# Maine Learning Innovations

Minutes for a Meeting of the Board of Directors held August 19, 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, August 19th, 2025. Board members attending were Donna Pelletier, Stacey Blanchard, Tina Meserve, and Susan Walters. Cherieann Harrison was excused. A quorum was present.

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

**Opening Items**.

**Approval of Minutes.**

Susan motioned to approve the minutes of the Maine Virtual Academy (MEVA) Governing Board Business Meeting of July15th, 2025. Tina seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Stacey asked if minutes were done through Artificial Intelligence (AI). Dr. Browne and Stephanie Emery confirmed that AI is not being used for the writing of the minutes. Minutes were pulled together from presentation slides and notes written from Dr. Browne and Stephanie Emery's notation collaboration.

**Finance Report.**

2024-2025 Financial Summary:

MEVA shows preliminary/unaudited surplus of $40,236 for the year ended June 30, 2025. The school utilized $204,022 in ESSER III funds for FY'25. These funds were used mainly to pay salaries for learning loss recovery, guidance services and summer school, and purchased technology services and equipment. Salaries and benefits remain our largest expense. Health insurance has required ongoing monitoring. As of June 30, 2025, we had 59 employees made up of 12.5 Administrative positions and 46.5 Teachers/Ed-Techs. Our audit will be conducted by Wipfli and is scheduled to take place the week of August 25th.

Jennifer Hight showed the board a breakdown of the financials. Tina appreciated that Jennifer has kept the board informed of small adjustments that come up unexpectedly in the financials. Donna confirmed what Jennifer was showing in the budget, that the FY25 surplus is about $40K. Jennifer stated that we budgeted break even. Donna asked for clarity, will we still see Covid money on the reports again for August and September of this year? Jennifer clarified it will show for School Year 2024-2025 in the comparative reports next year. MEVA did the best they could to use up as much Covid money as possible. (approx. 90%)

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

FY25 Audit Update:

Jennifer reported that auditing started little earlier than expected. Documentation was due this week. There was a meeting with the auditors, and they said we should have the FY25 financial audit results earlier this year (in November versus December).

FY26 Amended Budget:

Jennifer showed the items that changed from the original FY26 approved budget. Originally, MEVA had an FY26 budget with a $405K deficit, which assumed zero federal grants.

Susan asked if we were expecting any federal funds? If so, what was the expectation of spending that money? Dr. Browne confirmed that FY 26 federal grants: Title IA, IIA, and IVA, plus IDEA, were now substantially approved by the Maine Department of Education (MDOE).

Adding the FY26 grant funds allowed for an increase in budget for salaries. This then brought things down to a $107K surplus.

Jennifer said we feel comfortable having the surplus in case we need staff. In that case that extra money would cover it.

Donna asked how many people did you put into the Title I grant? Dr. Browne states, one (1) teacher and four Ed Techs approximately in the Title I grant. This will be clarified with Jennifer soon. Title II is allocated to teacher-professional development.

Jennifer stated there are some adjustments to the ED279. However, it still seems on track to what we were told what we would get.

Donna questioned the surplus line: where does the funds go? Dr. Browne said it was a financial buffer, in these times of grant uncertainty.

Jennifer pointed out the funds for special education contracted services. The number listed was not guaranteed.

Tina mentioned in other places she has worked, they never had a separate line for surplus funds. They allocated funds into other areas.

Jennifer projected that salaries may consume half of the surplus as well as the related services if it was needed to allocate the funds to other areas.

Susan asked if allocating the surplus would impact anything with the auditors.

Jennifer stated that it does not impact the auditing and mentioned that we could be over budget by ten percent (10%) in some categories.

Donna stated that having the surplus line was concerning. Donna made the point that the board had to vote on what is offered today. Did we want the surplus?

Jennifer stated we must buy laptops annually, and we cannot get them until July, which was a time crunch. She suggested it would not hurt to order them in June instead of July if we have the money set aside; money could be placed there. Dr. Browne reported we have increased enrollment closer to five hundred (500) students so having the money there is a good thing.

Susan made the point that if we want to put the expected surplus into places where we will use it, then we need to consider that option.

Tina said it made sense for the board to put the extra money into the budget somewhere.

Susan said that she would like Dr. Browne's and Jennifer's recommendation on where to place the extra funds.

Dr. Browne said she would like it placed into the laptops. Jennifer agreed with Dr. Browne and recommended funds go into the special education-related services line. Jennifer adjusted the financials to show the allocations in the identified areas.

Stacey asked if utilities were included in the rent of the offices? Jennifer said yes.

Tina pointed out the $20K MEVA had in accrued interest. Jennifer stated that we will need to discuss this further. We cannot invest but our interest is running about $4K a month. The total interest was $40K last year. It has gone down a little bit. Donna said that this can be saved for next meeting. Donna inquired how we were with this budget right now with the adjustments and needing a motion to approve. Board members seemed to all agree with the allocations.

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

**Administration.**

Dr. Melinda Browne presented the Head of School Report.

SY-2025/2026 Lauch:

- Teachers started work on August 11th. Two weeks of professional learning.
- Vector training.
- First day of classes is August 25th.
- First weekly Professional Learning (PL) Meeting is on August 25th at 3:00 pm.
- We are doing a schoolwide book study: *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation,* Cobb & Krownapple (2019). Do any board members want a copy?

- We are pleased to announce our Cognia Accreditation.

