

MID-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Regular Board Meeting
Official Minutes
March 20, 2024

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

Ramsey: Ms. Melissa Ritter; Mulberry Grove: Ms. Casie Bowman (arrived at 9:07); South Fork: Mr. Chris Clark; Edinburg; Ms. Ashley Francis; Panhandle: Mr. Aaron Hopper; Morrisonville: Mr. Patrick Murphy; Bond: Dr. Wes Olson; St. Elmo: Mr. Travis Portz; Carlinville: Dr. Becky Schuchman, Brownstown: Mr. Mike Shackelford

MEMBERS ABSENT

Litchfield: Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau; Vandalia: Dr. Jennifer Garrison; Hillsboro: Mr. David Powell

OTHERS PRESENT

Mrs. Bobbi Fisher, Director; Liz Holcomb, Business Manager; Ingrid Watkins, Executive Secretary

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Approval of Minutes from the February 13, 2024 Meeting.
- Approval of Destruction of Regular Session Audio Recordings maintained to comply with OMA related to a remote meeting- 8/24/2022 Governing Board Meeting.
- The FY24 Balance Sheet and Receipts vs. Expenditures reflects the February fund balance of \$2,290,301.09 which includes receipts of \$182,671.65 and expenditures of \$475,625.77. FY24 revenue is being received as anticipated (at 98% currently). For March, our projected revenue amount is \$769,724.44, which includes the Final Cost Billing assessment. Our projected expenses are in the amount of \$468,315.44. Our resulting March 31st fund balance is projected at \$2,591,710.09
- Accounts Payable Review, Approval, and Order for Immediate Payment of March 20th bills in the amount of \$194,396.75. Expenses include routine bills, EBF flow-through to districts, professional development, materials/assessments/mileage, legal, and contractual therapies

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Shackelford to approve the Consent Agenda. Roll Call Vote: Ms. Ritter, yes; Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Francis, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Murphy, yes; Dr. Olson, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Dr. Schuchman; Mr. Shackelford, yes. Motion carried 9 yay, 0 nay.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

Mrs. Fisher reported that in January, the Transition Specialists purchased Ocular systems for students to gain virtual job experience. The Ocular is a virtual reality head set that has an operating system in the headset itself. Each transition specialist has 2 devices each and is able to assign students various job experiences depending on their interest. These students simulated being a construction worker, working in auto repair, working as a firefighter, welding, assisting in an accident, laying cable, fixing a utility pole, installing solar panels, and also working in manufacturing. Given limitation regarding transportation, willingness to have a student job shadow, safety concerns, and schedules, this Ocular device is able to allow students to try out jobs to give them a better idea of what their career goals are. Mrs. Fisher congratulated the Transition Specialists on taking the initiative to request to purchase such devices that give students more access to transition activities and to make it a fun experience. Mrs. Fisher also reported that she was able to submit the amendment to the FY24 contract, resulting in \$30,000 more for this year (ending at a total of \$275,000). Next year's contract will be \$290,000 which will include 200 students and 50 outcomes. If we have the 200 students met by December/January, we will pursue the Youth Services Contract with DRS, which will allow us to assign one of our existing Transition Specialists into that role. This contract will pay up to 60%-80% of that person's salary, resulting in even more funding able to go to the students.

Mrs. Fisher reported on professional development. Barb Daugherty, Amy Knodle, and Bobbi Fisher attended the conference last month in Champaign. They attended various breakout sessions and shared the resources and knowledge with the whole Leadership team in early March. The highlight, as usual, was the attorney panel that spoke on school refusal, student threats, private evaluations, curriculum opt-outs, FAPE challenges, and extracurricular accommodations for students. The MSSE administration team heard updates from the BCBA and vision/hearing teachers. The team also started preparing for ESY, the 4th quarter team meeting agenda, summer roll over data clean-up, speech adjustments for next year, and also discussed were Embrace updates, the new Assistive Technology guidance document, Infinitec offerings, and much more. Instead of attending mentoring via zoom this month, the Program Coordinator mentoring group got together and attended a virtual IEP and 504 training. It facilitated great conversation, scenarios, and problem solving as a team. It was a full-day training and the admin group benefited greatly from it.

