

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007
7965 W. EMERALD, TABLEROCK ROOM
BOISE, IDAHO**

A regular meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) was held Thursday, September 27, 2007, at 7965 W. Emerald, Tablerock Room, Boise, ID. Chairman Bill Goesling presided via telephone.

The following members were in attendance via telephone:

Brad Corkill	Gayann DeMordaunt	Joe deVera
Paul Powell	Alan Reed	Esther Van Wart

Chairman Goesling called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1. Commission Work

Agenda Approval

The PCSC approved the agenda as published.

Rolling Calendar

M/S (deVera/Powell): To approve November 13, 2007, as the date and Boise, ID as the location for the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting, to replace the previously approved November 15, 2007 meeting date.

M/S (deVera/Powell): To approve March 6, 2008, as the date and Boise, ID as the location for a regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

2. Garden City Community School (GCCS) Corrective Action Plan

Dr. Barbara Gaston, Board Chair; Brett Spencer, Board Treasurer; Cindy Hoovel, Administrator; Dr. Jan Thomas, Dr. Martha (Marti) Monroe and Kathy Waddell, Board Members; and Gary Thomas, Grant Coordinator, represented GCCS.

Dr. Gaston reviewed the status of the school.

Mr. Spencer reviewed the school's budget, which finished the last fiscal year with a negative fund balance of approximately \$97,000. A line of credit was secured through Zion's Bank. The budget was based on 125 students and current enrollment is 136. The budget submitted to the State Department of Education (SDE) reflects a positive fund balance of \$36,000 at the end of this fiscal year, and all debts will be repaid by the second quarter of next year.

The PCSC commended the school for the quality of the materials, which were informative and organized, and for their progress in correcting the defect.

M/S (Powell/DeMordaunt): To lift the notice of defect issued to Garden City Community School on the grounds of failure to meet generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Ms. Hoovel gave a presentation regarding the corrective action plan (CAP).

Commissioner Powell asked if the GCCS is a member of the Idaho Charter School Network (ICSN) and whether the school has adopted ICSN model policies.

Ms. Hoovel said GCCS has adopted the ICSN's model policies and the board is reviewing them to identify any necessary revisions.

Tamara Baysinger, PCSC staff, said the IEP section of the revised charter remains unclear.

Ms. Hoovel said this section was simplified and additions made to the website. If necessary, the charter can be amended.

Jennifer Swartz, PCSC counsel, asked GCCS to identify the section of educational law the school is relying on with regard to the phrase: "services do not need to be bid and only other items (supplies, facility, etc.) that cost over \$25,000 are required to have multiple bids."

Commissioner Reed cautioned the school against contracting with board members for services.

Dr. Gaston said the services in question were not available through any other provider.

Commissioner Powell said statute regarding pecuniary interests of board members needs to be reviewed by counsel in the future.

M/S (Powell/Van Wart): To approve the charter revisions proposed by Garden City Community School, with the exception of the Individualized Learning Design section, and to direct the school to work with Commission staff to clarify this section pending staff approval. *The motion passed unanimously.*

M/S (Powell/deVera): To approve the corrective action plan proposed by Garden City Community School. *The motion passed unanimously.*

3. Xavier Charter School (XCS) Complaint Investigation

Cindy Fulcher, Administrator and Founder, represented XCS.

Ms. Fulcher addressed a complaint that XCS inappropriately denied enrollment to a student with special needs. XCS has been working with the SDE, which has determined that XCS acted out of compliance in two areas: the process of meeting with parents of special education students, and the process of handling transferred students with special needs. XCS is now working a corrective action plan overseen by the SDE.

Commissioner deVera asked what, in Ms. Fulcher's opinion, caused the parent to file a complaint.

Ms. Fulcher said a special education staff expert was not present when she met with a special education student's parent because XCS had not yet hired for the position. The parents disagree with Ms. Fulcher regarding implementation of the student's IEP.

Commissioner Corkill asked how many people accompanied the parent to the meeting.

Ms. Fulcher said there were three individuals, plus the parent. The individuals were various special education providers with whom the parent had privately contracted.

Commissioner Powell asked whether it is XCS's position the school has complied with the SDE CAP.

