

**MID-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Regular Board Meeting
Official Minutes
November 15, 2023**

PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

The regular meeting of the Mid-State Special Education Executive Committee was called to order by Chairman, Ms. Melissa Ritter at 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bond County: Dr. Wes Olson; Carlinville: Dr. Becky Schuchman; Hillsboro: Mr. David Powell; Litchfield: Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau; Morrisonville: Mr. Patrick Murphy; Ramsey: Ms. Melissa Ritter; South Fork: Mr. Chris Clark; St. Elmo: Mr. Travis Portz

MEMBERS ABSENT

Brownstown: Mr. Mike Shackelford; Edinburg: Ms. Ashley Francis; Mulberry Grove: Ms. Casie Bowman; Panhandle: Mr. Aaron Hopper; Vandalia: Dr. Jennifer Garrison

OTHERS PRESENT

Mrs. Bobbi Fisher, Director; Liz Holcomb, Business Manager; Vickie Throne, Executive Secretary; Ingrid Watkins, Student Data Specialist

Recognition of Visitors: Ms. Robin Yockey (Remote), Auditor from Hottenrott & Associates, LLC

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Regular Session Minutes from October 10, 2023
- Destruction of regular session audio recordings maintained to comply with OMA related to remote meetings from 4/20/2022 and no executive recordings;
- Financial report - The FY24 Balance Sheet and Receipt vs. Expenditures reflects the October fund balance of \$2,881,313.19. The receipts of \$820,907.44 and expenditure totaled \$490,578.06. November projected revenue is \$733,142.87 and expenses of \$474,759.06. The resulting November 30th fund balance is projected at \$3,139,697.00.
- Review of previously approved payables for November 15th totaling \$183,275.46.

A motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Dr. Schuchman to approve the Consent Agenda. Roll Call Vote. Fuerstenau, yes; Olson, yes; Powell, yes; Portz, yes; Murphy, yes; Ritter, yes; Clark, yes; Schuchman, yes. Roll Call Vote. Motion carried 8 yay, 0 nays.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Fisher reported that last week we celebrated National School Psychology Week. The theme this year "Let's Grow Together" is inspired by the importance of both personal and shared strengths in our growth as individuals and school communities in every season of life. We are blessed to have the expertise and dedication of Lucas, Kassi, Amanda, Kristy, Tricia, Meg, Lisa, Amy, and Kristen on our teams serving students.

Mrs. Fisher reported that the School Report Cards include special education data that is used for district State Performance Plan Indicators and your future LEA Determination. Mrs. Fisher is pleased to report that none of our schools are targeted for the students with disabilities sub-group. Mrs. Fisher also would like to commend Carlinville Middle School, Litchfield Middle School, and Ramsey Elementary School for being exemplary schools. Across the cooperative, the percent of special education ranges from 13.1% to 24.2%. Two districts were at or below the state average of 15.3%, eight districts were under 20%, and five districts are now over 20%. These numbers are still high, but we have seen a decrease across the cooperative from last year, which Mrs. Fisher believes was contributed by more time and attention being put towards RtI efforts and trainings. As you look at district planning and resources, it is

worthy of reviewing your district rate, the universal curriculum and the tiered RtI/MTSS interventions. In analyzing the percentage of total indicators met by each district, the range is from 61% - 82% indicators met. Seven districts met the graduation indicator of greater than 82.6% and six districts met the drop-out indicator of less than 13.7%. Most districts met in the areas of assessment participation, least restrictive educational environment, and early childhood outcomes. All districts met at 100% for EI transitions, evaluations with eligibility within 60 days, and transition services for students 16 and older. This information has been discussed during Leadership with PCs. Please just let Mrs. Fisher know if you would like her to review this information with you and consider possible district specific recommendations.

Mrs. Fisher reported that Reevaluation Procedures have been finalized and included in your advanced packet. Mrs. Fisher would like to thank our School Psychologists, School Social Workers, Brandy Buske, and Brandon Wright for all playing a role in its revision.

Mrs. Fisher reported that our Eligibility Criteria Committee continues to work on revising our SLD eligibility. They have met twice (most recently on 11/6) and have presented their work to the rest of the School Psychologist and School Social Worker group for feedback. We hope to finalize that for your approval soon.

