



## Founders' Forum: Opening Charter Schools in Maine

Augusta Civic Center, September 17, 2011

### Feedback Form - with Responses

Dear Forum Participant,

We hope you came away from our forum with a better understanding of what it takes to open a public charter school in Maine and where to obtain further resources to assist you in realizing your vision for education.

We also hope you have made valuable connections with other potential charter school founders, with those of us at MACS, MDOE, State Board, and with a variety of consultants working in the charter school field.

We would appreciate your sharing your thoughts about the forum below, as well as any questions or suggestions you may have for us to consider for future events. Thank you very much for your attendance and for sharing with us below. Please use the reverse side if you wish. You may also give us your thoughts by email or by phone.

#### 1. Would you like additional information or clarification about a particular aspect of opening a charter school in Maine?

- Regs. as they take final form. Contacts & potential resources – collaborators, even & especially among attendees at forum!
- How to support an organization while working toward start-up
- Hoping to have access to answers of questions from break out groups. What will RFP's look like and when will they be issued?
- How to nominate folks to commission that authorizes charters in Maine
- Would like additional information on specialty schools
- Those initial conversations with stakeholders that will be positive, productive and lead into implementation.
- How would multiple schools on a single charter work? 1 board? 2 boards? If you get a charter for 1 school, can you just start a second school?
- Yes, please
- Finance
- I'm wondering how to grow the "enthusiasm" in Maine among local school boards to serve as authorizers.
- Can the admission lottery apply to certain # of students per part of town
- Can a 501c3 have a charter school branch/affiliate for one program of many?
- The financial piece – bus/transportation, lunches, all the non-academic issues – yikes!
- Funding for room and board.
- A list of all attendees e-mailed to participants.
- Yes, I would like help with consultation
- Facilities – budget – entering long term leases – role of 501c3 "Friends of ..." group.
- I would like to receive information as the rules are developed
- What ages of students included, what is earliest age for inclusion? What is available for start-up funding?

#### 2. Do you have any specific recommendations for us to consider while crafting the rules and processes necessary to implement the new charter school law?

- Stay focused on providing quality education.
- Q&A – forums for discussions – do not say or indicate that they are Private – nothing on the internet is private. Please make this clear.
- Opportunity for "public" sessions – forums in libraries, information sheets, public service announcements

- Spec Ed – town/district where Spec Ed student resides is responsible for “above and beyond” cost to meet a student’s IEP. Both Authorized board & sending town district should review the IEP.
- A change in the LEA designation for who is responsible for special ed to the sending district would help
- Have public reality check & opportunity for comment on drafts.
- Simple, clear – flexible
- I would around Special Ed – collaboration with local providers (clinical, speech, OT, PT, etc.) to meet IEP and they provide billing.
- Clarification on admissions policy from DOE
- re: Special Ed – have the district of residence (not authorizer) send funds to public charter school for Spec. Ed students
- Not at this moment. But I am so glad to know that you are open to recommendations. I will email you as these ideas occur.
- Clarify the funding responsibility. For covering spec. ed. support for sending student
- Continue to look at the special education funding issues – that’s going to be huge!
- Rules for authorizers should define narrowly authorizer’s ability to define what sort of educational objectives charter schools should have.
- Make it more attractive for school supts. to become authorizers
- No
- Consider culture
- Allow one “resubmission” for consideration of charter approval.
- Having an existing board continue as the Charter School Board as well as any assets remain with the current organization
- Flexibility – start-up

### **3. What is your overall opinion of the forum and its usefulness to you personally or to your organization?**

- Good!
- Networking is very valuable. Information is valuable.
- Very useful, clarifying
- Steve Z. excellent, Mike D. too long. Very useful! Good materials – good presenters
- Excellent forum –great resources
- Very good – not too overwhelming. lots of questions answered and clarifications made
- Very helpful, but a little overwhelming, there are a lot of specific questions that couldn’t be answered yet.
- Very useful – perhaps could have been a bit more interactive
- Everyone was very interesting and well informed. Anxious to read the material and websites.
- Very good day, thank you
- Although my organization cannot “found” a public charter school, this event, esp. the breakout sessions, Q&A time, and just perfectly timed breaks were great for networking and fleshing out the details.
- Well presented & you brought together a great variety of individuals who made this Forum very good
- Amazing.
- Very good.
- Excellent. Thank you.
- I came to learn about the process & am satisfied
- Very, very useful
- Wonderfully informative – networking is helpful.
- There are so many things to consider – if we should decide to convert our current program – I am grateful to have this opportunity to discuss & think about the issues
- Yes. Good.

### **4. Do you have any suggestions for making future forums better?**

- focused on specific parts of the application process, more on Fed grant application process
- Very good! Next time we should have more answers re: rules and reg.
- Those who are in the process of creating their Charter School do a mini-presentation on their experience thus far.
- Making a list of participants and having similar people sit together would help with networking
- More small group interaction; Commissioner Bowen
- Great spot, lunch and snack!
- Mr. Bowen should attend

- Make us move a little more after lunch or afternoon snack. All the food was delicious, but the carbs couldn't help but be soporific.
- Let's do this again – soon!
- Get early speakers to be more interactive with audience.
- As you progress, tailor forums to be more specific, eg, funding, special ed., etc.
- Divide
- More time, and good advert.
- Not really
- Rotating workshops, for example: 9 - 10:30 Hiring Staff – Teaching – Admin – Medical
  - 11 – 12:30 Curriculum Development – Sources – Waivers? Specialized etc. classes
  - 1 – 2:30 Meal Planning & Transportation
  - 2:45 – 4:00 Financials

## 5. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

- Thank you! Good work!
- I think this was very well done. In another forum perhaps letting people know you won't have many of the answers people are looking for.
- You are awesome!
- The press we have had so far has helped us and helped the movement
- Venue and hospitality is perfect, and just close enough to Portland
- Will there be an attendee list with emails or phone numbers? I was scribbling as fast as I could go, but there still are other people with whom I'd like to connect – oh – you are answering my question!
- Really appreciated having the consultants present.
- Thank you!
- Cultural consideration.
- No

## 6. Do you have additional questions for the Dept. of Education to consider in its rule-making process?

### Please use the back →

- See #2 above (Have public reality check & opportunity for comment on drafts.)
- Please consider facilities money, especially upgrades to heating and electric-solar, geothermal, biomass.
- re: Special Ed – have the district of residence (not authorizer) send funds to public charter school for Spec. Ed students
- Define the lottery process more completely, i.e., spell-out how home district's students rank vs. other district's applicants.
- Not at this time.
- Announcements for charter business/meetings/deadlines should be directed to town websites for public information.

*Thank you very much!*