

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: Robin Meredyth Chernow

Home Address: 33 Brewster St, Rockland Maine, 04841

Business Name and Address: n/a

Phone Number: 908-872-5196

E-mail address: chernow.robin@gmail.com

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

n/a

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

- I am eager to engage in the local community in a different way than my full time job. I intend to apply the skills I have cultivated in former education and work experiences to support this

school as best I can. I believe in the mission of this school, and I believe this school will be an asset to the community so I want to support the school by serving on its board.

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

- My understanding is that board members of public charter schools must uphold the school's legal obligations and oversee the head of the school. Additionally as a non-profit, the board members uphold by-laws and support fundraising.

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.

- For the ELC Charter School in particular, I have been attending meetings since January 2019, when community members would come together to express interest, share visions of the school, and brainstorm mission-related concepts. My experience in this work from early in the process has allowed me to hear from community members about the community need and interest in the school, in addition to experiencing the arc of the planning process and development of the school vision as it stands currently. Additionally, I am on the external affairs/marketing committee of the ELC nonprofit and have stepped into leadership roles to facilitate conversations or serve as a scribe when others have been absent. I have already demonstrated how I am a flexible team member and am able to support the ELC.
- I do have hiring and staff management experience that will prepare me to oversee the head of school and support staffing decisions. When I worked on Hurricane, I was responsible for hiring, training, and managing seasonal education staff each year. Currently at Island Institute, I am on the hiring team for our Fellows program, selecting candidates for two year positions in island and coastal communities. I also design and plan Fellows professional development sessions and have weekly meetings with several fellows.
- Finally, in my work with the Maine Environmental Changemakers, I have served in various roles, from writing and editing grants, to program design and visioning committees, to a member of the youth planning team. These different leadership roles are similar to aspects of the charter school board, being aware of financial obligations and being responsive to community need while still holding the mission to its core.

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

I bring varied experience in both education and nonprofits so I will effectively be able to contribute to the school's curriculum policies and other policies in general. I have also worked on social-emotional learning and can share those resources, in addition to curriculum resources. My experiences hiring and managing staff, in addition to fundraising and managing project funds and budgets will also transfer to my work on the ELC charter school board. I also have strategic planning experience and am aware of measurable impact targets that can be used to evaluate adherence to strategic plans.

School Mission and Program

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

The school's mission is to deeply root students in Maine's ecological and cultural landscapes, foster authentic real-world learning through mentorship and craft, and cultivate compassionate and resilient leaders prepared to engage in the challenges of today and tomorrow.

I interpret this as an interdisciplinary approach to education that supports the growth of whole people capable of taking care of themselves and their environment, able to work independently and collaboratively, and excited to synthesize information and content from a variety of disciplines to solve problems locally and globally.

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

The school has articulated its four educational principles for programming. In order to achieve these principles, each day will start with a block for English language and a block for math so students are well-positioned to excel in these foundational skills and apply them to real world situations. Then, the rest of the day will be reserved for the interdisciplinary projects. The projects will integrate social studies, natural science and technology along with mentorship and internship experiences. The curriculum of the interdisciplinary aspect of the school is still being developed, as it will incorporate student voice and current issues to increase the relevance of these real world place-based learning and problem-solving opportunities.

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

A successful school is home to students who are curious and resilient, with educators who mentor, challenge, and show compassion for their students. While this can be achieved in a variety of ways, the charter school will accomplish much of this by positioning the students to engage in their community to better understand and solve locally-relevant interdisciplinary problems. The quantitative characteristics of successful schools include growth in student proficiency measures on standardized tests, in addition to high student attendance rates, student and staff retention, and a school enrolled at its target capacity.

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

We will know the school is succeeding in its mission by evaluating our program for the four education terms, which were designed to align with the mission. Additionally, we will see student retention, academic growth, and community support and engagement in students' interdisciplinary projects. If or when one or more of these areas weakens, we will need to more closely evaluate our efforts to enact the mission and determine how to adjust.

Governance

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

The board will have oversight of the school's legal obligations, ensuring legal compliance with the charter commission. In addition the board will manage the school's finances and oversee the annual budget. The board will oversee and guide the head of school and will keep in mind the mission of the school, developing big picture strategic plans to fulfill the mission of the school.

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

We will have several ways to measure the success of the school after only one year of operation. In our students, we will observe a high attendance rate and full enrollment of the freshman and sophomore classes, with 24 students enrolled in each class. We will also have enrollment interest for the next year's incoming freshmen. We will collect baseline data on student academic performance so we can use this as a reference point for student growth in the future. We will be in good financial standing,

having met our budget goals. We will ensure our board members have been trained and have pursued professional development around how to maximize their effectiveness as board members.

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

At the end of four years, our school will be successful if we have a fully enrolled school of 96 students, with 24 in each grade level. We will see growth in our students' academic achievement, demonstrated through standardized testing and academic portfolios. We will also have a high rate of student and staff retention. We will be financially stable and will have a board with diverse skills to support the school.

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

In order to ensure the success of the school, the charter school board will need to seek training about effective boards, increase its impact in fundraising, and engage in ongoing board recruitment. With strong financial backing and a varied board, we will be able to support the school in achieving its mission.

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?

As our school's conflict and behavior resolution strategy will rely on restorative justice, we will embrace that strategy on the board level as well. Therefore, I would speak in person with the board member in question and would also talk to the board chair for guidance.

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**

Yes, I know Ian Collins as a professional colleague through previous work together and via our work on this board.

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*

n/a

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**

Yes. Lisa Packard and Paul Cartwright were involved in the Ecology Bridge Program which has functioned two days a week this year to pilot concepts for our charter school. Lisa and Paul are likely to work in administrative and educator capacities, respectively at the charter school. I know them personally as community members in addition to the professional relationship for this school.

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.

I / we do not know any such persons Yes
n/a

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

9. Indicate any potential ethical or legal conflicts of interests that would, or are likely to, exist should you serve on the school's board.

None Yes

Certification

I, _____ Robin Chernow _____, certify to the best of my knowledge and ability that the information I am providing to the Maine Charter School Commission as a prospective

board member for ____Ecology Learning Center____ Charter School is true and correct in every respect.



Signature

____6/17/19____

Date