Mrs. Fisher reported on the trainings held or attend by staff since the last board meeting in November.

- Leadership on 11/1- Our admin group discussed many topics including the school report cards.
- PC Mentoring on 10/26- We had Keri Buscher, Barb Daugherty, and Amy Knodle attend. They learned about homebound instruction, remote learning, eLearning, home instruction, and the legalities of the different topics.
- Teacher Mentoring on 10/25- Dawn Theivagt along with Barb Daugherty and Amy Knodle presented on co-teaching and special education legal timelines.
- 10/18 & 11/1-Liz, Vickie, and Mrs. Fisher all attended the Bushue HR conference and learned about new upcoming laws, among other items.
- Barb Daugherty, Amy Knodle, Brandy Buske, Dawn Theivagt, and Mrs. Fisher all attended the IAASE conference in Tinley Park, IL from 10/18-10/20. A lot was learned as we networked, attended great breakout sessions, were inspired by great keynote speakers, and spent some time as an admin group.

Mrs. Fisher will be working with the RIF/PERA committee next week to complete our required meeting on November 21st. Mrs. Fisher reported that after consultation with Brandon Wright, it is time to update our Work Study Limits plan from 2009. If your district needs to update their Work Study Limit plan for your special educators, we will be happy to share our plan that will be presented to the board for approval at next months board meeting. Your district will then be able to use this as a guide when working with your union to update your plan.

Mrs. Fisher reported that our transition specialists along with the MSSE office has been approving transition grants for school-based business ventures and for overall supplies to incorporate more life skills curriculum into their day. The funds being used are generated by the Transition Specialists meeting outcomes. We are very fortunate that they are self-sustainable and bringing such great services to students. In the South Fork district Sessey Lynch, Special Education Teacher, requested equipment and supplies to use with her Life Skills students and others in her class. The students started by making cookies after the first week of school, utilizing the cookie oven, an sharing with the staff and students. During the week the students look at recipes that they are interested in and then they prepare them on Fridays. Mrs. Lynch has incorporated other students outside the special education classes to mentor and help out. They have made donuts from biscuits, homemade salsa from roasted vegetables, and other

horderves. They have also utilized the Air fryer and the learned the many ways it can be used for cooking healthier foods. The students are learning social skills, when sharing, measuring, cooking and baking information, following directions, kitchen skills, healthier life styles, and more.

In the Edinburg district Mrs. Thomlin, Special Education Teacher, had been approved and taken on the responsibility of fixing up the old Home Economics room to use with her students. She requested some equipment and supplies to start the year. She also has acquired a new gas oven, THANKS to LOWES who saw this information listed on the school website. The students have made cookies and sold them to staff and students. They have prepared simple meals for the staff. Both the staff and students look for recipes that the students can learn from and at some time prepare for themselves. They are keeping a spread sheet of the dates, all the ingredients, supplies, and things they use to keep track of expenses and profits. This will be an ongoing learning experience throughout the year.

Mrs. Fisher reported that the Finance Committee met today, prior to this board meeting to discuss insurance rate increases and available options. On November 7th, we were notified that renewal rates for the same plan we currently have, Allied for major medical with a Gap supplemental plan, was going to have a rate increase of 41%. Mrs. Fisher asked Brady from Loman-Ray to look for other companies and different plan options that may be more affordable. We then learned that we were granted a rate relief from a 41% increase down to a 26% increase. After reviewing the options, Mrs. Fisher shared the information with the finance committee. Mrs. Fisher and the committee believe the best option moving forward is to stay with Allied for Major Medical along with a Gap plan. We compared our current plan option against three other plans and the cost for all four options were comparable, but the benefits are greater with Allied/Gap plan. After reviewing the options, it is the recommendation of the Finance Committee to increase the board paid amount from \$600/month to \$700/month. For your comparison, the board paid \$675/month in 2022 prior to the rate drop when we first switched to the Allied/Gap policy. Liz calculated the financial impact for each district for the remainder of the FY24 school year and the increase ranged from a \$618.00 total increase to a \$3,733.00 increase. Mr. Murphy asked if we have a contract with our staff is it common practice to change this mid-stream in the middle of year. Mr. Clark and Ms. Ritter reported that their districts change mid-year as well. Dr. Schuchman reported that MSSE staff do not have a contract. Mrs. Fisher reported that Liz has a spreadsheet that lists all district increase amounts and we are sharing this information so that you will know what your district increase will be.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mrs. Fisher introduced Ms. Robin Yockey who will present our FY23 Audit.

