

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2014  
700 WEST STATE STREET  
JRW WEST, BOISE, IDAHO**

A regular meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) was held Thursday, February 13, 2014, at 700 West State Street, Boise, ID, JRW West Conference Room. Chairman Alan Reed presided.

The following members were in attendance:

Gayann DeMordaunt	Nick Hallett
Gayle O'Donahue	Wanda Quinn
Brian Scigliano	Esther Van Wart

Chairman Reed called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

**A) COMMISSION WORK**

**1. Agenda Review / Approval**

**M/S: (Quinn/Hallett): To approve the agenda combining the annual updates for the schools with the respective amendments and adding an additional agenda item – PCSC Funding Update. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**2. Minutes Approval**

**M/S: (Hallett/O'Donahue): To approve the meeting minutes from December 12, 2013, as submitted. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**B) CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL UPDATES**

**1. Idaho Science and Technology Charter School (ISTCS)**

Mike Kitzmiller, Chairman; Kelly Moulton, Vice Chairman; Tami Dortch, Administrator; and Chantelle Macy, Business Manager, represented the ISTCS.

Mr. Kitzmiller commended Tamara Baysinger, PCSC Director, for her assistance in improving the school-authorizer relationship during a time of struggle.

Ms. Moulton presented ISTCS's parent survey results.

Ms. Dortch provided comments regarding ISTCS's self-reporting of problems identified at the school, which the board and administration are taking action to correct.

Ms. Macy gave a financial update for the school. Funds are tight, but she anticipates a carryover of \$21,000. She will meet with Alison Henken, PCSC Manager, to review the discrepancies between the school's budget and the PCSC template.

Commissioner Hallett suggested the school may be bit overstaffed due to the low enrollment. He asked what the school plans to implement in order to increase enrollment.

Ms. Dortch said there is seldom a waiting list. Enrollment tends to increase after the first semester when parents and students look for alternatives to their current schools.

Mr. Kitzmiller noted that ISTCS's enrollment increased substantially from last year.

Commissioner Hallett cautioned the school that if enrollment increases too late in the school year, the school won't be funded for those students.

Commissioner DeMordaunt commended the school for its positive survey results and enrollment growth in middle grades, which is a difficult demographic to attract.

Commissioner O'Donahue commended the school board for their commitment and effort.

Commissioner Scigliano asked if the school has a Marketing plan.

Ms. Moulton said the school reaches out through word of mouth, has a good relationship with the Blackfoot School District, and uses a website. Most other marketing efforts attempted in the past have proven ineffective.

Ms. Dortch concurred that a huge marketing plan resulted in only one additional student.

Commissioner Van Wart said her experience with this community coincides with the school's representation.

Commissioner Quinn commended the school for handling their struggles professionally.

## **2. Rolling Hills Public Charter School (RHPCS)**

RHPCS provided a written report only.

Commissioner DeMordaunt reported there has been positive feedback within the community regarding RHPCS's new administrator.

### **3. Heritage Community Charter School (HCCS)**

Robb MacDonald, Board Chairman; Javier Castaneda, Executive Director; Tammie Strickwerda, Board Member; and Elizabeth Moore, Business Manager, represented HCCS.

Mr. MacDonald provided an update on the status of the school. He requested that the Commission consider delaying a letter of concern regarding finances for two months, to facilitate continued lease negotiations.

Mr. Castaneda reported that spending has been limited to critical items only.

Commissioners DeMordaunt and Hallett commended the school for making sharp adjustments to correct the financial situation.

Ms. Strickwerda noted that inaccurate enrollment estimates contributed to the problem.

Mr. Castaneda said HCCS is tracking data to determine which marketing efforts are effective and why students are leaving.

Mr. MacDonald explained that, when the budget was created, they estimated 540 enrollment and actual was 470. The Business Manger left and the transition did not go smoothly. Salaries did not accurately reflect teacher's contracts. The salary budget was out of sync by a year. The school has implemented practices to ensure this situation does not recur.

