

MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Business Planning Committee Charter

(a public document)

Preamble

At the end of the 2019 academic year, the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (“MSSM”) was ranked #2 among over 17,000 public high schools in the country by U.S. News & World Report magazine. While unranked this year due to size limitations on reporting, MSSM has historically been ranked among the top 20 schools when included.

This year, the school’s Board of Trustees (the “Board”) approved two foundational documents confirming the school’s commitment to its mission of providing the best possible educational experience for some of Maine’s most deserving and gifted high school students. These two documents (attached) describe the bookends of a life-altering experience available to a residential student at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (“MSSM”). The first document describes a Mission Appropriate Student, and the second is the Portrait of a Graduate. The creation of these statements engaged the whole MSSM community (students, teachers, alumni, parents, administrators and board members), and they are representative of the community’s love of and commitment to the school.

Now, after 25 years of success, the school’s future is at risk because available resources are inadequate to sustain a safe and superior academic experience for MSSM students. The school has operated in recent years on flat funding from the state, and the likelihood of any additional financial support is small in the face of the state’s current budgetary challenges. International students, whose tuition payments have supplemented the school’s budget in recent years, are becoming an unreliable financial resource. At the same time, there are growing needs to fund new priorities in the areas of student wellness (emotional, physical and social) and curriculum redesign and to replace or upgrade aging and inadequate academic and residential facilities.

Preliminary research by an ad-hoc committee of the Board has found that creative and successful new models have emerged at similar residential STEM schools in other states around the country. These new models have been developed in response to changes in STEM education generally and to the availability of public funding, which varies significantly between states. From this early research, it is clear that similar schools in other states are thriving today, providing the highest level of education for qualifying students in their states. One important contributor to the success of these schools has been their ability to build strategic institutional partnerships to strengthen their business models both programmatically and financially.

In light of these preliminary findings, the Board of Trustees has determined that a thorough reassessment of the school’s business model is necessary and that options be identified and considered for a more sustainable path forward. As the school embarks on this process, two fundamental resolutions were unanimously adopted by the Board of Trustees at its workshop retreat on Friday, May 22.

- The school is committed to maintaining a superior academic program in a safe residential environment for the students in its care.
- The business model for the school needs to be reconsidered in the broadest sense, and additional resources identified for investment in the school’s future.

To explore viable new business model options, the Board has authorized the formation of the Business Planning Committee (the “Committee”). This Charter explains the organization, objectives, process and timeline for the Committee’s work to identify optional business models for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics.

Committee Membership and Organization

The Committee consists members appointed to serve until their resignation or until the Committee is disbanded by the Board of Trustees and the Committee has the authority to fill empty seats.

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Proposed Nominees</u>
● Chair of the Board of Trustees	David Ferguson
● Executive Director of MSSM	David Pearson
● Treasurer of the Board of Trustees	Peter Orne
● Chair of the Governance Committee	Josh Chalmers
● At large member of the Board of Trustees	David Coit
● Representative of the Maine Dept. of Education	Dan Chuhta
● Representative of Maine Legislature*	TBD
● Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees (or their designee)	TBD
● Student Representative to the Board of Trustees (or their designee)	TBD
● Parent representative	Cris Alvarado
● Alumni representative	Kate DeLutio
● MSSM Foundation representative	TBD
● At large – other	TBD

It is essential that there be active representation on the Committee from the Executive branch of state government and from the Maine Legislature throughout Phase 1 (described below) to provide alignment with the needs and interests of Maine residents.

The Committee will establish its own leadership structure and sub-committees to accomplish its purpose in an effective and timely manner.

*In consultation with the Joint Standing Committee for Education and Cultural Affairs

Phased Objectives and Timelines

The overarching objective of the Committee will be to provide the Board of Trustees with a forward-looking business model for MSSM that enhances the value of the school to the State of Maine, its citizens and especially for the students it enrolls. The plan hopes to identify new sources of financial support for the school through partnerships with other institutions as well as enumerating and justifying additional financial support from the State of Maine.

The Committee's work will be carried out and delivered in four phases, with the objectives of each new phase dependent on the outcome of the prior phase and ongoing direction from the Board of Trustees.

Phase 1 – Discovery & Concept

The Committee will explore a broad range of options to create a financially sustainable business model for MSSM consistent with its programmatic objectives. The principal activities of the Committee during this first phase will be to:

- Research the business models of the 15 other state-sponsored residential STEM high schools to evaluate the elements of their success and applicability to Maine.
- Interview institutions in Maine (and possibly elsewhere) that would have the resources and interest in partnering with MSSM to meet its long-term objectives.

