerk, J. Pike, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera and R. Rice.

Absent were: M. Anderson, T. Bolen, K. Brackett, M. Brozman, D. Haines, Honorary Member, J. McGreevy, P. Orne and J. Patterson, Honorary Member.

Administrators and Staff present were: R. Barrans, M. Beckum, C. Berube, M. Grillo, E. Jortberg, P. Long, R. McDonald, D. McGann, T. Moore (scribe), M. Tasker and A. Whittemore.

Others present: Multiple students and parents.

I. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair, D. Ferguson followed by introductions.

II. D. Ferguson, Chair, opened the meeting to the public for comment.

A. Public Comment:

No comments were made.

B. Reports and Consent Agenda:

J. Pike asked M. Grillo and D. Pearson to clarify comments at the end of the Management Report regarding the expectations of the nurse given the fact MSSM is 1 person away from being unable to keep the dorms open. Are there any contingency plans?

D. Pearson responded that we have a contingency plan in place and an active job posting for a new nurse.

J. Pike asked if there are any fill ins?

D. Pearson said Yes, the RI team has been working together.

M. Grillo added that E. Pelkey and the RI team is coordinating and filling in as necessary. They are a veteran RI team and are making it work along with other people that are stepping up as necessary.

D. Ferguson said according to BOT report, we are also down 1 RI/RSL person.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

M. Grillo stated Yes that is correct. Although it has been tough to be low on staff, the dedication of the RI's and E. Pelkey has gotten us through.

D. Ferguson asked D. Pearson what Administration discussions are looking like for Spring? Will we be able to get the students back together?

D. Pearson stated there are lots of moving parts in this. We are looking to hire more RI's. We also want input from the Departments, then move up to Administrators to make a final determination by November. Aspiration is to bring everyone back in January.

D. Ferguson asked if there were any questions on this or the Management Report?

D. Pearson stated that Illinois and Mississippi Science schools are completely online. North Carolina is doing exactly what we're doing; hybrid model - 6 weeks on, 6 weeks off rotate, 680 students roughly online. Learning models are various within our peer schools. We also have a shared building, that other schools do not. He is amazed by staff and faculty that follow protocols to keep us safe.

D. Ferguson commented on the data, charts, and graphs and thanked M. Grillo and A. Whittemore for the break out details in their reports to let them know what is going on at ground level. He asked if there were any changes anyone wanted to make regarding their management reports.

D. Pearson stated he would like to share/discuss the Wellington Engagement Index (WEI) information they used recently.

D. Coit said there is a link in the BOT's Video Library regarding the WEI, which describes how it works. (link located here: <https://www.mssm.org/about/board-of-trustees>).

D. Pearson explained that students' login and based on responses, they are dropped into a grid. WEI will give us data for the long term. There are different ways to look at this data. Feedback right now is anonymous, but can be drilled down further if necessary.

D. Coit added it is a tool to identify kids at risk.

D. Eustis-Grandy asked is all the students took part in this?

D. Pearson replied No. 75% of the student body took part.

A. Scott asked for clarification regarding anonymous vs. it not being anonymous.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. Pearson and D. Coit explained that it is anonymous, but can provide specific information if necessary but it is not the goal. Obviously, we need to be careful how it is used.

L. Renick-Butera understands the anonymity need of this for students as we are starting to explore it more. She loves this. Huge step forward. As a teacher are they able to know who the student is?

D. Pearson said this is why he has asked Department Chairs to meet with him regarding disseminating and access to the information.

D. Coit said that alot of schools use this.

R. Rice commented on A. Scotts points. UMPI has strict guidelines on how evaluations are utilized. MSSM needs something written up for everyone to know how it's being used.

D. Pearson and D. Coit agreed that policies need to be written for its use. D. Pearson added that it is on the agenda for him and Department Chairs to discuss further.

D. Ferguson is astounded at the numbers presented. It is a testament to the students and faculty. Good snapshot.

J. Pike asked how the 75% is broken out.

D. Pearson said it is 11th & 12th graders, but they will be looking at how we use this as we talk as a team.

M. Beckum urged that we have a way to collect to data from all individuals. Only a small % of the student body shown which could be skewing our sense of reality from a stats perspective.

