

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2010  
700 W. STATE STREET, BOISE, IDAHO  
JRW WEST CONFERENCE ROOM**

A regular meeting of the Idaho Public Charter School Commission was held Thursday, August 5, 2010, at 700 W. State Street, Boise, ID, JRW West Conference Room. Vice-Chairman Gayann DeMordaunt presided.

The following members were in attendance:

Brad Corkill	Gayann DeMordaunt	Nick Hallett
Gayle O'Donahue	Esther Van Wart	

Absent:       Chairman Goesling  
                  Alan Reed

Chairman DeMordaunt opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION (Closed to the Public)**

Pursuant to Idaho Code Section 67-2345(1)(f), to communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated.

**M/S (Corkill/Van Wart): To move into executive session pursuant to Idaho Code Section 67-2345(1)(f). *The motion passed unanimously.***

**M/S (Hallett/Corkill): To move into open session at 8:15 a.m. pursuant to Idaho Code Section 67-2345(1)(f). *The motion passed unanimously.***

1. Commission Work

Agenda Approval

**M/S (Corkill/Van Wart): To approve the agenda as published. *The motion passed unanimously.***

Rolling Calendar

**M/S (Van Wart/Corkill): to approve January 13, 2011, as the date and Boise, Idaho, as the location for the following regularly scheduled PCSC meeting to follow the November 18, 2010 meeting. *The motion passed unanimously.***

2. **Heritage Charter School New Charter Petition (third hearing)**

Kelly Bangerter, Board Chair; Blair Crouch; Anneli Crouch; and Amanda Bingham, represented Heritage.

Mr. Bangerter reported that the petitioners' goal is to open in fall 2011 with a target population of K-6. He addressed areas of concern identified by the PCSC and staff:

- Curriculum and professional development – HCCS representatives attended a SEM model training at the University of Connecticut. Other staff will attend in order to use a “train the trainer” method.
- Budget – The budget is built on state funding and does not include grants. The calculation for average daily attendance was based on 90%. Holdbacks are based on 5%. Budgets were calculated on worst-case scenarios with a small carryover each year.
- Grant funding – The State Department of Education (SDE) has advised Heritage that federal grant dollars will be available for all three years. Heritage can function as currently budgeted without grant dollars. An Albertsons Foundation grant of \$100,000 is also available.
- Transportation – North Side Bus Company verified that Heritage has budgeted adequate funds in place to cover costs, but was unable to give a letter of commitment due to variables in transporting students.
- Facilities – Heritage has received two bids from modular building companies. The bid from Design Space is lower and modular buildings are available within Idaho.

Commissioner Hallett asked who would be taking care of payroll and personnel, noting that a business manager or treasurer trained in human resource management would be necessary.

Mr. Bangerter said Heritage plans to assign these responsibilities to the principal and office staff. Contracted personnel will be used for audits. An accountant in the community will be a part of a finance committee to review fiscal matters. Additionally, Heritage may contract with Paragon for management services, but the budget does not include funds for such a contract.

Commissioner Van Wart expressed concern regarding lack of financial expertise on the board, and noted the projected budgetary reserves are minimal.

Commissioner Corkill asked whether Heritage's relationship with the Jerome School District has improved.

Mr. Bangerter said the petitioners' intent is to continue to work with the district by keeping them informed of student numbers, hiring of teachers, and other matters. The enrollment cap reduction from 370 to 150 does lessen the impact on the district.

Commissioner O'Donahue cautioned against relying too heavily on volunteers.

Commissioner Hallett asked for further detail regarding the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM).

The Heritage representatives indicated that volunteers will provide art and music clusters with the supervision of teachers. Preliminary curriculum choices include Saxon Math, Core Knowledge, FOS Science, and Harcourt Reading or SEMR.

Chairman DeMordaunt inquired whether the Washington facility has the necessary city approval.

Heritage indicated they have spoken to the City Administrator, Assistant City Administrator, and Planning and Zoning staff. The property is already appropriately zoned for modular buildings.

The PCSC questioned Heritage regarding marketing plans and availability of professional staff.

**M/S (Corkill/O'Donahue): To approve the charter petition for Heritage Academy.**

Commissioner Hallett expressed concern regarding the adequacy of staff to handle fiscal services.

Chairman DeMordaunt requested that updated budgets be provided to PCSC staff by October 15<sup>th</sup>, with the addition of fiscal services and benefit funding.

