

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2021

8:30 A.M. NPT Office

600 E 1st Street Pana IL 62557

CALL SPECIAL BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL at 8:30 am

Dr. Dougherty called the special board meeting to order and roll call was taken with three board members present. Board members present were Dr. Chris Dougherty, Mr. Jason Bauer and Dr. Scott Doerr. Also present was NPT Director, Kelly Suey.

Others in attendance include: Wendy Dulakis, Michael Edwards, Michelle Todd, Debbie Holthaus, Kyle Anderson, Brenda Patrick, Dee Tarter, and Sabrina Jones.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS, PUBLIC COMMENT, AND CORRESPONDENCE

Michelle Todd, Debbie Holthaus and Sabrina Jones introduced themselves to the board. Michelle Todd is the lawyer representing Taylorville School District. Debbie Holthaus has a student in the FACeS Program. Sabrina Jones is the NPT Special Education Cooperative Program Coordinator.

OLD BUSINESS

Discuss and Act on List of Expectations for the FACeS/CBI Program at Taylorville.

Mrs. Suey stated that back in April we presented a list of expectations at our regular board meeting. We had a discussion and weren't able to come to an agreement. Mrs. Suey noted that Dr. Dougherty had mentioned a few things that she didn't feel like Taylorville would be able to fulfill. So in the meantime, some of these were tweaked a little bit and adjusted. The revised expectations were to be presented at the May board meeting, Dr. Dougherty was unable to be here. So we thought it would be best to remeet so we could all sit at the table and review these expectations. Mrs. Suey asked the board if she would like her to read the list of expectations.

Dr. Dougherty asked which of the expectations are different?

Mrs. Suey replied that bullet number three was added "Taylorville will be in charge of evaluating faculty and staff." The last bullet point, "teachers will communicate regularly with parents on any changes made to the program, curricular needs or procedures and instruction. Teachers will also follow empty guidelines if remote learning becomes necessary" was also added.

Mrs. Suey stated that the purpose of this is just to have a discussion on whether Taylorville feels like they can meet these expectations and then act on it.

Dr. Dougherty stated to bring everybody back to where we were when this co-op was formed, there was not decentralization of staff, so staff belong to the co-op. Since that has happened, Taylorville has now hired the teachers and the paraprofessionals in the program. And therefore, the list of things is external to the management of what goes on with your staff in a building.

Mrs. Suey asked Dr. Dougherty if she feels like the list of expectations is something that Taylorville will be able to, or allowed to happen, Dr. Dougherty stated that she still does not. Mrs. Suey asked if there is one particular thing or the entire list. Dr. Dougherty stated that the promise of the co-op owning the program in a district and having external control over it is contrary to a district with staff running a program.

Dr. Doerr asked Mrs. Suey what the joint agreement says about the FACES/CBI program. Mrs. Suey read 12.3 from the Joint Agreement. "NPT Special Education Cooperative, as approved in its original Comprehensive Plan, provides for many programs and services. In addition, the NPT Special Education Cooperative owns and operates the FACES and CBI programs for all Member Districts to utilize. Member Districts shall not create their own programs related to the FACES and CBI program unless approved by the executive board."

Mr. Bauer clarified that the joint agreement states that the FACES the CBI programs are a special education cooperative program. However, as Dr. Dougherty alluded to, the teachers and paraprofessionals are employees of Taylorville Unit #3 School. Mrs. Suey said that he is correct. Mr. Bauer did state that the program itself is an NPT special ed cooperative program,

Mrs. Suey stated that "It (the joint agreement) says it owns and operates the FACES and CBI programs for all Member Districts to utilize."

Mr. Bauer stated that they (Pana) are paying for that service to the school district. Mrs. Suey replied, correct. Mrs. Suey stated that each district reimburses Taylorville for their portion of salary and benefits for the staff.

Dr. Dougherty reminded everyone how many students each district sent to the program. She asked Mr. Bauer how many students he sent this year. Mr. Bauer replied that he didn't think it matters the number of students that we send to special education classes. Dr. Dougherty asked if it was seven, and then stated that to Dr. Doerr that he sent three and pulled a few back. And Taylorville had a couple of dozen. Mrs. Suey stated it was approximately one dozen. Dr. Dougherty thinks that's relevant.

Mr. Bauer stated that he thinks it's relevant that it's a special education cooperative program, spelled specifically a joint agreement. Mr. Bauer stated that he guesses his question would be then, so that we're not here for five hours today is; What on this list in Taylorville's estimation is not doable.

Dr. Dougherty stated that she would defer that to Michelle. Mr. Bauer stated that he didn't ask Michelle, he asked her (Dr. Dougherty). Dr. Dougherty stated that she is going to defer that to Michelle. She's here to speak on behalf of the district.

Michelle thanked Mr. Bauer. She stated she spoke to our legal council about speaking on behalf of Taylorville. Michelle continued by explaining the difficulties here on the list of expectations with the programming and the staff to sign off on a document like this that is relatively vague and the expectations will make it difficult in the future if we get to disagreements about whether Taylorville is meeting the expectations and not meeting the expectations. She continued by saying that the dynamic we have here with it being an NPT program staffed by Taylorville employees, how we can meet several of these expectations with those folks being our staff members, subject to our collective bargaining agreement, subject to evaluations by our staff. So Michelle thinks that definitely answers the concerns the district has with signing off on this document.

