



MEEKER AND WRIGHT SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE
Board Meeting - Joint Powers Board #0938
Tuesday, June 25, 2024 - 6:00 pm
Sholund School for Girls, Annandale, MN
Meeting Minutes - *Unofficial*

Present: *Gena Jacobson, Amy Johnson, Jessica Johnson, Cindy Miller, Julie Rae Pennertz, Kelsey Puncochar*

Absent: *Colleen Carlson*

Others Present: *Melissa Hanson, Caren Heltne, Heidi Hennen, Jennifer Janikula, Jessica Shogren-Carlson, Emily Schneider*

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at 5:59 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda without changes was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Jessica Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Tour of Sholund Alternative Program

Caren Heltne, Jennifer Janikula, and Jessica Shogren-Carlson provided a tour and overview of the program.

V. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Jessica Johnson and seconded by Julie Rae Pennertz. The board unanimously approved the consent agenda which included:

- Minutes of Previous Board Meeting
- Bills for Payment and other financial reports as attached
- Personnel Items

- *Employment of the following staff:*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Mary Carlson	1.0 FTE Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing	August 26, 2024
Laura Skouge	1.0 FTE Paraprofessional:	August 26, 2024



	Cornerstones	
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- *Recognition of Tenure:*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Olivia Engel	Special Education Teacher
Danielle Gehrman	School Psychologist
Ashley Gruber	Special Education Teacher
Brittney Hjelmeland	School Psychologist
Jennifer Janikula	Special Education Teacher
Vincent Pokornowski	DAPE Teacher
Susan Sickler	School Psychologist
Amy Stienessen	Classroom Systems Consultant

VI. Reports

Executive Director Report

General Updates

The school year ended with an annual All-Staff Spring Inservice to celebrate a successful school year. Award recipients were honored and employees participated in the Wellness event, “Let’s Move MAWSECO”. Employees heard from keynote speaker, Luke Soderling about the power of a good and thankful attitude and the power of perception.

Percentage of students identified as needing IDEA services increased by half a percentage point (14.7% to 15.2%) from the 2021-22 school year to the 2022-23 school year which represents the largest increase in decades. MAWSECO districts’ longitudinal Child Count Data also shows an increase of 1.1% in the average percentage of special education students over the past five years. While the overall total student population within our seven member districts has decreased by 187 students from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024, the number of students receiving special education services within our districts has increased by 68 students in that same time period.

Staffing & Personnel



Cooperative staffing changes that have occurred in the past three years to address needs within MAWSECO and member districts were discussed with the Executive Advisory Committee and board. While there was an increase in the number of MAWSECO employees, the overall costs of cooperative services to members has not increased substantially. The Director of Business Services met with member districts' business managers to review the financial data.

Other Information Impacting Special Education

Specific learning disability criteria changes are coming. 2023 Legislative action to work toward removing the use of the discrepancy model. The new criteria will focus on lack of anticipated progress from instruction and relies heavily on the district's MTSS process/data.

Prior to the 2023 legislations, under MN state law, school districts had ended instruction for special education students on July 1 following their 21st birthday. Federal law is clear, these students are entitled to services through their 22nd birthday. As a result of the judge's decision regarding Class Action Lawsuit, certain students may be entitled to compensatory education services. MDE is providing notice to students/parents.

Parochial Schools in the area are hiring special education teachers. Special education is the responsibility of the public school under IDEA.

Director of Business Services Report

Meeker & Wright Special Education Cooperative is a School Finance Award Recipient for 2023 Financial Reporting

Meeker & Wright Special Education Cooperative was one of 380 districts who met the qualifying criteria to receive the 2024 School Finance Award. It is awarded annually by the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of School Finance, to recognize schools for meeting statutory deadlines for submission of audited fiscal financial data and reporting criteria.

FY25 Title Funds

There is an allocation of \$14,209.17 in Litchfield district's Title I Part A Neglected fund for the Wings program which will be used to offset the expense of the second teacher for this program.

There is an allocation of \$61,000 in Annandale district's Title I Part D fund for the Sholund program.

There is an allocation of \$102,390.09 in Dassel Cokato district's Title I Part D fund for the Village Ranch program which is an additional \$35,435.38 above last year's allocation.



MDE update for Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals in FY25

There was a detailed update given with regard to the use of special education funding and an exemption made for FY25 only for paraprofessionals hired in FY24 who do not yet meet the definition of highly qualified.

Paraprofessionals hired in FY25 will need to meet the definition of highly qualified prior to special education funds being used.

VII. Informational Items

A. Recognition of Board Member Years of Service

Board member, Amy Johnson, was recognized for 15 years of service on the MAWSECO board of Directors and board member, Gena Jacobson, was recognized for 5 years of service on the MAWSECO Board of Directors.

B. Executive Director Annual Evaluation Process

The annual evaluation process for the Executive Director was discussed.

VIII. Action Items

A. Old business

1. Fiscal Year FY25 Preliminary Budget [Second Reading]

Motion to approve the FY25 Preliminary Budget was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Julie Rae Pennertz. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Revised 2024 Summer Services Budget

Motion to approve 2024 Revised Summer Services Budget was made by Jessica Johnson and seconded by Cindy Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

B. New Business

1. 2024-2025 MAWSECO Program Calendar Revisions

A motion to approve the 2024-2025 MAWSECO Program calendar revisions was made by Jessica Johnson and seconded by Gena Jacobson. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Collective Bargaining Agreement between MSEA and Meeker and Wright Special Education Cooperative



Meeting Date:
Tuesday, June 25, 2024

A motion to approve the 2024-2026 Collective bargaining Agreement with MSEA-MAWSECO was made by Julie Rae Pennertz and seconded by Cindy Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

IX. Future Board Meetings

- A. July 30, 2024, 6:00 p.m. MAWSECO Education Center, Howard Lake
- B. August 27, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Wright Technical Center (Cornerstones and Eastern Wright Programs), Buffalo
- C. September 24, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Wings Alternative Program, Litchfield

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

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