

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2014
650 WEST STATE STREET
SUITE 307, BOARD ROOM, BOISE, IDAHO**

A special meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) was held Thursday, May 1, 2014, at 650 West State Street, Boise, ID, in the Office of the State Board of Education, Suite 307 Board Room. Chairman Alan Reed presided by telephone and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

The following members were in attendance by telephone when the meeting was called to order:

Gayann DeMordaunt	Gayle O'Donahue
Wanda Quinn	Esther Van Wart

Commissioners Brian Scigliano and Nick Hallett joined the meeting after it was in session. Commissioner Scigliano attended in person.

Agenda Review / Approval

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

A) COMMISSION DISCUSSION

1. Proposed PCSC Alternative School Performance Framework

Chairman Reed requested that Tamara Baysinger, PCSC Director, provide an introduction to the draft Alternative School Framework.

Ms. Baysinger provided an overview of the reasons for the creation of the Alternative School Framework, the status of the State Department of Education's (SDE) process of revising the Star Rating system with consideration for alternative schools, and the adjusted and new measures presented in the PCSC's draft Alternative School Framework. She summarized feedback the PCSC staff received from PCSC-authorized alternative schools, explaining that certain measures suggested by one school representative would be difficult to use due to issues with sample size and/or data collection. She provided particular detail about the same school representative's feedback regarding proposed Measure 1b. Written feedback from the Idaho Virtual Academy (IDVA) raised concerns about the method used to calculate this measure. Ms. Baysinger explained the school's

concern, the research the PCSC staff completed related to the measure, and the reasons that staff continued to include the measure in the draft. She recommended that the PCSC consider this information when making a decision about Measure 1b.

Chairman Reed asked if any of the stakeholders present for the meeting wished to give public comment.

Kelly Edginton, Administrator for Idaho Virtual Academy (IDVA), responded in the affirmative. She stated that she appreciates the creation of the alternative framework, and agrees that it may be difficult to get data for some of the measures she proposed in her written comments. She reiterated her interest in student persistence being considered, since alternative schools have students who graduate or persist in school that wouldn't have otherwise. However, she recognizes that the PCSC may not be able to track this type of measure. She highlighted the concern she included in her written comment regarding Measure 1b, emphasizing that if many alternative schools score high in the Star Ratings as a result of changes to the system, the measure may penalize some of them by placing them in low percentile groups despite their high scores.

Suzi Budge, lobbyist with SBS Associates, also provided public comment. She stated that she is always concerned about additional measures placed on schools on top of what is already required and believes that Measure 1b is an example of this since the percentile comparison is not required by the SDE. She also does not appreciate the school-to-school comparison, as she feels it creates a competition between schools. She believes the focus should be on how alternative schools help students grow.

Having heard public comment, Chairman Reed presented the agenda item for PCSC discussion.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked Ms. Baysinger to clarify why staff proposed Measure 1b.

Ms. Baysinger responded that the measure was intended to be favorable for the schools, since the measure it replaced was related to the federal status designations that alternative schools are more likely than traditional schools to receive. An alternative school could be identified as a Focus or Priority school but still do well in comparison to its peers; the draft Measure 1b is intended to acknowledge this.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked whether the PCSC could consider whether to include Measure 1b at a later time, perhaps after the PCSC receives the SDE's drafted changes.

Ms. Baysinger responded that this would be difficult since the PCSC has to sign performance certificates with all PCSC-authorized schools by July 1st and it may be unfair to schools to expect them to agree to a certificate without at least knowing the types of measures that will be included in the framework.

Commissioner Quinn asked whether the decision was between including Measure 1b or reverting to the previous measure as it is in the framework for general schools.

Ms. Baysinger replied that this is the primary consideration. The measure could also be eliminated. She also noted that the other alternative schools PCSC staff spoke to about Measure 1b gave positive feedback, saying they preferred the new measure over the one included in the original framework.

Commissioner Quinn asked for clarification of the number of alternative schools authorized by the PCSC.

Staff stated that four PCSC-authorized schools are alternative or have alternative programs in addition to general programs.

Chairman Reed asked Kelly Edginton if she had additional thoughts.

Ms. Edginton responded that she feels Measure 1b is unfair, based on the reasons she and Ms. Budge provided earlier. She also noted that the Star Rating will be adjusted for alternative schools, which may allow alternative schools to perform better in the system.

Chairman Reed asked Ms. Baysinger whether regular charter schools have similar concerns to those expressed by Ms. Edginton and Ms. Budge.

Ms. Baysinger replied that other schools do not have this concern, since there is no measure in the regular Performance Framework that compares schools to their peers.

Commissioner DeMordaunt said the good thing about this measure is that it provides context. She is also wondering about the idea of persistence that Ms. Edginton brought up, but understands the PCSC probably cannot implement it due to lack of an appropriate statewide data collection system. She asked for clarification on any additional benefits of Measure 1b.

Ms. Baysinger responded that the primary advantage of Measure 1b is the “apples to apples” comparison of alternative schools to other alternative schools, whereas the previous measure of designation categories impacts all schools in the same way, regardless of the types of students they serve. She also stated that Ms. Edginton is correct that adjustments to the Star Rating system could impact

alternative schools' scores, but the system will remain designed to give a score that accurately reflects alternative schools' statuses.

Commissioner DeMordaunt noted that all of the schools except one have favorable opinions. She wondered whether the PCSC should consider using the measure outside of the framework.

Commissioner Quinn stated that she does not believe would be fair to have off-the-books measures that are not included in the framework.

Commissioner O'Donahue reiterated that the other schools are favorable of the measure, but that she wonders how strongly they feel and how they feel about this measure versus the old one.

Ms. Baysinger responded that Commissioner O'Donahue's question was difficult to answer, since she didn't want to speak for the schools in their absence. She said the schools had expressed greater comfort with being compared to their peers rather than with being evaluated on their state accountability designations, since alternatives are more likely to be Focus or Priority schools. She noted that the comments from the other schools were verbal, as opposed to the formal, written comment provided by IDVA, and some of them may not have considered the measures in the same depth as did Ms. Edginton.

Ms. Baysinger also addressed the question of the PCSC using additional data outside of the framework, noting that use of context will be necessary and helpful. PCSC staff has communicated to schools that they will be able to provide additional information at the time of renewal consideration, and the PCSC will likely need to do so as well. Contextual information will be critical to making wise decisions in light of changing situations such as standardized testing and community circumstances.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked if there is any chance that the SDE will look at this measure and possibly consider adopting it.

Ms. Baysinger said her understanding is that the SDE considered a similar measure but decided against including it.

Commissioner Reed stated that, based on discussion, it appeared that Measure 1b was the only measure that Commissioners had concerns about. He asked for clarification of whether the PCSC is waiting for additional information from the SDE.

Ms. Baysinger clarified that while the PCSC is waiting for information from the SDE to complete the proposed measures, statute requires the PCSC to sign performance certificates with all schools before we will have that information, so

we will need to sign the performance certificates with the framework as it is and then clarify the rating categories later. This has been discussed with the affected schools; they all understand the situation and have expressed a reasonable comfort level with it.

Commissioner Reed said it is difficult to adopt the framework without the all the necessary information; the timing has put the PCSC in an uncomfortable situation.

Commissioner Hallett asked for clarification of whether Measure 1b had been discussed with all of the PCSC schools or just the alternative schools.

Ms. Baysinger said the draft Alternative School Performance Framework, including Measure 1b, has been discussed point-by-point with the four alternative schools authorized by the PCSC. Three schools expressed that they like Measure 1b, and one school stated that it does not.

Commissioner DeMordaunt believes that, based on the two years of data run by staff, the measure seems favorable to the previous one; that is, it would be more beneficial to alternative schools. She asked whether the commission would have the option to re-evaluate or change the measure later.

Ms. Baysinger clarified that the framework will need to remain the same through the performance certificate term. The PCSC could re-evaluate and amend the framework if necessary during the first round of renewals. Additionally, if there is a measure in the framework that is clearly not working well, the PCSC can look at the results in that context and place less consideration on that measure. Ms. Baysinger then provided the PCSC with an overview of the 2013 data related to Measure 1b, noting that based on that data, the top percentile (exceeds expectations) included 5 Star, 4 Star, and 3 Star schools; the 50% to 75% percentile group (meets expectations) included 3 Star and 2 Star schools; the next percentile group (does not meet) included 2 star and 1 Star schools, and the lowest group (falls far below) included only 1 Star schools.

Alison Henken, PCSC staff, provided additional information on the data, the potential changes to the Star Rating system, and gave the PCSC information on the types of changes that would need to occur for high-performing schools to be penalized by Measure 1b. Based on the data from the previous two years, Ms. Henken noted that there would have to be a dramatic improvement in performance by many of the alternative schools. Ultimately, for a 5 Star school to not be in either the Meets or Exceeds categories, more than half of the alternative schools would have to receive a 5 Star rating. That would be unlikely even in light of the modifications for alternative schools. Additionally, and having so many schools receiving the top rating would likely raise concerns at the SDE regarding the functionality of the accountability system.

Commissioner Reed stated that he appreciates the clarity on the data, but also

noted the mathematical possibility of risk. He would hate to see a well- or adequately- performing school get penalized.

Commissioner Van Wart said she understood that this measure was being proposed because the non-alternative Measure 1b was more likely to penalize alternative schools. She asked for clarification on the concerns raised by one of the schools.

Ms. Baysinger summarized the school's feedback, stating that the school's primary concerns relate to the risk of a high-performing school landing in a low percentile if the majority of its peers also perform very well, and the feeling that the affected schools may be scrutinized in a way that other schools are not.

Commissioner Van Wart requested that Commissioner DeMordaunt clarify her concerns or reasons for wanting to delay the inclusion of the measure.

Commissioner DeMordaunt responded that she is in favor of including the measure and believes this measure is better for alternative schools than the one in the general framework.

Commissioner Scigliano said he appreciated the thorough discussion. Though he does not feel Measure 1b is perfect, he thinks it's an improvement beneficial to alternative schools, and with the majority of the impacted schools in favor of it, he supports the draft.

Chairman Reed asked for clarification regarding whether the majority of schools are in favor of the measure, asking if they had provided comment.

Ms. Baysinger replied that the input from three schools was positive but verbal, received in-person during site visits and during phone meetings at which the measures were specifically discussed. IDVA was the only school to provide written comment, and they were not in favor of the measure.

Commissioner Quinn stated that she believes that the draft framework is designed to be favorable for the schools.

M/S (Quinn/O'Donahue): To adopt the Alternative School Performance Framework as proposed.

Chairman Reed inquired whether the PCSC could choose to strike Measure 1b altogether rather than reverting to the old measure if they chose not to use the currently proposed one.

Tamara Baysinger responded that this could be done. Adjustments would need to be made to the points allocated to other measures in order to ensure the weighting

would remain similar.

Chairman Reed suggested it may be better to strike the measure entirely than to approve the measure in the hope it will operate correctly.

Commissioner O'Donahue stated that she feels the schools are generally communicative and would have expressed concern if Measure 1b was unpalatable to them. Schools did note their discomfort with the focus/priority measure. She also reminded the PCSC that that this one measure has only a small impact on each school's overall score and renewal decision.

Chairman Reed noted that the school not in favor of the measure may have the most alternative students. He then asked if the Commissioners were ready to vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

After the vote, Commissioner Quinn asked for clarification about how a school gets to be identified as alternative

Ms. Baysinger said schools that wish to receive alternative designation must apply for designation as such and meet certain qualifications.

Commissioner Quinn whether a school could meet the qualifications but choose not to be designated as an alternatives school.

Ms. Baysinger said she believed this was possible.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.