

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

Meeting Minutes
September 28, 2019
Maine School of Science and Mathematics
Limestone, ME

Board members present were: K. Beaulieu, T. Bolen, K. Brackett, J. Chalmers, D. Coit, D. Ferguson, Chair; D. Haines, Honorary Trustee; J. Havu, J. Herweh, D. King, P. Orne, J. Philbrick, J. Pike, M. Reagan, L. Renick-Butera, A. Scott and D. Pearson, Clerk.

Absent were: M. Anderson, D. Chuhta, and J. Patterson.

Administrators and Staff present were: M. Beckum, D. Eustis-Grandy, M. Grillo, S. Hong, R. McDonald, D. McGann, T. Moore (scribe), H. St. Peter, T. Smith, K. Wells and A. Whittemore.

Others present were: D. Deal, L. Havu, M. Thron

- I. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Chair, D. Ferguson followed by introductions.
- II. D. Ferguson, Chair dismissed the Board of Trustees members to their individual committee meetings held in B Wing classrooms as well as in the conference room.
- III. D. Ferguson, Chair mentioned the Foundation Board Meeting will take place in the Conference Room at 10:00am and all Board members are welcome.
- IV. After a short break for lunch, D. Ferguson, Chair dismissed the Board of Trustees members to continue their individual committee meetings held in B-Wing.
- V. David Ferguson, Chair reconvened the meeting and opened to the public at 1:30 pm.
 - A. Reports and Consent Agenda:
 - A. Whittemore gave an enrollment update as follows:
 - 140 enrolled students. 81 returning and 59 new.
 - 7 students have left since the beginning of the school year.
 - T. Bolen asked if exit interviews are being done?
 - L. Renick-Butera said not at this time, but it is something being actively worked on in the Program Team Committee.
 - M. Reagan asked A. Whittemore if he saw a pattern with the students who left?
 - A. Whittemore - Yes, most were female students though they came from all grade levels (9th, 10th, 11th & 12th).

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- D. Pearson - Some of the exiting students are on medical leaves of absence and plan to return.
- J. Philbrick stated the new academic schedule needs to be reviewed.
- L. Renick-Butera said this is also being discussed and worked on in the Program Team Committee.
- D. McGann shared that the academic management report was written before the events of September 4, 2019. She thanked staff for their 24/7 support of the students.
- K. Wells reported that the Foundation Board of Visitors event will take place on October 25, 2019 from 4pm - 6pm at the Cumberland Club in Portland, Maine.
- D. Pearson said that Maine Public Radio will be on campus next week, as well as WCVB TV in Boston to spend an afternoon learning about the students/school.

D. Ferguson, Chair moved to approve the consent agenda items which include the minutes of the May 24, 2019 meeting and the September 28, 2019 management report, seconded by D. King; voted unanimously.

B. Committee Reports

Advancement Committee: M. Reagan stated the draft charter was reviewed and the committee came to the conclusion it does not currently meet their needs, nor does it work with the bylaws. The committee will start from scratch and bring the draft to the December 7, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting. They also discussed the support needs of the Foundation, Summer Camp and Admissions Departments.

D. Haines questioned why Summer Camp was cut from 5 weeks to 4 weeks. M. Reagan said that this was discussed but they did not have time to go over why and reported that a STEM Educator's Camp was added for the 5th week. R. McDonald answered that too much money was spent on Financial Aid therefore they opted to eliminate the co-ed week and work on filling the camp for only 4 weeks. Having the co-ed week reduced the number of girls that attended the camp. This is an experiment for the coming year and will be revisited for next year. The capacity is still 500+ campers in attendance, so this will not really impact student numbers. Room also has to be made to fit in a STEM Educator Camp to serve Maine teachers as per statute with sufficient maintenance time left over to put the dormitory and academic building into good repair following intensive summer camp useage.