D. Pearson agreed. What we just saw is at the ultimate macro level. We can narrow it down further. Reflection as a whole as it's our first time going through this that Students are having a good experience for the most part.

D. Ferguson asked if there were any further questions.

A. Whittemore commented that he heard M. Reagan was no longer chairing the Advancement Committee and wanted to thank her in advance for all she has done. He also added that they were experiencing a bump in participants for the Virtual Open House since his report was written. He currently has 15 families already registered to attend, without our normal campaigning. This is outstanding. Virtual also gives us limitless opportunities for attendees. If you have an idea for one of the Admissions Fireside chats, please email admissions.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. Pearson thanked A. Whittemore and added we have had our 2nd round of COVID-19 testing since his report. All testing came back negative. He added that he recently learned that we will be getting some money from the COVID Relief Fund for the testing for this first half of the year.

D. Ferguson moved to make a motion to accept the Consent Agenda which include the meeting minutes of May 22, 2020; June 22, 2020; July 29, 2020; August 14, 2020 and the December 5, 2020 Management Report. D. King motioned to accept, seconded by M. Reagan.

Roll Call Vote:

K. Beaulieu - Yes, J. Chalmers – Yes, D. Chuhta – Yes, D. Coit – Yes, J. Havu – Yes, J. Herweh - Yes, D. King – Yes, J. Pike – Yes, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera – Yes, R. Rice – Yes, D. Ferguson – Yes
Passed unanimously.

C. Committee Reports:

Advancement Committee: D. Ferguson stated that M. Reagan has resigned as Chair of the Advancement Committee due to current workload. M. Reagan added that she will take it back in the future if her current work commitment is reduced.

L. Renick-Butera is worried if someone doesn't maintain this in the interim, all of M. Reagan's work will be lost.

D. Ferguson added that big things are taking place in the committee. The MSSM Foundation has new point person. D. McGann is the new Foundation Administrator and point of contact. He reiterated that A. Whittemore touched on what Admissions is doing, but the committee will need someone to coordinate these pieces.

Finance and Facilities Committee: D. King stated that the next meeting is November 30, 2020. We skipped our normal date because of the Audit. He believes the Audit is close to being complete. The school started the year with 129 students and we budgeted for 120 Maine students, which is a positive. Could be challenging this year due to unexpected expenses we are paying for that we didn't plan on. COVID testing is one of these expenses. At the last meeting, the committee agreed to request that the Foundation assist with the monies we didn't plan on for COVID testing. This equal approximately \$48,000. In the interim, he spoke to D. Pearson about good news that we received regarding approval from the DOE through a grant to get testing paid for. Testing done through December 31, 2020 will be paid for, but we may need to still ask Foundation for assistance after January 1, 2021. He stated we need to have patience as we are all in a new phase of learning.

M. Beckum added that the Auditors were at the school on Tuesday and Wednesday. There are still alot of unknowns regarding any financial ramifications and they are making adjustments as necessary.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. Eustis-Grandy is wondering why Academic Support and EXD increased in the July Financials.

M. Beckum stated that D. McGann's position was split into these categories. It was changed from TEA category.

L. Renick-Butera commented that when we passed the budget, the BOT agreed on reinstating employees' salary reductions if additional revenue was received. What is the status of this? Is it too early to determine if this can happen?

M. Beckum responded we will be revisiting this before the end of the calendar year to see if we can reinstate this around the holidays.

D. Pearson thanked M. Beckum for overseeing the financials. He would like to also recognize all the parents for supporting the RI staff by paying room and board fees. Parents will be reimbursed for room and board for the 3-week period of holidays. He also thanked the Limestone Community School for our reduction in rent. We originally sought a rent reduction of \$130,000, but received a reduction of \$85,000. This is a testament to teamwork for all of involved.

D. King - Asked if there were any additional comments and/or questions.

D. Chuhta thanked everyone for their financial efforts. He stated that the COVID relief funds are due to the Governor understanding the current needs of our schools. He stated to D. Pearson that all funding is very technical in its use. We need to be careful in saying that funds will pay for testing. For instance, it doesn't pay for people to get testing, but it will pay for kits. Regarding State funding, the State budget was severely impacted by the pandemic. The State was able to keep school funding for this year intact. News on funding for the 2022-2023 will not be as good. The State will not be able to preserve the current school funding for all schools, but he wanted to give a heads up. The next 2 years could be very difficult for education, including a 10% cut to school funding.

