

MID-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Regular Board Meeting
Official Minutes
May 20, 2020

PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

The regular meeting of the Mid-State Special Education Executive Committee was called to order by Chairman, Dr. Wes Olson, at 9:03 a.m. with remote participation as allowed by Executive Orders related to the Open Meeting Act due to COVID-19. The regularly scheduled March and April meetings were canceled as no critical issues were time sensitive.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Wes Olson, Bond County; Mr. Mike Shackelford (Remote), Brownstown; Dr. Becky Schuchman (Remote), Carlinsville; Mr. David Powell (Remote), Hillsboro; Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau (Remote), Litchfield arrived at 9:11 a.m. departed at 9:30 a.m.; Mr. Ben Theilen (Remote), Edinburg; Mr. Dave Meister, Morrisonville; Mr. Aaron Hopper (Remote), Panhandle; Ms. Melissa Ritter (Remote), Ramsey; Ms. Julie Healy (Remote), St. Elmo; Mr. Chris Clark (Remote), South Fork departed at 10:05 a.m.

OTHERS PRESENT

Mrs. Angela Armour, Director; Mrs. Lyn Becker, Assistant Director; Mrs. Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary; Ms. Liz Holcomb, Business Manager; Mr. Kurtis Land, CTI technology

Recognition of Visitors: None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Steve Phillips, Mulberry Grove; Dr. Jennifer Garrison, Vandalia

CONSENT AGENDA

The following were presented as part of the Consent Agenda for approval:

- Regular Session Minutes from February 19, 2020.
- Destruction of Executive Session Audio Recordings Older than 18 Months
- Financial report to date for FY20:
 - The balance sheet for the April 16 account reflects assets of \$1,735,545.50. The Receipt vs. Expenditure report also reflects revenue of \$141,454.48 and expenditures totaling \$441,798.29. The projected May expenses are anticipated at \$550,000.00 with projected revenue of \$148,000.00. In addition, please note the transfer from the 15 account later this month in the estimated amount of \$534,385.00. The resulting May 31st fund balance is projected at \$1,875,090.34.
 - The MSSE 15 account balance sheet reflects current assets of \$534,240.27. The Receipt vs. Expenditures report includes revenue of \$151.00. Prior to the end of the month we plan to transfer remaining fund balance of \$534,385.00 to the new account. The May 31st fund balance is projected at \$0.00.
 - The Bond/Fayette balance sheet shows current assets of \$22,337.45 on 30th. The fund balance of \$22,338.61 is recommended to transfer to districts by action later in the meeting. The May 31st fund balance is projected at \$0.00
 - The Christian Region balance sheet shows current assets of \$9,500.65 on April 30th. The fund balance of \$9,500.65 is recommended to transfer to districts by action later in the meeting. The May 31st fund balance is projected at \$0.00.
 - The MC/C Region balance sheet shows current assets of \$324,049.85 on April 30th. The fund balance of \$324,071.27 is recommended to transfer to districts by action later in the meeting. The May 31st fund balance is projected at \$0.00
- Accounts Payable Review & Approval- The May 20th, April 15th, and March 18th lists total:

MSSE = \$167,389.38 May 20th New – 16 Bills; MSSE = \$179,107.09 April 15th New – 16 Bills;
MSSE = \$177,128.40 March 18th New – 16 Bills; MSSE = \$23,873.79 March 18th Old – 15 Bills;
BF = None; CR = \$76,173.59 March 18th; MCC = \$8,174.28 March 18th

A motion made by Mr. Meister and seconded by Mr. Powell to approve the Consent Agenda, carried by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

As part of the Director's Report, Mrs. Armour shared that in late April, LEA Determinations related to the performance of each local district with regard to the provision of special education and related services were reported by the Illinois State Board of Education related to the Illinois State Performance Plan. Once again, each of our districts received a 4.0 Meets Requirements.

Mrs. Armour reported that any final amendments to FY20 IDEA or IDEA PS are due by the end of the month. She offered assistance, if needed, and noted that the FY21 Consolidated District Plan is now available. Mrs. Armour received Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Compliance data for each district comparing spending for special education from 2017-18 to 2018-19. As anticipated, only three districts-Ramsey, South Fork, and St. Elmo-did not automatically meet MOE through increased costs or increased per cap with a decrease in IEPs. Student exceptions for Ramsey and South Fork were submitted to ISBE and approved last Friday. We are working with St. Elmo on allowable exceptions as staff changes will be reported. Mrs. Armour noted that it was confirmed by ISBE that we will not complete the MOE Cooperative Composite requirement this year since the grants transferred to districts. She noted that hopefully, our new MOE forecast spreadsheet will be helpful in the future as we work to help each district keep this threshold as low as possible. Mrs. Armour has also found this tool helpful as she assists districts in deciding how much IDEA carryover to write for in FY20 which will impact MOE in FY22. She asked that superintendents please watch for an email containing information that will be needed for the FY21 grants.

Mrs. Armour reported that since we last met, we have been fortunate to receive an amended DHS/STEP contract for FY20 in the amount of an additional \$62,571 for the provision of 15 additional student outcomes bringing this contract to \$218,571. She reported that we are also very actively participating in the DRS-COVID Incentive program having earned \$24,350 in the last six weeks by connecting with and supporting our STEP students. The number of STEP students participating started at 56 and has increased each week with last week reaching 94 students. Students are earning an incentive completing requirements and participating in a remote transition session or 1-1 call with the transition specialist. Mrs. Armour expressed appreciation and provided recognition to transition specialists, Laura Snyder, Randi Riemann, and Joan Saatkamp.

Related to implementation of services during the COVID-19 pandemic related to IDEA, FAPE, Remote Learning, and FY21 planning, Mrs. Armour provided brief comments. She reported that as we continue to gather information from a number of legal and professional sources, we are taking a very common-sense approach and are prioritizing partnerships with families. Mrs. Armour first thanked all of our Mid-State employees who have not missed a beat. She noted that our program coordinators figured out how to set up and facilitate remote IEP meetings over a weekend and took on the extra collaboration to support parent participation in these virtual meetings and also in mailing documents following the meetings. Our full-time PCs held between 70 and 76 IEP meetings each since March 16th. Many therapists have made progress from "sending packets" and attempting phone contact to scheduling and providing some remote therapy sessions using technology. Our psychologist and SSW teams have done an excellent job devising and implementing a plan to complete eligibility meetings when possible, make parent contact and obtain agreement to extend the timelines for those requiring face-to-face evaluation, and have worked ahead into the fall as much as possible on the easy re-evaluations in order to have time to complete all of the face-to-face assessments and observations when we return to school. Mrs. Becker has been invaluable in monitoring how employees are doing, what needs they have, and responding/supporting staff. Mrs. Armour shared that she has participated in numerous legal webinars as well as the national Council of Administrators of Special Education webinars which has helped with perspective and implementation of

quality services and FAPE. She feels very good about our efforts in developing Remote Learning Plans and in providing FAPE to students. We recommend that IEP teams review the Remote Learning Plan each time an IEP meeting is held and create a plan for any student who becomes eligible or moves into our districts. While referring to a document that she provided, Mrs. Armour provided a review of terms that are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably which include summer school, extended school year (ESY), and compensatory education services. She noted that while we are all praying for the best-case scenario in the fall while preparing for the worst, a short survey distributed to all our employees and district special education teachers will assist with future planning and service delivery. A survey will also be provided to each superintendent in order to obtain information from each district on a number of areas related to technology, the provision of tele-therapy, and planning for the upcoming school year. Finally, Mrs. Armour thanked each superintendent for trusting us to focus on the special education services and best practices during these unprecedented times.

Mrs. Armour reported on licensure and staffing. Shannon Ferholtz, from ROE 51 and chairman of the ISBE Licensure Committee, provided an update to the area director's group last week. Paraprofessionals can receive short-term licensure with high school completion to allow for test to be taken within 3 years. Para candidate needs to set-up the account in ELIS and send proof of high school diploma to the Regional Office of Education to be uploaded first which should then result in automatic issuance. Short-term approvals have been added and testing centers are starting to reopen with limited hours and new safety requirements. It was recommended that we start identifying teachers for short-term emergency licensure now so they can begin coursework. Mrs. Ferholtz indicated those who have a deficiency letter that expires June 30th should not expect any extension. Mrs. Armour asked superintendents to please let Mrs. Becker or her know of any special education vacancies as they occur over the summer so that we can assist with possible candidates.

Mrs. Armour recognized the Hillsboro district and all the Mid-State folks supporting the remote learning efforts for all children. The recent news article in the Journal News entitled, "Solving Remote Learning for Those with IEPs" provided factual information as well as how our collaborative approach and supports have been of benefit to families and students. The story was picked up by the National Board of Occupational Therapy and circulated. Mrs. Armour noted that the biggest compliment to the district and staff is that the article was written by one of our parents.

Related to Communication, Mrs. Armour reported that letters were sent to Senators Durbin and Duckworth and Representatives Shimkus and Davis on behalf of our organization requesting flexibility and relief related to IDEA during the COVID pandemic.

Mrs. Armour reported that the Steering & Finance Committees met following the February board meeting. The committee provided input into establishing the amount of the fund balance and budgeting for unallocated funding sources. This group has been consulted as needed to continue moving forward with finalizing FY20 and proposing the FY21 budget, practices, and finances.

Mrs. Armour reported that the Insurance Committee including three employees met for the first time on February 24th. The committee met with a representative from Teachers' Coalition on Health through Egyptian Trust regarding the eligibility requirements and details of an option to tether services from Egyptian Trust. Due to the reorganization, we may soon meet the eligibility requirements of 50 or less employees. The committee expressed interest in the option if eligibility is established as cost-saving are anticipated. At last update, we are looking at as early as a July 1st switch to the tethering program through BCBS with Egyptian. If for some reason we do not qualify or choose to stay the course, for FY21 we are in Egyptian Trust Tier 7 with a 10% premium increase.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Armour presented the Press Plus 103 updates and the updates to Sections 1 and 2 for the first reading. After review of the highlights of updates, the first reading was noted.

Mrs. Armour reported that although we did not formally amend the FY20 budget, we have used this work as the basis for final assessments. The Steering & Finance Committee offered recommendations related to offsetting revenue that has been applied to lower FY20 assessments. Mrs. Armour reported that changes are noted in both revenue and expenditures that have been decreased since the adopted budget. Mrs. Armour has had the opportunity to review the detailed information specific to your district with many of you. Mrs. Armour reported that we used the offset of Medicaid FFS, which was applied to each district based upon generated revenue from the district, and \$200,000 of Mid-State's BFM, which was applied to decrease shared costs. Positive impacts were made on both FY20 assessments and MOE for each district. Prior to proceeding with this recommendation, we spoke with our auditor and the ISBE federal auditor who completed our audit last year to confirm information related to previous cost-billing processes that will streamline our practices significantly. We are excited that the FY20 Cost Billing is complete for the year, and Mrs. Armour expects bookkeepers will also appreciate this as there will be no end of June exchange of checks that need to be banked. In addition, we have considered the historic practice of flowing the EBF funds to districts the month following receipt. Mrs. Armour indicated that there is no reason that the final FY20 payments cannot flow in June. She recommended that we prepare to flow the final FY20 EBF payment to districts in June, if received as expected. A motion made by Mr. Powell and seconded by Ms. Ritter to approve the FY20 final district assessments, as presented, and flow the June EBF allocations to districts, if received, carried by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour recommended the authorization of payments to districts to decrease FY20 assessments. Based upon the information above, a separate Payable List totaling \$217,454.66 was referenced for consideration and approval. Mrs. Armour reported that these funds should be applied as a credit against your FY20 expense. A motion made by Mr. Shackelford and seconded by Ms. Healy to approve the Payables List which reflects a return of a portion of the FY20 Assessment to each member district, carried by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour recommended the final transfers of the former Region fund balances to districts. The Payable List for each former Region was referenced for consideration and approval. Mrs. Armour reported that per the auditor, these are undesignated funds. As soon as these checks clear, these six Region accounts will be closed. Dr. Schuchman asked if documentation of the status of these funds could be provided for documentation. A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Powell to approve the Payables List which reflects a return of the former Region fund balances to each member district, carried by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour requested authorization to transfer Mid-State funds to the new account and to close all accounts no longer needed. A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Ms. Healy to approve the Director or Business Manager complete the final transfer of Mid-State funds to the new account and then close all related Mid-State and former Region accounts following all payables clearing the respective accounts, carried by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour noted that when our new billing structure was developed and approved last year, she recommended that it be reviewed annually. She referenced the document developed and approved last year with only a minor revision related to the assessment calculation for Itinerant Therapists (OT and PT). The updated Average Student Enrollment (ASE) for each district that will be used in the shared calculations in FY21. Mrs. Armour reported that the assessment methods we have implemented in FY20 have created much more equity, simplified cost-billing, and provided stability in assessments for districts. She noted that while we continue to research and consider new ideas to improve efficiency while still meeting your high expectations, we are truly just beginning to settle into the new organizational structure as many of the financial transitions are just concluding. Mrs. Armour stated that we look forward to collaborating with those of you who have ideas to share and with the board in further goal setting as soon as the current situation related to the pandemic allows us. A motion made by Mr. Meister and seconded

by Dr. Olson to approve the Mid-State Billing Structure for FY21, as presented, carried by a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour presented the FY21 Preliminary Budget. The detailed draft Preliminary Budget was prepared and provided to the executive committee officers for input before being presented. After referencing the budget summary and providing a brief overview, Mrs. Armour noted that based upon the preliminary figures it is likely that district assessments will be down by at least \$45,000 overall compared to FY20 given a consistent insurance contribution and increase in salary/benefits for employees. Mrs. Armour thanked Liz Holcomb, business manager, who has been an outstanding addition to our team noting that her efforts and work have been commendable. Mrs. Armour also noted that we have made so much progress this year. A motion made by Mr. Shackelford and seconded by Mr. Hopper to approve the presentation of the FY21 Preliminary Budget to the Governing Board on August 26, 2020, carried by a roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays.

Mrs. Armour presented to for approval the Contract and Services Agreement Renewals for FY21 noting there minimal changes from the previous year. A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Ms. Healy to approve the contracts and services agreements for FY21, as presented, carried by a roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ACTION ON BUSINESS ITEMS

A motion made by Mr. Powell and seconded by Mr. Hopper to accept the resignations of part-time retirees Charles Bowles and Cindy Miller at the end of the 2019-20 school year, carried by a roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Ms. Ritter to approve the employment of Debbie Musgrave, SLP, and Amy Ashmore, PTA, as needed at their FY20 hourly rate, for the provision of ESY services, carried by a roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays.

DISCUSSION

The next Executive Committee Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Mr. Theilen and seconded by Mr. Hopper to adjourn the meeting at 10:18 a.m. carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary

Dr. Becky Schuchman _____ 5/20/2020
Chairperson Date

Vickie Throne _____ 5/20/2020
Secretary of the Board Date