



**Draft Minutes of HCA Board of Directors Meeting  
Zoom**

**February 24, 2021**

Board Members Attending: Cynthia Shelmerdine, Nancy Anderson, Ed Harris, David Jean, Peggy Muir, Barbara Merson, Sally Mackenzie, Alan Youdsnukis, Kathy Wilson.

Scott Barksdale, HOS; Mae Applegate, Dean of Studies and Student  
Fern Desjardins, Board member of the Maine Charter Commission.

Cynthia called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.  
Consent agenda (Minutes of the January 21, 2021) was adopted.

**Head of School Update**

Scott first reminded the Board of the positive case the school experienced just before the school break in February. Div 2/3 was immediately closed. Then when a variant of Covid was discovered in Maine, the entire school closed per the decision the executive committee of the BOD made in January. The school was scheduled to reopen on March 15. But Scott said the school has safety protocols in place and Maine's case numbers are steadily decreasing. Furthermore, the distribution of vaccines will soon include teachers. He asked the executive committee to vote to allow the school to return to its normal schedule of in-person, hybrid, and remote learning as of March 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to do so.

Scott outlined the three focus areas for the school's work right now:

1. Returning to its roots, i.e., connecting with EL and supervision of teachers using the rubric established a few years ago.
2. Operational excellence.
3. Staff retention, i.e., continuing collaborative learning groups and coaching by Mae, Dean of Studies and Students.

Scott explained that he and Mae share responsibility for both campuses such that they each spend two days a week at each school. Mae has no supervision responsibilities, so she can be a colleague-coach to staff members.

Mae described her main focus as the staff/crew culture of the school. One action principle of EL is that “student’s crew will never be better than staff crew.” She works to ensure individual teachers have what they need to do good work and to help the staff as a whole enjoy fun activities too. In her coaching, she uses data of what she’s observed to help teachers improve their practice. She writes a weekly internal memo to the staff to highlight positive things that occurred that week, bring up common concerns, and present a fun video. Mae remarked that she feels students see HCA as a place they can come to and be themselves. She herself is happy to be part of the team making that happen for kids.

Regarding a question about students who might be in particularly difficult circumstances during this time, Mae said that she and Susan Prince met over the break and produced a list of students who needed some extra attention. Each will be assigned to a particular staff member for support.

On the question of when teachers will be eligible for the vaccine, Board members encouraged Cynthia, as chair, to write to legislators expressing the need for teachers to have priority in receiving the vaccine. Cynthia said she would contact Senator Mattie Daughtry of Brunswick, who is chair of the Education Committee, and send a similar statement to the Charter Commission.

Scott mentioned that enrollment for next year is really slow. It seems that many people are not looking ahead to next year or are not looking to make a change in this unique time. The projected budget and future planning will take into consideration many possible scenarios.

### **Advancement Committee**

Barbara described the recent work of the Advancement Committee. The priority right now is to contact the people who have donated in the past but haven’t yet this year. Andrew is producing a google doc with relevant information, and Barbara wrote a sample email for individuals to use in personally contacting those people.

The next focus will be on a second appeal to our loyal donors and others as well as a plan to approach businesses for their support. She asked board members to think about places where they do business as potential connections for Advancement. She noted that been successful in receiving government grants, and Scott has applied for others from different organizations this year.

### **Executive Committee**

Cynthia reported on the board policies workshop she and Scott attended. We all have the links to the state requirements of school, therefore board, policies. She will compare the list of required policies and our policies and present a needs list at the next board meeting. Scott noted he will present new graduation policies at the March meeting.

Cynthia mentioned that some board members have expiring three-year terms this year. She will contact individuals about their plans. She also discussed the topic of board recruitment, especially of parents. She will follow up on one who was present at our last meeting.

**Public Comment**

Fern Desjardins is the charter commission's liaison to HCA. She said she would bring up two items we discussed at the next charter commission meeting.

1. The need for teachers to be vaccinated in order for schools to fully open safely
2. The question of enrollment at charter schools. Are all other liaisons seeing the same dip in potential students?

Fern also praised Scott for the thoroughness of his report and for the newsletter.

The meeting adjourned at 6 pm on a motion by Ed, seconded by Dave.