D. King thanked the BOT for their interest in our Financials situation and attending Finance meetings.

D Ferguson thanked D. King and the committee for their work.

Program Committee: L. Remick-Butera stated they recently held a meeting on Tuesday. There were 17 attendees for the meeting which led to great conversation. She appreciates all the staff who stepped up to be on the committee. We've been talking about the response to the tragedy in September 2019. M. Grillo worked this summer and put together a small team to look at what the response plan is and what we can change for the future. Important changes they decided to make;

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

articulate roles and responsibilities about who does what and create scripts for clearer guidelines on what to say. Also pertinent documents one would need to live through and manage through a critical incident are to be located in one place. All RSL staff now have smart phones in order to be able to access information at a moments notice. The team looked at persons at risk and how they're identified. A crucial last step that was missing and important to do. We discussed the fact that post-assessment is very hard to do. They were going to have a question and answer at each meeting for all programs, but this was tabled due to post-assessment plan. K. Parker gave an update in Spring with Dr. Barrans and D. McGann on this data. This information will be shared at the November BOT workshop. Some clear initial trends that came to light is that students spend only 7 hours a day on self-care. There is very strong satisfaction with peers. Mixed satisfaction of adults; a broad category. General dissatisfaction with Administration, which is also a broad category. We always want positive data all the time, but it is more important to look at the data to make specific short term plans and then bigger BOT plans. The Title IX subcommittee met over the summer. A lot of research was done talking to other schools. This report will be ready in November as well. There are 4 categories of recommendations. We tend to fall into training before an incident happens. This should be spread out in consistent and planned way. We also talked about Equity in the Summer. Important that it's not just a PR statement, but guides us as a board. What are we thinking about equity, etc? When we revisit our charter in December, we will be thinking about this. Committee meetings allow for more public input. It was great that we had so many staff and students come. They gave thoughtful input as to their experience with online learning. The hybrid is better than it was in March, but it is still not the same as in person. This is not a reflection of MSSM but online learning as a whole. Remote conversation is much different than in person. Labs are very challenging. They are very grateful for the new technology in place, but not all classes have it. Students online seem less engaged. It is hard for teachers trying to ease this divide. Students prefer synchronous classes. There is also a lack of connection between 1st years and returners, making it feel like a non-cohesive body. Cohorts are also difficult to navigate, but again medically necessary.

M. Grillo stated that everything said above is an accurate reflection. He asked where L. Renick-Butera got the information from?

L. Renick-Butera answered she just received this information in a recent meeting/chat.

M. Grillo said that after COVID testing was complete and results were received, changes were made to bring the students closer together. For example, spacing 3' from 6', more people allowed in lounges and recently allowing students to visit other wings.

L. Renick-Butera added that it seemed there were no complaints regarding the COVID restrictions. It was more just talking about what it's like having to live under restrictions.

M. Grillo agreed. Students said they understood but it is tough on them.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. Pearson mentioned the additional outdoor activities. Having intramurals and outside activity has been very good for the students. These small things are helping. It will be a challenge in the winter to keep everyone engaged.

After a short 15-minute break, D. Ferguson reconvened the meeting at 11:00am.

Student Welfare Committee: D. Coit stated that they explored best practices taking place at other schools. They held a meeting in August that brought the WEI forward. Everyone was encouraged to look at this. Social and emotional learning, should be part of our ongoing venacular. We need to be using this language more as this way of learning is really taking hold. He and D. Pearson are planning to talk about/meet “Project Adventure” this next week. This could potentially be appropriate for our students. He would like D. Pearson’s input with teachers and students on whether this should be brought to the Student Welfare Committee for further evaluation.

M. Grillo asked that D. Coit explore what we’ve done in the past first before moving forward as he remembers that we did this exact program years ago. D. Coit agreed.

D. Chuhta stated that the DOE will be making Social Learning materials available shortly. Bear or Kelly would be good people to talk to about this. The program is called Suite 360.

Governance Committee: D. Ferguson stated that J. McGreevy is the new chair of the Governance Committee. She was not available for today’s meeting. She is looking forward to digging into work. They will hold meetings every other Tuesday on Zoom from 6:30pm-8pm, beginning in October, 2020. D. Ferguson stated that one of the things the committee will be tasked to look in depth at is the Title IX policies that were passed quickly in August, 2020.

