

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held May 20, 2025

Pursuant to email and public website notices, a virtual meeting of the Board of Maine Learning Innovations was convened on Zoom at 4:00 PM, May 20th, 2025. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Cherieann Harrison, and Tina Meserve. Stacey Blanchard and Susan Walters were excused. A quorum was present.

Attending for Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) were Melinda Browne, Don Fournier, Christina O'Grady, Lena Vitagliano, Chelsea Osgood, Jillian Dearborn, Jennifer Hight, and Stephanie Emery.

Attending from Stride was Tom Travia.

Attending from Clark Insurance (Marsh McLennan) was Chad Cote.

Opening Items.

Approval of Minutes. Tina motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of March 18th, 2025. Donna seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Finance Report.

FY25 Quarter 3 Finance Report:

FY25 Quarter 3 Financial Narrative: MEVA shows a surplus of \$427,279 for the nine months ended March 31, 2025. Salaries and benefits remain our largest expense. Health insurance coverage has increased significantly and the board continues to pursue options to stabilize costs moving forward. As of March 31st we had 59 employees made up of 12.5 Administration positions and 46.5 Teachers/Ed-Techs. Planning for our FY25 audit is underway and will be performed by Wipfli.

Jennifer presented the financial report with the board and did an abbreviated review via a shared screen. Jennifer made the point that MEVA had a hefty cash balance, fortunately, since it will be dipped into for the coming school year.

Jennifer said that the breakdown showed a health insurance increase, which was expected. Jennifer showed a summary of the expenses reflecting all year-to-date figures. This was the same summary that was submitted to the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC). The next financial audit was scheduled for the week of August 25th, a bit earlier than the prior year.

Tina motioned to approve the FY25 Quarter 3 Financials. Donna seconded. All in favor, so moved.

FY26 Budget.

Employee Health Insurance:

Chad Cote from Clark Insurance attended this board meeting to answer any final questions in relation to the health insurance.

Donna explained the health insurance renewal cycle changes as a reminder. January 1st to December 31st was the original cycle. Donna stated that we worked with Chad, to look at the different options that were available to the board and timelines along with health care costs impacting staff. We decided to stay with the Anthem plan that MEVA currently had but changed the renewal cycle to the July 1st to June 30th. Due to changing the plan at this juncture, it will cost the school about \$159,000, in addition to what was quoted in November 2024. We hoped this would be worth it. In this scenario, staff continued to carry over their accumulators, the board believed it was a good solution. Next year, the board will know what the costs will be when planning the budget, and the staff will know the health plan for the following year.

Tina asked, if we did not make this change for July 1st, would we face a big change on January 1st? That could be just as much as the amount we are changing now at this point.

Chad replied, correct. Chad stated that the committee was trying to determine whether “we roll the dice.” The biggest issue was the plan had operated at a 150% loss for Anthem over the past couple of years due to the claims. There could be rate relief based on potential changes.

Cherieann motioned to approve the recommended employee health insurance. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Faculty Compensation Increase:

Donna reiterated to the board that salary compensation for staff in the upcoming year will be two percent (2%) across the board.

Cherieann asked if positions had changed? She noticed a decrease in the line item from the prior year. Dr. Browne said we are optimizing staff based on needs. Tina asked, does this mean we have fewer staff, but can accommodate programs we have without adding hires? Dr. Browne asserted, the instructional faculty head count remained the same. There were some administrative support positions that were eliminated, or the individuals in those roles were leaving.,

Cherieann motioned to approve the recommended employee salary increase of 2%. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Jennifer shared her screen to show the assumption that there will be no grant allocations expected for FY26. However, Jennifer asserted that she does not feel that we will lose grant

funds, but just in case they built in the most conservative assumption. The proposed FY26 budget showed a deficit due to the loss of federal grants. Funds needed to be moved over to balance the budget. Jennifer clarified that MEVA's fund balance covered the proposed deficit. Jennifer projected that if we received grant monies, we could look at adding positions.

Jennifer highlighted various line items in the proposed FY26 budget. Tina asked how old were our student computers? Jillian and Jennifer explained we buy about one hundred (100) units per year. We did order extra due to older computers needing to be replaced. Dr. Browne projected that we were also looking at an increase in enrollment this coming year. Donna made the point that the students depend on their laptops to access schooling so that was important.

Tina asked if it was our goal to replace computers every four (4) years? Jillian stated that we had a four (4) year warranty on the student computers, and we kept track of which ones were due to go out of service or needed to be updated/upgraded etc.

Cherieann asked out of two hundred (200) laptops how many were designated for staff and students? Jillian replied that staff computers were not included in the figure, and those were ordered in accordance with the provision of Stride IT Services.

Dr. Browne said that MEVA spends approximately \$20,000 on staff laptops annually. Dr. Browne looked up the quote. MEVA ordered twenty-five (25) new computers for staff the quote was \$23,975. Jillian mentioned, we also needed to factor in keyboards, mice etc.

