



Governing Board Meeting Minutes May 9, 2022

Attendees

Members

Present	Absent	Member
X		Sharyl Allen , Deputy Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction (joined at 2:41pm)
X		Joel Graves (Chair), Superintendent, Eureka Public Schools
X		Anthony Lapke (Vice Chair), Teacher, Glacier High School
X		Adrea Lawrence , Dean, Phyllis J. Washington College of Education, University of Montana, Non-Voting
X		Luke Muszkiewicz , Chair, Board of Trustees, Helena School District No.1
X		Brock Tessman , Deputy Commissioner, Academic, Research & Student Affairs, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
X		Jason Neiffer , Executive Director, Ex Officio, Non-Voting
X		Mike Agostinelli , Assistant Director/Curriculum Director, Ex Officio

Staff and Guests

- Christen Cole, Instructional Registrar, MTDA
- Anna East, Student Support and Content Specialist, MTDA
- Kate Peterson, Student Support and Content Specialist, MTDA
- Ryan Schrenk, EdReady Program Manager, MTDA
- Jason Leonard, EdReady Instructional Registrar, MTDA
- Virg Hale, EdReady Lead Ambassador, MTDA
- Jodie Hirsch, Instructional Projects Coordinator, MTDA
- Dylan Klapmeier, Education & Workforce Policy Advisor to Governor Gianforte
- Diane Fladmo, Montana Federation of Public Employees

Minutes

Chairman Graves call the meeting to order at 2:30pm

Approve of Minutes of April, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The board review minutes of their April, 2022 meeting. Member Lakpe moved to accepted the minutes; Member Muszkiewicz seconded. The board approved the minutes unanimously.

Approval of Expenditures Through April 30, 2022

Director Neiffer presented the expenditure report through April 30, 2022. Neiffer noted that the MTDA staff is working on adapted report expenditures that is closer in line with the budget reporting we do as part of our requirements at the University of Montana. Member Muszkiewicz moved to accept the budget report; Member Tessman seconded. The board approved the report unanimously.

Board Meeting Schedule Discussion

Director Neiffer discussed the meeting schedule for the MTDA Governing Board for the 22-23 school year. Traditionally, the board meets nine times a year, taking July, November, and February off. Neiffer also expressed his desire to do one meeting face-to-face in the Spring. Board chair Graves expressed his approval of the plan. Board member Muszkiewicz suggested we have a spring meeting on the books in case there needs to be critical discussion with the board regarding the 2023 Legislative Session. There was no action on this item.

Program Updates

Project Sirius

Director Neiffer updated the board on “Project Sirius,” the proposed MTDA service expansion project. Neiffer shared a draft with the board shared with Representative Jones. Neiffer noted that he and members of the MTDA team have met with vendors and staff at other state virtual schools via their membership in the Virtual School Leadership Alliance (VLLA) regarding possibilities. MTDA is also looking at the prospects of hiring a program manger for this project during the F23 fiscal year if resources are available and the plan looks likely to come in play Fall 2023.

Neiffer also noted that he and Assistant Director/Curriculum Director Agostinelli will visit OPI offices on May 25 to meet with OPI leadership and interested departments.

Middle School Field Test

Assistant Director/Curriculum Director Agostinelli presented on MTDA’s “field test” of middle school courses this past spring.

Agostinelli discussed a brief history of middle school programming at MTDA, and the market research the staff conducted before designing the program. Agostinelli presented the course list and discussed teaching staff requirement and training. Most students took just one course, and there were a few examples of multi-course enrollments. Agostinelli discussed a few specific examples of student circumstances that created need for distance learning access. Agostinelli also complemented our new middle school teaching staff for their flexibility and proactive attitude.

Chair Graves asked Agostinelli about the fee structure. Agostinelli noted that it is the same as the high school program.

Director Neiffer discussed full program (replacing a teacher) with the board, and that MTDA is planning for increased emergency use this fall, including potentially middle school coverage of core or elective areas.

Member Muszkiewicz thanked Agostinelli for the presentation, and complimented the staff for their honest approach to the program and distance learning.

Indigenous Language Project/Staffing

Director Neiffer updated the board on the indigenous language development project. The staff has made extraordinary progress since July 1, 2021, but, has highlighted that the project is time-intensive. Neiffer has identified underutilized grant funding from the Phyllis J. Washington College of Education 21st Century Teaching and Learning Initiative program, funded by the Washington Foundation. Pending approval from Dean Lawrence and the Washington Foundation, Neiffer plans to buy out Dr. Anna East's time and name her a "tribal liaison and education fellow" for the period of the grant funding so she can exclusively work on indigenous language classes and connections with tribal leaders, elders, and other interested parties. During that time, he will work with the UM Foundation to identify other funds that can help support this work in the future.

Member Allen asked if MTDA was working on language or language and culture with the indigenous language project. Director Neiffer answered that the courses will focus on both. Member Allen asked about MTDA's reach to non-profit and other organizations that might be partners in this work. Director Neiffer responded that yes, based on the preferences and guidance of tribal leaders. Member Allen asked if we are in contact with Donnie Wetzal and Matt Bell at OPI on our work. Dr. Anna East answered that she is in contact. Director Neiffer also mentioned that they plan to working on a regular meeting with Mr. Wetzal and Mr. Bell.

Public Comment

Board Chair Graves called for public comment. There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Board Chair Graves adjourned the meeting at 3:11pm.