

1. Agenda Approval

Does the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) have any changes or additions to the agenda?

COMMISSION ACTION

A motion to approve the agenda as submitted.

2. Minutes Approval

Does the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) have any changes or additions to the meeting minutes from December 12, 2013?

COMMISSION ACTION

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2013, as submitted.

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**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2013
IDAHO STATE CAPITOL BUILDING
EAST WING 41, BOISE, IDAHO**

A regular meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) was held Thursday, December 12, 2013, at the Idaho State Capitol Building, Boise, ID, East Wing, Room 41. Chairman Alan Reed presided.

The following members were in attendance:

Nick Hallett	Gayle O'Donahue
Wanda Quinn	Brian Scigliano

Absent:

Esther Van Wart
Gayann DeMordaunt

Chairman Reed called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

A) COMMISSION WORK

1. Agenda Review / Approval

M/S: (Hallett/O'Donahue): To approve the agenda as published. *The motion passed unanimously.*

2. Minutes Approval

M/S: (Quinn/O'Donahue): To approve the meeting minutes from October 10, 2013 as submitted. *The motion passed unanimously.*

B) COMMISSION EDUCATION

1. Overview of New PCSC Annual Update Budget Template

Alison Henken, Charter Schools Program Manager, introduced the PCSC's new budget template, which was designed to provide:

- Consistency in budget reporting for all PCSC-authorized schools; and
- Alignment with the State Department of Education (SDE) IFARMS report for ease of completion by the schools while continuing to address the PCSC's need for information beyond the scope of annual budget projections (specifically, year-to-date actual and year-end projections).

C) CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL UPDATES

1. White Pine Charter School (WPCS)

WPCS provided a written report only.

The Commission had no comments or questions regarding WPCS' annual update.

2. Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School (TCPCS)

Daniel Wendt, Principal and Superintendent; and Justin Judy, Board Chairman, represented TCPCS.

Mr. Wendt provided an overview of the culture and program at TCPCS. TCPCS has high expectations of their students and sees only a small fraction of the number of disciplinary referrals typical of other schools at which Mr. Wendt has served.

Commissioner Hallett commended the school of their 4 Star Rating, increasing dual enrollment, and favorable fund balance.

Chairman Reed commended the school for their progress and achievements.

3. Monticello Montessori School (Monticello)

Monticello provided a written report only.

The Commission had no comments or questions regarding Monticello's annual update.

4. Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center (BCCLC)

BCCLC provided a written report only.

The Commission had no comments or questions regarding BCCLC's annual update.

5. The Academy at Roosevelt Center (The Academy)

The Academy provided a written report only.

The Commission had no comments or questions regarding The Academy's annual update.

6. Odyssey Charter School (Odyssey)

Odyssey provided a written report only.

Chairman Reed asked for clarification regarding Odyssey's accounting error mentioned in the materials.

Tamara Baysinger, PCSC Director, explained that approximately \$250,000 in revenue was accidentally entered into the budget twice. The individual who made the error is no longer associated with the school. Odyssey has since hired a business manager.

7. American Heritage Charter School (AHCS)

AHCS provided a written report only.

The Commission had no comments or questions regarding AHCS's annual update.

8. Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy (CTEA)

Joel Weaver, Director of School Programs; Velda Racehorse, Board Chairman; and Merceline Boyer, Board Treasurer, represented CTEA.

Mr. Weaver provided an overview of the school's first months of operation. He discussed language immersion implementation, teacher team building, and community support.

Ms. Racehorse expressed pride regarding CTEA's rapid progress from groundbreaking in June to opening the school in fall.

Ms. Boyer noted her observation that children in the community are benefiting from the language immersion even if they are not enrolled in the school.

Mr. Weaver reviewed CTEA's budget, noting that a shortfall is anticipated by the end of the fiscal year. Inadequate cash flow is anticipated to become a problem in June.

Commissioner Hallett said it appears that lower than expected enrollment appears to be a major cause of CTEA's financial concern. He asked whether CTEA expects to achieve the projected enrollment next year.

Mr. Weaver said CTEA expects enrollment growth. He indicated that the school

should be more financially stable next year due to lower facility costs and the receipt of Impact Aid and Title VII Native American federal funds.

Commissioner Hallett asked how CTEA will cover payroll over the summer.

Mr. Weaver said the Board is discussing borrowing funds.

Commissioner Hallett asked whether CTEA has obtained assurance of any banks' willingness to provide a loan.

Mr. Weaver said the school has not yet contacted any banks.

Commissioner Hallett suggested the school secure a loan or line of credit well in advance of the June shortfall.

Ms. Racehorse said the school expects enrollment to grow annually as more students start kindergarten and move up through the grades.

Mr. Weaver expects CTEA will find that enrollment levels out around 24-25 students per grade.

Chairman Reed noted that, during the petitioning phase, CTEA expected significantly higher enrollment. He asked how CTEA plans to increase enrollment enough to regain fiscal stability.

Ms. Racehorse said they got a late start to the school year due to facility construction, which stalled some enrollments. Bussing issues created a further, negative effect.

Commissioner O'Donahue congratulated the school for their hard work and dedication. She inquired about waiting lists and a marketing plan.

Mr. Weaver said the school has not implemented an enrollment marketing plan. He anticipates continued tribal support and increased interest as the community sees the school develop. Prior to opening, CTEA had a waiting list opening in some grades, but there is no waiting list at this time.

Chairman Reed reminded CTEA that one of the responsibilities of the Commission is to protect taxpayer's funds. He requested that Ms. Baysinger outline possible action of the PCSC.

