

**MID-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Regular Board Meeting
Official Minutes
August 21, 2019**

PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

The regular meeting of the Mid-State Special Education Executive Committee was called to order by Chairman Dr. Wes Olson at 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Wes Olson, Bond County; Mr. David Powell, Hillsboro (left at 9:27 a.m.); Dr. Becky Schuchman, Carlinville; Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau, Litchfield; Mr. Aaron Hopper, Panhandle; Dave Meister, Morrisonville; Ms. Melissa Ritter, Ramsey; Mr. Steve Phillips, Mulberry Grove; Mr. Chris Clark, South Fork

OTHERS PRESENT

Mrs. Angela Armour, Director; Mrs. Lyn Becker, Assistant Director; Mrs. Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary

Recognition of Visitors: None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Julie Healy, St. Elmo; Mr. Ben Theilen, Edinburg; Mr. Mike Shackelford, Brownstown; Dr. Jennifer Garrison, Vandalia

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of Regular and Closed Session Minutes (July 17, 2019, August 6, 2019 and August 13, 2019)
- Approval of Destruction of Executive Session Audio Recordings Older than 18 Months (None for MSSE or any former Region)
- Financial Report to date for FY20.
 - Mrs. Armour reported that due to issues with posting/coding revenues to the old and new MSSE accounts in SDS, we are not using the Balance Sheet report for the new account. Mrs. Rexroad is working on addressing the programming issue.
 - For the new MSSE account, Mrs. Armour reported that the July monthly revenue of \$933,854.61 is in agreement with the bank's credits for July. The Receipts vs. Expenditures reflect a July 31st fund balance of \$864,726.59 which includes revenue of \$933,854.61 and expenditures totaling \$129,121.02. Mrs. Armour reported that the projected August expenses are \$82,691.27 and the loan to Christian Region in the amount of \$150,000.00 with projected revenue of \$43,514.05. The resulting August 31st fund balance is projected at \$632,035.32.
 - The August projected balance for the MSSE old account is \$455,908.85.
 - The July 31st fund balances for the former Regions are: Bond/Fayette \$22,316.94, Christian \$215,413.72, and Montgomery County/Carlinville \$474,032.31.
- Accounts Payable Review & Approval
 - MSSE = \$272,006.59 Old – 15 Bills
 - MSSE = \$22,795.10 New – 16 Bills

- BF = \$102.10 Old – 15 IDEA
 \$25.00 Final legal retainer
- CR = \$35.00 Final legal retainer
- MCC = \$3,007.18 Old – 15 IDEA
 \$3,200.50 Final legal retainer

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Clark to approve the Consent Agenda, carried by a roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

Director's Report

Mrs. Armour reported that both she and Lyn attended the Directors' Conference on July 24-26 provided by ISBE and IAASE. They attended the following sessions which were informative including:

- Transformational leadership to promote meaningful change that is data driven
- Importance of knowing the data and where it is coming from (SIS, I-Star, Report Card)
- Special education teacher shortage initiatives
- Trends in conflict resolution – placement determination number one mediation and due process complaint

Mrs. Armour reported that 57 educators have been CPI certified so far this month in two full day certification and three half-day re-certification courses. Additional full-day certification and re-certification courses are scheduled in the upcoming 4 weeks.

Mrs. Armour reported that on Monday an email was sent from Mrs. Becker containing information on Embrace DS training for any new staff or those returning who would like a refresher in Medicaid billing. She noted that there are several new districts this year using Embrace, and we will be helping you to maximize the reimbursement you can receive. Superintendents were asked to forward the training information to any district employed SLPs and nurses. The webinar is scheduled for next Monday at 2:00.

Mrs. Armour reported that on August 8th we welcomed 12 newly hired special education teachers and SLPs to the mentoring program. New staff from Carlinville, Edinburg, Litchfield, Ramsey, and Vandalia were assisted in getting off to a great start by Lyn Becker and Bobbi Hartman-Fisher. They will be meeting one afternoon each month during the first semester focusing on basic 101 skills to master and also best practices of successful special educators. Any additional new staff is welcome to join the group.

