

CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER DISCLOSURE FORM

To be completed individually by each proposed charter school board member.

Serving on a public charter school board is a position of public trust and fiduciary responsibility. As a board member of a public school, you are responsible for ensuring the quality of the school program, competent stewardship of public funds, and the school's fulfillment of its public obligations and all terms of its charter.

As part of the application for a new charter school, the Maine Charter School Commission (Commission) requests that each prospective board member respond individually to this questionnaire. Where narrative responses are required, brief responses are sufficient.

The purpose of this questionnaire is twofold:

1. To give application reviewers a clearer introduction to the applicant team behind each school proposal in advance of the applicant interview, in order to be better prepared for the interview; and
2. To encourage board members to reflect individually as well as collectively on their common mission, purposes, and obligations at the earliest stage of school development.

Background

1. Name of charter school on whose Board of Directors you intend to serve

Ecology Learning Center

2. Full name

Solomon Alexander Heifets

Home Address

12 Farm Rd, South China, ME, 04358

Business Name and Address

Phone Number

207-213-7932

E-mail address

solomon.heifets@gmail.com

3. Brief educational and employment history. (No narrative response is required if resume and professional bio are attached.)

See attached.

4. Indicate whether you currently or have previously served on a board of a school district, another charter school, a non-public school or any not-for-profit corporation (to the extent not otherwise indicated in your response to Item 3, above).

No.

5. Why do you wish to serve on the board of the proposed charter school?

I wish to serve as part of a commitment to improve the world through education. I believe that a significant portion of my energy should be expended towards improving my community, and I believe that the best use of that energy is in offering quality opportunities for education, such as those that would be offered by the proposed charter school.

6. What is your understanding of the appropriate role of a public charter school board member?

A public charter school board member should create policies that govern the school, fundraise in support of the school, and oversee the executive director or principal of the school. A board member should not overstep these boundaries and should not interfere with the daily operations of the school.

7. Describe any previous experience you have that is relevant to serving on the charter school's board (e.g., other board service). If you have not had previous experience of this nature, explain why you have the capability to be an effective board member.

As a member of the leadership team at another charter school, I have a sense of the ground level needs of a charter school, as well as the role that an effective board can play in governing a charter school. I have participated in creating reports for the charter commission and for the department of education, and have attended many of our school's board meetings. As the secretary for our school's leadership team meetings, I bring specific skills in communication to my role as board member. Additionally, in my time as a site coordinator for the AmeriCorps AIMS HIGH program, I worked closely with principals and superintendents in two school districts while directing a team of AmeriCorps members, and I gained insight into the nature of how effective schools are organized.

In all of my positions within schools, I have been a part of leading change within these schools, and have gained experience in learning what facilitates effective school change. In any young organization, and in particular a school, the ability to adapt to change is critical.

8. Describe the specific knowledge and experience that you would bring to the board.

I bring knowledge and experience of teacher and student needs, education law, educational philosophy, and school structure.

School Mission and Program

1. What is your understanding of the school's mission and guiding beliefs?

The school's mission is to build a more resilient community by grounding students in a place-based education that contributes to a happy, healthy, thoughtful adult life.

2. What is your understanding of the school's proposed educational program?

The school's educational program is place-based, supports wellness through immersion in nature, incorporate apprenticeship and mentorship within the community, and encourages critical thinking.

3. What do you believe to be the characteristics of a successful school?

A successful school meets the needs of its students as well as the needs of its surrounding community. A successful school has robust community engagement, and it graduates students who live as happy, productive, and healthy members of society. A successful school has high staff and student retention

rates, and high attendance. A successful school offers opportunities for students and community members to engage in activities outside the normal school day.

4. How will you know that the school is succeeding (or not) in its mission?

I will know that the school is succeeding by evaluating its performance measures along with some of the items mentioned above in #3 (staff and student retention, attendance, community engagement, post-graduation tracking, etc.)

Governance

1. Describe the role that the board will play in the school's operation.

The board will oversee the executive director's work, and it will create policies to guide the operations of the school. The board will also seek to raise funds and establish partnerships in the community to support the operations of the school. Additionally, the board will be responsive to complaints from staff, students, parents, and community members. The board will not interfere with day-to-day operations of the school.

2. How will you know if the school is successful at the end of the first year of operation?

If the school is successful at the end of its first year of operation, it will meet its expectations for enrollment and retain all or most of its students into the second year. Surveys of community members will also reflect a general support for the school's presence and mission.

3. How will you know at the end of four years if the school is successful?

At the end of four years, the school will be successful if it not only meets the measures from question #2 (enrollment, retention, and community support), but also boasts a high graduation rate, and a high college acceptance or post-secondary career-placement rate.

4. What specific steps do you think the charter school board will need to take to ensure that the school is successful?

The board will develop clear and effective policies that govern the operations of the school in a timely manner to ensure fluid collaboration within the school. The board will also fundraise and strengthen organizational partnerships in order to support the school.

5. How would you handle a situation in which you believe one or more members of the school's board were acting unethically or not in the best interests of the school?

I would submit a request for an executive session of the board (minus any members under scrutiny) to discuss my concerns and to determine how to proceed with either an investigation, reprimand, or vote to remove said board member(s).

Disclosures

1. Indicate whether you or your spouse knows the other prospective board members for the proposed school. If so, please indicate the precise nature of your relationship.

I / we do not know any such trustees **Yes**

My spouse knows Beth Alma, a non-voting board member and board treasurer, as the parent of one of the students at the Ecology Bridge Program. My spouse is no-longer employed in the program.

2. Indicate whether you or your spouse knows any person who is, or has been in the last two years, a school employee. If so, indicate the precise nature of your relationship.

I / we do not know any such employees **Yes**

My spouse was a school employee in the Ecology Bridge Program for the past year (2018-2019). She finished the school year and is no longer employed in the program.

3. Indicate whether you or your spouse knows anyone who is doing, or plans to do, business with the charter school (whether as an individual or as a director, officer, employee or agent of an entity). If so, indicate and describe the precise nature of your relationship and the nature of the business that such person or entity is transacting or will be transacting with the school.

I / we do not know any such persons. **Yes**

4. Indicate if you, your spouse or other immediate family members anticipate conducting, or are conducting, any business with the school. If so, indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

I / we do not anticipate conducting any such business **Yes**

5. If the school intends to contract with an education service provider indicate whether you or your spouse knows any employees, officers, owners, directors or agents of that provider. If the answer is in the affirmative, please describe any such relationship.

Not applicable because the school does not intend to contact with an education service provider

I / we do not know any such persons **Yes**

6. If the school contracts with an education service provider, please indicate whether you, your spouse, or other immediate family members have a direct or indirect ownership, employment, contractual or management interest in the provider. For any interest indicated, provide a detailed description.

N/A *I / we have no such interest* **Yes**

7. If the school plans to contract with an education service provider, indicate if you, your spouse or other immediate family member anticipate conducting, or are conducting, any business with the provider. If so, indicate the precise nature of the business that is being or will be conducted.

N/A *I / we or my family do not anticipate conducting any such business* **Yes**

8. Indicate whether you, your spouse or other immediate family members are a director, officer, employee, partner or member of, or are otherwise associated with, any organization that is partnering with the charter school. To the extent you have provided this information in response to prior items, you may so indicate.

Does not apply to me, my spouse or family **Yes**

