

Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held July 15, 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, July 15th, 2025. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Cherieann Harrison, Tina Meserve, and Susan Walters. A quorum was present.

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

Attending from Stride was Tom Travia.

Opening Items.

Approval of Minutes. Stacey motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of June 17th, 2025. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Finance Report.

Dr. Browne gave a brief finance update:

- FY25 Audit is in progress, with fieldwork scheduled for the week on August 18th.
- Wipfli has opened the document collection Hub and is in the process of setting up an initial meeting.
- We typically receive audits by the December board meeting. Copies are due to the state and charter commission by December 30th.
- FY26 Grants: Received substantial approval for IDEA. Waiting for final ESEA allocations – the application is open. Title II and IV are under review and are removed from the application.

Dr. Browne reported that the FY25 Quarter 4 financials have been moved to the August board meeting, hopefully with an amended budget. The next governing board meeting will be on August 19th.

The FY 25 audit by Wipfli is in progress. Dr. Browne and Susan Walters have received the letter to sign and send back to Kelsey, the auditor. The fieldwork is scheduled for the week of August 18th. The auditors have opened an online hub for document submission. Auditors plan to attend the December board meeting to present the outcomes of the audit before it is sent to the commission and state by the December 30th due date.

Dr. Browne confirmed that MEVA was allocated IDEA funds of \$170K, which are substantially approved. We are waiting on the final ESEA (Title IA) allocation of \$214K. Title II and Title IV are currently frozen and under review by the United States Education Department (USED). Right now, ESEA funding is up in the air. We will know by Friday (July 18th), if we can finalize the

FY26 Title IA application. Luckily, MEVA is in a good financial position and is being careful with all FY26 revenues and expenses.

Stacey made the point that this situation has affected all types of schools.

Donna asked Dr. Browne if MEVA was getting the IDEA funds? Dr. Browne stated that there was substantial approval on the FY26 IDEA application.

Donna asserted that when we worked on the budget and approved it, we did not include any federal funds. Dr. Browne confirmed that we did not, although when Jennifer Hight did the three-year financial projections, she included the expected federal grant allocations.

Dr Browne has the FY26 ESEA application ready for submission. She is going to wait until Friday, July 18th, which is the earliest date to submit.

Donna states, if Dr. Browne receives word that the local entitlement is confirmed, then we as a board need to come together in August to amend the approved budget.

Susan asked if there will potentially be any disruption of the IDEA money by the August meeting? Dr. Browne said she thinks we would know by then. There was no indication of any disruption of about \$170K. Susan said she believed it was stated that for some Special Education related funding or legal connections it would be rolled into Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)? Dr. Browne said that she does not know if that has been done yet. Dr. Browne made the point that she waits until she receives official communications from the Maine Department of Education (MDOE).

Donna stated that MEVA was fortunate to build a budget that did not include federal funds. Dr. Browne made the point that MEVA was really sticking with the budget; we are very conservative.

Tina commented that she was working within the solar industry, and it was proven that money cannot be drawn back. If grants were awarded substantial approval, then it was set aside for the schools. Dr. Browne said that this was reassuring information and will keep everyone posted about FY26 federal grant funds.

Administration. Dr. Melinda Browne presented the Head of School Report.

SY-2024/2025 Annual Monitoring:

- Performance Framework shared.
- Data Collection Workbook is completed and shared.
- Documents Submitted.
- End of Year Meeting scheduled.
- Final Annual Monitoring Report to be shared in the fall.
- Strategic Goals (next slides). Retained two in-progress goals and added two more. Aiming for an inclusive learning environment that focuses on sub-group performance as measured by the Maine Through Year (MTY).

In Progress Strategic Goals – Reading Growth (NWEA MAP)

Indicator	Description	2023-24 Performance BASELINE	Short-term Goal for SY 2024- 25 NEXT YEAR	Long-term Goal SY 2028-29 FIVE YEARS
1.4a	Subgroup Performance: Maine State Assessment (NWEA MAP) 3rd-8th	MEVA reported the following subgroup performance: Students on IEPs: 36% Students on 504s: 44% F+R Lunch: 43% Sex/Gender: Male: 32% Female: 46%	Partially Meet (Approaching) subgroup performance measure in reading, with three out of five (3/5) subgroups achieving the 45% threshold by next year. Students with IEPs: 6/18 (33.3%) Students on 504s: 2/4 (50.0%) F&R Lunch: 7/11 (63.6%) Male: 15/33 (45.5%) Female: 8/26 (30.8%) Met our short- term goal of 3/5 subgroups achieving a 45% threshold.	Meet subgroup performance measures in reading, with five out of five (5/5) subgroups achieving the 45% threshold for SY- 2028/2029.