Mrs. Fisher reported Special Education child count certification has opened in IWAS for superintendent approval by Friday, March 22nd. All districts have certified their numbers, so thank you for that. The MSSE clerical staff have kept I-Star errors clear and have stayed up to date with IEP changes, ensuring that each districts' Child Find count is as accurate as the information provided by the special education staff. Mrs. Fisher will be working with the Program Coordinator group to analyze the data and look for any trends or concerns that can be addressed.

Mrs. Fisher reported that MSSE has been advised from the Student Cares Department that a progress template document will be released in the spring to guide the RTO Reduction meeting this spring. That meeting should be scheduled soon, but plan to meet closer to the end of the year to ensure the document has been released. That update will be due June 30th.

Ms. Casie Bowman arrived at 9:07 a.m.

Mrs. Fisher reported that most of the Statement of Economic Interest forms have been completed. For those that have not completed the form, Ingrid will be providing it today.

Mrs. Fisher reported that both Michaela Hartley and Chloe Foppe will be on maternity leave at the start of the next school year. Both DHH teachers will both be back by November 15th, with one returning October 1st. The substitute vacancy has been posted since last month and Mrs. Fisher has been following leads on virtual platforms as well. This includes discussing supports with neighboring cooperatives and the 2 DHH teachers and Mrs. Fisher have been discussing different options for weeks now. The hope is to fill the vacancy with 2 days of in-person instruction and 1.5 days of virtual support while both teachers are gone, as that is what it would require to comply with IEP minutes. If unable to secure the in-person candidate, then 3.5 days would be necessary for virtual services. The price to cover the maternity leaves either way will be around \$14,000 total. This price would be spread out across all 13 districts and it doesn't account for some more deductions regarding mileage and unpaid days for the staff on leave. A decision for this will be made this month or next. Mrs. Fisher will keep the board informed.

Mrs. Fisher reported on February 21st, Barb Daugherty facilitated a zoom call between Mid-State and Menta. Ms. Daugherty and Mrs. Fisher spoke with Rory Conran, CEO of Menta. The following items were discussed:

- It was requested for a Transition Specialist to be provided as part of the tuition, as this has been in the past. This person would come with the student to the home school while transitioning back from being at Cornerstone. This person would also provide transportation. Mr. Conran stated that Menta would post that position and see if that service can be provided at no extra charge.
- When students are transitioning back to districts, documentation would be needed in order to pro-rate the tuition during that time. Unless this were to happen on both ends, the IEP placement would need to remain at 100% Cornerstone in order to receive the full reimbursement amount. Ms. Daugherty addressed a Ramsey student and receiving a credit for the amount of time the student has spent in the home district vs. with Menta. This credit was granted.
- Due to a Vandalia student receiving DHH services from a MSSE employee; a request was submitted for a tuition break. Mr. Conran said that DHH is not a service Menta offers and not part of the tuition. As a

result, MSSE would need to continue to provide those services at our expense. Menta is open to hiring their own DHH teacher, if they were able to find one to hire.

- Also discussed were students who are hospitalized while attending Cornerstone. It is advised that the districts do not make that student inactive on Cornerstone's end unless the stay will result in a change of placement. Making the student inactive would require an IEP change in order to avoid SIS errors and conflicting reimbursement dates. This included a brief discussion as to which circumstances this entails to ensure that cost for the Menta services matches what is being provided.