D. Coit asked if Governance handles recruitment of BOT members.

D. Ferguson answered yes. Right now we have 1 Science appointee that will need to be filled, but no word on approvals for new Governor appointments. If anyone has any recommendations, please forward it on to J. McGreevy.

D. Ferguson motioned to accept the Committee Reports, seconded by D. King.

Roll Call Vote:

K. Beaulieu - Yes, J. Chalmers – Yes, D. Chuhta – Yes, D. Coit – Yes, J. Havu – Yes, J. Herweh - Yes, D. King – Yes, J. Pike – Yes, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera – Yes, R. Rice – Yes, D. Ferguson – Yes

Passed unanimously.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. Action Agenda:

Business Planning Committee – Summary of Workshop Discussions

- Ferguson stated 1. Final Vision slide needs to be Board's top focus. We need full BOT support on this in order to pitch to legislation/committee's for MSSM's role in the State of ME.
2. Also need more work on partnerships - Finances misstated. Slide that says we need modest is not accurate. Need to correct this.
- J Chalmers key takeaways: The "ask" is going to fall on some people who are working really hard on balancing a budget. We need to reach out to other organizations, philanthropic for funding. Also A. Whittemore mentioned a couple of places and we should consult with them. A couple of action items with D. Pearson – set-up meetings with various campus' and continue conversations in building the vision.
- D Coit we are adding a 4th option to include Limestone Community School to the comparison. Faculty - include housing in discussion. Reiterate what we're looking for in approval - our thinking (open for discussion), is approval of the Vision. Separate from partnership discussions. We are not looking to make a recommendation on partnerships as the State will make the decision.
- A. Whittemore asked that meetings be held with Faculty and urged to consider meeting with Staff. Needs to be everybody.
- J. Herweh looking for more clarity on what would be presented. The current comparison chart is biased towards Colby College. Though you stated we are not looking to make a recommendation to the State, anyone looking at this chart would automatically think our position is Colby College is the best option. He is not in favor of putting this data forward.
- K. Beaulieu shares same thoughts. The presentation is slanted to move MSSM, but we need to keep in mind what we have in Limestone. For example, an option to buy ½ of the academic building or other options for the building. We need to keep in mind that MSSM is a public high school.
- T. Moore stated it is important that the school continue to be available for those who want to attend, regardless of their financial ability to do so. This will not happen if it becomes a private entity. The majority of Maine families are in or near the poverty level. If the school is partnered with a private entity such as Colby, MSSM could essentially become out of reach for the very students we typically serve. Aroostook County is an underserved, rural community. Remaining in the county could be a "selling" point to the State as we are contributing to the community instead of leaving it, like so many others have done.
- D. Eustis-Grandy stated the comparison charts are very subjective. She worries that we've hoped on the "moving is the solution to all our problems" again. Solving the cost issue is what's driving other things. If we don't change finances we will remain on the same path; moving won't fix it.
- L. Renick-Butera asked to see slide again on Elevator Slide. She feels this is the heart of what we need to buy into and sell.
- M. Reagan said the school's survival is more important than location. More in line with creating partnerships with technology companies, bringing workforce into the area. No one has talked about this, but another area for potential partnership.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- D. Ferguson stated we are still not doing all that we're supposed to be doing when we are only serving 200. We need to make sure we have these outreach programs for our long term survival. Better job integrating the more support.
- A. Whittemore said the criteria is subjective and he is puzzled as to what stage do we include the funding potential of these partnerships. The slides don't include any potential savings. D. Chuhta's information about the future budget was chilling. More financials should be included.
- D. Coit said we are going to be doing this over the next couple of weeks. We will not be presenting any options until we get to Phase 3 of the Business Plan.
- M. Grillo said he is not sure we should use that we don't have the outreach. We have a successful Summer Camp, also Faculty outreach. But what is the expectation? What measurement tools are we using?
- J. Chalmers replied, reaching out to other schools. The fact that we're not involved in the State science fair was a shock. A lot of information is seeing what other people are doing and not doing.
- M. Grillo asked if they have vibrant Summer Camps like we have for 25 years?
- J. Chalmers said they do what we do and more.
- D. Eustis-Grandy stated that these schools have bigger staffs, outreach departments and more. We are not large enough for this type of staffing.
- M. Reagan said we are in direct competition from sending schools. If we got support from DOE this might not be the case. We need to be viewed as a partner, but we are not set-up this way.
- D. Pearson said there are many competing demands. There is universal opposition with local superintendents.
- D. Ferguson asked what the next steps are.
- D. Coit referred to a slide from yesterday's presentation that include the next steps. Do we agree on the Vision. What are our roles as trustees? Who is our responsibility too? Our individual and collective responsibility is the survival of the school.
- D. Ferguson said we may want to come back to the full board for final approval/full support in December, after discussions in Augusta and then present to Augusta in January, 2021. We can't do this without unified support. If we don't have strong buy-in from the entire community, it will fail.
- D. Coit asked should we be working on a recommendation so J. Chalmers and I know what the objective is. Need some clarity?
- D. Chuhta said he plans to have conversation with the Commissioner and possibly Governor about the slide deck to show where we are going and possibly get their feedback.
- J. Herweh said the information on slides is subjective and wants the county to get a fair shake.
- D. Eustis-Grandy said we will need to adjust the timeline a bit. Will that be done? Not sure this can be done in the next 7 days.
- J. Chalmers stated we can't meet with Legislature right now anyway.
- D. King stated this process began because we do not have enough money to operate. We started this to be able to go to the State to document or explain why we should be funded at a certain level based upon what we are doing and can do for the State. 2 things of note: 1 - Change in funding location to the Commissioner. We were in competition to get funding through Appropriations (Sue Gendron). Have we even thought about looking at another location to get funding? Is there a better place?

