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**REFERENCE: DRAFT MINUTES – August 21, 2008 Public Charter School Commission Meeting**

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2008  
AMERITEL INN BOISE TOWNE SQUARE  
7965 W. EMERALD, TABLEROCK ROOM  
BOISE, IDAHO**

A regular meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission was held on Thursday, August 21, 2008 at 7965 W. Emerald, Boise, Idaho. Vice-Chairman Alan Reed presided. The following members were in attendance:

Brad Corkill

Gayle O'Donahue

Gayann DeMordaunt

Joe deVera

Chairman Goesling and Commissioner Van Wart were absent.

Vice-Chairman Reed called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**1. Commission Work**

Vice-Chairman Reed asked whether there were changes or additions to the agenda.

**M/S (deVera/Corkill): To approve the agenda as written. *The motion passed unanimously.***

Vice-Chairman Reed asked whether there were any scheduling conflicts with the rolling calendar.

**M/S (Corkill/deVera): To approve December 11, 2008 as the date and Boise, ID as the location for the regularly scheduled Commission meeting to follow the October 16, 2008 meeting. *The motion passed unanimously.***

The Commission considered the draft minutes from the May 1, 2008, regular Commission meeting.

**M/S (deVera/Corkill): To approve the minutes from May 1, 2008 as submitted. *The motion passed unanimously.***

**2. Nampa Classical Academy New Charter Petition**

Isaac Moffett, NCA board chair, introduced the NCA petition for a classical, liberal arts

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public charter school providing a trivium based education to grades K-12. He discussed the proposed school's history, mission, educational program, facilities plan, and budget.

Commissioner deVera asked on what data NCA's proposed enrollment is based.

Kristopher Wilson, NCA board member, cited lengthy waiting lists at other charter schools in the area, rapid growth rates in the local school district, and strong community interest in the NCA petition.

Mr. Moffett said NCA will need to enroll at least 360 students to make the school financially viable, but facility space may allow for additional enrollment.

Commissioner deVera asked why NCA intends to start with grades 1-9.

Mr. Moffett explained that the decision was based on finances and the trivium methodology.

Commissioner Corkill asked how many classical education instructors are available.

Mr. Moffett said that many instructors nationwide are trained in classical education. He described the processes by which NCA will provide professional development for teachers who are not yet trained in classical education.

Commissioner DeMordaunt noted that middle school grades are notoriously difficult for charter schools to keep full. She also inquired about the apparent lack of funds for professional development in the budget.

Mr. Moffett said NCA's research demonstrates that middle school and high school enrollment at similar schools indicates that a positive and energetic school culture tends to preclude attrition in the upper grades. He said NCA is exploring means by which to provide sports programs, and the board will consider changing its grade offerings if interest in upper grades proves insufficient.

Commissioner O'Donahue advised the petitioners to reconsider their intent to offer credit for educational experience gained outside the classroom, lest the opportunity be abused. She also suggested rewording of the excused absence policy.

Commissioner deVera inquired of staff whether a charter school's founders must be named prior to petition approval.

Jennifer Swartz, Commission counsel, said the law provides only a general definition of "founder." She said she did not believe petitioners were required to have identified their founders prior to approval, but it is advisable that petitioners consider what criteria individuals must meet in order to be considered founders.

Vice-Chairman Reed advised NCA to consider whether opening with grades 1-9 is

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advisable, considering that it may be difficult for very young children to transfer between schools after kindergarten.

Mr. Wilson said NCA will make every effort to accommodate demand for kindergarten at NCA as soon as possible.

Commissioner Corkill asked staff what would happen if NCA failed to enroll a sufficient number of upper grade students to remain fiscally stable.

Tamara Baysinger, Commission staff, said the most likely scenario would involve a charter revision to permit a different and more financially viable grade configuration. She said bubble classes offer another possibility for schools facing a temporary financial shortfall.

Commissioner DeMordaunt said that although it is possible the petitioners will face some difficulties with enrollment or other issues, she believes the petition is complete and strong, and that the petitioners have demonstrated their ability to work through problems that may arise.

Several members of the public spoke in support of the NCA petition.

**M/S (DeMordaunt/Corkill): To approve the charter petition for Nampa Classical Academy. *The motion passed unanimously.***

Commissioner deVera advised the petitioners to work with their facilities contractor to ensure a backup plan is in place should NCA's enrollment be lower than expected.

### **3. Southern Idaho Learning Center Lab School Charter School Petition**

Melody Lenkner and Claire Major, SILC Lab School board members, described the SILC LS's mission, educational program, and relationship to the Southern Idaho Learning Center. She said the SILC is well understood by its community and there is extensive community support for the SILC LS, which will serve students by understanding and responding to the needs of its target population, learning disabled students. She described area demographics and to demonstrate the likelihood that SILC LS will be able to enroll a sufficient number of students. She noted that SILC LS will provide an exceptional program even for students who do not have learning disabilities.