Chairman Reed requested that the school submit updated financial reports clarifying the relationship between the cash flow and budget projections, and these presently seem to contradict.

Commissioner Quinn commended the school for its dramatically improved star rating.

Commissioners DeMordaunt and Hallett expressed interest in delaying issuance of a letter of concern.

Ms. Baysinger indicated that purpose of a letter of concern is to protect taxpayers in the event of a mid-year closure. At this point in the fiscal year, HCCS would experience no impact of such a letter until FY15.

**M/S (Quinn/DeMordaunt): To delay consideration of a written notice of concern until the April 2014 Commission meeting, at which time the**

**Heritage Community Charter School will provide an update to include facilities lease agreement negotiations and a reconciled budget and cash flow projection.**

*The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **4. The Village Charter School (TVCS)**

Lee Miller, Board Chairman; Tony Richards, Administrator; and Michelle Roth, Business Manager, represented TVCS.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked what steps the school took to increase from a 2 to 3 Star Rating.

Mr. Richards said the school implemented professional professional development, focusing on weak areas and making frequent adjustments based on results. The school is part of the Idaho Leads Group at BSU providing real-time data, which is being used on a daily basis.

Commissioner DeMordaunt observed that Singapore Math aligns well with Common Core, but it can take approximately three years to see measurable results.

Commission Van Wart asked how the school addresses bullying and asked what strategies are being used to improve classroom management and student engagement.

Mr. Richards said the school has been using the WYSE tool and has established a high expectation of the students, who are rising to the challenge. The administrator is notified immediately of any bullying cases.

Chairman Reed inquired about the school's anticipated \$63,000 loss for FY14.

TVCS reported that the reason for the deficit is that the school is beginning the process of purchasing a facility. The bonds priced out higher than anticipated and the school needed to pull out of the process, incurring a loss of \$60,000 in already expended resources. The school plans to proceed with facility fundraisers.

#### **5. Another Choice Virtual School (ACVS)**

Ross Jones, Business Manager; John Kelleher, Board Chairman; Dr. Laura Sandidge, SpEd Director; and Dr. Kelsey Williams, Administrator, represented ACVS.

The school's representatives provided a PowerPoint presentation. ACVS's

enrollment includes a FRL population of 80%, yet the school has seen increased academic performance and student motivation.

Commissioner Hallett asked about concerns expressed on the surveys with laptops freezing up and a slow and overcrowded Internet lab. He asked how these concerns are being addressed.

Dr. Williams said the computer lab hours have been expanded and the school is discussing implementing a sign-up usage schedule. The slow Internet issue has been corrected through technical updates. Site blocks have been implemented at school and at home to prevent cyber bullying; these blocks may account for some of the students not being access certain websites.

## **6. Compass Charter School (Compass)**

Kelly Trudeau, Administrator; Mike Adolf, Board Chairman; and Cathy Stover, Business Manager, represented Compass.

Ms. Trudeau provided an update regarding the status of the school. Compass has earned a 5 Star Rating for two consecutive years, is now in the midst of a capital campaign, and has established a dual credit partnership with CWI.

Chairman Reed asked what about Compass' success might be useful for assisting other schools.

Ms. Trudeau said the school is working on an expansion amendment that will describe the replicable model.

## **7. Vision Charter School (Vision)**

Wendy Oldenkamp, Principal, represented Vision.

Ms. Oldenkamp provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the status of the school. Vision works to offer every student the opportunity to earn an AA degree prior to high school graduation, regardless of the student's financial resources.

## **8. Liberty Charter School (Liberty)**

Liberty provided a written report only.

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

## **9. Victory Charter School (Victory)**

Victory provided a written report only.

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

#### **10. Legacy Charter School (Legacy)**

Seth Stallcop, Administrator, represented Legacy.

Mr. Stallcop said he is excited to see the educational choices that have become available in Idaho since charter legislation passed in 1998. Legacy missed being a 5 Star school by just 5 points. The school's financial situation is secure and improving. Legacy focuses on Harbor training and has implemented a Harbor Room with a new staff member to oversee the culture of the room to ensure it matches classroom cultures.