Mrs. Fisher reported that she has been working with the MTSS network to customize some professional development for our staff. She sent an email regarding this on March 6th and wanted to follow-up on this opportunity. This professional development can be scheduled for August as a full-day of PD. Teams from each district (Administrators, Title/Rtl staff, School Psychologist, School Social Worker/Counselors, Program Coordinator) would participate. There would be 3 to 4 half-day virtual follow-ups throughout the year. These coaches would help staff assess where they are, what their goals are, and to help them develop practices to help them achieve their goals. There could be a great benefit from looking at this through the special education lens as the referrals have been increasing, as has special education percentages. If all districts participate, the cost will be a little more than \$1,000 for each district which includes 4 training sessions. That can be applied to the IDEA grant this summer. Please let Mrs. Fisher know if there are any concerns moving forward with it.

Mrs. Fisher reported on SB3606. This proposed bill will amend the school code and proposes that the State reimburse districts for public and private special education day schools at an equal rate.

Mrs. Fisher provided an update on committee reports. Prior to the February meeting, the Finance Committee reviewed the Final Cost Billing and invoices for the 6th and final assessment along with district specific detail which were emailed on Feb. 28th. The updated revenue and expenditure budget documents were reviewed by the committee. Revenue decreased by \$37,716.61 and expenditures decreased by \$55,538.17. The overall expenditures decrease on the budget is mainly due to removing \$166,250, the Medicaid FFS flow-thru as an expense. Per discussions with the auditor, it was suggested we remove the Medicaid FFS flow-thru from the expenditure budget so as to more accurately reflect the application of the Medicaid funds received. Final assessments increased by \$77,426.83 from the Adopted budget. This was due to increased usage of Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy services from TheraKids (\$71,550), insurance increases (\$17,400), but was off-set by \$9,515 due to a reduction in the IMRF rate. Therefore, the overall net benefits increase was \$7,885. Per the Billing Structure, the \$134,828.44 that was the Medicaid FFS generated by the districts, was applied and it reduced the final assessment. The individual assessment breakdowns per district, which includes recommendations of what to put into the grant, was emailed along with the final cost billing. The adjusted amounts do not result in a need to amend the FY24 Budget. There is no need to hold the April Governing Board meeting. The Finance Committee is scheduled to meet following the March and April board meetings. The Building and Facilities Committee is also scheduled to meet in April. The Personnel Committee met prior to the Executive Board meeting today. They met to discuss Mrs. Fisher's transition to director and the contract, since it is almost the end of the first year and it is only a 2 year contract. The committee also met to discuss hiring Patricia Redpath as a 3 day part-time employee starting next school year in order to help serve South Fork's Social Work services following the resignation of Sarah Turner.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Fisher reported on the review and approval of recommendation from the Finance Committee. Now that final cost billing has been sent out, the Finance Committee is considering 3 salary increase options for FY25, which is helping to work towards starting the FY25 budget. Once the Finance Committee has decided on a salary increase recommendation, we would like approval to start producing the FY25 budget. The Finance Committee recommendation will be presented to this board for final approval during the April board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Dr. Olson to approve the Finance Committee’s recommendations to start development of the FY25 MSSE budget. Roll Call Vote. Ms. Ritter, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Francis, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Murphy, yes; Dr. Olson, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Shackelford, yes. Motion carried 10 yay, 0 nay.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

ACTION ITEMS

Mrs. Ritter recommended approving the leave request for Chloe Foppe, the resignation of Sarah Turner, and approving the Personnel Committee’s recommendation to hire Patricia Redpath 2 additional days a week, all as presented.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Ms. Bowman to approving the leave request for Chloe Foppe, the resignation of Sarah Turner, and approving the Personnel Committee’s recommendation to hire Patricia Redpath 2 additional days a week, all as presented. Roll Call Vote. Ms. Ritter, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Francis, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Murphy, yes; Dr. Olson, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Mr. Shackelford, yes. Motion carried 10 yay, 0 nay.

DISCUSSION

Governing Board Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. has been cancelled. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17 at 9:00 a.m., with the Finance Committee meeting to occur following at 9:30 and Buildings/Facilities Committee meetings to occur at 8:30.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Clark to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Bobbi Fisher, Director

Melvin Ritter

Chairperson

4/17/24

Date

Anguid Watkins

Secretary of the Board

4/17/24

Date