

# Maine Charter School Commission

Key: **Yellow** = Document Information.  
**Red** = Interested Party Questions

**Thursday, June 2, 2016**

The RFP Informational Meeting is being held in Room 103A Cross State Office Building, Augusta 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

## **RFP for Public Charter School Applications Informational Meeting Notes**

**Note:** Throughout this document, Commission refers to the Maine Charter School Commission.

1. **Maine Charter School Member Introductions** – Shelley Reed, MCSC Chair, Jana Lapoint, Vice Chair; Laurie Pendleton, Commissioner; Bob Kautz, Executive Director; Gina Post, Director of Program Management; Heather Fuller, Administrative Assistant; Nancy Dube, Student Nurse Consultant for DOE; and Roberta Lucas, Special Services Liaison for DOE and Maine Charter Schools. Late arrival; Tyler Backus, School Finance & Compliance Coordinator for DOE.
2. Interested Parties Introductions – Wendy Betts, Independent Consultant with Wayfinders Passages; Andrea Vassallo, Wayfinders School; Dottie Foote, CEO of Wayfinders School and Passages School; Erin Larson, Director of Operations, Wayfinders School; Roger Brainerd, Maine Association for Charter Schools (MACS); Illaria Dana, and Erik Squire.
3. **RFP Review**
  - RFP Information for completing a public charter school application – Shelley Reed. Regular RFP Pages 1-6.

**Intent to Submit a Charter School Application;** in order to apply, this document is mandatory by **June 14, 2016**, submission of the actual completed Application for 2017 is optional.

- The rubrics for the Applications provide a numerical score and a narrative.
- 110 Evaluation Criteria – produces a 600-800 page document. You are creating a district not just a school.

**Executive Summary** – Application Certification must be signed by the Chair of the Governing Board. The Public Charter School Contract is between the Public Charter School Governing Board and the Maine Charter School Commission.

**August 25, 2016, by 5:00 p.m.** Application has to be delivered to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the State Office Building to the Maine Charter School Commission Office.

- Completeness Review – Quantity review not a quality review – do all required criteria appear in the Application? This is done by the MCSC Staff before the Review Team receives the Application.
- If the application is found to be complete, you will receive notification of the date and time of your Review Team Interview (all held in the State Office Building, Augusta).
- If there are deficiencies found in the Application, you will receive notification and have **five** days to provide a complete version of the Application.
- Review Teams consist of a Chair and two other Commission Members.

- Evaluation Criteria is exactly what we are using as a Rubric to measure the contents of the Application. Rubrics are available on the [MCSC Website](#).

**Review of the Applications** is completed by the Review Team, the Commission and any other professionals deemed necessary to facilitate a thorough evaluation of the Application. This will include people from the Maine Department of Education as well as experts from the public at large.

**September 19 – September 23, 2016** – Governing Board interview with the Review Team to **clarify** any questions the Review Team may have. Notification of date and time will be sent with your completeness letter on or about September 10.

**October 4, 2016** – is when the Commission meets; the Review Team presents its recommendation to the question: *Do we think that this Application has scored high enough to bring it forward to a Public Interview with the Commission* and a public hearing for the Community; followed by discussion and a vote of the Commission.

If your Application is voted to move forward, **October 11 – October 14, 2016** –will be In-person Interviews with the Commission (approx. 90 minutes) and the Public Hearing for the Community to provide testimony to the Commission (approx. 90 minutes). Every effort is made to hold these meetings in the Application Catchment Area. You will be notified of the date, time and place.

**November 8, 2016** – is the Commission Final Vote on each Application to begin the Public Charter School Contract negotiations.

**Common Characteristics seen in Successful Charter Schools** See Bullets in Introduction on RFP Page 3.

- We want to see the mission and vision of your school in the education plan, organization of your school, in the fiduciary responsibility, in the governance.
- Clearly define in your catchment area the community need - Who is the student and what is he/she going to get that she/he cannot get any place else? Education program is likely to be effective for this need.
- See continuing Professional education for the staff should be directly related to the mission/vision of the school.
- Educational Staff must have a sound knowledge of state educational laws (education, charter, special education, etc.).
- Reach out to the Communities of the catchment area in advance to allay fears and invoke acceptance with your mission and vision so it is wanted and will be sustained and maintained.
- Skill sets needed for the Governing Board – have to have a mix of leaders; vital for the financial planning and management.
- Special Education can wipe out your budget. Charter schools are attractive to parents/students requiring special education services and schools have to pay attention to the support services they may need.

Innovative – Think BIG and have the support systems in place to hold up that dream for you.

