

MID-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Regular Board Meeting  
Official Minutes  
March 17, 2021

PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

The regular meeting of the Mid-State Special Education Executive Committee was called to order by Chairman, Dr. Becky Schuchman, at 9:01 a.m. with remote participation as allowed during the current public health emergency, current Disaster Declaration, and extended Executive Orders. In-person attendance at this meeting was deemed not practical, prudent, or feasible. In complying with our revised policy related to Open Meetings Act, the Board Secretary completed the following requirements: kept a verbatim record of the complete meeting for no less than 18 months; ensured that any interested member of the public can hear discussion; verified that each Board Member could hear one another; verified the Board Members present and that a quorum was met; conducted all votes by roll call and recorded each Board Member's vote so that it is identified; and reported to the public following the Board's meeting with no physical presence of quorum.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Wes Olson (Remote), Bond County; Dr. Becky Schuchman, Carlinville; Mr. Aaron Hopper, Panhandle; Ms. Melissa Ritter, Ramsey; Mr. Chris Clark, South Fork; Mr. Robert Koontz, Mulberry Grove; Dr. Jennifer Garrison (Remote), Vandalia; Ms. Julie Healy (Remote), St. Elmo; Mr. Dave Meister (Remote, left meeting at 9:20 a.m.), Morrisonville; Mr. David Powell (Remote) Hillsboro; Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau (Remote) Litchfield; Mr. Ben Theilen, Edinburg

OTHERS PRESENT

Mrs. Angela Armour, Director; Mrs. Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary; Mrs. Lyn Becker, Assistant Director; Mrs. Liz Holcomb, Business Manager

Recognition of Visitors: None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Mike Shackelford, Brownstown

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Regular Session Minutes from February 17, 2021.
- Destruction of Executive Session Audio Recordings Older than 18 Months: MSSE Special Meetings August 6 & 13, 2019 and Regular Meeting August 21, 2019.
- Financial report - The FY 21 Balance Sheet and Receipt vs. Expenditures reflected a February 28<sup>th</sup> fund balance of \$2,729,096.56 including revenue of \$167,044.80 and expenditures totaling \$433,238.44. The projected March expenses were estimated at \$421,000.00 with projected revenue of \$191,390.00. The resulting March 28th fund balance was projected at \$2,503,330.40.
- March Accounts Payable List in the amount of \$215,340.50 was presented for approval and for immediate payment.

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Dr. Fuerstenau to approve the Consent Agenda. Roll Call Vote. Fuerstenau, yes; Olson, yes; Powell, yes; Healy, yes; Koontz, yes; Meister, yes; Ritter, yes; Garrison, yes; Hopper, yes; Clark, yes; Schuchman, yes; Theilen, yes. Motion carried 12-0

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Armour welcomed the board back to our first in-person meeting since COVID began one year ago and wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day! Mrs. Armour thanked the board for their leadership during the past year and commitment to continuing education based upon the metrics and what was best for individual districts and communities. As Mrs. Armour interacts with other directors and administrators in central Illinois and across the state, she has found that we were not paralyzed as many

others were and still are. Mrs. Armour thanked the board for allowing our service providers to resume services in the schools as soon as was possible and for working together to get students back in-person who were not finding success remotely. Mrs. Armour thanked all employees who think out of the box and continue to figure out how to meet kids and families where they are. We have learned a lot and are focused on continuing many practices that have proven beneficial for students, families, employees, and districts.

Mrs. Armour reported that on March 7-13 we celebrated School Social Work Week. She noted that we are fortunate to have excellent school social workers who not only complete the legally required evaluation components and IEP services but also prioritize service and sharing their expertise with students, families, and school staff. She asked for assistance in recognizing our School Social Workers by sending a quick email or sharing gratitude to: Karen Bennett (VD), Lisa Cacciatori (MV, PH, SF), Rick Cina (HB), Michelle Dothager (BD), Patty Redpath (EB), Nancy Roasio (LF), Jessica Ryan (CV), Scarlett Vanzo (BT, MG, RM, SE).

Mrs. Armour provided an update on the specialty staff vacancies for the FY22 school year. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, we posted part- or full-time positions for a Teacher of the Visually Impaired and for a Speech-Language Pathologist. Mrs. Armour is thankful that we have secured services in both disciplines, is finalizing details, and plans to have formal recommendations for approval in April. Mrs. Armour has also initiated collaboration with Illinois State University in order to provide practicum and student teaching opportunities further south in our area schools.