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Governance Committee: J. Chalmers said the committee discussed the role and oversight of the school and its current policies for readings today (JICK, ACAA, ACAA-R). The committee plans to review all school policies for compliance over the next year. Bylaws were also reviewed; specifically changes from the separation of Limestone Community School from RSU 39. The bylaws will be worked on for review at the December 7, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting. Reconciliation of the subcommittees and bylaws is also needed along with State statutes, again with RSU39 wording. Board membership was also reviewed and there are 4 members that will expire in 2020. They will be reaching out to the community before the December 7, 2019 meeting. The committee is also defining roles for orientation of new members. In the past, this consisted of a tour, required training, and possibly dinner in the cafeteria with students. In order to streamline and use best practices going forward, all Board documents will be shared on google sites.

Finance and Facilities Committee: D. King reported that during their monthly meeting it was noted there were some assumed revenues that did not materialize, resulting in a structural deficit. They are actively working with Administration, as well as monitoring the situation and will report back to the Board of Trustees at the December 7, 2019 meeting. Any questions related to financials can be directed to M. Beckum.

J. Philbrick asked what the amount of deficit is? M. Beckum said it is \$280,000. D. Pearson added that this is due to the International student population being lower than hoped. They are short 5 students. A. Whittemore added that the amount of new International students he was asked to enroll was 9, for a total of 15. This amount was higher than we have ever had in the school's history. D. Haines questioned that the deficit was not due to overspending, but a direct result of the projected revenue of International students? M. Reagan asked if the projected amount of 9 additional International students should be changed since this is well above what the school has historically enrolled in one year? A. Whittemore stated that a conversation needs to occur with enrollment management early on rather than try to balance the budget in March. D. King said that these discussions will take place.

M. Reagan asked if the 140-145 enrolled students is a realistic number based on our current staffing, beds available, and being short-funded? P. Orne stated that the bigger picture is balancing a budget based on the amount of International students enrolled. As a Maine public school, if they have budgeted for 145 students and all spots have been filled, yet they still cannot meet their budget, this

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is a revenue problem and needs to be dealt with by the Board of Trustees at the government level. A. Scott said that based on conversations with M. Grillo, we are not adequately staffed in the dorms for 145 students. D. Ferguson stated that conversations took place with the Department of Education regarding all of these concerns/issues, including the fact that the required STEM Educators camp has to be funded by a grant. These conversations will continue and we are working hard to make this happen. D. Pearson added that continued state flat revenue funding has to be addressed. D. Deal stated she hopes that tuition costs are not increased for parents, as it is a very serious hardship. D. Ferguson stated that currently in the Statute, the State requires a room and board fee and that State financial aid is available. They are actively working to get this changed.

Audit: T. Bolens said that the Audit was not on the original agenda, but should have been. The completed audit was received this past Thursday. T. Bolens approved the audit as he did not see any issues. It has been passed on to the Board of Trustees for approval. He added that due to time constraints, approval was done electronically. The Comptroller from the State of Maine changed the deadline to October 15, 2019. A Board accepted audit needed to be back to the Comptroller by the Oct. 15th date. In the past, an extension was offered however, this did not take place this year. D. Ferguson added that with our fiscal year end of June 30 2019, this was a very tight schedule to try and meet. T. Bolens added that the financial records are reviewed on a monthly basis throughout the year. The audit was simply the last step in a very rigorous process.

D. Ferguson moved to accept the unanimous Finance & Facilities committee recommendation to approve the audit, seconded by T. Bolen; voted unanimously for approval.

Program Committee: L. Renick-Butera said they were not able to review the charter and implement recommendations. She stated that Title IX training took place in the Spring. The committee needs to keep the new academic schedule on their radar. The committee also discussed the student death by suicide. While it is very important for students and staff it also must be addressed at the Board level. Based on this, the Program committee recommended that they receive a report about the school's response to this tragedy for the December meeting. They would also like to see information on how other schools have handled tragedies. T. Bolens said that they need to make sure the data that is collected is meaningful. J. Philbrick said that all data that is collected needs to be discussed quickly and asked if we can afford to wait for this information? He said he is worried about what may get lost at the board level. L. Renick-Butera referred to

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the plan that M. Grillo followed and said he told her it had been put in place 6 years ago. D. Ferguson added that timeliness is important.