**Information Sheet for Completing a Maine Charter School Application.**

After this meeting, any questions are to be sent by email to [mcsc@maine.gov](mailto:mcsc@maine.gov) for Bob Kautz; responses will be posted on the [www.Maine.gov/csc/](http://www.Maine.gov/csc/) as soon as possible.

Applicant instructions go to *Criteria* and Evaluation Criteria mirror the *Criteria* required.

- Read Application Instructions carefully.
- Answer the Question.
- Know the applicable Laws – Most are available on [www.Maine.gov/csc/](http://www.Maine.gov/csc/).

- Use the Department of Education Resources and [Maine Association of Charter Schools](#) for needed information.
- Fundraising, in some form, is necessary for sustaining your charter school.

A significant amount of fundraising is needed to balance your budget each year. The General Purpose Aid is not sufficient. There is no State Funding for Charter Schools for Facilities or Busses.

As stated and a reminder: Your mission and vision need to be woven in throughout all application sections. It may be necessary to be repeating information in order to have woven your mission and vision throughout the Education Plan, Organizational Plan, Governance, Business and Financial, Education Service Providers.

- **Note:** All information from the Applicant is Public Information.
- For a “Brick and Mortar” Charter School, use the Regular RFP and Rubric. Applicant can provide blended learning by using virtual education as an element of your program (a foreign language, advanced courses, etc.), which could mean an Education Service Provider Contract - E. Page 35.

**TABS (Application Page 5):** Form, Template, Insurances, and Policies.

Narrative and Tab may be duplicate information – please, exhibit in both places.

**Policies:** School districts are required to have adopted Policies – You may find a school’s policy manual on line – and adapt that for your particular public charter school. The Applicant is responsible for making sure all policies meet the current Law (i.e. special education rules and laws have changed over the years).

Model policies are available; you may want to add to them; but be careful about subtracting.

Do not only cut and paste policies – Understand your policies and their implications.

Narrative is a description of the policy – the Policy Tab must be the “Policy to be followed adopted by the public charter school governing board.”

**Possible sources of model policies are:**

Maine School Management Association (MSMA).

Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC).

Local School District.

**Format Requirements:** Regular RFP Page 6.

**Unbound Copy** with elastic for ease in section copying.

**Thumb Drive** - all Tab documents clearly labeled.

**Should the Tab sections also have consecutive numbering on them, so you start at 1 and end up at 1000 or something?**

*The Tabs need to be according to the list of Tabs.*

**Regarding the application needing to be delivered on the 25th, to whom?**

*The full application must be received no later than 5pm on August 25, 2016 at Maine Charter School Commission, 5th Floor of the Cross Office Building. Go to the receptionist desk, and they will call a staff member of the Maine Charter School Commission, we will come gather the application information and provide you a receipt.*

**A. Education Plan - Laurie Pendleton.**

Answers 4 questions: What is it you want your students to achieve?  
How do you plan for them to achieve it?  
How are you going to evaluate to know if they have “got it?”  
What are you going to do if they didn’t “get it?”

Recommend a book –“Failure Is Not an Option: Six Principles for Making Student Success the Only Option” – By Alan M. Blankstein

**A.1 Mission, Vision Identification of targeted student population and the community the school hopes to serve.**

**Definition of Mission and Vision - RFP Section II A. Education Plan Page 8.**

**Mission** – What is it that you want to do? What is your guiding mission for this particular school? Why do you want to open this school?

**Vision** – What do you see as your school in 5 to 10 years? What is the long-term view of this school? Why are we in this for the long term? What do we expect to have happen?

How your school will differ from the district public school? What different opportunities will be provided? Understanding of the catchment area demographics; know the percent of special education in the area and identify how you will accommodate the needs of your students.

All categories of the Application align to the approach.

Community and targeted population: demonstrate that you are going to be meeting a community or regional need. Interaction with the Community – surveys, meetings, conversations.

**Students enroll from the targeted catchment area and may enroll from outside of that location?**

*The law was changed that you are now allowed at least one student from each one of those schools even if it does not round up to one. This is so that no child anywhere in the State is prevented from that option of being able to attend a Charter school.*

05-071 Chapter 140 Section 3. Charter School Operations

**2. Enrollment**

- A. **Declaration of student intent.** A charter school shall require a written declaration of intent to enroll in the charter school in the upcoming school year from each student who wishes to enroll in the charter school, including students who have an enrollment preference. The written declaration must be signed by the student’s parent, guardian or legal guardian and submitted to the charter school within the deadline established by the charter school. The charter school must set the deadline so that sufficient time is allowed to conduct a lottery within the time frame set forth in this rule if the number of declarations of intent to enroll exceeds the number of seats available in a grade, level or division of the charter school. The declaration of student intent may request only such information as is needed to determine which grade, level or division of the school the student wishes to enter, **whether the student is eligible for a preference**, and the identity of the student’s resident school administrative unit (SAU).

