

Becker is a member of the Sherburne Northern Wright Special Education Cooperative along with Big Lake, Monticello, and St. Michael-Albertville. The Coop provides special education related services to the districts including Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinators, Assistive Technology Consultants, Audiologists, Autism Consultant, Home Based Teachers, Speech Clinicians, Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, and School Psychologists.

The Coop has operated as a “Host” configured entity since its inception. Under this arrangement, Monticello School District has served as the financial host. Coop employee contracts are held and administered by the Monticello School District. The Monticello School Board has served as the governing body, acting on recommendations from the Coop’s superintendents. Administrative costs incurred by Monticello are distributed among the member districts so that Monticello is held harmless.

MDE is requiring that all Host configured Coops transition to operate under a Joint Powers Agreement. Under this arrangement the governance authority will be a Joint Powers Board comprised of the superintendent from each district. The Joint Powers Board will oversee the operations of the Coop. Monticello will continue to administer the employee contracts and serve as our fiscal host.

The transition to a Joint Powers SPED Coop will have no impact on the services provided to the member districts, the Coop employees, or the operation of the Coop. An independent audit may be required, which would increase expenses. However, a Joint Powers Coop would have the ability to appeal tuition bills, which could decrease expenses. So, the transition should be cost neutral. The transition to a Joint Powers SPED Coop requires school board approval from each of the four participating school districts.

I recommend approving the Joint Powers Agreement.