



IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

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PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING

August 11, 2015

650 W. State Street, Boise, Idaho

Len B. Jordan Building, Clear Waters Conference Room, 3rd Floor

AGENDA

Tuesday, August 11, 2015 – 650 W. State Street, 9:00 a.m.

A. COMMISSION WORK

1. Agenda Review / Approval
2. Minutes Review / Approval

B. OTHER

1. Commission Consideration: PCSC Transfer Moratorium
2. Commission Education: Charter School Replication & Charter Management Organizations
3. Commission Education: Fiscal Evaluation Case Studies
4. Commission Education: Transportation and Student Demographics

If auxiliary aids or services are needed for individuals with disabilities, or if you wish to speak during the Open Forum, please contact the SBOE office at 334-2270 or PCSC staff before the meeting opens. While the PCSC attempts to address items in the listed order, some items may be addressed by the PCSC prior to or after the order listed.

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 June 11, 2015?

COMMISSION ACTION

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 11, 2015, as submitted.

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

June 11, 2015
304 N 8th Street, Rm 242
Boise, Idaho

Thursday, June 11, 2015 – 304 N 8th Street, Rm 242 – 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reed at 9:00 a.m. The following Commissioners attended:

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| Alan Reed | Phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Person <input type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gayle O'Donahue | Phone <input type="checkbox"/> | Person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kelly Murphey | Phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Person <input type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brian Scigliano | Phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Person <input type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wanda Quinn | Phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Person <input type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Esther Van Wart | Phone <input type="checkbox"/> | Person <input type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Gayann DeMordaunt | Phone <input type="checkbox"/> | Person <input type="checkbox"/> | Not present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

A. COMMISSION WORK

1. Agenda Review/ Approval

M/S (Quinn/Scigliano): To approve the agenda as presented. *Motion unanimously passed.*

2. Minutes Review/Approval

M/S (Quinn/O'Donahue): To approve the minutes from April 9, 2015, as presented. *Motion unanimously passed.*

B. OTHER

1. Bingham Academy: Fiscal Update

Tamara Baysinger, PCSC Director, advised that Bingham Academy (BA) is expecting a small, negative year-end balance. Earlier in FY15, the school took out a \$154,000 bank loan which must be repaid with funds from future fiscal years; the first payment is due in August 2015. The letter of concern already issued will remain in force. PCSC staff recommends that the PCSC require a fall enrollment update and continued, quarterly fiscal updates.

Fred Ball, Director, and Diane Dodds, Board Secretary, appeared telephonically to represent BA. They said that, although the FY16 budget is tight, they believe enrollment will be adequate.

Commissioner O'Donahue asked BA what their enrollment was currently.

Mr. Ball replied that enrollment was right at 90, and the budget was based on 85.

Commissioner Reed asked what changes BA has made to ensure that the school will not again fall behind on operating funds.

Mr. Ball responded that BA would not hire a principal this year because, in addition to BA having a qualified head teacher, he can spend more time at BA since Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center, where he is employed as director, will not require as much of his time.

Commissioner O'Donahue inquired about the difference between the State Department of Education's and BA's calculations regarding FY15 revenue.

Director Baysinger said the school has not responded to staff's requests for their comment on the difference of approximately \$100,000.

Mr. Ball stated that he provided a narrative regarding BA's anticipated transportation expenditure savings.

Director Baysinger clarified that the issue is a discrepancy between revenue projections, not expenditure projections.

Chairman Reed inquired whether BA and the SDE are projecting the same transportation revenue number.

Mr. Ball responded affirmatively.

Chairman Reed requested that PCSC staff confirm that the transportation revenues projected by the SDE and BA are indeed the same.

M/S (O'Donahue/Scigliano): To direct Bingham Academy to provide the PCSC with a 2015-2016 enrollment update by September 1, 2015, as well as quarterly financial reports throughout fiscal year 2016. *Motion unanimously passed.*

Chairman Reed advised BA to respond to PCSC staff's correspondence regarding the PCSC's direction in a timely manner.

2. Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy: Fiscal Update

Director Baysinger stated that although Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy (CTEA) continues to struggle financially, they have repaid their line of credit. At this time, their situation does not appear serious enough to warrant issuance of a letter of concern; however, PCSC staff recommends that the PCSC require a fall enrollment update and continued, quarterly fiscal updates.

Joel Weaver and Alexandria Alvarez appeared telephonically to represent CTEA.

Commissioner Reed inquired why CTEA believes it is not experiencing greater support from its community, particularly in the form of higher enrollment.

Mr. Weaver said the school is working to prove to the community that it can succeed with a difficult student population. He noted that CTEA is growing at the anticipated rate, but enrollment remains low because the original enrollment number was smaller than anticipated. Continued financial support by the tribe is critical.

Commissioner Scigliano asked whether there is a plan to decrease reliance on the federal grants before they become unavailable.

Mr. Weaver replied that the majority of positions covered by the grant are not required for basic operations. Staffing will change as grant support decreases.

M/S (Scigliano/O'Donahue): To direct Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy to provide the PCSC with an enrollment update by September 1, 2015, as well as quarterly financial reports throughout fiscal year 2016. *Motion unanimously passed.*

3. Heritage Academy (HA): Fiscal Update

Director Baysinger stated that HA appears to be on the verge of securing a facility refinance. At this time, their situation does not appear serious enough to warrant issuance of a letter of concern; however, PCSC staff recommends that the PCSC require a fall enrollment update and continued, quarterly fiscal updates.

Dr. Christine Ivie, Administrator; Blair Crouch, Board Chair; Cheryl Kary, Business Manager; and Teresa Molitor, Board Secretary, appeared telephonically to represent HA.

M/S (O'Donahue/Quinn): To direct Heritage Academy to provide the PCSC with a 2015-2016 enrollment update by September 1, 2015, and quarterly financial reports through fiscal year 2016. *Motion unanimously passed.*

Commissioner O'Donahue and Chairman Reed expressed appreciation for HA's efforts in securing the facility refinance.

4. Commission Review: PCSC Policies, Third Reading

Director Baysinger advised that the draft policies presented have not changed since the second reading. No individuals have signed up to provide comment.

Chairman Reed said he was contacted by Chris Yorgason by phone the previous evening. Mr. Yorgason inquired whether Section 1.A.4 should require submission of budgets in Adobe, rather than Excel, so the numbers cannot be changed.

Director Baysinger commented that the reason for the Excel format is to enable staff to view the formulas. Staff does not change a school's original; any changes would be easily identifiable.

Commissioner Quinn asked why fiscal letters of concern could be re-evaluated only at the June meeting.

Director Baysinger replied that the policy was drafted with practicality in mind, with the understanding that letters of concern are issued after extensive consideration and should only be re-evaluated with equal consideration, which is time-consuming and impractical on an ongoing basis. Existence of a letter of concern does not change the amount of money the school receives in a year.

Commissioner Quinn asked if the language saying “no later than March 15” for making final renewal/non-renewal consideration is due to timing for the lottery.

Director Baysinger replied affirmatively, noting that the deadline is statutory.

Commissioner O’Donahue said the PCSC should be sure to communicate this date to schools, because some hold their enrollment lotteries in February.

Director Baysinger stated that renewal guidance will go out in November to schools in their renewal year. That will give them time for their schools to make adjustment. Staff will ensure that schools are advised of the March 15 deadline.

Commissioner Quinn inquired whether renewal decisions could be made earlier than March 15.

Director Baysinger said the law does not prevent earlier decisions, but they will likely prove impractical. There needs to be time for both PCSC staff and schools to prepare and respond to information.