MRS 20-A Chapter 112 § 2404

H. A public charter school shall give **enrollment preference** to pupils enrolled in the public charter school the previous school year and to siblings of pupils already enrolled in the public charter school. [2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

I. A public charter school may give enrollment preference to children of a public charter school's founders, governing board members and full-time employees, as long as they constitute no more than 10% of the school's total student population. [2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

J. A public charter school may enroll students from outside the State if space is available. [2011, c. 414, §5 (NEW).]

MRS 20-A Chapter 112 § 2404

D. For a school administrative unit with an enrollment of 500 or fewer students, a public charter school, unless authorized by a school administrative unit, may not enroll more than 5% of a school administrative unit's noncharter public school students per grade level in each of the first 3 years of the public charter school's operation, except that if 5% of a school administrative unit's noncharter public school students per grade level is less than one, a public charter school may enroll one student of the school administrative unit per grade level in each of the first 3 years.

## **A.2 Academic Program**

Maine Learning Results with Common Core.

What are you teaching and how do you propose to teach it?

Core Subjects: Math, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies – Sample lesson plans from two different grade levels

Provide research for the learning environment you propose.

Student outcomes.

Professional Development for Teachers.

What does differentiated instruction look like in your school on the continuum from children with significant needs all the way up through Gifted and Talented, how you are providing differentiated instruction is really important.

**Maine law allows students that are going to a Charter school to participate in Extra-Curricular or Co-Curricular activities at the school in the district they reside. In Charter schools, the school has to negotiate with the regular public school that that child would be attending to see if they will allow the child to go and if there would be a cost. There is also a word in the law, capacity; if the school says they do not have the capacity to allow the child to attend, then they could refuse the child.**

Review Laws in regard to Charter School Student participation in co-curricular activities in their resident districts. Maine Principal's Association can be a resource for this information.

Graduation Standards must include a proficiency-based diploma.

Tracking of students for college, post-secondary opportunities?

Support plan for drop-out students?

### **Schools can focus on average students? Are there any special regulations for doing that?**

*The Maine law says any child can focus. You can say that our focus is this, but if it is a child that is not a risk who applies and you have an over subscription and you have a lottery, or sufficient number with that child, you have to accept them, there is no differentiation. Your vehicle is, make it clear, this is who we are focusing on to try to get that population to understand it and want to attend. You cannot prevent someone from attending.*

### A.3 Special Student Populations

**Child Find Policy and Referral/Pre-Referral Policy; need to be current and up to date.**

**Restraint and Seclusion Policy is also a requirement under General regulations.**

**When looking at the Special Ed, or Health policies, from other districts, be sure to look at the dates that are listed making sure that you are using the current information.**

**Under current regulations, you need to have a 282 Special Education Teacher. We recommend at least contracting with a Special Education Director in order to have expertise in the field. If a student with special needs requires out-of-district placement, the public charter school accepts all responsibility for that student. If enough money is appropriated there are some State Funds for excessive costs over and beyond the State average amount per student to apply for in the spring. The school has to up-front the cost and may have to absorb 4 times the State average. If there are not enough funds, State reimbursement may be cents on the dollar.**

*The special education allocation will be based on the estimate until the change is made after the October 1 count is complete. So if you have more children requiring special education services attending when school starts we will only adjust for those students after we adjust the ED 279, following the October 1 count. It will be a retroactive adjustment, with the additional funds paid through the remaining monthly payments.*

Tyler Backus, School Finance & Compliance Coordinator, Maine Department of Education  
[www.maine.gov/doe](http://www.maine.gov/doe) [207-624-6635](tel:207-624-6635)

**Insurance Policy may cover legal costs, if you have a due process hearing.**

No insurance coverage for service cost for special education students.

Public Charter Schools could pool to have a contingency fund.

Public Charter Schools could share special education professionals.

The authorized Public Charter Schools have formed a group meeting to work out common issues.

Public Charter schools are not allowed to discriminate. Schools have to avoid the appearance of “counseling out”.

**Chapter 140** lays out all the specifications that have to be met by charter schools in regards to the whole enrollment process.

You also have to provide related services for students who have an IEP, the services may change once in the Charter school, but from the beginning services need to be provided.

**NOTE:** Special Student Populations include: Gifted and Talented Students, At Risk, and English Language Learners.

### A.4 Assessment

Assessments provided Data that can be acted on.

You are required to participate in the Maine State Assessment program.

High Schools – Students College and career-ready – how will that be assessed?

How will students be promoted through your school – does not have to be by grade?

How will use your assessment data to make decisions?

## **A.5 School Climate and Discipline**

What is your approach to student discipline and is it likely to promote a safe and supporting learning environment you want to build?

Follow all legal requirements in disciplining students – particularly disciplining students with special needs.

Emergency Procedures – a plan in place for establishing safe procedures for students.

All policies in place for this section – Regular RFP Page 16.

## **B. Organizational and Operational Plan - Gina Post.**

### **B.1. School Calendar and Daily Schedule**

Non-traditional schedules – explain the rationale and how it equates to the law for number of days per year and number of hours per day.

**Daily Schedule:** “One grade from each division.” Division is K-6, Middle School, and High School.

TABS page 17.

### **B.2. Student Recruitment and Enrollment**

Exhibit Location of catchment area, student demographics, and enrollment data from currently operating schools.

How you will reach all community members with information about your school – documentation of this outreach? How and where will you target specific populations who may not have access to this information to provide them an equal opportunity to enroll?

**In talking about community that you are serving, catchment area, enrollment projections, we serve students from all over the State of Maine, so we might be talking about a different language in regard to assuming how we define community, is the State of Maine? We may need some assistance in regard how to explain as it is 24/7.**

*All of the Charter schools conserve the State of Maine. If you don't have the means or funding for them you won't get that from the State. You would need to have some other source of income. The parent would need to provide transportation depending on the distance. You are getting the funding for the educational piece and that is what you would need to describe.*

**We need to find ways to describe it so it does not detract from the research that we have done on a residential basis. We need to separate the residential from the school.**

*There is no requirement of the child that if they want to attend your school, they have to be willing to live here.*

### **B.3. Staffing and Human Resources**

Chief Executive Officer is employed by the Governing Board.

Chief Financial Officer and the Head of School (Principal) are employees of the school.

Public Charter School Administrators are not required to be certified, required to have background check. Teachers are certified, certified within three years or special area of expertise accompanied by an explanation of their credentials for teaching in your school.

Who are you looking for to teach in your school and justification for your criteria?

Be aware of the requirements for Teacher Performance Evaluation and Performance Growth for all public schools.

School nurse is trained and meets the DOE criteria

**State law indicates that you need to follow all the Health and Safety standards of the DOE. It is your duty to review these to be sure you know what they are. They are referenced in the RFP. You need to have a 524 Certified Nurse as outlined by the DOE requirements.**

#### **Chapter 140 - Medication and Administration**

#### **Chapter 45 – Health Screenings; Vision, Hearing, Height and Weight**

#### **Chapter 126-261 – Immunization Rule with DHHS**

Required Tabs listed on Page 20.

#### **If we have more questions, can we go through Bob, or do we go through [specialists]?**

*The reason the questions have to come via email and we will respond via email is that any question that we receive from any of the applicants, we need to make it known to all of the applicants and the only way we can do that is to have the questions coming in to one person and can respond back to that one person. The question and the response will be up on the website.*

**Description for certified teachers – refer to the law for this information.**

#### **Can a Board member be a teacher or is that not allowed?**

*Governing board has to be separate from anything and anyone else. Employees cannot be on the governing board. They are the policy makers, fiduciary policy; they are not the Head of School. If hiring a Head of School they need to allow them to run the school. Governing Board has to be independent due to a conflict of interest.*

**With public Charter schools there are 3 areas that you don't have flexibility on; Health and Safety, Special Education, and Federal laws involving education.**

#### **B.4. Pre-Opening Plan**

An important document in the organization of tasks to open your school; who is responsible, when it needs to be complete/when it is complete.

Tab 19. Pre-opening Plan Template available at [www.Maine.gov/csc/](http://www.Maine.gov/csc/)

#### **B.5. Management and Operation**

Tab 20. Organizational Chart – who reports to whom

Tab 21. Administrators and Staff – position descriptions, per the org. chart, illustrating the day-to-day operation for each position – curriculum, personnel, budgeting. Provide any available resumes, background checks, etc. Page 22

Some schools in an attempt to maintain a bare bones budget have created job descriptions that are impossible to carry-out; be realistic.

#### **Anyone you hire that is subcontracting has to go through the Criminal History Check approval through the DOE?**

*Yes anyone that has sustained contact with the kids. A certification requirement for Administrators is not necessary.*

## **B.6. Parent and Community Involvement**

This is where you want to describe and document contact with people in the catchment area communities (evidence of public meetings), assessing needs, gaining resource partners, growing demand for your school, conversations with the local district schools.