Ms. Yockey reported that the financial statements for fiscal year 2023 are presented on the Annual Financial Report Form. The Joint Agreement was not required to have a Single Audit. The CYEFR required by GATA is now also a separate submission from the AFR filing. The independent auditor's report on the basic financial statements includes an unmodified opinion on the basic financial statements and indicates that financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with the regulatory basis of accounting. The report also includes an adverse opinion to warn users of the financial statements that the financial statements are not prepared in accordance with GAAP, or generally accepted accounting principles. The report also indicates that the supplementary schedules accompanying the report are fairly stated in relation to the financial statements. The report references no findings and there is no reference to a management letter this year. The joint agreement ended the year with \$1.6 million of cash and investments. There are no restrictions of fund balance. Results of operations-receipts were less than disbursements by (\$46,237). Receipts and Disbursements were both materially inflated by the on-behalf amounts of \$1.3 million dollars paid by the State of Illinois into TRS and THIS on behalf of the MSSE certified staff and is based on June 30, 2022, actuarial amounts. Local Funds \$3.47 million-67% of total funding. Assessments are over 89% of that total. State flow through and State Revenue \$ 1.386 million EBF (27% of total funding) Federal Revenue of \$344K (Medicaid) 6% of total funding. By object, the largest expenditures are Salaries/Benefits followed by Other Objects-which include the flow through

payments of EBF. One audit adjustment was made to the unaudited numbers. The amount of Medicaid Fee-For-Service had been recognized in a state flow through account. Since the amount is not also reported as a transfer when it is netted with amounts billed, the Medicaid Fee-For Service was reclassified to Federal revenue account 4992. The amount reclassified was \$206,405. Ms. Yockey asked if there were any questions or concerns and none were noted.

A motion made by Ms. Ritter and seconded by Dr. Fuerstenau to approve the FY23 audit as presented. Roll Call Vote. Portz, yes; Schuchman, yes; Clark, yes; Olson, yes; Ritter, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Murphy, yes; Powell, yes. Motion carried 8 yay, 0 nays.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Fisher asked if there needed to be any further discussion on Insurance Provider, Package, and Benefits. If there is any additional information regarding the insurance rates/options requested, she is happy to discuss this now or it can be discussed in executive session as well.

Mrs. Fisher reported that the summary of policy updates from PRESS 113 are included and reflected. The majority of Press 113 is minor changes. One notable addition is when we present the budget to the governing board, we are to present a written report that includes the annual average expenditures of the operational funds for the previous three fiscal years. Other than that, the same minor updates/changes noted for your districts was included in our draft.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Dr. Fuerstenau to approve the first reading of policy updates for PRESS 113. Roll Call Vote. Olson, yes; Portz, yes; Powell, yes; Schuchman, yes; Clark, yes; Murphy, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Ritter, yes. Roll Call Vote 8 yay, 0 nays.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ACTION ITEMS

Mrs. Fisher recommended approving the recommendation from the finance committee to increase board paid insurance to \$700.00 per month per employee instead of the current \$600.00 per month.

A motion made by Dr. Fuerstenau and seconded by Mr. Powell to approve the recommendation by the finance committee regarding board paid insurance to pay \$700.00 per month per employee instead of the current \$600.00 per month. Roll Call Vote. Olson, yes; Portz, yes; Fuerstenau, yes; Schuchman, yes; Murphy, yes; Clark, yes; Ritter, yes; Powell, yes. Motion carried 8 yay, 0 nays.

DISCUSSION


The next MSSE Executive Committee Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Mr. Powell and seconded by Dr. Olson to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 a.m. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Bobbi Fisher, Director


Chairperson

12/12/2023
Date


Secretary of the Board

12/13/2023
Date