Mrs. Armour noted that along with teachers, it is also imperative that we support our new specialist employees. She recognized and thanked the excellent veteran professionals who are sharing their expertise: Mid-State Psychology Intern Supervisor, Amanda Cunningham; Speech-Language Clinical Fellowship Year Supervisors, Lorinda Jennings, Lynnette Milner, and Kelly Behme; Teacher of the Hearing Impaired Mentor, BriAnn Langley-Bullard, and Program Coordinator Mentor, Brandy Buske.

Mrs. Armour reported that since the regular July board meeting, we have filled a full-time School Social Work position and the Business Manager position, secured a retired SSW and retired Guidance Counselor to serve during a maternity leave, increased SLP retiree services and secured a contract SLP to cover additional needs when Mulberry Grove lost their SLP and we were able to shift staff assignments to also meet this new need, and worked with TheraKids to help three districts secure ECSE services. Mrs.

Armour noted that we are starting in a much better position than last year as far as staffing is concerned. Mrs. Armour commended Lyn Becker for her efforts in recruitment this summer. At this time, we are in need of another day per week of school psych services in Carlinville, and will need coverage for a school psychology maternity leave for three months beginning in January. We already have leads on a full-time school psychologist and a full-time teacher of the visually impaired for 2020-21 which we will be pursuing sooner rather than later.

Early this month Illinois Department of Human Services put out a grant application. Yesterday, Mrs. Armour received great news from the Department of Human Services informing us that we were awarded a community based grant for approximately \$9,000 to deliver information about Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in our communities. The three transition specialists will work collaboratively to provide these presentations during the school day and will be targeting freshman and sophomores as well as their parents.

Mrs. Armour asked the board members to please review letter received from Robert Wolfe, ISBE CFO. Mrs. Armour reported that we will discuss details and consider a Resolution provided by NPT during new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion made by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mr. Powell to enter into executive session carried by a roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays at 9:19a.m.

A motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Meister to return to open session carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays at 9:42 a.m.

ACTION ON BUSINESS ITEMS

Personnel:

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Phillips to approve the part-time employment of Joy Criner, Kelda DeBarr, and Mary Emerson; the full-time employment of Elizabeth Holcomb, Business Manager; and the reclassification of Randi Riemann to include Program Coordinator and Lyn Becker as the Assistant Director, as presented, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Ms. Ritter to approve the Finance Committee's recommendation for a 2.5% increase for the Assistant Director, carried by a roll call vote of 7 yeas, 1 nay.

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Dr. Olson to approve the Finance Committee's recommendation for a 2.5% increase for the Director, carried by a roll call vote of 7 yeas, 1 nay.

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Mr. Clark to approve the Finance Committee's recommendation for the remaining MSSE staff salary, THIS benefit change for those employees who do not already receive this benefit, and 2.5% salary increase for all staff and an additional \$1,560.00 increase added to the base salary for Speech Language Pathologist and Behavior Specialist, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Hopper to recommend MSSE Executive Committee minutes from January 30th, March 20th and May 15th remain closed while minutes from February 20th, April 17th and June 13th be opened; Christian Region minutes from March 20th be opened and MCC closed minutes from March 20th, April 17th, May 15th and June 13th remain closed while the minutes from February 20th be opened, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mrs. Armour reported that the revised Joint Agreement includes the prior amendments made since 2008 including amendments last year eliminating the Regions effective July 1, 2019. Mrs. Armour explained that she recommends that some payment should be required for a district upon withdrawal to pay for the services provided in the next fiscal year during the transition. This payment would include cost for finance and student related services such as payroll and claims as well as legal fees. The original wording as well as a proposed option for the Articles was provided, and Mrs. Armour welcomed input from the Board.

A motion made by Dr. Olson and seconded by Dr. Schuchman to approve the amended Articles of Joint Agreement with the updated 9.3 section as recommended for the approval by the Mid-State Governing Board, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour provided a summary of the FY 20 Proposed MSSE Budget & Consolidated Budget. Mrs. Armour presented the FY20 Consolidated Budget and also provided a copy of the FY19 budget. Mrs. Armour noted the considerable overall decrease in money that will be flowed through the cooperative this year. Additional written details were provided for those who preferred a copy. Mrs. Armour focused on the new MSSE portion of the budget reporting that FY20 Proposed Revenue Budget is \$5,900,000.00 which is an increase of \$101,884.00 from the May Preliminary Budget. The changes are \$92,000.00 in regular assessments and \$9,000.00 from the new DHS award that was just awarded. The anticipated June 30th fund balance is \$31,500.00 which is interest, Medicaid Administrative Outreach and Fee-for-Service that is not budgeted. Mrs. Armour noted that Mrs. Rexroad pointed out that we can say that this is the true cost of services which is what we have been working toward for almost a year. The fund balance of \$31,500.00 does not include the remaining fund balance from the old MSSE account. We will need to work together to decide what will happen with that money, but given the recent situation in Christian Region with an inadequate fund balance it would be wise to transfer these fund to the new account.

Mrs. Armour explained the \$92,000.00 regular assessment increase as compared to the May preliminary budget came from an increase in the need for services by districts. Mulberry Grove developed a need for a part-time speech pathologist and three districts did not have early childhood special education teachers to staff their classrooms are accessing this service through TheraKids. Mrs. Armour reminded the Board that these additional expenses apply only to the districts that are accessing these staff pools. Mrs. Armour provided details of where funds were adjusted to better meet needs. At this point and time we do not have a specific breakdown of the assessments, but it was noted that if a districts needs stayed the same since May that the assessment would be consistent. However, if a district was in need of additional services, the assessment will go up.

Dr. Olson expressed concerns that we will be operating at a deficit of approximately \$1,100,000.00. Dr. Olson is seeing on paper that our revenues are less than our expenditures. Mrs. Armour noted that the fund balances are not figured into the total revenue. Mrs. Armour indicated that further clarification will be sought from Mrs. Rexroad and that she will provide an update through email to all superintendents. We will then modify the budget to reflect this before presenting it to the Governing Board. Dr. Olson is also concerned with the \$700,000.00 in EBF money that NPT is requesting be sent to them that we will see an even bigger deficit of \$1,800,000.00. Mrs. Armour again reported that she believes that the issue is how the spreadsheet is formatted with the prior fund balances not be considered and the EBF is not budgeted toward FY20 expenses.

A motion made by Dr. Fuerstenau and seconded by Mr. Hopper approve the Proposed FY20 Mid-State Special Education budget and the consolidated budget, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Armour recommended approval of the Resolution to appoint Elizabeth Holcomb as the IMRF Authorized Agent on behalf of Mid-State Special Education.

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Dr. Fuerstenau to approve Elizabeth Holcomb as the IMRF Authorized Agent on behalf of Mid-Stat Special Education Joint Agreement, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour recommended that the Addendum to the Therapy Services Agreement with TheraKids, P. C. be approved to establish a rate for a special education early childhood teacher. This is needed because three districts that have no viable candidates at this time and who would like to work together to share services.

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Mr. Clark to approve the addendum to the Therapy Services Agreement with Therakids, carried by a roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour reported that Dr. Doerr emailed her on Friday asking that the agenda be revised to include approval of the Resolution entitled *FY2020 Evidence-Based Funding Payment Agreement* that he had prepared by his attorney to address the recent letter from Robert Wolfe. Dr. Doerr asked that it be signed so that they can return the resolution to ISBE as soon as possible. Mrs. Amour asked for discussion on how we want to proceed with the EBF Funds. She explained that how these funds are used varies for co-ops. She explained that two years ago our co-op made the decision to break down the funds based upon Region and Mid-State personnel and flow the funds to districts as had been the practice with the previous Personnel Reimbursement. She noted that some co-ops used the money as offsetting funds for programs and services. The Steering Committee has had considerable discussion over the past year regarding this topic.

Dr. Olson reported that the State Board was under the assumption that NPT and Mid-State had reached a separation agreement when in fact that did not happen. Once ISBE realized that was not the case, they are requiring good faith negotiation and agreement in order for ISBE to reallocate the EBF money. The discussion that needs to happen here is to determine if this board agrees to the distribution of those funds to NPT which would decrease our revenue budget for Mid-State by approximately \$700,000.00. Dr. Olson explained that this resolution was drafted by the NPT attorney and is what they have given this board to consider. Dr. Olson reported that his interpretation of this is that it is an agreement. Usually an agreement is made through some type of bargaining process and that has not been the case but is strictly their request. Dr. Fuerstenau feels that this is their money generated by their students, and it should be returned to them. Mr. Clark asked if we are still incurring cost for some staff that we continue to need even though those three districts withdrew. Mr. Clark noted that if this is based upon personnel then we need to look at the fact that we still have a director, assistant director, program coordinators, and other services that account for the reimbursement.

Dr. Schuchman stated that she believes the Steering Committee should meet and review this agreement and make a counter recommendation based on their discussion. There could be equipment that was left with those districts as well and there could be other things that need to be considered. Mr. Hopper reported that it is the responsibility of the withdrawing districts to negotiate and bring this to the cooperative that they are withdrawing from. Dr. Fuerstenau stated that he is in agreement with Dr. Schuchman that this go to the Steering Committee for a recommendation. Dr. Fuerstenau asked to have Legal Counsel Discussion added to the next agenda as he thought we were going to have it on this agenda. Mr. Hopper stated that any reallocation of EBF should be a negotiated amount not just them providing us with an amount, and we accept it. Mr. Hopper stated that if we just give them the amount they want we are opening it up to whomever leaves getting to provide us with amount they want and having to accept that. Dr. Schuchman reiterated that as Mr. Clark noted there are positions that were prorated between districts that we still have staffed. Dr. Schuchman also asked if it is truly hold harmless

and money is taken away from Mid-State, does the State do some type of reassessment. Dr. Fuerstenau asked that if attorneys have to be involved with the agreement that we have this discussion prior to anything being done. Dr. Olson responded that he has had some discussion with Mrs. Armour regarding legal counsel and Dr. Olson apologized that this was not on the agenda. Dr. Olson stated that for procedural purposes he agrees with Dr. Schuchman that the Steering Committee needs to review this and we need to provide a recommendation for a withdraw agreement proposal. The question is do we use current legal counsel for the withdraw or is it okay to move forward with the same counsel until the board can make a formal recommendation for a change. Dr. Fuerstenau believes we have no choice under the circumstances and noted that Litchfield is not happy with that.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Hopper to table the EBF Resolution as presented, carried by a roll call vote of 7 yeas, 0 nays, 1 present.

DISCUSSION


Dr. Schuchman asked for clarification on whether we are putting the Legal Counsel on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting or will we wait until this is settled. It was agreed that we would put legal counsel on the agenda for discussion. The next Executive Committee Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18th at 9:00 a.m. The Governing Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 27th beginning at 6:30 p.m. The agenda was provided in early August to share with your local board representative. Mrs. Armour reminded the board that we will need at least 9 board representatives in attendance in order to approved the amended Articles of Joint Agreement.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Dr. Schuchman to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m. carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

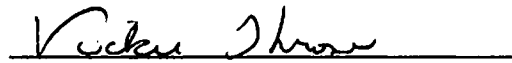
Mrs. Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary



Chairperson

9/18/19

Date



Executive Secretary

9/18/19

Date