New Strategic Goal – Subgroup Proficiency: Reading (Maine Through Year)

Indicator	Description	2023-24 Performance BASELINE	Short-term Goal for SY 2024- 25 NEXT YEAR	Long-term Goal SY 2028-29 FIVE YEARS

1.1b	Student Academic Proficiency - MDOE Through-Year Assessment, Math	For all students assessed, MEVA reported the following grade level and overall performance (difference from applicable state averages): Grade 7 - 26% (-12%) Grade 8 - 21% (-18%) Grade 10 - 24% (-18%); and Overall - 24% (-16%).	Partially Meet (Approaching) performance measure in math proficiency, with three out of three (3/3) grade levels achieving within fifteen percent (-15%) of the applicable state averages, by next year, for all students assessed. Grade 7: 26% (-13%). Grade 8: 13% (-28%). High-School: 37% (-12%). Overall – 30% (-13%) Progressing: 2/3 grade levels are within 15% of the applicable state averages.	Meet performance measure in math, with three out of three (3/3) grade levels achieving within five percent (+/- 5%) of the applicable state averages by SY 2028/2029, for all students assessed.
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Spring '25 MTY Grade Level Comparison to State

Math	State - At/Abv	MEVA - At/Abv	Difference	Performance
Grade 7	39%	26%	-13%	Approaching
Grade 8	41%	13%	-28%	Not Meeting
Grade 10	49%	37%	-12%	Approaching
Total	43%	30%	-13%	Approaching
Reading	State - At/Abv	MEVA - At/Abv	Difference	Performance
Grade 7	68%	43%	-25%	Not Meeting
Grade 8	60%	42%	-18%	Not Meeting
Grade 10	59%	52%	-7%	Approaching
Total	62%	48%	-14%	Approaching

This Spring '25 data compares MEVA's tested grade levels to those same grade levels for Maine Through Year (MTY).

Spring '25 MTY Overall Subgroup Data (Grades 7, 8, & 10 Combined)

Subgroups				
Math	State - At/Abv	MEVA - At/Abv	Difference	Performance
SE	12%	8%	-4%	Meeting
ED	29%	27%	-3%	Meeting
Female	42%	30%	-12%	Approaching
Male	44%	28%	-16%	Not Meeting
Reading	State - At/Abv	MEVA - At/Abv	Difference	Performance
SE	30%	23%	-7%	Approaching
ED	52%	45%	-7%	Approaching
Female	67%	53%	-13%	Approaching
Male	57%	37%	-20%	Not Meeting

This Spring '25 data compares MEVA's tested grade levels to those same grade levels for Maine Through Year (MTY).

New Strategic Goal – Subgroup Proficiency: Math (Maine Through Year)

Indicator	Description	2024-25 Performance BASELINE	Short-term Goal for SY 2025-26 NEXT YEAR	Long-term Goal SY 2029-30 FIVE YEARS
1.1a	Student Academic Proficiency - MDOE Through-Year Assessment - Subgroup Data by grade level, Reading	MEVA reported the following subgroup performance: Students on IEPs (7 th Grade): 36% (-2%) Students on IEPs (8 th Grade): 27% (+2%) Students on IEPs (10 th Grade): 18% (-11%) F+R Lunch (7th Grade): 35% (-23%) F+R Lunch (8 th Grade): 56% (+7%) F+R Lunch (10 th Grade): 44% (-4%) Sex/Gender: Male (7th Grade): 38% (-26%) Male (8th Grade): 32% (-22%)	Partially Meet (Approaching) performance measure in reading proficiency, with three out of four subgroups (3/4) subgroups achieving within fifteen percent (-15%) of the applicable state averages, by next year, for all students assessed.	Meet subgroup performance measures in reading, with four out of four (4/4) subgroups achieving within five percent (5%) of the applicable state averages, by the SY-2029/2030.

		<p>Male (10th Grade): 46% (-8%)</p> <p>Female (7th Grade): 48% (-25%)</p> <p>Female (8th Grade): 58% (-6%)</p> <p>Female (10th Grade): 55% (-9%)</p>		
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New Strategic Goal – Subgroup Proficiency: Math (Maine Through Year)

