



Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative

1304 Ronzheimer Avenue
St. Charles, IL 60174
Phone: 331-228-4873
Fax: 331-228-4874

Executive Advisory Board Meeting March 4, 2026 9:00 AM

The Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative Board met in Regular Session on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at the Mid-Valley Special Education Cooperative, 1304 Ronzheimer Avenue, St. Charles, IL 60174.

Call to Order

Dr. Gordon, Superintendent D303, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Roll Call

Upon roll call the following members were also present: Mr. Kim, Superintendent D101; Dr. Kilrea, Interim Superintendent D301; Dr. Rohlwing, Superintendent D302; and Dr. Barrett, Superintendent D304.

Also present: Special Education Administrative Liaisons/Designees from the member districts; Mrs. Lisa Palese, Mid-Valley Executive Director; Mr. Matthew McDonald, Mid-Valley Director of Business and Human Resources; and Mrs. Brandi Pedersen, Recording Secretary.

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

- 3.1** Approval of Minutes, Executive Board Meeting, February 4, 2026
- 3.2** Approval of Bills, February 2026
- 3.3** Approval of Payroll, February 2026
- 3.4** Approval of Financial Report, February 2026
- 3.5** Approval of the Treasurer's Report, February 2026

Dr. Gordon called for Approval of the Consent Agenda. Dr. Rohlwing moved and Dr. Barrett seconded the motion. Approval of the Consent Agenda was confirmed by unanimous vote. 5-0.

For Information

4.1 Student Enrollment Update and Classroom Openings, February 2026

Mrs. Palese provided an enrollment update. Since August 2025, Mid-Valley has welcomed thirty-two new students, with an additional eight currently pending. Nine students returned to their home schools or moved, with one student transitioning to a private day school.

4.2 2026-27 Student Projections & Classroom Openings

Mrs. Palese shared those preliminary estimates for the 2026–27 academic year indicate a projected increase of approximately 45 students compared to August 2025. Based on these figures, several classrooms are expected to operate near maximum capacity at the start of the term.

4.3 Staffing Update, December 2025

Mr. McDonald reported that staffing levels remain largely consistent with previous periods, noting only the addition of a few 1:1 paraprofessional positions to meet specific student requirements.

4.4 Mental Health Partnership Meeting

Mrs. Palese presented an overview of the Mental Health Partnership, outlining its primary objective to establish a seamless continuum of care by bridging the gap between district personnel and community mental health providers. She emphasized that the initiative aims to enhance awareness of available resources for staff and families while highlighting the district's existing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) frameworks. Furthermore, the partnership serves as a platform for addressing systemic challenges faced by school-based teams, fostering a collaborative environment designed to ensure students and families receive the comprehensive support necessary for academic and personal success.

4.5 FY25 Audit

Mr. McDonald briefed the Board about the FY2025 audit report, noting that the district received a clean, unmodified opinion. The audit revealed no material weaknesses in internal controls and no instances of non-compliance. Furthermore, all necessary audit adjustments were successfully recorded, and the district is not required to submit any corrective action plans. These results underscore the district's commitment to rigorous financial oversight and sound fiscal management.

4.6 Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA)

Mr. McDonald responded to a FOIA request where he provided basic information.

For Discussion

5.1 Board Meeting Dates 2026-2027

Mrs. Pedersen discussed the proposed 2026-27 Board Meeting schedule. Upon review, the Board reached a consensus to reschedule the July 1, 2026, meeting to June 24, 2026. The remaining meeting dates were accepted as presented without further revision.

5.2 2026-27 Staffing Plan - Part 1

Mrs. Palese presented the 2026–27 Preliminary Staffing Recommendations, which propose a net reduction of 4.3 certified and 9.0 classified FTE positions compared to the prior year. These adjustments, primarily affecting instructional, coaching, and hearing services are driven by enrollment projections and increased operational efficiencies. While specific related service allocations were moderated to match actual utilization, one administrative position was added to support expanding operations. Mrs. Palese noted that these figures remain subject to change based on final student placements and a projected enrollment. Current enrollment is projected at 312 students, representing an increase from the 299 students projected in the Spring of 2025.

5.3 Transition Program Facility Needs Update

Mr. McDonald shared information regarding the Cedar Avenue facility for the Transition Program. Analysis of the Cedar Avenue facility for Mid-Valley's Transition programs reveals that while operationally attractive, the proposed Letter of Intent (LOI) presents significant long-term financial risks. Key concerns include a 3% annual rent escalation (exceeding 55% over 15 years), a Tenant Improvement (TI) allowance with high effective financing costs, and full capital responsibility for HVAC and mechanical replacements without the benefits of equity.

The Triple Net (NNN) structure, covering uncapped taxes, insurance, and unmetered utilities, further exposes the district to unpredictable operating expenses. Additionally, the 12- to 15-year commitment lacks the flexibility to adapt to future enrollment or funding shifts. Validated by legal and real estate consultants, these terms shift ownership-level risk to the tenant.

Consequently, the Board is advised to either renegotiate for more favorable terms, evaluate alternative lease properties, or explore the feasibility of a property purchase. More discussion will take place at a meeting with the districts CSBO's and will be brought to the next Board.

5.4 Preliminary FY27 Program Cost

Mr. McDonald presented an initial analysis of program costs and tuition rates for the 2026–27 school year to facilitate preliminary budgeting and strategic discussion. He noted that the comprehensive FY27 program budget remains under development, with a more exhaustive budgetary presentation scheduled for the April Board meeting.

For Action

6.1 Approval of the Personnel Report, February 2026

Dr. Rohlwing motioned, seconded by Dr. Barrett, for Approval of the Personnel Report, February 2026. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. 5-0

New Business

None

Adjournment

Motion made by Mr. Kim and seconded by Dr. Rohlwing. By consensus, the motion carried 5-0 Ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 AM

Chair of the Mid-Valley Board

The next Regular Mid-Valley Executive Advisory Board Meeting will be on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 9:00 AM at the Mid-Valley Administration Offices, 1304 Ronzheimer Avenue. St. Charles, IL 60174