Ms. Baysinger indicated that the notice of defect system no longer exists, but there is a process by which the PCSC may address fiscal concerns at a school in order to protect taxpayers in the event of a mid-year closure. She read from Idaho Statute:

If an authorized chartering entity has reason to believe that a public charter school cannot remain fiscally sound for the remainder of its certificate term, it shall provide the State Department of Education with written notification of such concern. Upon receiving such notification, the State Department of Education shall have the authority to modify the percentage of the total appropriation to be paid to the public charter school pursuant to the provisions of.....such that equal percentages are paid on each of the prescribed dates.

Ms. Baysinger said that CTEA's certificate term begins now and extends to 2017. The purpose of this section of code is to protect the taxpayer and the students. If the Commission issues this letter of concern to SDE now, it probably won't make much of a difference this year, as CTEA is a new school and has already received most of their funding. However, it may impact next year's funding. The final decision regarding modification of the payment schedule would be made by the SDE.

The Commission discussed issuance of a letter of concern and the negative impact this may have on CTEA, enrollment, and their ability to obtain financing.

In response to questions, Ms. Baysinger said the letter of concern would be a public document, but it would be sent only to the SDE and school. It would not change the amount of funding to CTEA, but could affect the timeline on which the SDE disbursed funds.

Chairman Reed asked PCSC staff to provide to CTEA a list of the PCSC's expectations for a status report in February. The report should address a marketing plan to increase enrollment, documented plans to cover cash flow shortages, projections for FY15, and any other plans to improve fiscal stability at the school.

D) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED CHARTER OR PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE AMENDMENTS

M/S (Hallett/Quinn): Amend the agenda to proceed with NI STEM. *The motion passed unanimously.*

1. North Idaho STEM Academy (NI STEM)

Ms. Baysinger that NI STEM would like to expand into high school grades. This idea was originally proposed by the Commission during the petitioning phase, but the school wished to postpone expansion until it was more established and assured of sufficient community interest.

Colleen Thomson, Project Coordinator; Scott Thomson, Administrator; and Lorna Finman, Board Member, represented NI STEM via telephone.

Commissioner Scigliano commended NI STEM for survey results which are overwhelmingly supportive (144 families) of opening a high school.

Mr. Thomson said individuals approach him daily to check whether NI STEM is planning a high school expansion.

Commissioner Quinn said she had an opportunity to speak to Mr. Thomson and the Lakeland School District. She is very empathetic to both entities regarding their individual concerns. Ultimately, both entities can be successful with the growth within the community. NI STEM epitomizes what a charter school should be with high achievement, engaged students, academics, community involvement, and waiting lists for expansion. She noted that Lakeland should not be impacted until 2019.

Mr. Thomson agreed that most enrollment growth would be organic, moving up from NI STEM's own elementary population.

Commissioner Quinn indicated that Lakeland may believe it is a 2014 impact and suggested that NI STEM discuss their plans in more detail with the district. She complimented Dr. Finman for her work, experience, and support to NI STEM.

Commissioner Hallett encouraged NI STEM to keep close communications with the Lakeland School District on the impacts and timing of these amendments.

M/S (Quinn/Hallett): To approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by North Idaho STEM Charter Academy. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Sage International School of Boise (Sage)

Ms. Baysinger said Sage is requesting removal of the school's existing, per-grade enrollment caps. These would be replaced with a school-wide enrollment cap increasing from 712 to 1200 students, almost doubling the size of the school. The expansion would be made possible by Sage's receipt of a \$350,000 grant from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation. The school-wide approach would allow Sage more flexibility based on community need. Decisions regarding per-grade enrollment caps will need to be made annually and publicly posted well in advance of Sage's enrollment lottery.

Commissioner Quinn said it makes sense to be flexible in the low grades and grow the schools organically.

Commissioner Hallett asked what the breakdown of enrollment would be between elementary and high school.

Commissioner O'Donahue said meeting materials report expected enrollment of 480 K through 5, 400 in 6 through 9, and 320 in grades 10 through 12.

M/S (Quinn/Scigliano): To approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Sage International School of Boise. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Syringa Mountain School (SMS)

Ms. Baysinger said SMS is proposing an amendment that would permit more rapid enrollment growth than originally approved in the petition. She noted that because SMS won't open until next fall, the PCSC has no performance record on which to base this decision; however, the school's leadership has a history of being organized and responsive.

M/S (Hallett/Quinn): To approve the proposed performance certificate amendment as submitted by Wood River Waldorf Methods School, also known as Syringa Mountain School. The motion passed unanimously.

E) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Commissioner Quinn asked for more information regarding the process to get the performance certificates to this point.

Ms. Baysinger described the collaborative process between PCSC staff and schools to develop mission-specific goals, which are then considered by a subcommittee of commissioners.

Chairman Reed said the subcommittee and the schools are in agreement with the contents of the documents by the time they reach full Commission consideration. Without exception, the schools have expressed satisfaction with the outcomes.

1. Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy (CTEA)

M/S (O'Donahue/Quinn): To execute the Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy Performance Certificate as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2. INSPIRE Connections Academy (INSPIRE)

M/S (Hallett/O'Donahue): To execute the INSPIRE Connections Academy Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

3. iSucceed Virtual High School (iSVHS)

M/S (Quinn/Scigliano): To execute the iSucceed Virtual High School Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

4. Idaho College and Career Readiness Academy (IDCCRA)

M/S (Quinn/Hallett): To execute the Idaho College and Career Readiness Academy Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

5. Heritage Academy (HA)

M/S (O'Donahue/Scigliano): To execute the Heritage Academy Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

6. The Academy at Roosevelt Center (The Academy)

M/S (O'Donahue/Hallett): To execute the Academy at Roosevelt Center Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

M/S (Quinn/Hallett): To adjourn the meeting. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m.