M/S (O’Donahue/Scigliano): To adopt the new and amended PCSC policies as presented. *Motion unanimously passed.*

5. Staff Update: Board Legislative Idea

Director Baysinger advised the Commission that State Board of Education (SBOE) will be considering a legislative idea regarding the role of non-profits in managing public schools. The legislative idea would clarify that a non-profit authorized to organize and manage a public charter school could not also operate other enterprises. The legislation under consideration would also address issues regarding the number of charter schools that may be organized and managed under a given non-profit. One of the main purposes of the legislation would be to ensure that public dollars sent to public charter schools are used for their intended purpose.

Terry Ryan, executive director for Bluum and board member for Gem Prep and Gem Innovation Schools, expressed concerns that a non-profit would be limited to management of only one public charter school. He indicated support for permitting one board to hold multiple charters.

Chairman Reed advised the PCSC that Pro Tempore has appointed Evan Frasure of Pocatello to fill the Commission seat previously held by Esther Van Wart. Chairman Reed

expressed that former Commissioner Van Wart, a valued, longtime Commissioner, would be greatly missed.

M/S (Quinn/O'Donahue): To adjourn the meeting. *Motion unanimously passed.*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

SUBJECT

Commission Consideration: Transfer Moratorium

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

I.C. §33-5205A

BACKGROUND

On December 11, 2014, the PCSC approved a motion to enact a temporary moratorium on approval of charter school transfers until the PCSC attained sufficient staffing levels to manage the associated workload. At the time, the PCSC's portfolio included 35 schools, and the PCSC office was staffed by 2.5 FTE.

DISCUSSION

The 2015 Idaho State Legislature approved a PCSC staff increase to 4.0 FTE. Specifically, the PCSC staff now comprises a director, two program managers, and a full-time administrative assistant.

IMPACT

Lifting the moratorium on approval of transfer petitions will allow Idaho charter schools currently authorized by their local school districts the opportunity to be considered for transfer to PCSC authorization. Currently, there are 13 charter schools in Idaho authorized by local school districts; PCSC staff is aware of four schools that have expressed interest in transferring.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the PCSC lift the temporary moratorium on approval of transfer petitions.

COMMISSION ACTION

A motion to lift the temporary moratorium on approval of transfer petitions, effective immediately.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

SUBJECT

Commission Education: Charter School Replication and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs)

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

N/A

BACKGROUND

In Idaho and nationwide, interest in replication of existing charter school models, often through engagement of CMOs, is growing. Research is increasingly available to assist charter stakeholders and authorizers in identifying best practices associated with replication and CMOs.

DISCUSSION

Public Charter School Commission Director Tamara Baysinger will present research findings and best practices related to charter school replication and CMOs.

IMPACT

Information item only.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff has no comments or recommendations.

COMMISSION ACTION

Any action would be at the discretion of the Commission.

SUBJECT

Commission Education: Fiscal Evaluation Case Studies

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

N/A

BACKGROUND

The PCSC is responsible for overseeing the financial outcomes of its portfolio schools, as well as evaluating the capacity of new charter petitioners to operate fiscally sound schools.

DISCUSSION

Using a case study approach, staff will review accounting practices and financial reporting of current charter schools. Jennifer Barbeau, Charter Schools Accountability Program Manager, will examine two schools from their initial petition review to the current fiscal year. The relationship between the strength of the charter proposal and future fiscal performance will be examined.

IMPACT

Information item only.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff has no comments or recommendations.

COMMISSION ACTION

Any action would be at the discretion of the Commission.

SUBJECT

Commission Education: Transportation and Student Demographics

APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

N/A

BACKGROUND

On April 9, 2015, the PCSC directed staff to examine whether or not there was a relationship between provision of student transportation and the percentage of FRL and ELL students at PCSC portfolio schools.

DISCUSSION

Charter School Program Manager Kirsten Pochop will share staff's analysis of the impact of charter school transportation on student demographics.

IMPACT

Information item only.

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff has no comments or recommendations.

COMMISSION ACTION

Any action would be at the discretion of the Commission.