Indicator	Description	2024-25 Performance BASELINE	Short-term Goal for SY 2025-26 NEXT YEAR	Long-term Goal SY 2029-30 FIVE YEARS
1.1a	Student Academic Proficiency - MDOE Through-Year Assessment - Subgroup Data by grade level, Math	<p>MEVA reported the following subgroup performance:</p> <p>Students on IEPs (7th Grade): 9% (-2%)</p> <p>Students on IEPs (8th Grade): 0% (-11%)</p> <p>Students on IEPs (10th Grade): 11% (-3%)</p> <p>F+R Lunch (7th Grade): 12% (-14%)</p> <p>F+R Lunch (8th Grade): 13% (-15%)</p> <p>F+R Lunch (10th Grade): 31% (-3%)</p> <p>Sex/Gender:</p> <p>Male (7th Grade): 29% (-13%)</p> <p>Male (8th Grade): 16% (-27%)</p> <p>Male (10th Grade): 38% (-9%)</p> <p>Female (7th Grade): 21% (-15%)</p> <p>Female (8th Grade): 8% (-32%)</p> <p>Female (10th Grade): 37% (-12%)</p>	<p>Partially Meet (Approaching) performance measure in reading proficiency, with three out of four subgroups (3/4) subgroups achieving within fifteen percent (-15%) of the applicable state averages, by next year, for all students assessed.</p>	<p>Meet subgroup performance measures in reading, with four out of four (4/4) subgroups achieving within five percent (5%) of the applicable state averages, by the SY-2029/2030.</p>

Academic Actions

- Correlation Study between i-Ready assessments and Maine Through Year (MTY) data.
- Provide teacher training on understanding NWEA MAP (norm referenced) and i-Ready (criterion referenced) assessments.
- Review Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Plan and technology tools informed by Spring '25 assessment data.
- Provide targeted teacher professional development, coaching, and feedback throughout SY-2025/2026.
- Continue course curriculum mapping, informed by data analysis.

SY-2025/2026 Assessment Calendar:

Assessment Type	Fall Dates	Winter Dates	Spring Dates
NWEA	September 16, 17, 18, 2025 (Makeup Day - September 19, 2025)	January 13, 14, 15, 2026 (Makeup Day - January 16, 2026)	April 28, 29, 30, 2026 (Makeup Day - May 1, 2026)
MEA (ELA & Math)	October 6-17, 2025	NA	May 11-22, 2026
MEA (Science)	NA	NA	April 6-17, 2026 (HS) May 11-22, 2026 (8 th Grade)
ACCUPLACER	September 16, 17, 18, 2025, with makeup days scheduled throughout the year	Ongoing	Ongoing
i-Ready	ALL 7th - 11th grade students will complete math & Reading. August 25 - September 9, 2025, during Math & English classes, with makeups held during FOX Time and HelpDesk	January 13-15, 2026 (For mid-year enrollees only)	April 13-17, 2026, during Math & English classes, with makeups held during FOX Time and HelpDesk

Summer 2025 Update:

- Project-based learning – 62 students.
- Extended School Year (ESY) – 27 students.
- Extended School Year (ESY), Self-Contained – 19 students.
- Middle School Skills – 29 students.
- High School Enrichment – 8 students.
- Total Count: 145 students.

Dr. Browne reported that the Commission's data collection workbook was completed and submitted. A team of people worked on this effort including Dr. Browne, Stephanie Emery, and Dr. O'Grady. We provided everything they were looking for. We have also submitted additional documents, which were part of the annual monitoring. The End of Year (EOY) meeting with the Maine Charter School Commission was scheduled for mid-August.

We are in progress with our strategic planning; results were shared from Spring 2025 assessments. MEVA's new goal is the proficiency of subgroups for math and reading.

Cherieann asked, when she first joined at the beginning of the year, we were reporting low numbers on the state assessments, especially for seventh (7th) grade, do we have data comparing the data to last year to this year? Dr. Browne committed to bringing longitudinal data to the next meeting.

Tina expressed, it seems our (grade 7 & 8) students were not making target growth. Do you have info of those who met, and what the projected growth was, and if they made it or not? Tina expressed she felt last year we were not making progress in reading, then we had the conversation that performance was better in reading than in math, but the progress for meeting their targets was worse. If they were meeting their projected growth, then we can say yes, we are doing something right even if they come in low. However, if they were not meeting their projected growth, then that was another layer of consideration for us.

Dr Browne said we use the NWEA MAP to measure growth. Overall, as a school (grades 7-11), we met all our targets. When we zoom in and evaluate grades seven and eight (7 and 8); those are the most difficult grades.

Tina made the point that it will be good to know two things: (1) if kids are proficient based on the state averages and on how we compare. (2) Then also knowing whether our grade levels are meeting their projected growth. We will not catch up even if we are meeting what the average growth would be for a student. Tina would also like to look at students' perceptions of rigor (Spring '25 Panorama School Climate Survey) as well.

Donna stated, we know that our incoming seventh (7th) graders come in not meeting standards and are behind, even though we did not have anything to do with them prior. What can we do?

Dr. Browne shared "Academic Actions" which addressed Donna's question. MEVA used iReady diagnostic assessments, which provided grade level placements to see how behind or above they were. This guides course placements and places them where they belong on the level of skill. Dr. Browne suggested to the commission that they consider purchasing iReady as an assessment tool.

Donna asked if we utilized iReady this past year? Dr. Browne said yes, and MEVA included the data in the board reports throughout the school year.

