

NLSEC Board Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2021, 9:00 a.m.
NLSEC Conference Room, 16 E. Hwy 61, Esko, MN 55733

Present: Barnum Superintendent, Mike McNulty; Carlton Superintendent, John Engstrom (virtual); Esko Superintendent, Aaron Fisher; Hermantown Superintendent, Wayne Whitwam; Lake Superior Superintendent, Jay Belcastro; Moose Lake Superintendent, Billie Jo Steen; Proctor Superintendent, John Engelking(virtual); Wrenshall Superintendent, Kim Belcastro; Northern Lights Special Education Director, Dena Hagen; Northern Lights Academy Asst. Sp Ed Director, Barb Mackey; Northern Lights Special Education Coop.; Business Manager, Jill Morberg; Northern Lights Special Education Administrative Assistant, Tisha Warbalow

Absent: Cromwell-Wright Superintendent, Nathan Libbon; Cloquet Superintendent, Dr. Michael Cary; McGregor Superintendent, Brad Johnson

Call to order: *The meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m.*

Welcome and Introductions: Dena introduced Katie Marciniak, Special Education Director Intern at the meeting to observe.

Approve Agenda:

Motion made by Superintendent McNulty to approve the October 1, 2021 agenda as presented. Second by Superintendent Whitwam. Motion carried.

Approve May 6, 2021 meeting minutes (Attachment A)

Motion made by Superintendent Steen to approve the May 6, 2021 Board Meeting minutes as presented. Second by Superintendent McNulty. Motion carried.

Personnel:

- New Hires
 - New Administrative Asst. Tisha Warbalow, continuing Cloquet Contract
 - New 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist, Joselyn Rhein, Lake Superior Contract
 - New Occupational Therapist, Ashley Omar, Independent Contractor
 - New .6 FTE Teacher for Blind/Visually Impaired, Haley Chopp, Purchase of Service from Northland Learning Ctr.

- Request for 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist-Registered posting to serve Willow River, Moose Lake and Barnum. (Attachment B, B1). Model Change from OTR/COTA to OTR.
 - Dena is proposing the model change from OTR/COTA to OTR.
 - There were no applicants for the COTA postings.
 - Lake Superior School District has switched to this model and they have saved money.
 - There will need to be a decision on who will hold the contract with both reasonable cost and what makes sense to the coop structure in mind.

Motion made by Superintendent Engstrom to approve the posting of an 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist under the new model. Second by Superintendent John Engelking. Motion carried.

- Shared Coop Group Picture
 - Dena shared the NLSEC staff photo to show who is all involved to make NLSEC a success.

Fiscal:

- Approve FY22 Working Budget (Attachment C)
 - Dena and Jill reviewed with the board.
 - The board had approved the planning budget back in the Spring of 2021.
 - There is an increase from the planning budget to the working budget in the amount of \$55,725.23 due to greater increase in salary and fringe than than projected in the planning budget.
 - There are around 2200 students amongst the 12 districts on IEPs which is more than what Duluth has and our budget is only at \$2.5 million. When Dena left the Duluth school district, their budget was around \$18 million for SpEd.
 - Superintendent Kim Belcastro, Aaron Fischer, John Engelking are all very pleased and supportive of the Coop. Thank-you to Dena for all her hard work.

Motion made by Superintendent McNulty to approve the FY22 Working Budget. Second by Superintendent Belcastro. Motion carried.

- Medical Assistance Revenue Update (Attachment D)
 - There is no update at this time due to the changing in Administrative Assistants at the NLSEC.
Update will be presented at the December regular meeting.
- CARES Provider Relief Fund - COVID-19
 - What can we spend the money on? Dena has been working with the business managers in the 12 districts on determining what they can spend it on. Business managers are hesitant to spend the money as they think they will need to pay it back.
 - All deposits have been made to the districts.
 - Districts have until December 31, 2021 to spend part of the money and the remaining money by June 30, 2022.
- Contracted Services Review (Attachment E)
 - Coop manages all of SpEd contracted services for fiscal compliance.
 - Dena presented the current list for review.
 - Presence Learning is being used throughout the districts for psychologist testing as finding a psychologist has been difficult. Superintendent Kim Belcastro is very happy with Presence Learning.
 - Retiree Jean Brandt is at both NLA and at a Charter school up the North Shore.

Director's Report: (Attachment F):

- [Parent Resource Booklet](#) - SpEd resource booklet for parents.
- [Secondary transition booklet](#) - great for high school students that are transitioning.

- [Secondary transition planning checklist](#) - transition planning for kids by age. This is not a requirement for secondary SpEd teachers to use, but a very helpful tool.
- [Annual report](#) from last year that shows highlights of all kinds of things happening at the Coop. This can be found on the NLSEC website.
- Shortages in SpEd staff
 - There are many creative happenings that have taken place for SpEd teacher shortages. Wrenshall needed an ECSE teacher so a student teacher was brought in to fill the position under the supervision of Jessica Brown.
 - In Cromwell, a general education substitute teacher has been hired on as a SpEd teacher with obtaining the correct variances from MDE.
 - Virtual speech services are being offered in Wrenshall and McGregor.
 - Districts should communicate with the parents on what is happening if staffing looks different than typical.
- Jeopardy - Special Education

Questions:

- Superintendent Steen asked if Barnum could use Moose Lake's van for transporting students? The driver would be from Barnum. Superintendent Fisher suggested checking with the insurance providers of each district.
- There is a lack of school bus drivers. Districts are hiring back retired drivers.
- There is a lack of substitute teachers and creative solutions are happening often to deal with shortages.

Future NLSEC Board Meeting Dates:

- Friday, Dec 3, 2021, 9:00 a.m. NLSEC Conference Room, 16 E. hwy 61, Esko, MN
- Friday, Apr. 30, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Adjourn