Regarding computer rentals, Donna explained to Cherieann that MEVA rented computers solely for state assessments. Teachers traveled statewide to facilitate in-person testing. This year there were three (3) test periods. Dr. Browne made the point that we rented them from Stride. It was a mobile computer lab and cut down on staff wear and tear. The rented computers were turn-key ready to go. Jillian stated that the rental computers came with systems ready and everything was loaded on them and all set with all the equipment needed for testing. If we had to do the set up, it would require students to bring their computers back and then ship them back out, it would be too much.

Tina motioned to approve the FY26 Budget. Cherieann seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Jennifer planned to wait until the deadline to upload into the state system (NEO). Jennifer will send an updated copy to the board, as she made some minor adjustments to the budget in the meeting, based on feedback.

Three-Year Annual Financial Plan:

Donna and Dr. Browne commented that the committee did not work on the three-year financial plan. Jennifer used inflators to generate projections. We expected to have projections at next meeting to review.

Administration.

Dr. Melinda Browne presented the Head of School Report.

SY-2024/2025 Progress:

- MEVA Meets.
- High School Graduation Ceremony, June 6th, 2:00 pm, via Zoom.
- Eighth Grade Step Up Day, June 13th, 11:00 am, via Zoom.
- Summer 2025: Enrichment, Project-Based Learning, and Work Study.
- Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) renewal contract.
- Ballard Center lease renewal.

MEVA Meets allowed students to get academic support in person at the office. Christina O’Grady and teachers participated in this opportunity. This opportunity was under development and began back in March. We planned to build on this further, as the initial student interest was promising.

Strong Schoolwide Growth throughout the Year:

- MEVA presented strong growth, as measured by NWEA MAP math, reading, and language usage, throughout SY-2024/2025.
- Intervals included ‘fall to winter’ and ‘winter to spring’ and ‘fall to spring.’
- Well done everyone!

NWEA MAP Growth SY-2024/2025: Median Conditional Growth Percentile

School Profile	Math	Reading	Language Usage
Fall to Winter	58 th	51 st	54 th
Winter to Spring	59 th	51 st	54 th
Fall to Spring	65 th	53 rd	50 th

Spring ’25 state testing participation:

- Very strong turnout for our in-person, state testing.
- Minimal movement.
- Overall, this is a highly positive trend towards attaining our 95%+ participation target. Two science windows: grade 11 (April) and grade 8 (May). The Maine Through Year (MTY), math and reading, grades 7, 8 & 10, window closes on May 30th.
- We appreciate the faculty’s heroic efforts!

Outcomes on Strategic Reading Goal – 5/19/2025:

- Female – 31%.
- Male – 46%, met.
- IEP – 33%.
- 504 – 50%, met.
- F/R (ED) – 64%, met.
- Short-term goal (3/5 subgroups at/above 45%) for SY-2024/2025 Met, by Spring 2025.
- We have *a lot of work to do* to meet our long-term goal of 5/5 subgroups at/above the 45% threshold, by Spring 2029.
- Thank you for your efforts!

Dr. Browne reported that she and Donna were attending a strategic planning workshop this week, hosted by the Maine Charter School Commission.

MEVA FY26 ESEA Application Public Comment and Comprehensive Needs Assessment:

- We made the first pass at completing the SY-2024/2025 Comprehensive Needs Assessment. We will follow up when spring 2025 assessment data is finalized.
- Looking ahead at the FY26 ESEA Application, the public comment period opened on April 7th, 2025. We are seeking feedback on how the grant funds may be used to support student achievement and growth.
- In the past ESEA funds have been used to secure faculty to provide supplementary instruction in English Language Arts and math. Professional development has focused on teacher courses. We aim to continue this approach to utilizing FY26 ESEA funds.
- MEVA's largest academic need is growth in reading, and proficiency in math and reading, at the middle school level.

SY-2025/2026 New Enrollment Update:

- Demand for MEVA enrollment is very high.
- We are on track to achieve our 495-student target by October 1st, 2025. Four-hundred ninety-five (495) students is our maximum number.
- Our target is twenty (20) students, higher than the previous year.

Governance.

MEVA Strategic Plan Review.

MEVA Strategic Plan Priorities:

- Goal 1: Achieve Our Mission and Vision.
- Goal 2: Meet/Exceed Our Charter Contract Performance Measures.
- Goal 3: Graduate Students Who Are College and/or Career Ready.
- Goal 4: Deliver The Best Possible Service and Support to our Students and Families.

Proposed FY26 Board Meeting Dates.

All meetings are at 4:00 pm via Zoom.

July 15, 2025

August 19

September 16 – Annual Meeting

October 21

November 18

December 16

January 27, 2026

February 24

March 17

April 28

May 19

June 16, 2026

Members of the board members agreed with the dates. Dr. Browne said that dates were posted on the school website.

Grade 10 Curriculum Maps:

- The Curriculum Mapping Committee meets regularly to review the maps in accordance with our schedule.
- The tenth-grade maps are up for approval today.
- We are aiming to have eleventh- and twelfth-grade maps on the agenda of the June 2025 meeting.

Cherieann motioned to approve the Grade 10 Curriculum Maps. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Public Discussion.

Tina expressed appreciation for all the work behind this month's agenda. Donna made the point that people do not understand what goes into this sometimes. Nice work everyone!

Adjournment.

Tina motioned to adjourn. Cherieann seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore