

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
STATEWIDE VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD
OLIVER HODGE EDUCATION BUILDING
2500 NORTH LINCOLN BOULEVARD, ROOM 1-20
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

April 19, 2013

The Statewide Virtual Charter School Board met in special session at 10:03 a.m. on Friday, April 19, 2013, in the Board Room of the Oliver Hodge Education Building at 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The final agenda was posted at 8:55 a.m. on Thursday, April 18, 2013.

The following were present:

Mr. Derrel Fincher, Director of Learning Technologies, State Department of Education
Mr. Richard Caram, Director of C3 Schools, State Department of Education
Ms. Terrie Cheadle, State Board of Education

Members of the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board present:

Mr. John Harrington, Edmond
Ms. Debbie Long, Claremore
Mr. Jaared Scott, Stillwater
Ms. Pamela Vreeland, Jenks

Members of the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board not present:

Dr. Janet Barresi, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, ex-officio nonvoting member
Dr. Phyllis Hudecki, Secretary of Education, ex-officio nonvoting member

Others in attendance are shown as an attachment.

**CALL TO ORDER
AND
ROLL CALL**

John Harrington called the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board special meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Cheadle called the roll and ascertained there was a quorum.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, OKLAHOMA
FLAG SALUTE, AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**

John Harrington led Board Members and all present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag, a salute to the Oklahoma Flag, and a moment of silence.

OPENING COMMENTS

John Harrington thanked members for their flexibility in scheduling the meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

**April 9, 2013 Statewide Virtual Charter School Board
Special Meeting Minutes Approved**

Jaared Scott made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2013 special Statewide Virtual Charter School Board meeting. Debbie Long seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following votes: John Harrington, yes; Debbie Long, yes; Jaared Scott, yes; and Pamela Vreeland, yes.

**2013 Statewide Virtual Charter School Board
Special Meeting Times and Locations Approved**

Derrel Fincher, Director of Learning Technologies, said at the April 9, 2013 meeting members agreed to meet on the second Tuesday of every month. The State Department of Education (SDE) legal counsel has advised that specific meeting dates, times, and places are required. The proposed date for the July meeting is in conflict with the July 9-12 VISION2020 Conference. He suggested meeting the Tuesday prior to or after the conference.

Derrel Fincher noted it was not necessary to have a meeting every month. The board sets all meeting dates and the chair can call a meeting.

Members discussed availability for the July meeting, importance of regularly scheduled meetings, 1 p.m. meeting time, availability of meeting rooms, and possible meeting locations/facilities.

Derrel Fincher said he checked into the availability of meeting locals in Tulsa. One of the issues with the effort requires SDE staff traveling prior to a meeting to ensure proper posting has occurred and the meeting facility is prepared. Typically, additional

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staff travels the day of meeting which can be quite challenging to get everything and everyone there.

Debbie Long asked was it possible to utilize a Tulsa Public School facility.

Derrel Fincher said he did not know but would check into the complexity with legal counsel.

John Harrington said today we can schedule dates, times, and the locations can be changed. The proposed meeting times of the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board is changed to 1 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month with the exception of the July 12 meeting at 10 a.m. The previously scheduled 10 a.m., May 14, 2013 meeting is now scheduled for 1 p.m.

Debbie Long made a motion to approve meeting dates for the 2013 Statewide Virtual Charter School Board. Jaared Scott seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following votes: John Harrington, yes; Debbie Long, yes; Jaared Scott, yes; and Pamela Vreeland, yes.

**Statewide Virtual Charter School Board Draft Charter
Application for submission to the State Board of Education Tabled**

Derrel Fincher said Senate Bill 1816 has gone through the Senate and two committees. The bill basically changes the role of the SVCSB from being a charter school board chartered by the State Board of Education (SBE). The SBE would hire the providers to be on the oversight board which oversees the statewide virtual charter school for all the statewide virtual charter school providers. In its current form all of the contracts they may have with other districts would come here.

John Harrington asked would this board be the body granting the charter.

Derrel Fincher said this board will be the body granting the charter, and would also develop the rules to assure they are properly monitored and meet high standards. Basically, the board develops the criterion a statewide virtual charter school would be meeting. As it stands now this board would be a sponsor and an autonomous board. This could change tomorrow.

John Harrington said it poses a bit of a dilemma and interesting question. On one hand what is written in law today is the charter board as we have known it and the application process that is laid out before us. If nothing changes then of course the real impetus for this board would be to do what we have been instructed and called to do as expeditiously as possible. Not knowing what the new rule is which could change tomorrow in which case we would not need to do that. Is that a fairly summation where we find ourselves today?

Derrel Fincher said I think so. Richard Caram, Director of C³ Schools may be able to help us understand the timing for applications. Part of what we are trying to do is to get an application because they cannot actually work with providers until they are constituted as a school.

John Harrington thanked Mr. Caram for his continuous service to the board and asked him to provide information on the virtual charter school application timeline

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process. We have two pathways before us and we do not know if the other change will occur. Let us assume that it does not, please talk about the timeframe of moving forward as originally planned.

Richard Caram said I do not think we can produce an application for the April SBE meeting but maybe present it at the May meeting for their consideration. This would push back a decision by the SBE to June unless action is taken at the May meeting. Especially if it was altogether for them to peruse but if they make changes they cannot pass something based on changes. The legislative session will be ending around May 25th and we should know if there are changes.

Jaared Scott asked under our current guidelines if this does potentially happen or we get pushed to June could we actually spin this up in time for school to start in August.

Richard Caram said that would mean getting a provider and having the time frame to go through the contractual process. Virtual schools are on a year round situation and the start of the virtual charter school is not necessarily dependent on August 15. It is based the funding and August 1 deadline based on a provider marketing to attract students to the school.

John Harrington said some of my assumptions, I hope Mr. Caram could validate or say no if it is not the case, are about submitting an application to the SBE. I have a bias or assumption that it would be better to submit a stronger application than a quicker one. Even if the application comes a month later, it is better to present a stronger application than a hastily prepared application sooner. Based on your experience and what you have seen of this process would you tend to agree with that?

Richard Caram said absolutely. I would agree that you have all the Ts crossed and the I's dotted to circumvent questions like, "why isn't this covered or what about this or what about that." A stronger application is very much correct, no matter if it were brick and mortar or virtual, a stronger application the better.

John Harrington said another critical element that concerns me most is the need for a superintendent. Someone who will be the administrator of this program this charter school. I am not as concerned about the way virtual charters are setup and their whole business of being able to turn up content and get students learning rather quickly. The timing seems to be a bigger risk for an organization-charter... To put it a different way, it is very important that we have a strong superintendent, whatever that title will be for that individual, who will lead the day-to-day operations. That will be harder to do quickly even maybe than selecting a provider and turning that service on.

Richard Caram said it is a correct assumption based on a few things and that the virtual part is uncharted waters. To find an individual with the expertise to lead through the initial process, plus the expertise as a superintendent and all the responsibilities that go with that is a balancing act. It is not that one cannot learn this or be a quick study but it would be a characteristic you want to look at and where they are in the virtual world, thinking, and paradigm. How they envision it happening because they are the boots on the ground for this organization. They will receive all the phone calls; connect with vendors, and parents/students. This person must have a wide variety of knowledge if in fact it is a K-12 format of elementary through high school, including graduation and testing requirements.

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John Harrington said fortunately that process could begin moving forward now. It would not necessarily have to have all the other pieces lined out for that to move forward. However, my two last assumption points for Mr. Caram's feedback, do these two different pathways have different leader profiles or could it be the same leader? I am assuming it is two different types of profiles and I feel the least confident in that assumption. To expand, if the laws are enacted that change this body to an overseer board, I believe there will still be some administration work that occurs on a day-to-day basis. I am not sure that it is the same type of leadership or management function as the pure virtual charter school that we are currently operating towards.

Debbie Long said it may be more of an administrative staff.

John Harrington said it may be a different profile or it may not. It would be fantastic if it is either one of those scenarios. If you would say to me this is the shape of what that person should look like and no matter what you can start looking for is this shape. My guess is the shape has overlap but it might not be just the exact same type of individual. We cannot get the cart too far in front the horse. If we knew just how this would turn out and or if it did not matter we would need to get this person, we could start looking for that person. We really need to know which path we are going to be on.

Richard Caram said that would be correct. I am not sure you can interview people but you can have an idea of the person you want based on either scenario. Because no school exist, no funding stream exist, a detailed outline of the plan does not exist, and the type of people that take those types of risks are few and far between.

Debbie Long said she did not like feeling hurried because we are not going to do the best way we can do. I do not remember seeing a timeline in the law but it seems there is only a month or little more when we will know, one way or another, as to which way we are supposed to go. What if we approach it while waiting until to see what occurs at the capitol and take it from there. If we do indeed proceed to start a school then we can start our timeline and then maybe wait a year. I have not read anything that requires one be started this year if that indeed is the path we take.

Richard Caram said there is no timeline. It would behoove this board to have the application idea in the works and all the needed pieces in the application. If the other scenario happens you have a framework of what you need to look for and want.

John Harrington said in other words if we are going to receive applications we will be better equipped to evaluate them.

Robert Caram said you would have a rubric developed.

Pamala Vreeland said this was one of her concerns. The application can be worked and errors cleaned up in the next month. In talking about the possible leader/superintendent we could frame a formal job description to know what we are looking for and that person will know also. This could go down both of those paths. I hope we are looking at a selection of providers and not just one, and we could build a rubric that helps us select who are the actual providers. These types of things could be developed by gathering what other states have done and basically have a packet together while waiting on legislation to see what our role actually will be.

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Jaared Scott asked at what point we could possibly have providers present to us in order to get an idea of what is available. Is it appropriate to contact vendors?

Debbie Long said to better understand how virtual school companies worked she made arrangements to tour one. It was enlightening and allowed me to see visually how they function and how teachers operate. It would be good to hear from several providers.

Richard Caram said one issue would be is to not open the door for competitive bidding. It would be wise to learn on your own individually and inform yourselves on what is available. The various formats and delivery will give you a greater understanding in writing your application process.

Debbie Long requested a list of vendors and contact information.

Derrel Fincher said a lot of vendors offer virtual courses but not many. He would set up additional meetings with out-of-state and in state providers.

Richard Caram said vendors would need to understand board members are only seeking information. The other part to understand is that the person in either scenario would be very much like a regular superintendent by which vendors would provide and present information. The superintendent would then present to the board for consideration.

John Harrington said the consensus is to prepare a robust application that fleshes out the qualities and characteristics of potential providers, and leadership components of the organization is a good course regardless of what happens. A strong application that represents the best thinking and approach will give us a fast track, hopefully, at the SBE for the present course we are on. If the course does change it will provide the rubric model that can be used to hold up against other applications.

Board Members concurred it was best to continue preparing the application and agreed to table the item until the May 2013 meeting.

John Harrington asked Mr. Fincher for recommendations, elements or pieces for the application drafting process.

Derrel Fincher said I have another example of a charter school application. I attended the SDE charter school training which was informative. Members working in groups of one or two to create pieces please forward them to me and I can assemble them. We want to avoid situations where it looks you are deliberating outside of the open meetings requirements. Once the pieces are assembled I will add comments, answer questions, and confer with Mr. Caram.

Richard Caram said we are still searching for a perfect virtual school application. I am not sure one exists but if we can put one together with this body then we will have a good working document. It will serve us either way.

Derrel Fincher said I will continue searching for more examples, and discuss with Mr. Caram regarding issues of how it would work if this were a school, and how it works if it is an oversight board. If it is a school you are doing one thing and another if it is an oversight board. An oversight board would specify the perimeters for providers to

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operate but also make sure it does not narrowly restricted innovative models from coming through.

Richard Caram said a nice part of having providers is to have options for the differentiated student and parent. Do you want students to be able to choose multiple providers for various courses or one provider for courses? Who counsels the student and especially in high school and middle school to collect a correct transcript for college entrance? It is a much simpler task dealing with one charter school than dealing with several virtual charter schools, each having a student accounting system, individual accountability/assessment values. There are a lot of variables involved that must be determined.

John Harrington said the application will be prepared with a mindset that it will be either our application or it will serve as a model guideline of our own thinking as others are evaluated based on our experience. Let us press forward towards the May 14, 2013 meeting with a goal of having a completed application to review and approve at that time. We will know more about the direction ultimately of this board hopefully by then but either way by having the application is something needed either way.

Richard Caram advised formulating ideas on the type of person and characteristics needed of the two scenarios in order to be ahead of the game based on what you see as professionals in the application.

Jaared Scott said having gone through the training the other day the EOIs and impending PAARC assessments concerned him for the virtual students consuming courses at home or elsewhere. Where does the student go or how do they take the EOI examinations.

Derrel Fincher said testing centers are located in the state's two metropolitan areas and the state is divided into quadrants with test locations closest to students within each quadrant. A testing proctor and teacher are assigned at testing sites to monitor and supervise. Those associated with companies typically have an instructional technology (IT) department within the United States that prepares/provides the necessary computer equipment used for the test. This is something that has to be a part of a plan if a charter school. Even if it is someone wanting to be chartered and you are an oversight board part of their plan should clearly explain not only how they will assure the test but most importantly how do they assure students show up.

Richard Caram said a certain percentage of students must be tested and this is a major barrier for virtual charter schools. Not only getting testing done, making it available geographically/demographically but getting the student to understand the importance. The student that would normally enroll in virtual charter schools are not your typically driven student even though a great percentage are. The school takes a hit on the percentage(s); there are different types of testing, and getting the correct test at the correct testing window time. The information needs to clearly state in the application that the accountability and assessment requirements will be followed.

John Harrington asked are you saying it may not flush out the precise mechanics of it.

Richard Caram said it is one of the things they will adhere to when applying to become a charter school and the exact state statute can be cited within.

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Derrel Fincher said the oversight board would require more details and even if you are the school what you turn into the SBE the providers will adhere to this. When the providers come in you will want the detail, too.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Pamala Vreeland made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m. Jaared Scott seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following votes: John Harrington, yes; Debbie Long, yes; Jaared Scott, yes; and Pamela Vreeland, yes.

The next meeting of the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board will be held on Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 1 p.m. The meeting will convene at the State Department of Education, 2500 North Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

John Harrington, Chairperson of the Board

Terrie Cheadle, State Board of Education