Ferguson moved that the Executive Committee work with Administrative Team to get a report (inclusive of assessment of current plan and involvement from the community) by the December 7, 2019 meeting, seconded by J. Philbrick; voted unanimously.

Community Health and Student Development: D. Coit said they have assembled a new Community Health and Student Development committee based on a recommendation made by the Ad hoc committee and authorized at the Board of Trustees meeting on May 24, 2019. D. Coit thanked J. Pike and M. Reagan for all of their work putting this together including many great discussions and face to face interviews with private schools, North Carolina STEM school, C. McCullough, M. Grillo and D. Pearson. The ongoing work is to provide a resource for looking at best practices at other schools, including materials, what works and what does not work at other schools to benefit MSSM. The definition is a school model that engages the entire community and acts as a developmental process for success after graduation. Organization of the committee took place today with a lot of emotional feedback. They are actively discussing what is the portrait of a MSSM graduate? The committee would like the entire community involved in answering this question. No progress was made on the charter. They realize this is important and will get back to the Board of Trustees as soon as possible. D. Ferguson said that a charter was supposed to be available at this meeting. D. Coit added that the charter changed today with more members meeting.

C. Policies: J. Chalmers stated that policies are implemented by the Executive Director and then sent to the Governance Committee for review. The reviews take place at the meetings, up until the 1st reading can be edited. Anyone can bring up changes to the policy during this time. During the 2nd reading, policies are ready for approval and become an approved policy.

- 1st reading of JICK - Bullying and Cyberbullying

J. Chalmers moved to accept the 1st reading of the JICK policy, seconded by D. Ferguson.

J. Philbrick asked if past behaviors that fall in section 2, are more stringent than defined in the policy currently. D. Pearson answered that as of right now, there is no policy in place and this would be the policy. D. King asked if “physical harm

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damage” also covers emotional health. J. Chalmers answered yes. J. Philbrick asked if Section 5a on page 4 excludes electronic communication. An email link could be sent annually or a link could be placed in the student handbook for consistency.

D. Ferguson moved to approve the 1st reading of JICK - Bullying and Cyberbullying, seconded by J. Chalmers; voted unanimously.

- 2nd reading of ACAA Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students

J. Chalmers said the date of the 1st reading needs to change to May 24, 2019.

J. Pike moved to table the 2nd reading of the policy which was opposed by J. Philbrick.

J. Chalmers and J. Philbrick asked that gender identity or gender expression be added in two places and bring back the policy again for a second reading. It was also noted that Superintendent in both sections need to be changed to Executive Director.

- 2nd reading of ACAA-R Student Discrimination and Harassment Complaint

M. Dow asked if it was a conflict of interest for the Title IX coordinator to also be the Cross-Country coach; meaning would favoritism be shown to students who are on the Cross-Country team? D. Ferguson said that the Board will discuss this further. M. Reagan asked if there is anyone else in Human Resources? The answer was no, but there are 2 other staff members who have been through Title IX training. T. Smith added that the point of requesting an additional Title IX coordinator is to not restrict reporting. D. Pearson suggested making a change to read “any school employee.” J. Philbrick asked to move to staff to ED and his designee which is Title IX Coordinator. K. Brackett asked if the reporting procedure is written in the handbook so that students can easily understand? J. Philbrick answered he believes the procedure is laid out in the handbook.

D. Ferguson moved to table the 2nd reading of the ACAA-R policy, seconded by A. Scott; voted unanimously.

D. Strategic Plan Update was moved to allow public comment to begin.

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E. Public Comment:

M. McCarthy said that a stronger support system for students is needed regarding Mental Health at the school. Specifically, 24/7 access to a Mental Health professional (someone other than an RI), access to request more mental health days (not attend classes). Right now there is a maximum number that a student can take and there shouldn't be a max. Students feel pressured NOT to take mental health days. Also, more checks on a student that takes a mental health day and more attention given to that student to ensure they are getting the help they need.

D. Deal agrees that the school really needs to address this immediately. L Renick-Butera answered that the BOT wants this and are already proactively looking into this and many other options.

M. Tasker said that they have pointed out the weakness of not having a Mental Health worker for years. Though we may not be able to prevent another tragedy, it is something desperately needed.

M. Dow/S. Hong said there is a lot of pain right now and students need to be heard. The recent tragedy has impacted many students and staff.

T. Smith said that getting feedback from the students is essential. The BOT really needs to meet with students to hear them and keep them safe. He implored that the BOT not let this come out on just a report.

G. Orne emotionally stated that support in the dorm is seen as more of a punitive attitude instead of supportive one. Most students' parents are 4 hours away and the RI staff is supposed to be a parent figure. He and others have felt scared to talk or ask for things for fear of refusal of their request and they also feel they would be irritating to staff. It takes courage just to ask them for Tylenol. The environment is non-supportive.

M. Santomena said that adding gender identity into the ACAA policy should be protected under state and federal law and therefore should not need input from legal counsel to change this in the policy. It would make sense to include it under that statement as there are already students here who identify as such. J. Philbrick answered that it is not protected under federal law. M. McCarthy clarified that the policy should have been tabled solely on that issue. J. Chalmers and D. Ferguson said that was not the only reason for the policy being tabled.

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J. Philbrick said that the Program Team committee talked about having a full-time mental health counselor. Things are slow to happen, but this is important and he implores that the Board act on this now. D. Ferguson answered that the BOT does understand the urgency.

K. Brackett suggested that Public Comment should be first at future meetings. D. Ferguson stated that this can be done.

M. Delorge thanked the Board for coming to the school. He asked that the BOT please come to the dorms, speak and interact with them. D. Coit answered that they need to make this happen. M. Reagan also wants to speak with and interact with students.

L. Havu said that Board Development means spending the day or evening in the students' shoes.

J. Havu suggested that the Board have lunch or dinner with the students in the cafeteria at future meetings. D. Ferguson agreed.

L. Renick-Butera stated she would have liked to have been able to also speak to RI staff members as they are not here to represent themselves. It would be important to get their perspective as well, as they may see things differently than what was reflected.

S. Hong said she has noticed a pattern in students airing their grievances and asked that they be taken seriously. She asked that the Board listen and follow through with the things they have said.

J. Pike thanked all of those that shared their feelings, tears, and more with the Board.

J. Philbrick asked the fellow members of the Board how they can get the proposed items done (adding a mental health worker, etc.)? He said that there needs to be a way that they can get this accomplished now. D. Ferguson agreed it is their responsibility to get these things done and stated the Executive Director will need to report on these things and bring them to the Board on an ongoing basis.

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K. Beaulieu said that when money needed to be found to repair the broken eyewash stations, it was done. The Board needs to find the money to be able to get a Mental Health worker at the school now.

D. Coit added that putting this request all on the ED may not be feasible since it is also a budget issue. J. Havu stated that they cannot wait for the speed of bureaucracy.

M. Dow said that if this is not done sooner rather than later, there may not be a school to save. She asked D. Pearson what his thoughts were regarding everything they have said. D. Pearson answered that his door is always open. He is actively working on speaking to representatives like Troy Jackson next week in terms of improved school resources. The key issue of student and student well-being needs to be addressed. M. Dow felt he did not answer her question and asked again what his thoughts were on what the students said today. D. Pearson stated he was horrified.

L. Havu and M. Reagan asked that D. Pearson speak to M. Grillo and RSL staff immediately and address student concerns.

M. Allen said that the academics and opportunities at MSSM are amazing, but they are diminished by the lack of feeling safe in the dorms. M. Dow added that multiple students are making choices between their academic standing and Mental Health.

M. Delorge said that academics are important but having fun is too as they are still teenagers and that there should be more opportunities for this side of life.

D. Ferguson moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:32pm, seconded by J. Havu; voted unanimously.

The next Board meeting will be Saturday, December 7, 2019 at the University of Maine at Orono – Wells Conference Center, Orono, Maine.

Respectfully submitted,

David Pearson, Clerk
Board of Trustees