

NLSEC Board Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2021, 9:00 a.m.
NLSEC Conference Room, 16 E. Hwy 61, Esko, MN 55733

Present: Barnum Superintendent, Mike McNulty; Carlton Superintendent, John Engstrom; Esko Superintendent, Aaron Fisher; Hermantown Superintendent, Wayne Whitwam (virtual); Lake Superior Superintendent, Jay Belcastro; 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 (virtual); Northern Lights Special Education Administrative Assistant, Tisha Warbalow; Esko School Board Member, Todd Rengo (phone); Cloquet Superintendent, Dr. Michael Cary; Cromwell-Wright Superintendent, Nathan Libbon; Willow River High School Principal, Melissa Johnson

Absent: Cloquet School Board Member, Ken Scarbrough; McGregor Superintendent, Brad Johnson; Moose Lake Superintendent, Billie Jo Steen; Willow River Superintendent, Bill Peel; Barnum School Board Member, Jessica Unkelhaeuser

Call to order: *The meeting was called to order at 9:11 a.m.*

Welcome and Introductions: Willow River High School Principal Melissa Johnson is attending the meeting

in place of Superintendent Bill Peel. She is working on her Supt. license.

Approve Agenda:

Motion made by Superintendent McNulty to approve the December 3, 2021 agenda as presented. Second by Superintendent Libbon. Motion carried.

Approve October 1, 2021 meeting minutes (Attachment A)

Motion made by Superintendent Libbon to approve the October 1, 2021 Board Meeting minutes as presented. Second by Superintendent Belcastro. Motion carried.

Fiscal:

- Medical Assistance Revenue
 - The MA billing spreadsheet includes all 13 districts and lists each MA designee.
 - We are waiting on settle-up payments from the 19/20 school year. In the past six there haven't been any settle-down payments.
 - MA billing has been on hold since November due to the settle-up process.
 - Some of the school districts have MA revenue for the 21/22 school year due to claim submissions at the beginning of the school year before the billing was suspended.
 - MA revenue for the 20/21 school year is lower due to the COVID pandemic.
 - Supt. Libbon asked about the increase in Cromwell's MA revenue. There could be a student that became eligible, there is back billing or higher billers in his district.
 - Supt. Kim Belcastro stated that there are higher needs students that are being MA billed for in Wrenshall.

- Contracted Services Review

- The spreadsheet lists all special education contracts that have been created for the 21/22 school year.
- For a district to have an outside service provider, there needs to be a special education contract in place for special education fiscal compliance.
- Feedback about the outside providers that are being used:
 - * Wrenshall is using Presence Learning for speech services and Supt. Kim Belcastro stated it is not going as well as she thought it would. The speech services are being provided virtually to the students and more support is needed. Cromwell has a contracted speech therapist and will provide this information to Wrenshall. McGregor is using Speech Partners.
 - * NLSEC Districts Have both district-hired psychologists through the school and Presence Learning. At this time 6 districts are using Presence Learning.

Director's Report :

- Maintenance of Effort (MOE): Districts must spend as much special education dollars as the previous year and can not dip below. During the COVID pandemic, there have been staff reassignments, for example SpEd paraprofessionals were providing daycare that is not SpEd, but it did not affect MOE as expected.
- If NLSEC was a formal coop, MOE would be calculated as a whole but our districts calculate separately and can not support each other in this area. The NLSEC board would like to relook at becoming a formal cooperative. A separate meeting would need to be set-up for the board to meet.
- Increase in Transition Age Students 18-21 has more than doubled this year and it is not due to the pandemic.
- There has been an increase in Conciliation Conferences across NLSEC due to change in law from MDE with the Prior Written Notice's signature page. The parent/guardian has three options to choose from: 1. Consent: I agree; 2. Objection: I do not agree and I **request a conciliation conference**; 3. Objection: I do not agree and I request a meeting with the appropriate members of my child's IEP team.
- COVID-19 Recovery Service:
 - There was a law passed that says by December 1, 2021 all SpEd families will be invited for a meeting to address any concerns that may have occurred because of the pandemic. The majority of the results received from families indicated there aren't concerns, or the concerns have already been addressed.
 - Any students that need recovery services will need to be reported to MDE, who will report to the federal government.
- Staffing Shortages:
 - There is a para hire and sub shortage, but do we actually have too many paras? Teams need to look at additional adult support for students to receive the support that they need.
 - Idea: What if we offered a class on how to become a para? What is expected of a para? This would be through the community education department in your districts by Barb Mackey and Dena Hagen. The classes would be offered throughout the 13 districts but with some generalized locations.
- High Leverage Practices in Special Education
 - All special education teachers should be using these practices.
 - These are used in NLSEC training this year, including with new special education staff.

Future NLSEC Board Meeting Dates:

- Friday, February 11, 2022, 9:00 a.m. Garfield Board Room, 302 14th Street, Cloquet, MN
- Friday, May 6, 2021, 9:00 a.m. NLSEC Conference Room, 16 E. Hwy 61, Esko, MN

Adjourn:

Motion made by Superintendent McNulty to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 a.m. Second by Superintendent Cary. Motion carried.