XCS said they have complied with the CAP, as well as adopted new policies and procedures to ensure future compliance.

Commissioner deVera asked if PCSC staff has received confirmation from the SDE.

Ms. Baysinger said she is in contact with SDE and expects to receive informal confirmation.

M/S (Powell/DeMordaunt): To direct PCSC staff to issue to Xavier Charter School a written notice of defect on the grounds that the school has committed a material violation of any condition, standard or procedure set forth in the approved charter and/or violated any provision of law. *The motion passed unanimously.*

4. North Valley Academy (NVA) Charter Petition

Debra Infanger and Gayle DeSmet, both Founders, represented NVA.

Ms. Baysinger cited two, outstanding issues with the NVA petition: facilities and budget. She noted that the future of ISDB is in question, and the Gooding campus may not be available beyond the 2008-09 school year. Additionally, achieving adequate enrollment in grades K-12 can be difficult for a new school, particularly in a small community. PCSC staff has strongly recommended the school begin with grades K-7, and the school is willing to consider this option.

Ms. Infanger said a back-up facility plan for the purchase of land and rental of modular buildings has been developed. Though Gooding is not a densely populated area, there are many home-schooled students having a need of a charter school. The high school in the area has many issues and there is a need in upper grades as well. She prefers not to limit the grades before knowing what the actual enrollment will be.

Chairman Goesling said the PCSC is looking at viability for the long-term.

Commissioner Powell asked why this charter school would be the best answer for Gooding.

Ms. Infanger said she has compared her own children's experience in the Gooding district schools with that of family members at Liberty Charter School. Initially, NVA was to be a Harbor School, but the Harbor Institute chose not to expand to Gooding. The NVA petitioners identified Core Knowledge as a desirable curriculum and Great Expectations was selected to encourage a positive school culture.

Commissioner Corkill inquired regarding the Gooding School District board's opinion of the NVA petition.

Ms. Infanger said both Dr. Ray Goodman and Tracie Anderson have indicated they do not have issues with the charter school.

Commissioner Van Wart asked how much of the education will be outsourced with dual enrollment.

Ms. DeSmet said the College of Southern Idaho and IDLA will be able to provide online classes for post-secondary credits.

Commissioner Van Wart inquired whether there is any possibility of purchasing the ISDB facility.

Ms. Baysinger said the ISDB facility is state owned, and was donated to the state for use by ISDB under an agreement that requires its return to the original owner if it ceases to be used for that purpose. Therefore, the facility cannot be sold to a charter school.

Commissioner Van Wart asked if the facility will need remodeling for use by NVA.

Ms. Infanger said no remodeling would be necessary.

Commissioner Van Wart asked whether NVA formulated a budget based on the back-up facility option.

Ms. Infanger said they have not.

Commissioner Van Wart expressed concerned that the entire board is self-perpetuating.

Ms. DeSmet said the board does nominate board members on which parents vote.

Commissioner Powell requested estimates for the alternative facility plans. He noted the budget allows only small reserves, and said he would like to see reserves around 5%-10%.

M/S (Powell/deVera): To hold the decision on North Valley Academy until the next regular meeting of the Commission and to direct Commission staff to work with the petitioners to address items including, but not limited to:

- **Estimated student population in the Gooding area**
- **Budgets based on facility plans A and B**
- **Budgets based on Year One offerings of grades K-8 and K-12**
- **Inventory and surveys for budget accuracy**
- **Realistic attendance numbers based on historical data of charter schools**
- **Conflict with Gooding School District**
- **Invitation to Gooding School District leadership to the next PCSC meeting**
- **Facility layout**
- **Transportation plan**

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Insight School of Idaho Charter Petition

Kari Hogan, Board Chair of Portable Practical Education Preparation (PPEP) of Idaho, Inc.; Don Peña, Board Vice Chair; Brian Rose, Vice President, School Development at Insight Schools, Inc.; and Danny Azuno, Executive Director of Community Council of Idaho (CCI), represented Insights School.

Ms. Hogan and Mr. Rose provided an overview of Insight Schools.

Mr. Peña summarized information regarding the Hispanic population and dropout rates in Idaho, and explained the proposed role of Insight in serving these and other students via an online curriculum.