Mr. Bauer stated that based on the collective bargaining we're not asking for anything that's outside of the Taylorville bargaining contract. The hours in that contract will be filled by the Taylorville employees and obviously they'll be evaluating all of their staff and covering payroll. So Mr. Bauer is not quite sure where that really enters the fray into this general document that really is just an overview of expectations that the cooperative would have of the program in terms of just being able to have access to it, because, again, it is regardless of what everybody thinks, it's a special education cooperative program that's outlined in a joint agreement that has been approved by many entities, including the state board of Education.

Dr. Doerr stated that he thinks the expectations are reasonable, as noted in our conversations with legal counsel last night and those conversations with Taylorville counsel. Dr. Doerr stated that this is a program that we have ran now for two years and unfortunately has not gone as expected because of whatever reasons. Regardless of students in attendance, Dr. Doerr still believes this is a program that should be ran by the director and the executive board as outlined in our joint agreement and our comprehensive plan that was so approved by the Regional Board of Trustees and the State Board of Education. Dr. Doerr doesn't think these are unreasonable expectations, to say that we should have the right to curriculum. Dr. Doerr continued to say that based on the feedback we received from Summer School or the Workforce Program that was conducted this month from all parents, including Taylorville parents, it was it was very well ran and the curriculum was well planned out and and met the expectations of students needs and goals and within their IEPs, Dr. Doerr stated that he thinks we can continue to still do that with the oversight of the NPT administration running the curriculum in the program as the board sees fit or the board has approved. And therefore, Dr. Doerr is ready to move forward with this and and that he also agrees with these expectations and let's move on and create a cohesive program that benefits the needs of all students that are within the program.

Mr. Bauer stated that he is in a position to speak on Pana's behalf. Pana's expectation is for our students, regardless if it's one or two or four or seven, is that this program is a program that we can send our students to and their needs will be met and their goals and their IEPs will be met and services will be delivered in a professional sound manner and our families will be communicated with during the process, just like any other child that attends in the school. And our stance will be that if this program is not meeting their needs or if there's issues with it, Pana will pursue legal action against Taylorville Unit #3 for not fulfilling the needs of their students. Mr. Bauer continued to say that Pana is tired of the B.S. at this particular point in time, because, again, this is about all students and we do have to look out for our students that are involved in this program. So with that being said, I don't see anything in this document that is unreasonable. Taylorville still controls their employees. Mr. Bauer stated that Taylorville still evaluates their employees and their employees still report to whoever their supervisor is in their particular building. Mr. Bauer stated that we ask that there's collaboration between them and the program that is specified in the joint agreement. So with that being said, Mr. Bauer made a motion that we would approve the expectations for the 21/22 school year for the FACES and CBI.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE 21/22 SCHOOL YEAR FOR THE FACES AND CBI PROGRAM.

Motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Dr. Doerr to approve the expectations for the 21/22 school year for the FACES and CBI program. Roll Call Vote: Dougherty-NO, Doerr,-YEA, Bauer-YEA. Motion passed 2-1.

Dr. Dougherty wanted to go on record to say that Taylorville has no say. Taylorville has no vote. It's two districts aligned with a coop leader against the biggest district, and there's no say, there's no vote, there's no say.

B. Discuss an act on the transfer and location of the CBI program from Taylorville to a different location starting July 1st.

Mrs. Suey stated that this is a moot point now that we know that it was approved for the expectations.

Mr. Bauer asked to speak on Item B. He stated that at this point in time we have students who have become accustomed to a routine of where they attend school. We had families who have become accustomed to the routine of where their children attend school. And regardless of how this meeting ends today or how it goes, the number one thing he has to take into consideration when looking at this item on the agenda is, if we were to change the location, how is that going to impact kids and how is that going to impact families? At this point in time Mr. Bauer is not in favor of changing the location of the program from Taylorville to a different location. He is in favor of making this program, which is an NPT special ed program, regardless of what anybody says or thinks about this, of doing our due diligence to make this work the school year. So Mr. Bauer is not in favor of transferring the location.

Dr. Doerr stated that he is willing to suspend items B at this time, to see how the school year goes with the expectations that were previously approved by a constitutional majority of this board. Dr. Doerr noted that he will speak with his board as well in regards to Mr. Bauer's comments about litigation, if these expectations are not met through either individual or through the co-op. Dr. Doerr stated that there has to be some kind of shared vision for this program that meets the needs of all students K through 12 and beyond. And collaboration between the school district and the special ed co-op, which is a legally binding entity, and we will move forward as planned. Hopefully things will work out.

Mrs. Suey stated that if the board is not making a motion not to move the program, she will need to hire a speech language pathologist to meet the student's needs in the FACES program because Taylorville has hired their own SLP's this year. Mrs. Suey will post a two day a week position so we can make sure we meet our students' needs. Dr. Doerr stated that sounds good.

Dr. Dougherty asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOVE TO ADJOURN AT 8:47 a.m.

Mr. Bauer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Doerr seconded the motion. . Motion passed by a voice vote.

Dr. Dougherty, Chairperson

Dr. Scott Doerr, Secretary