

NSSEO Update-April 2025 Member District Governing Board Representative Report

New Principal for Kirk Campus

NSSEO is pleased to announce the appointment of Jen Browning as the next principal of Kirk School, effective for the 2025-2026 school year.

Ms. Browning brings a wealth of experience within the Kirk community, having previously served as a classroom aide, classroom teacher for seven years, and assistant principal for one year. Most recently, she spent four years as the assistant principal at Grove Junior High in CCSD 59.

Her selection followed a comprehensive interview process that included an online screener of candidates, followed by a three-team interview process with staff from multiple categories, parents, administrators, and administrative representatives from Districts 211 and 214. Final candidates also participated in a half-day tour of Kirk School and an interview with Dr. Schnoor and Governing Board President, Robert Rognstad.

NSSEO is confident that Ms. Browning's deep understanding of Kirk School and her proven leadership will ensure its continued success.

Strategic Plan-Governance Priority

An overarching priority of the Strategic Planning meetings at NSSEO, was to review the overall Governance Structure, and identify ways that transparency and communication along with a structure for increased collaboration between superintendents of member district superintendents and NSSEO could be achieved. The process has included a study of other special education cooperatives, a comparative analysis of the articles of agreement of NSSEO and other special education cooperatives, consultation with superintendents of member districts belonging to other special education cooperatives, and consultation with legal counsel regarding the current NSSEO Articles of Organization.

On March 31st, the NSSEO Governing Board conducted a Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting to discuss this specific topic. The consideration of an Operational Board composed of member district superintendents and the NSSEO superintendent as a 'board committee' (subject to the confines Open Meetings Act) was a consideration, as was the movement of some of the duties of the Governing Board to the Operational Board. While this is how some area special education cooperatives function, the **identified need** for increased collaboration among superintendents, to better inform decisions made by home boards with regard to NSSEO, does not require this level of formality. Through consultation with legal counsel, it has been confirmed that there is nothing in the current NSSEO Articles of Agreement, or OMA that prevents the superintendent of NSSEO from convening an administrative meeting of member district superintendents, to both inform them of the needs of NSSEO which they can then discuss with their boards, and for NSSEO to receive feedback from member districts regarding their needs.

The superintendent administrative meeting, which will be named the NSSEO Superintendent's Council, is planned to occur approximately ten times (most months of the year) during the 25-26 school year. The Governing Board Meetings which currently take place eleven times per year 'may' be reduced from a monthly meeting to afford superintendents and their Governing Board representatives ample time to discuss the needs of NSSEO both before a member district board meeting, and the scheduled NSSEO Governing Board meeting at which the representative will be asked to vote the will of their board on various agenda items that govern the cooperative. The Governing Board draft calendar will be brought to the May 7th NSSEO Governing Board meeting.