Ms. Hogan addressed the petitioners' bylaws, articles of incorporation, management contract, and facility plans.

Ms. Baysinger noted that the revised management services agreement states that Insight will be contracted to "operate" the school, which is in direct conflict with Idaho statute, which clarifies that no charter shall be granted to a charter school operated by a for-profit entity.

Commissioner Van Wart asked the school to specifically outline its proposed governance structure.

The Insight representatives said the corporation operating, governing, and managing the school is PPEP of Idaho. The current board of directors consists of Mr. Peña and Korene Gonzalez, from Idaho; as well as Kari Hogan, John Arnold, and Sharon Davis, from Arizona. Two additional members, to reside in Idaho, will be added to this existing board.

Chairman Goesling has concerns that documentation specifically states PPEP will appoint the majority of the board members, which does not allow for local control.

Ms. Hogan said the school is aware this needs to be changed.

Mr. Peña said Arizona has significantly more experience with charter schools than Idaho. PPEP, Inc. is a non-profit organization in Arizona, but PPEP of Idaho is a separate entity. There is no connection, investment, or pecuniary interest between PPEP, Inc. and Insight, Inc.

Mr. Rose said the name of Insight School is used for the benefit of branding.

Commissioner Powell asked how the relationship between PPEP and CCI began.

Ms. Hogan said John Arnold, from Arizona, initiated conversation with Mr. Peña about bettering education through Idaho's charter school system.

Chairman Goesling asked why Idaho needs another virtual school.

Mr. Peña said that of the 4,000 Idaho virtual students, only 800 are high school students. Insight has the expertise to reach students not being served. The program builds in the expectation that these students will have low academic levels.

Mr. Rose discussed particular strategies of marketing to the Hispanic and migrant communities, and cited graduation rates of other Insight schools.

M/S (Powell/deVera): To hold the decision on Insight School of Idaho until the next regular meeting of the Commission and to direct Commission staff to work with the petitioners to incorporate changes referenced. *The motion passed unanimously.*

6. INSPIRE Connections Academy Update

Steve McNamer, Board Chair, represented INSPIRE.

Mr. McNamer provided an update regarding the status of the school, which now serves grades K-12.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked whether the school has met its academic benchmarks.

Mr. McNamer said the benchmarks are being met, with the exception of math.

7. Richard McKenna Charter High School (RMCHS) Update

Larry Slade, Director, represented RMCHS.

Mr. Slade provided an update on the status of the school. He said the school is working to improve standardized test scores by teaching test-taking skills.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked whether RMCHS has a Hispanic population.

Mr. Slade said the school typically enrolls 5-7% Hispanic students.

Commissioner Van Wart asked when failure to make AYP begins affecting funding.

Shirley Rau, SDE School Choice Specialist, said funding is affected in the second year.

8. Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School (TCPCS) Update

Gail Harding-Thomas, Administrator; Catherine Sadersway, Board Treasurer; Angela Lords, Secretary/Business Manager; and Erica Radford, Board Vice Chair, represented TCPCS.

Ms. Harding-Thomas provided an update on the status of the school. TCPCS plans to build a new facility in fall 2008.

Commissioner Powell inquired regarding the impact of the Harbor Institute's closure on TCPCSC.

Ms. Harding-Thomas said nothing will change at TCPCS. A Harbor network will be created among schools, which will meet monthly to ensure schools retain the Harbor culture.

9. Liberty Charter School Update

Sheila Bryant, Board Vice Chair; and Gayle O'Donahue, Community Relations Director, represented Liberty.

Ms. Bryant provided an update on the status of the school.

Ms. Baysinger indicated Liberty's ISAT scores are so high that it will soon be unrealistic for them to make them even higher and therefore make the gains necessary to make AYP. She is following up with the U.S. Department of Education to determine how this is handled nationwide.

Commissioner Powell asked whether previous struggles surrounding dual enrollment and fees for participation in sports have been resolved.

Ms. Bryant indicated the issues have been resolved. The school district reduced participation fees, thus making it more feasible for students to participate.

Chairman Goesling adjourned the meeting.