Dr. Browne reported that the first week in faculty return (August 11 through 15th) was committed to state compliance training and onboarding new employees.

MEVA's first day of school is August 25th.

We are resuming schoolwide faculty meetings. The name of the Monday meeting is changing from process improvement meeting to professional learning meeting.

We are doing a faculty book study about improving student outcomes and experience in the school. We have extra copies of the book being used, if board members would like one.

Board members expressed interest in getting a copy. Christina O'Grady pulled this reading source together and we will continue this throughout the weekly meetings.

Student/Faculty Laptops:

- MEVA owns and manages student laptops in house.
- MEVA owns employee laptops, but contracts with Stride for IT services.
- Detailed procedures for both student and employee laptops were sent to the board.

Dr. Browne shared information with the board on MEVA's processes for both staff and student computers.

Stacey asked if MEVA has an in-house technology person? Dr. Browne stated yes, we contract IT services with Stride for staff computers, and we had an in-house faculty member for student laptops.

Curriculum Mapping:

- During SY-2024/2025 the board reviewed and approved curriculum maps for primary core subjects, grades 7-12.
- The Curriculum Mapping Committee is resuming their work during SY-2025/2026.
- We will bring maps to the board for approval, October through March, in accordance with the schedule.

The curriculum mapping committee will have a meeting this week and is solidifying the schedule. Maps this year will include elective courses.

SY-2025/2026 New Enrollment (8/15/2025):

Dr. Browne observed that special education numbers were running slightly lower than in prior years. We are on track to meet our enrollment goals.

| 8/15/25 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRADE | New | Returning | Grand Total | Working on Apps | Seat Offers | New Interest |
| 7 | 11 | 0 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 1 |
| 8 | 28 | 39 | 67 | 10 | 3 | 11 |
| 9 | 35 | 24 | 59 | 9 | 4 | 3 |
| 10 | 41 | 67 | 108 | 10 | 2 | 22 |
| 11 | 28 | 101 | 129 | 4 | 3 | 38 |
| 12 | 25 | 85 | 110 | 6 | 5 | 8 |
| Grand Total | 168 | 316 | *484* | 49 | 20 | 83 |

| SE Update 8/15 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| GRADE | New | Returning | Grand Total |
| 7 | 3 | | 3 |
| 8 | 7 | 11 | 18 |
| 9 | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| 10 | 11 | 18 | 29 |
| 11 | 6 | 26 | 32 |
| 12 | 6 | 16 | 22 |
| Grand Total | 41 | 79 | *120* |

**Governance.**

Annual Review of Contract with Maine General:

- The ninth renewal of the contract with Maine General for school-based physician services was shared with the MEVA governing board.

Longitudinal Data Analysis:

- We shared longitudinal data to follow the discussion at our last meeting.
- We continue to update our charts as assessments are administered.

Donna observed that the longer students stay with us the better they do in the document Dr. Browne sent to the board.

Donna said the commission (end-of-year) visit occurred a short while ago and the commission had lots of good things to say about MEVA. They did note the reading scores for MEVA had gone down but were happy to hear about the plan to change that.

Review of Academic/MTSS Plan:

- We will share MEVA's Academic/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Plan from time to time.
- This is a working document designed to inform our teachers.

Dr. Browne said that we have a solid framework in place.

Governance: First Reading:

- First Reading: GCSA – Employee Computers.
- First Reading: GCSA-R – Employee Computers and Internet Use Rules.
- First Reading: IJNDD – Artificial Intelligence Use.
- First Reading: IJNDD-R – Guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Donna said she needed a motion to move to a second reading for policies, D-G.

Tina suggested putting the policies forward as a group for a second reading. Can we still talk about them individually? Donna confirmed, yes.

Tina motioned to group policies, D-G, and move them to a second reading. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

Dr. Browne said we have received employee feedback on these policies. There has been input on AI use and employee computer policies.

Tina wanted to make sure that staff understood if they use their own computer that it opened their computer up to malicious things as well as Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) requirements. If they keep their personal computer separate from work, it keeps them free from legal concerns, including FOAA, in the event something was to happen.

Tina asked if staff would receive training in relation to AI as stated in the policy. Dr. Browne confirmed, yes, and stated we have an AI training and MEVA used the MDOE AI tool kit in the training as well. Susan made the point that AI is changing, so a policy update may be needed soon.

Tina motioned to move the policies to a second reading. Stacey seconded. All in favor, so moved.

**Public Discussion.**

- Workshop to set board goals directly following today's meeting.
- Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) Training for board members is available on MEVA's Vector platform.
- Board Conflict of Interest (MEVA Policy BCB) forms will be available in Vector.

Donna announced that the board had plans today to set their board goals in a workshop after this meeting.

Donna said that regulations required board members to take FOAA training, and the Maine Charter School Commission (MCSC) required at least one training session annually. This will cover this request.

After the September board meeting, Donna said we will request board members to complete the Board Conflict of Interest form as well. Stephanie Emery will set up Vector platform accounts for everyone and send it out to the board after the September board meeting.

Dr. Browne shared news that the MCSC is updating the SY-2024/2025 annual monitoring report to show that the board exceeded their performance expectations. Donna stated, it was because we self-evaluate with a survey and write our goals.

**Adjournment.**

Donna asked for a motion to go into the workshop.

Tina motioned to go into the workshop. Susan seconded. All in favor, so moved. The board meeting was adjourned at 5:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Emery and Dr. Melinda Browne
Secretary pro tempore