Dr. Browne committed to sending the updated Academic and MTSS plan to the board for the August meeting.

Susan said statistically when we do comparisons, do we have a core group that continuously has been at MEVA that we can look at as a subgroup to determine if we truly have growth? Dr. Browne stated, yes, we have done this analysis before. Susan mentioned it would be good to do this perhaps every year.

Cherieann said she understands we have different populations. Checking how we trend over the past few years that would help with the understanding it may not be the same population.

Dr. Browne committed to bringing this information to the next meeting. Dr. Browne asserted that we have solid processes in place. We were unable to control who enrolled in the school and it was challenging work.

Donna said we appreciate the work that you and the staff do because it is very hard work.

Dr. Browne said, overall, MEVA was doing well on most things within the performance measures; the academic area was the hardest part. The board really helped us on that academic piece. Our focus on academics needed to continue.

The MEVA SY-2025/2026 Assessment calendar was shared.

MEVA has adjusted the name of the Monday faculty meetings to Professional Learning meetings.

Project-based Learning (PBL) Presentation:

- Dr. Christina O’Grady, Curriculum Coordinator, will present a Project-Based Learning (PBL) overview.

WHAT is PBL?

- Develops 21st-century skills essential for future careers.
- Increasing student engagement and motivation
- Promote deeper understanding through hands-on experience.
- Build confidence through authentic achievement.
- Prepares students for collaborative work environments.

Elements of PBL:

1. Sustained Inquiry - Students engage in a rigorous process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.
2. Authenticity - Projects involve real-world context, tasks, tools, and standards.
3. Student Voice and Choice - Students make important decisions about their project, including how they work and what they create.
4. Reflection - Students reflect on their learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, and the quality of their work.

Traditional vs. PBL:

Traditional Approach:

- Teacher-centered instruction
- Passive consumption of information
- Individual work emphasis
- Standardized assessment
- Isolated subject learning

PBL:

- Student-centered exploration
- Active knowledge construction
- Authentic assessment
- Interdisciplinary connections
- Long-term skill development

Developing Projects:

Standards and Goals - Start with the standards and credits needed.

Launch and Implementation - The project is built within the Learning Management System (LMS). MEVA's LMS is Brightspace.

Creation and Presentation - Students create and present the knowledge they have gained.

The Power of Reflection:

Reflection transforms experience into learning. Without intentional reflection, students may complete projects without fully understanding what they have learned or how to apply their new knowledge in different contexts.

Success:

- Summer - 55 students are enrolled in summer PBL.
- Credits Earned - 17 total credits were earned over the school year.
- Graduates - 5 students were able to earn credits to graduate.

Dr O'Grady reported that this year, we made PBL more methodical. PBL helped to explore students' interests and build twenty-first (21st) century skills. We tried to connect student interests with their project which led to post-secondary goals. Most students who engaged in this program had this opportunity, as their last resort, after we have tried everything to engage them. PBL revolves around student-centered exploration, active knowledge construction, authentic assessment, interdisciplinary connections, and long-term skills development.

Donna asked, to whom do the kids present their projects? Students present their final projects to Dr. O'Grady.

SY-2025/2026 New Enrollment:

7/11 Update			
GRADE	New	Returning	Grand Total
7	10		10
8	18	40	58
9	25	29	54
10	37	70	107
11	22	108	130
12	22	89	111
Grand Total	134	336	470

GRADE	Working on Applications	Seat Offers
7	3	11
8	5	5
9	9	11
10	6	7
11	11	4
12	9	10
Grand Total	43	48

Special Education = **27.44%**

SE - GRADE	New	Returning	Grand Total
7	3		3
8	7	11	18
9	5	11	16
10	13	20	33
11	6	28	34
12	7	18	25
Grand Total	41	88	129

Governance.

Governance: Related Services Procedural Manual

- Priorities include provider credentials, contracts and invoices, and provider communications.

Tina Motioned to approve the Related Services Procedural Manual. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Public Discussion.

Upcoming topics in August

- Artificial Intelligence (AI), Faculty computers, policy, and procedures.
- Student and staff laptops inventory and replacement.
- Review MEVA Academic and MTSS Plans.

Cherieann inquired if there had been a previous discussion on having student board members and if the students could get credit for that? She mentioned that her former district had student members, although they could not vote, but they were able to give valuable feedback. Stacey asserted that she thought it was a promising idea. Donna made the point that she needed to look at board policies, but it sounded like a good idea.

Donna said that board self-assessment and board goals will be discussed at the next board meeting.

Stacey asked about MEVA's stance on AI right now? Dr. Browne said that AI usage was up to the teachers, depending upon their comfort with using it in the classroom. MEVA was developing policies and procedures surrounding AI.

Adjournment.

Tina motioned to adjourn. Cherieann seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore