

Governing Board/Executive Committee**Exhibit - Closed Meeting Minutes****Closed Meeting Minutes**

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| Date: March 19, 2025 | Time: 9:48 a.m. |
| Location: Mid-State Special Education office, Morrisonville, Illinois | |
| Name of person taking the minutes: Ingrid Watkins | |
| Name of person recording the closed meeting: Ingrid Watkins | |
| Names of members present: South Fork: Mr. Chris Clark; Mulberry Grove: Ms. Casie Bowman; Panhandle: Mr. Aaron Hopper; Brownstown, Mr. Lund; Litchfield: Dr. Kelly McClain; St. Elmo: Mr. Travis Portz; Hillsboro: Mr. David Powell; Ramsey: Ms. Melissa Ritter; Carlinville: Dr. Becky Schuchman | Names of members absent: Edinburg: Ms. Ashley Francis; Vandalia: Dr. Jennifer Garrison; Morrisonville: Mr. Patrick Murphy; Bond: Dr. Wes Olson; |
| Summary of the discussion on all matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Clark inquired if anyone needed to discuss the maternity leave for Kassandra Charles. The districts impacted by it said they were good with it. Mr. Clark opened the discussion on salary increase for FY26. Mr. Lund stated they did a 5% increase a couple years ago and are doing a 4% this year with E.S.P.. Ms. Ritter stated they are negotiating now and believe they will be 3% this year without the STEP. Mr. Clark mentioned everyone's concern about proration's that they have been told are coming down the line and how 5% is starting to be the expected norm, whereas a few years ago it was an amount that would never be expected. Mr. Clark addressed how there is such a large range when looking at Mid-State staff that is isn't as apples to apples when looking at how districts handle raises, since certified staff and hourly staff are handled differently. This makes it hard to compare averages. He said there is a fear that they are setting the bar for the future and the other concern is how to address it with STEPS, as administration at the districts are not included in STEPS. He noted that his district would have a cost of \$1,000 but wanted to hear from the larger districts that would have a much higher increase. He also asked if there was a need to delay the decision until negotiations are completed at the districts. Mrs. Fisher clarified that they don't have STEP and they don't have Union negotiations. The board inquired what her recommendation was and Mrs. Fisher said it was 5% because of the average of districts that already have contracts in place, the average was 5.5% once you factor in STEP. It was suggested that in order to go ahead with the FY26 budget, that they plan for 5% until a decision can be made on what the rate will be at a later meeting. Mr. Powell asked if we know how many districts are in contract negotiations. Mr. Clark said that is why this was brought to the Executive committee because they were not sure where all the districts were at with their negotiations. Dr. McClain said that she knows that the higher percentages have been the standard during COVID, but that she has to make cuts to positions so she does not know if she can vote for a 5% raise. Ms. Ritter said she is in negotiations but she does not think what is decided here will impact her negotiations. Dr. McClain said since she is new and does not know how it impacted her district in the past. Based on what she has learned so far, she does not think it will. Mr. Clark said he thinks this year is fine, but maybe in the future they might look at separating the rate between certified and non-certified. Dr. Schuchman mentioned that unfortunately that it's hard to know even how insurance rates will impact the raise percentage. She also talked about how they are all trying to figure out how to remain competitive but also consider how the state budget will impact them. Ms. Bowman stated that she does have concern about the impact the state budget will have and everyone was in agreement that they are also concerned. Mrs. Fisher expressed that she recommended what the average currently is for this year, | |

but completely understands that next year if the average is 1% then that is what she will recommend. Dr. Schuchman said one problem with comparing the averages is that districts are locked into multi-year contracts, so the average is going to lag behind what they current rate is. Mr. Clark also said it's also hard to go by averages as some of the benefits, like percentage of TRS that is paid, can be different than what the districts are doing. Mr. Powell asked if we have looked at how the positions compare to others in that same position locally. Mr. Clark said we did look at that a couple years ago and that we were around average. Mr. Portz mentioned how MSSE employees pay is a lot higher than what those in their districts receive and if they were employed by the district they would take a pay cut. So he is not a big fan of the 5% but when you start look at the dollars and what it looks like and since that is the recommendation he is willing to go forward. It was decided to go ahead with the 5% recommendation for this year but will look at restructuring how it is done next year. Mrs. Fisher said she will work with the Finance committee next year to develop a structure that makes sense. Mr. Lund brought up the raise percentage for another coop being 4.5% and 4%. Mrs. Fisher said she looked at the contracts for the other coops in this area. Mr. Powell asked if this matches with them. Mrs. Fisher said that with the certified staff it is competitive. Mrs. Fisher said with the non-certified staff it is probably more in their favor. Mr. Powell asked how many non-certified staff there are. Mrs. Fisher said about 7 non certified and 39 certified. Mr. Powell said for non-certified he is more likely to compare to the local districts, but for certified he is more likely to compare to other coops that have similar positions.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Hopper to return to open session at 10:00a.m. carried by a voice vote: Motion carried 9 yes, 0 no.

Time of adjournment or return to open meeting: 10:00 a.m.

The Board, during its semi-annual review of closed session minutes, has decided these minutes no longer need confidential treatment.

☐ **These minutes are available for public inspection as of:** _____ .
(Date)