The Board recognizes that both the needs of the State of Maine and the practice of education have a changed over the 25 years since the school's authorizing legislation was established. Therefore, the Committee is encouraged to exercise a wide degree of latitude as it explores potential resources and examples of business models that could position MSSM for success in the next quarter century.

No less than once a month, the Committee's leadership will report on its progress to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee will represent the Board of Trustees in providing oversight and guidance to the Committee within this first phase.

Once the Committee has completed its research and is prepared to recommend a business model or options for business models, it will seek approval by the Executive Committee before presenting its findings and recommendations to the full Board. It

would be the Committee's objective to deliver its findings to the Board of Trustees for approval in the Fall of 2020.

Phase 2 - Authorization

Once approved by the Board of Trustees, the proposed business model or models will be offered to the Maine Department of Education and appropriate Legislative committees for review and feedback. The objective of this review would be for the Board to gather feedback from constituencies to move the process to Phase 3, in which the Board would authorize a more detailed Business Plan or Plans to be developed. Presumably Phase 2 would occur in time for vested parties in state government to consider proposed legislative changes during the next biennium legislative cycle.

Phase 3 – Business Plan

Assuming support from the State of Maine, the Committee would proceed to write a detailed Business Plan for all relevant parties to use as a blueprint for substantive agreements and commitments necessary to establish the new business model for the Maine School of Science and Mathematics. Parties to these agreements would include institutions involved in providing the funding, facilities, governance and regulations (among others) embodied in the Business Plan.

Phase 4 - Implementation

The final phase of this project would be to implement the Business Plan.

Board of Trustees' Approval

This Charter has been approved by the Maine School of Science and Mathematics Board of Trustees by unanimous vote at its duly authorized meeting on June 22, 2020.

Maine School of Science and Mathematics

Mission Appropriate Student

You may be an MSSMer if you are...

An Enthusiastic Learner

You love to learn. Whether in the classroom, on your own or with a group of friends, you possess a passion for the pursuit of knowledge, a deeper understanding of the world around you, and, by virtue of this, a more intimate understanding and knowledge of yourself.

Honest and Respectful

You fervently believe in the value of honesty in everything you say and do, while recognizing and appreciating the existence of other perspectives. You respect the ideas of others, and you actively support a safe environment that fosters the open exchange of competing beliefs.

Independent yet Community-Minded

You are confident in your own thoughts, but you accept your peers as they are and see them as individual contributors, each in their own way, to your shared community. You eagerly engage in team activities that strengthen inter-personal relationships and that contribute to a culture of mutual support and respect among your peers.

Attribution

This definition was established in a community-wide process in the Spring of 2020, involving the active engagement of the students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff and the Board of Trustees of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics.

Maine School of Science and Mathematics

Portrait of a Graduate

MSSM's mission is to create educated citizen-leaders who will benefit their communities in the state of Maine and beyond. At MSSM, you will share many experiences with your classmates, building strong personal bonds that will last long after your graduation. This Portrait describes the values that the school holds dear and that we as a community hope that you will learn to appreciate and respect as you engage in the MSSM experience. By your graduation, you will:

Mastery

Gain a depth of knowledge in many subjects, and you will gain skills in discovery, analysis, and critical thinking, enabling you to be an effective problem solver. You will learn how to articulate your conclusions in spoken and written communications, enabling you to effectively convey your thoughts for the benefit of others.

Resilience

Appreciate the immense power and sense of accomplishment that come from persistence, and from the development of a curious and creative mind. You will seek challenges every day from which you will gain self-confidence and the ability to face adversity.

Self-awareness

Understand your strengths and your weaknesses, and you will assume full responsibility for your words and your deeds. This self-awareness will enable you to be an effective citizen and to be considerate as you encounter differences in others.

Engagement

Learn the value of active participation in community building. You will come to appreciate that each individual can contribute to shared objectives in different ways through innovation, collaboration, and leadership, and that the coming together of these different skills makes for a more effective and robust community.

Purpose

Graduate from MSSM with a sense of purpose that shapes your goals and guides your life decisions. Your MSSM experience will give you unique advantages and opportunities. You understand the importance of giving back to the people and communities who have enabled your success.

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