Commissioner Hallett asked if Legacy has plans for its increased fund balance.

Mr. Stallcop said the fund balance will be maintained to protect teachers from economic difficulties during downturns. Legacy had to freeze increases in teacher's salaries in recent years, but did not need to cut salaries.

Ms. Clement Taylor, State Department of Education School Choice Coordinator, noted that Legacy had the highest accreditation score in the state's history at only three years from inception. The team had to look extremely closely to come up with some items for school improvement.

Commissioners DeMordaunt and Quinn commended the school for its success.

#### **11. Sage International School of Boise (Sage)**

Keith Donahue, Director of Operations; and Lisa Lechner, Business Manager, represented Sage.

Mr. Donahue gave a report on Sage's expansion and the school's partnership with Echo Group.

Commissioner Scigliano asked if Sage has received positive feedback regarding its change in grading systems.

Mr. Donahue said the new system has been successful overall, though some stakeholders have expressed discomfort during the transition.

Mr. Donahue said it is a big switch and Sage feels it is going well.

Commissioner Van Wart verified with Ms. Lechner that the minor SpEd file issues noted during the site visit have been corrected.

Commissioner DeMordaunt commended the school for getting the IB program started and receiving the JKAF Grant.

## **12. Falcon Ridge Public Charter School (FRPCS)**

FRPCS provided a written report only.

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

## **C) OTHER CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATES**

### **1. Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy Financial Status Update (CTEA)**

Joel Weaver, Director School Programs; Velda Racehorse, Board Chairman; and Cyd Crue, Curriculum Coordinator, represented CTEA via telephone.

Mr. Weaver said, according to their plan and advice from the Commission, CTEA made it a priority to get the FY14 deficit covered. A \$40,000 loan was secured from D.L. Evans Bank at a 5.5% interest rate in order to cover cash flow shortfalls.

Commissioner Quinn confirmed with Mr. Weaver that CTEA anticipates a \$64,000 deficit for the current school year, but on February 4<sup>th</sup> the Fort Hall Business Council voted to allow CTEA to reallocate some tribal funds to help cover that amount. Federal Impact Aid will provide a long-term solution to CTEA's financial difficulties, which were largely due to low enrollment and startup facility costs.

Commissioner Hallett asked whether marketing efforts are underway and what results CTEA expects from those efforts.

Mr. Weaver said advertisements will begin running shortly with a focus on K-6 enrollment opportunities. All but five existing students have expressed their intent to return next year.

The Commission requested a fiscal update at the April Commission meeting.

Chairman Reed reminded the school that one of the responsibilities of an authorizer is to inform the SDE regarding any public charter schools having fiscal shortfalls.

**D) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED CHARTER OR PERFORMANCE  
CERTIFICATE AMENDMENTS**

**1. Compass Public Charter School Proposed Charter Amendments (Compass)**

**M/S (DeMordaunt/Hallett):** To approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Compass Public Charter School. *The motion passed unanimously.*

**2. Another Choice Virtual School Proposed Charter Amendments (ACVS)**

Dr. Williams said increased enrollment would provide financial resources to offer additional programs for students.

**M/S (Hallett/Van Wart):** To approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Another Choice Virtual School. *The motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Idaho Science and Technology Charter School Proposed Charter Amendments (ISTCS)**

Ms. Moulton reviewed the school's request for an increase in enrollment and breakdown of the increases by grade level.

Commissioner Scigliano asked what staffing changes are needed to accommodate the increase.

Ms. Dortch said ISTCS separated 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades and, due to current overstaffing, there is no increased staffing necessary.

**M/S (Quinn/Van Wart):** To approve the proposed charter amendments as submitted by Idaho Science and Technology Charter School. *The motion passed unanimously.*

**4. Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning Proposed Charter and Bylaws Amendments (PPSEL)**

Brian Gardner, Board Chairman, represented PPSEL via teleconference.

Mr. Gardner said the bylaws were not as effective as anticipated with regard to the board member elections process. The amendment updates the process while retaining opportunity for stakeholder input.

**M/S (Hallett/DeMordaunt): To approve the proposed charter amendments and bylaws as submitted by Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**5. The Village Charter School Proposed Performance Certificate Amendment (TVCS)**

Commissioner DeMordaunt verified with TVCS that the total cap previously approved for the school will not be exceeded in this amendment. It only changes the means by which TVCS achieves the enrollment.

Ms. Baysinger said that, during the process of developing the performance certificate, the PCSC approved a general standard that expansion requests would be approved when schools are in good standing and above. It is too soon to know what TVCS's accountability designation will be, though estimates indicate they may be at the lower end of the good standing range. TVCS is showing positive growth but has only a brief track record.

**M/S (Quinn/Hallett): To approve the proposed Performance Certificate submitted by The Village Charter School. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**E) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES**

**1. Compass Public Charter School (Compass)**

**M/S (DeMordaunt/Van Wart): To execute the Compass Public Charter School Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**2. Vision Public Charter School (Vision)**

**M/S (DeMordaunt/Scigliano): To execute the Vision Public Charter School Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**3. Falcon Ridge Public Charter School (FRPCS)**

**M/S (DeMordaunt/Van Wart): To execute the Falcon Ridge Public Charter School Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**4. Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center (BCCLC)**

**M/S (O'Donahue/Hallett): To execute the Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center Performance Certificate as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.***

## F) OTHER BUSINESS

### 1. Proposed PCSC Petition Evaluation Rubric Revisions

Ms. Baysinger said staff is recommended amendments to the PER to remove duplicative items and improve logical organization of petitions.

**M/S (Van Wart/DeMordaunt): To approve the amended PCSC Petition Evaluation Rubric as submitted.**

Commissioner Hallett asked if schools had an opportunity to comment.

Ms. Baysinger said the opportunity was provided, but no comments were received.

*The motion passed unanimously.*

### 2. Proposed PCSC Policy Revisions

Ms. Baysinger said the proposed policy amendments are intended to increase flexibility in PCSC decision-making while still establishing a clear standard for petition quality. The proposed changes were shared with stakeholder groups and no comments were received.

**M/S (Quinn/O'Donahue): To approve the amended PCSC policies as submitted.** *The motion passed unanimously.*

### 3. Legislative Update

Ms. Baysinger described H408, which would allow a school board to hire the spouse of a director under certain circumstances in small school districts.

The PCSC took no formal position on H408.

Ms. Baysinger described S1264, which in its original form would have made the PCSC a self-governing agency. The draft has since been amended to simply clarify the division of roles between the PCSC and SBOE staff. She noted that a number of legislators expressed their concern that the PCSC continue to receive adequate support in order to fulfill its role.

### 4. PCSC Funding Update

Ms. Baysinger explained that authorizer fees replace the general fund dollars historically appropriated to the PCSC. Some legislators have expressed the opinion that the PCSC should receive general funding dollars in addition to

authorizer fees. The PCSC's budget will increase only slightly from FY14 to FY15, but an amount insufficient to hire additional staff.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Baysinger reported that NACSA received a federal grant for authorizer evaluations. NACSA has offered to evaluate the PCSC at no cost to the PCSC; Idaho was selected largely due to its ongoing efforts to implement best authorizing practices. The evaluation process will begin with a documents review in May, followed by a visit during the June PCSC meeting. NACSA will draft a final report, which the PCSC will have an opportunity to review prior to its presentation in August.

### **FUTURE PCSC MEETINGS**

The PCSC's regular meeting on April 10 conflicts with some Commissioners' and staff's upcoming visit to an authorizer in Michigan. The August meeting date also causes scheduling conflicts.

**M/S (Van Wart/Hallett): To reschedule the April 10, 2014, regular meeting to April 17, 2014; and to reschedule the August 14, 2014, regular meeting to August 12, 2014. *The motion passed unanimously.***

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:33 p.m.