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Some of the local schools receive their funding through the Governor's budget directly. A lot of the conversation has been around partnerships and moving the school. If the majority of our time is spent there, what aren't we doing? He feels we are jumping away from improvement fact. We should be looking at improving where we are. The same problems will remain at MSSM no matter what the location.

- D. Ferguson has a funding question regarding the UMaine System partnership scenario. Would our budget fall under their umbrella which would give us more staffing, etc? That is one of the things to better advocate for our funding needs over the long term. Not sure what our prospects are for Limestone.
- R. Rice stated that would be a question for the UMaine Chancellor and State, but based on the information D. Coit received from sister schools, this would be important to draw from.
- J. Chalmers said that discussions he had with the Chancellor were very preliminary. We did broach this is what we were thinking about.
- D. Ferguson said there were definitely valuable takeaways from yesterday and today to come up with a better product.
- D. Coit said we're going to come back to the board for approval on the Vision. We're not going to the DOE.
- D. Coit and D. Eustis-Grandy both agreed we need new facilities and need to own our facilities.
- L. Renick- Butera - What are we going to be voting on to approve at the next meeting.
- J. Chalmers answered we will be voting on the Vision and where we think the improvements can be made.
- J. Pike commented that we have this timeline, but we have to have this long term plan to sustain us. Some of these things were hit on in the slides, but not discussed in depth.
- A. Whittemore said not to forget the assets we do have. It doesn't mean we have to give up the property we have for Summer Camp or Lego League.

After a short 15-minute break, D. Ferguson reconvened the meeting at 12:55pm.

- D. King stated that proper location for the school's funding, may be the Governor's budget directly.
- D. Coit is open to all of these things.

D. Ferguson moved to make a motion to go into Executive Session for the Executive Director's Annual Evaluation at 1:25pm. D. King made a motion to move into Executive Session, seconded by R. Rice.

Roll Call Vote:

J. Chalmers – Yes, D. Chuhta – Yes, D. Coit – Yes, J. Havu – Yes, D. King – Yes, J. Pike – Yes, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera – Yes, R. Rice – Yes, D. Ferguson – Yes

Passed unanimously.

The Executive Committee returned to the meeting at 1:40pm.

**MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

D. King motioned to adjourn at 1:40pm, seconded by J. Pike

Roll Call Vote:

J. Chalmers – Yes, D. Chuhta – Yes, D. Coit – Yes, J. Havu – Yes, D. King – Yes, J. Pike – Yes, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera – Yes, R. Rice – Yes, D. Ferguson – Yes

Passed unanimously.