*The motion passed with a vote of 3-1, Commissioner Hallett dissenting.*

**3. Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning (PPSEL) Annual Update**

Nils Petersen, Board Chair; represented PPSEL.

Mr. Petersen provided an update regarding the status of the school.

Commissioner Hallett requested additional information regarding the loan for \$120,000.

Mr. Petersen clarified that this is a 10 year amortized loan with a 3-year balloon. A refinance of the loan is being investigated with the current lender. The school has a reserve sufficient to cover the entire loan if necessary.

Chairman DeMordaunt commended the school for their successful first year. She inquired regarding the facilities lease.

Mr. Petersen said the lease ends in July 2012. The budget set is based on the current lease and current loan payment, so it will be most practical to update the contract on July 2, 2012.

Chairman DeMordaunt recommended completion of an annual stakeholder survey.

**4. Idaho Science and Technology Charter School (ISTCS) Corrective Action Plan**

Dr. Fred Ball, Director; Gary Larsen, Associate Director; Holly Lilya, Board Member; and Kelly Jo Fisk, Board Member, represented ISTCS.

Mr. Larsen presented for ISTCS regarding the school's failure to meet measurable student educational standards (MSES). He said ISTCS did not anticipate enrollment of a large number of students with learning and behavioral disorders. To improve scores, ISTCS will implement a more rigorous curriculum in Science, Math, and Reading to insure alignment with the state standards.

Dr. Ball reviewed the growth percentages in ISAT. There is room for improvement, but growth was significant. He said the school's revised budget is based on actual enrollment of 115 students. ISTCS has obtained a bank loan of \$150,000, repayment of which will be rolled into ISTCS' conversion. The board has developed a three-year schedule to build up to a 10% operating reserve.

Commissioner Corkill asked for clarification regarding Dr. Ball's relationship with Blackfoot Community Charter Learning Center and ISTCS.

Dr. Ball indicated he has been involved with BCCLC as administrator for a number of years. At ISTCS, Mr. Larsen is the full-time administrator and Dr. Ball assists with budgeting, finance, and personnel in both schools.

Chairman DeMordaunt asked about enrollment and how ISTCS has confirmed those numbers.

Dr. Ball said projections are 130 and 115 was used to be conservative. Dr. Larsen said the two major causes of student attrition were family moves and disciplinary issues.

The PCSC requested continued monthly enrollment and fiscal updates.

#### **5. Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School (TCPCS) Corrective Action Plan**

Aaron Clegg, Board Chair; Dr. Drew Meyer, Superintendent; Justin Judy, Board Member; Angela Lords, Clerk; and Erica Radford, Board Member, represented TCPCS.

Mr. Clegg indicated that the PCSC's concerns regarding open meeting law violations have been addressed through board training. He said the NOD related to failure to meet MSES was issued due to the school's provision of incorrect information. Amended documents have been submitted at the recommendation of PCSC staff.

Mr. Clegg introduced proposed charter amendments intended to address the ISCN recommendations received during an audit and increase class sizes to provide a division of Kindergarten from 32 into two classes of 16. Other proposed amendments adjust the number of board members and add children of full-time employees to those eligible for the founder's preference in accordance with recent statutory change.

**M/S (Van Wart/Hallett): To approve the proposed charter amendments submitted by Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School. *The motion passed unanimously.***

#### **6. Rolling Hills Public Charter School (RHPCS) Fiscal Status Update & Corrective Action Plan**

Dr. John Montgomery, Administrator; Lee Ann Gilberg, Treasurer; and Niki Crow, Clerk, represented RHPCS.

Dr. Montgomery reviewed the CAP, including compliance with code regulations with regard to provision of special education services. The board and administration met to determine how to handle future complaints to ensure the school understands its duties and responsibilities relative to special education issues. RHPCS is working with the SDE to get staff training. Procedures were put in place to require notification of the board chair within

three days of notice of a complaint and report to the PCSC within five days of notice of a complaint.

**M/S (O'Donahue/Corkill): To lift the notice of defect regarding the provision of special education services from Rolling Hills Public Charter School. *The motion passed unanimously.***

Ms. Gilberg said RHPCS has a small reserve and is projecting a tight budget for next year.

Dr. Montgomery said next year's budget is projected on 267, but actual enrollment of over 300 students is anticipated.

Commissioner Hallett asked if RHPCS has had greater reserves since opening in 2005.

RHPCS said the school once had higher reserves, but in the past 1 1/2 years, issues at the school resulted in decreased enrollment.

Chairman DeMordaunt said RHPCS is apparently improving, but she requested that the school continue providing monthly fiscal updates.

## **7. Kaplan Academy of Idaho (KAID) Update**

Dave High, Board Chair; Dorian Bell, Financial Advisor; and Vickie McCullough, Administrator; and Ofelia San Pedro, CEO of Kaplan Virtual Education; represented KAID.

Mr. High said KAID originally expected to attract high achieving students interested in advanced honors courses not available in rural areas. The actual population received included primarily students not succeeding in the traditional schools. In the original petition, approximately 69% of the budget was allocated to staffing and 24.6% to Kaplan. However, Kaplan's fees proved significantly higher than anticipated, leaving less for staff. KAID's intent is to continue with Kaplan, but KAID's board examines ways to lessen reliance on Kaplan's services to gain more teachers.

Mr. Bell said the SDE informed KAID the third year of the start-up grant could be reduced. Therefore, a conservative budget was prepared. Using adjunct teachers, the student:teacher ratio may decrease from 70:1 to 60:1.

Ms. McCullough said this is not what KAID took a staff retreat to discuss. The retreat covered course options that were considerably pared down while keeping core subjects. The student success path program was reviewed and alternative authorization received from the state for the upcoming year. Adjunct teachers may be called upon to assist in other classes.

Ms. San Pedro indicated Kaplan is very willing to work with KAID to reduce fees, find solutions due to reductions in grants, and be a full partner for the success of the school by working with Kaplan's board. Kaplan schools are successful due to the online nature of the programs, even with a high student to teacher ratio.

Ms. McCullough said one full-time teacher may have 70 students, but they are spread out between 32-36 courses. Course offerings have been pared down.

Commissioner DeMordaunt asked how the teacher workload compares within the marketplace.

Mr. High indicated the board is exploring options as to the types of providers similar to Kaplan, what their fee structures are, and what these ratios are with other providers.

Mr. Bell said KAID pays Kaplan 52.7% of the ADA apportionment. Grant monies and specific special education monies are not included under the service agreement.

Commissioner Hallett asked if KAID meets the accreditation requirement of the rules and regulations regarding class sizes of NWEA.

Ms. McCullough has not investigated yet whether KAID will meet those new requirements moving forward with year two. However, KAID was given provisional accreditation for year one.

Commissioner Hallett said he feels that the PCSC must get assurance that schools meet accreditation requirements in student:teacher ratios for all schools seeking NWEA accreditation.

The PCSC expressed discomfort regarding KAID's ability to deliver a quality education. Paring back to core courses was a wise move, but may result in lower enrollment. The PCSC requested monthly updates including Kaplan contract negotiations, enrollment, budgets, and documentation that KAID is compliant with NWEA accreditation requirements.

## **8. iSucceed Virtual High School (iSVHS) Proposed Charter Amendment**

Don Peña, Board Chair; and Monti Pittman, Executive Director, represented iSVHS.

Mr. Peña stated the MSES have been modified for simplicity, consistency, and clarity. He provided a review of all proposed changes to the MSES.

Mr. Pittman added that goals have been made consistent with other virtual high schools for comparison purposes and evaluation.

Commissioner Hallett asked what the current rate for Academic Progress is.

Mr. Pittman said students are at approximately 65%-70% and includes a year over year increase goal.

Commissioner Corkill commended the school for self-monitoring.

Commissioner O'Donahue asked for an enrollment update.

Mr. Peña said enrollment was 800+ and finished last year with 650. The student:teacher ratio started at slightly over 50:1, but finished at about 35:1.

Commissioner Van Wart asked why student performance goals were lowered from 75% to 70% proficiency.

Mr. Pittman said it has to do with consistency and being realistic considering the school's at-risk population of nearly 1/3.

**M/S (Hallett/Corkill): To approve the proposed charter amendments for iSucceed Virtual High School.** *The motion was unanimous.*

#### 9. **Idaho Virtual Academy (IDVA) Proposed Charter Amendment**

Desiree Laughlin, Head of School; Kelly Edginton, Principal; and Allen Wenger, Business Manager, represented IDVA.

Ms. Laughlin provided an update regarding the status of the school. She noted the three areas missed of AYP in ISAT (students with disabilities in Math and Reading, economically disadvantaged students in Math). However, all areas of the ISAT scores showed growth. The student to teacher ratio for grades K-8 is 70:1. This ratio was not increased due to budget cuts. Teachers work closely with parents and at no time does a teacher have 70 students in a classroom at the same time.

Chairman DeMordaunt commended the school for taking the most successful teachers and maximizing them in a concentrated way to achieve impressive results.

Ms. Laughlin introduced a proposal for a two-year pilot of an alternative hybrid program for at-risk students in grades 7-10. Students would come to a classroom between two and four times weekly, depending on the needs of the students, for direct instruction in math and English, as well as include credit recovery courses. With an enrollment of 150 students, this program would be budget neutral.

Commissioner Hallett asked if the hybrid program is funded as a virtual or brick and mortar, or both.

Ms. Laughlin said funding would be as a virtual school. The SDE has a separate building number for this pilot program for the purposes of financial reporting.

The PCSC expressed enthusiasm for the pilot program and clarified that the school will need to return to the PCSC for approval of an extension beyond the two-year time period, providing the pilot is successful.

**M/S (Van Wart/Hallett): To approve the proposed charter amendment to add an alternative hybrid school, as a two-year pilot program, for Idaho Virtual Academy.** *The motion passed unanimously.*

#### 10. **Xavier Charter School (XCS) Annual Update**

Jeff Bulkley, Board Chair; Teresa Berry, Board Vice Chair; Joan Hurlock, Board Member; Cindy Fulcher, Administrator; and Thad Biggers, Vice Principal, represented XCS.

Ms. Fulcher provided an update on the status of the school and progress in working a corrective action plan for failure to meet MSES.

The PCSC commended the school on their report.

Chairman DeMordaunt asked if there was a formal exit survey in place. She cautioned against misinterpretation of XCS's pre-enrollment interviews as a screening process, which is not permissible under the law.

Ms. Fulcher said XCS has tried a couple of options for exit surveys, but they have not worked well.

**M/S (Van Wart/O'Donahue): To lift from Xavier Charter School the September 2009 notice of defect regarding failure to meet measurable student educational standards.** *The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **11. Blackfoot Community Charter Learning Center (BCCLC) Annual Update**

Dr. Fred Ball, Administrator; Stacey Lilya, Board Vice Chair; and Mark Fisk, Parent, represented BCCLC.

The BCCLC representatives provided an update on the status of the school. Enrollment has increased and stakeholder satisfaction is high. Title I funds may not be received; if this is the case, BCCLC will institute budget cuts and may reduce education assistant staffing.

Chairman DeMordaunt requested a budget without Title I funding included unless Steve Underwood, Director-Coordinated System Improvement at SDE, confirms BCCLC is eligible for Title I funds this year.

#### **12. Another Choice Virtual School (ACVS) Pre-Opening Update**

Dr. Laura Sandidge, Board Chair; and Kim Hunter, Start-Up Consultant, represented ACVS.

Dr. Sandidge updated the PCSC regarding ACVS's preparations to open in fall 2010. Enrollment is at 115, with a goal of 150 prior to opening. A facility has been leased, handbooks developed, and hiring completed with the exception of one elementary teacher. Approximately 80% of students enrolled are on IEPs.

Chairman DeMordaunt requested that a worst-case budget reflecting low enrollment be sent to PCSC staff after the opening week of school.

#### **13. Sage International School of Boise (Sage) Pre-Opening Update**

Nancy Glenn, Board Secretary; Kim Carter Cram, Board Chair; Bill Carter, Board Vice Chair; Don Keller, Administrator; and Lisa Leffler, Business Manager, represented Sage.

Mr. Keller updated the PCSC regarding Sage's preparations to open in fall 2010, including successful marketing and community partnerships.

The PCSC requested that budget and enrollment updates be provided to PCSC staff after the opening week of school.

#### **14. Monticello Montessori School Pre-Opening Update**

David Meyer, Administrator; Chris Jensen, Administrative Assistant/Business Manager; Drew Meyer, Treasurer; and Lori Gentillon, Board Vice Chair; represented Monticello.

Mr. David Meyer updated the PCSC regarding Monticello's preparations to open in fall 2010. He said the school will sign a facility lease by agreement with Dome Technology once the certificate of occupancy is obtained. Once negotiations are made with USDA, the school will proceed toward purchasing the facility. The projected ending fund balance of \$28,141 is anticipated to increase to \$95,000 the following year.

The PCSC requested that enrollment and budget updates be provided to PCSC staff after the opening week of school.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.