Use these opportunities to demonstrate that you are a public school – not avoiding any element of the population.

How will you continue to foster continuing relationships?

Public engagement with local school districts especially in your catchment area, evidence of public meeting; feedback. We want to know that you have identified that there is in fact a community need.

## **C. Governance – Jana Lapoint and Bob Kautz.**

- We (Commission) sign a contract with the Governing Board of the School who holds the Charter.
- Head of School takes care of operating the school.
- The Board does not operate the school. Demonstrate that the board is arm's length from the operation of the school.
- Board Recruitment – People who believe in the mission and vision; who understand and have backgrounds in education, business, law, facilities, other board experience, and fundraising know-how.
- Conflict of Interest Statements and resumes from each governing board member, which demonstrate their expertise for their board role.
- The Governing Boards responsibilities are application development, knowledge of all application criteria, application commitments, raising money to balance the yearly budget and then oversight of the operation of the school. You let the operators operate and you see if they are doing the job with a formal evaluation process that regularly looks at how things are being done.
- Don't minimize how the Governing Board will evaluate the program and the operation of the school.
- Go out to the community and seek those that truly care about the concept.

Crisis will happen and a Board person(s) may have to jump in to resolve the crisis and jump out as quickly as possible.

The Commission will look to the Governing Board as you have the fiduciary responsibility for the public charter school.

See Tabs on Page 25.

## **D. Business and Financial Services – Jana Lapoint and Bob Kautz.**

- Budget needs to fit the mission and vision.
- Special education needs have to be budgeted.
- Comparable and comparative salaries to the area for staff.
- Who and what is managing your finances, be sure they have the necessary skills to do this task.

**Operating with 97% because the Charter school gets the other 3%. Fundraising is crucial.**

### **Provide last three years of what has been raised thus far as an example?**

*This needs to be separate, show it to us in a letter, cannot depend on funders to fund in the same way as previously done.*

### **Who needs to sign the Letter of Intent?**

*This would be signed by whoever is appointed.*

### **Does the Board need to apply for a non-profit? Wondering about Forming a 504 LLC?**

*Yes 504C*

### **Do we have to provide transportation in our district or is that an option that we have?**

*In your catchment area and then what other people are doing for those youth coming in to those, there are points of pick up. If I am a parent, then I would drive to that pick up point and then you are providing the transportation from those points.*

### **Can we take up to an additional school year, is that okay or not okay?**

*Have to meet all State requirements for facilities.*

*Having an additional year to open a school would be up to the Charter Commission and would have to be supported that this is going to be done and successful.*

## **D. 1 Budget**

Beginning July 1, 2015, the Department of Education began making direct payments to public charter schools authorized by the Maine Charter School Commission.

School Finance Staff created a template for applicants to estimate State Funding available on the Commission's website.

**The three percent is the only source of funds for the Commission to provide for the application process and the monitoring responsibilities for each of the authorized public charter schools.**

Tab 29 – All Workbook sections completed – Budgets, Enrollment, Staff, Pre-Opening Cash Flow, and First Year Operating Cash Flow.

## **D.2. Financial Management**

Description of accounting software that connects seamlessly to DOE system, Maine Education Data Management **Financial** System. Contact MEDMS Helpdesk 207-624-6896 for assistance.

Reporting must be timely and complete in order to receive the funding.

Once you receive the Charter, you are a public body and must abide by all the "right to know" requirements.

Be sure that whatever system you use, you can convert to upload into the DOE system. Ensure that someone cannot take the money.

**D.3. Facilities** – if you have one, floor plans – how will it be used?

If you do not have one, what are you looking for; options you are entertaining.

List of Tabs are on Page 31.

**D.4. Transportation** – Schools are not required to provide transportation for high school students (Grades 9-12); however, transportation for elementary (Grades K-8) must be provided.

Your defined catchment area is the section where transportation has to be provided.

#### **D.5. Insurance**

Evidence you have quotes for your insurance needs. Tab.34.

You will need a Rider for a school nurse.

#### **E. Education Service Providers - Shelley Reed.**

An Education Service Provider (ESP) or  
Giving you technical or other support.

- An organization, for profit or not-for-profit, with a contract of \$25,000 or greater to provide a service for your school.

**Secondary Education opportunities would be a partnership paying on a per student basis.**

#### **A. Conclusion – Shelley Reed**

**The RFP is the piece to go rather than what you think was said today.**

**The Letter of Intent can be signed by the person authorized by the Governing Board.**