Mrs. Armour reported that the December 1<sup>st</sup> Child Count certification period began early and continues through March 26<sup>th</sup>. As of March 11<sup>th</sup>, "Verified Status" is reported for: Hillsboro, Litchfield, Mulberry Grove, Panhandle, Ramsey, St. Elmo, and Vandalia. Mrs. Armour expects Maintenance of Effort (MOE) information will be out in early April and asked the board to please continue to reach out as IDEA grants are amended.

Mrs. Armour reported that the FBA & BIP two-part virtual training provided by Lyn Becker was held on Feb. 25 & Mar. 9 and was attended by 27 participants from seven districts. "Maximizing Medicaid Reimbursement with embraceDS" was held as we continue to assist districts in maximizing Medicaid fee-for-service funding. Mrs. Armour reported that we are exploring how to best provide the additional yearly training on topics related to the new Time-out, Isolated Time-out, and Physical Restraint requirements. Currently, we have used webinars through Infinitac that individuals can complete independently which has been helpful in keeping teachers, paraprofessional aides, and other staff in the schools. There is a new CPI option for trainers that is being explored.

Mrs. Armour reported that the "Special Services Legal FAQ" was distributed recently following an updated with nine new questions related to the topics of remote or homebound services/placements, establishing current functioning and FAPE upon return, and the role of the IEP team in requests for remote services/placements. Also, as plans are being made for summer school and extended school year services, questions have arisen related to access, eligibility, and transportation.

Mrs. Armour reported that both IASA and IAASE have provided information and opposition to HB0040 & SB0531 which would change the school code to provide that a student whose 22nd birthday occurs during the school year is eligible for special education services through the end of the regular school term rather than being eligible for services only until the day before his or her 22nd birthday. Another bill, SB 1821, allows the extension past the day before the 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday through only the 2021-22 school year for those who turned 22 between March 17, 2020 and the end of the 2021-22 school year. These bills directly impact over half of our districts and exceeds the federal IDEA requirements. Mrs. Armour stated that while we agree that more services should be available for young adults with disabilities, we do not believe that extending services past the 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday is the solution. And, we certainly do not support such a mandate without additional funding for districts. Another bill that Mrs. Armour is watching is SB0517 adding "public therapeutic programs" to ILCS 5/14-1.08 which requires districts to provide and fund such programs along with the parameters of reimbursement and proration through ISBE. Typically, there is mixed support and opposition to such change from special education cooperatives and districts

depending on geography because no new funding sources would result in significantly reduced reimbursement for placements such as Cornerstone, Hope School and the Illinois Center for Autism. Mrs. Armour noted that placement neutral funding and reimbursement system is difficult to argue, but over the past 10 years this concept has not gotten traction due to funding concerns.

Mrs. Armour ask that districts please add the Mid-State website link, [www.midstatespec.org](http://www.midstatespec.org), to their district webpage so that staff and parents can easily access resources, professional development, and other information.

Mrs. Armour reported that the Steering and Finance Committee met prior to the meeting and that Dr. Schuchman will provide updates later in the meeting.

Mrs. Armour noted that her communications on behalf of the organization related to HB0040 were provided in the advanced packet. Mrs. Armour plans to communicate with the senators today since a companion senate bill has also been introduced.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion mad by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Ritter to enter into executive session at 9:19 a.m. Roll Call Vote. Olson, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Koontz, yes; Theilen, yes; Schuchman, yes; Clark, yes; Hopper, yes; Garrison, yes; Powell, yes; Ritter, yes; Healy, yes. Motion carried 11-0

A motion made by Mr. Theilen and seconded by Mr. Koontz to return to open session at 9:25 a.m. Roll Call Vote. Healy, yes; Powell, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Olson, yes; Garrison, yes; Schuchman, yes; Ritter, yes; Clark, yes; Hopper, yes; Theilen, yes; Koontz, yes. Motion carried 11-0.

### ACTION ITEMS

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Mr. Theilen to accept the resignation of Judy Riedl, part-time program coordinator effective May 27, 2021. Roll Call Vote. Ritter, yes; Powell, yes; Olson, yes; Clark, yes; Healy, yes; Koontz, yes; Hopper, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Garrison, yes; Theilen, yes; Schuchman, yes. Motion carried 11-0.

A motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Ritter to approve Angie Armour and Lyn Becker to receive the 4% retirement incentives as is granted to all other certified Mid-State employees beginning in the 2021-22 school year. Roll Call Vote. Hopper, yes; Olson, yes; Healy, yes; Garrison, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Schuchman, yes; Clark, yes; Ritter, yes; Powell, yes; Theilen, yes; Koontz, yes. Motion carried 11-0.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Dr. Schuchman reported that the Finance Committee has continued work on the budget and the billing structure noting it is similar to what she had previously met and spoke to everyone about. Each district will now be paying directly for the staff serving their district based upon the percentage of time they have them. Other items will be redirected such as the materials, supplies and professional development so that individual districts can pay for them directly. If it is a case where two or more districts share an individual and there is mileage and professional development then Mid-State will bill those cost to the districts three times a year with the last bill being received in the first part of April so the payments can be processed prior to the end of the fiscal year. Dr. Schuchman noted that professional development and mileage can be paid through Special Education Funds, IDEA funds, EBF or Title. The hope is that in the next month we will be able to finalize that structure and take a vote to approve. The timing for determining staff compensation and benefits for the upcoming school year will need to be finalized in order for Mid-State to provide a definite cost to each district. It was determined that Edinburg, Litchfield and Brownstown are all negotiating this year. In addition, when Dr. Schuchman met with individuals discussion occurred regarding the EBF funding and the current process of funds coming into Mid-State and then being flowed to the districts. Dr. Schuchman referred to a chart provided by Mrs. Armour showing how the amount of flow-through for each district is determined based upon the actual number of personnel serving the district at the time the Base Funding Minimum was established for the cooperative. One of the goals for the Finance Committee was to establish and confirm the amounts generated by Central staff and not necessarily have that flow through every year. In addition to reducing cutting checks

back and forth, it would clarify the amount of funds that would stay at Central if a district were to leave the cooperative. The Finance Committee had Mrs. Armour work with legal to develop a Resolution that highlights and clarify an agreement. Dr. Schuchman noted that a Resolution could be changed at a later date more easily than the Articles of Joint Agreement. If another district were to join the cooperative or if the Based Funding Minimum amount were to change, the board could have another Resolution drafted to meet those needs. The Resolution is being finalized and will be shared with everyone prior to the next meeting when it will be presented for approval.

Dr. Schuchman confirmed that there is not a need to amend the FY21 budget, so the Governing Board meeting scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup> is not needed. Superintendents were reminded to please be sure to notify your board representative so that they are aware the meeting is canceled and that the Governing Board will meet in August to adopt a new budget for the FY22 school year.

Dr. Schuchman also reported that Finance Committee has worked to develop some organizational goals. She noted that some of the goals have already been accomplished or are getting close to being accomplished, but we want to make sure that we maintain goals annually.

### NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Schuchman reported that we will need to establish some additional committees. A Building and Facilities Committee is needed consider the sale of the Mid-State structure or if the board is going to keep it to develop a plan on how to maintain it. A Personnel and Search Committee will be established to look at an internal audit of positions because every cooperative structure is a bit different. Dr. Schuchman noted that when we start to look for a candidate to become the next director, we need to be able to clearly communicate to them what their role and responsibilities are. As an Executive Committee, Dr. Schuchman does not know that the board understands exactly what everyone's job duties are. Therefore, we need the committee to research, audit, and develop the desired structure in the future. It would also be helpful for that committee to be able to look at salaries and ensure that everything is competitive in that area so that we have some bases to determine what we should pay. This committee will be part of the search and interview process. Dr. Schuchman would like everyone to be involved in at least one committee noting that we will probably expand the Finance Committee by at least one or two members in order to get everybody more involved. Dr. Schuchman would also like to create a timeline with applying some of the goals discussed. The Building and Facilities Committee will be looking at the title for the Mid-State building to determine if it can be sold or if it would have to go back to HUD. Mrs. Armour asked for clarification if the Search Committee will be part of the Personnel Committee. Dr. Schuchman reported that there will be some members that fall into both. Dr. Schuchman indicated that she will create a document and send to board members for them to sign up for the committee or committees of their choice. Dr. Schuchman hopes to have cross representation of both small and large districts and districts that may share staff.

### DISCUSSION

The next MSSE Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Dr. Schuchman did ask that everyone plan to meet in person at the MSSE office, but if not available to attend in person, we will set up virtually as well. The goal is to have the committees established by the next meeting and set some timelines. The next Governing Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Healy thanked Dr. Schuchman and the Finance Committee for all their time and effort spent working towards setting the new goals.

### ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Dr. Fuerstenau and seconded by Mr. Powell to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 a.m. Roll Call Vote. Hopper, yes; Olson, yes; Healy, yes; Garrison, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Schuchman, yes; Clark, yes; Ritter, yes; Powell, yes; Theilen, yes; Koontz, yes. Motion carried 11-0

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary

Bachy D. Schuchman

Chairperson

Vickie L. Throne

Secretary of the Board

4-21-2021

Date

4-21-2021

Date