Commissioner DeMordaunt expressed concern that SILC LS's facility plan is based on the ability of Xavier Charter School to move out of its current facility.

Ms. Lenkner explained that XCS has a three year lease, and SILC LS may sublease the facility or start a new lease directly through the landlord, depending on when XCS is able to move.

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Commissioner O'Donahue confirmed with Ms. Lenkner that SILC LS will not only assist students to learn during middle school, but will actively prepare them to deal with a traditional high school setting.

**M/S (deVera/DeMordaunt): To approve the charter petition for the Southern Idaho Learning Center Lab School.** *The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **4. Idaho Science and Technology Charter School Petition**

Mark Fisk, ISTCS board member, said Blackfoot has only one public middle school, which is currently overcrowded. He emphasized the need to provide technical education to Idaho students

Dr. Fred Ball, consultant to ISTCS, described the school's business plan and explained that the petitioners believe ISTCS will not have difficulty enrolling middle school students, in part because it will offer an option separate from elementary school. He said ISTCS has found a facility option that will benefit both the school and the city.

Commissioner deVera verified with the petitioners that they followed the appropriate RFP and competitive bid process with regard to facility construction.

Commissioner Corkill asked about the Blackfoot School District's relationship with ISTCS.

Marc Isom, ISTCS board chair, said the district superintendent is unsupportive of charter schools.

Commissioner DeMordaunt confirmed with the petitioners that they are working on better defining how they will integrate technology throughout the curriculum.

**M/S (DeMordaunt/deVera): To approve the charter petition for Idaho Science and Technology Charter School.** *The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **5. Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning Update**

Nils Peterson, PPSEL board chair, updated the Commission regarding the school's progress in preparing to lease the "Now & Then" facility, as well as ongoing marketing efforts in advance of the school's Fall 2009 opening.

#### **6. Vision Public Charter School Facilities Update**

Wendy Oldenkamp, Vision administrator, described the site the school has selected for its permanent facility. She said Vision also has two backup facility options. She proposed the doubling of Vision's enrollment, increasing to two classes per grade, in order to increase revenue for the school and provide opportunities to more students in the area.

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Commissioner deVera asked why Vision is proposing the doubling of all grades, K-12, when the school does not yet offer grades 9-12.

Ms. Oldenkamp said the proposed charter revision was drafted in anticipation of a future need to offer enough class space to allow all middle school students to continue to high school if they wish. She also noted that the additional funding generated by the doubled grades would enable the school to build its facility, which will be constructed in pods as the need for space increases.

Commissioner deVera expressed concern that Vision's wait list numbers do not offer sufficient evidence that the school will be able to fill double classes K-12.

Ms. Oldenkamp said Vision's proposal will permit the school sufficient flexibility to market its ability to serve greater numbers of students. She said success of the proposal is critical to Vision's long term planning ability.

Laura Knott, Vision board member, clarified that Vision is asking the Commission to trust that the school will be responsible in handling its flexibility to increase class offerings.

Commissioner deVera expressed continued discomfort with the proposed budget, particularly with regard to how the facility expansion necessary for doubling the high school will be financed.

Commissioner DeMordaunt inquired of staff whether the Commission could approve only part of a proposed charter amendment.

Ms. Baysinger said that the law does not provide authorizers the option of approving only part of a proposed charter amendment. However, it would be reasonable for the Commission to consider a more limited form of the proposed amendment if asked to do so by the school.

Ms. Oldenkamp said Vision would like to propose an alternative amendment that would allow the doubling of grades K-8, but not grades 9-12. The proposed amendment would be the same as that offered in writing, with the exception of the last sentence, which would be stricken from the amendment.

**M/S (deVera/Corkill): To approve the charter amendments proposed by Vision Public Charter School, permitting the school to double classes in grades K-8, but not grades 9-12. *The motion passed unanimously.***

The Commissioners discussed with Vision's representatives the reasons for Vision's desire to have an appointed board rather than an elected board.

Ms. Oldenkamp said the appointment process was selected to protect the vision of the

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school's founders.

Commissioner DeMordaunt expressed her preference that charter schools have elected boards because charter school boards direct the use of public funds.

The Vision representatives agreed to approach the school community for comment prior to finalizing the proposed bylaws amendment providing for appointment, rather than election, of board members.

**M/S (deVera/DeMordaunt): To delay a decision on Vision's proposed bylaws amendment providing for appointment, rather than election, of board members.**  
*The motion passed unanimously.*

**M/S (DeMordaunt/deVera): A motion to approve the KCID site as Vision's permanent location.** *The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.