



**MEEKER AND WRIGHT SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE**  
**Board Meeting - Joint Powers Board #0938**  
**Tuesday, February 20, 2024 - 6:00 pm**  
**Meeting Minutes - Official**

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**Present:** Amy Johnson, Jessica Johnson, Colleen Carlson, Kelsey Puncochar, Gena Jacobson, Julie Rae Pennertz

**Absent:** Cindy Miller

**Others Present:** Melissa Hanson, Heidi Hennen, Emily Schneider

**I. Call to Order**

The Regular/Organizational meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

A motion to approve the agenda with changes was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Julie Rae Pennertz. Motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Consent Agenda**

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Colleen Carlson and seconded by Kelsey Puncochar. 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
- *Resignation/Retirement of the following staff:*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Mary Carlson	Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	June 5, 2024
Patty Diers	Eastern Wright Special Education Teacher	June 5, 2024

- *Employment of the following staff:*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Sonja Brevik	1.0 FTE Social Worker Cornerstones/Eastern Wright	March 4, 2024



Lori Saunders	1.0 FTE Paraprofessional Cornerstones	February 1, 2024
Alexis Waldin	1.0 FTE Behavior Analyst	January 30, 2024
Nathan Woodford	1.0 FTE Program Administrator Cornerstones/Eastern Wright	July 1, 2024

- *Reinstatement:*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Allison Johnson	Language Facilitator Trek	February 1, 2024

- *Lane Change:*

Paige Vetch, Occupational Therapist, moving from BA+40/MA to BA+70/MA+30, Effective August 28, 2023

**V. Acknowledgement - School Board Recognition Month**

Melissa Hanson, Executive Director, formally acknowledged School Board Recognition Month and expressed MAWSECO’s sincere gratitude to our board members for the important role they play within the organization and for the commitment they demonstrate in making decisions that have a tremendous impact on the education of the students MAWSECO serves.

**VI. Reports**

***Executive Director Report***

*General Updates*

The MDE has communicated that staff will be scheduling site visits to all schools and programs receiving Title One funds in MN.

MAWSECO’s Director of Technology and Administrative Cabinet have been discussing and reviewing the measures and steps necessary to increase security. The costs associated with implementation of these items will be included in the FY25 budget plan.

*Staffing and Personnel Requirements*

The MDE has provided a PELSB Competency Grid that can be completed for each staff member who has the appropriate training and experience as a new option for districts to



demonstrate that their special education paraprofessionals with three or more years of experience meet the personnel requirements.

MAWSECO will be participating in a Virtual Job Fair on February 21st in an effort to recruit applicants for our job vacancies.

*READ Act:*

Admin has continued to plan for implementation of the Professional Development requirements under the READ Act by July 1, 2024. The training will require approximately 50 hours of professional development for each staff member required to participate under the law.

*MAWSECO Legislative Advocacy*

MN Advocacy: Melissa will be attending the MASE Day at the Capitol on February 27, 2024 to meet with our state legislators regarding the needs of special education.

Federal Advocacy: Melissa will be traveling to Washington D.C. on February 28-March 1, 2024 to meet with our MN Congressmen regarding educational needs and priorities. This is a joint advocacy trip with MASA and MASE leaders that will be covered by MASE due to Melissa's role as MASE President.

*Jessica Johnson arrived at 6:27 pm.*

***Director of Business Services Report***

*Update on status of Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals*

As of February 9th, all MAWSECO special education and Title I paraprofessionals have met the definition of highly qualified and therefore all services provided are eligible to be reimbursed. The MDE is expected to begin monitoring for compliance in FY 25.

*Virtual Job Fair*

Elizabeth Sullivan, HR Coordinator, has done a great job of preparing and setting up for a virtual job fair on February 21st in which she and other administrators will be participating in an effort to try some new things in the area of recruitment.

*Resource Training Worksite Wellness Grant*

A grant in the amount of \$3,200 was received from Resource Training and Solutions as part of a worksite wellness program. The Wellness Committee has decided to use this grant towards a subscription for the Calm App that all MAWSECO employees and their



dependents 16+ are able to use. The subscription will be available starting February 29th. The Calm app is the #1 mental health app designed to help individuals manage stress, sleep better, and live a happier, healthier life through tools to help you build life-changing habits to support your mental health.

### ***Program Administrator Report***

#### *DAPE*

DAPE Networking has continued and has brought information out to all districts as they participate. Vinne Pokornowski has been working with St. Cloud State University to get some of the sport wheelchairs for student use for wheelchair basketball. These will be at the Ed Center but will also have the opportunity to go to the districts. Updated equipment has been arriving and has given students opportunities to try new activities.

#### *Journeys*

Students built and launched rockets in January due to the warm weather. It was great to see the excitement of the students when their rockets were launched.

There have been students transitioning from Journeys to their resident districts as well as some new students to Journeys. We continue to look for one more paraprofessional to become fully staffed for the students we currently serve.

#### *STEP*

Students are now able to sign up for some activities, inside and out, that meet their different interests. Students continue to run the “coffee shop” in the staff lounge two days a week. They are really refining their skill and making progress. During their most recent trip, the students were able to practice ordering lunch in the food court and split up and shop in the different areas according to their interests at the Ridgedale Mall.

#### *Trek*

Students enjoyed watching the rocket launch again. Each student did research on different penguins and completed a poster with pictures and facts that are posted on their bulletin board. We are hopeful that we will be able to fill the open paraprofessional positions soon.

#### *Cornerstones and Eastern Wright*

Enrollment continues to increase and we have completed a few intake meetings over the past couple of weeks. We are fully staffed within both of the programs and staff are getting trained in and acclimated to all of the students and the processes.



We were able to fill our newly posted school social worker position with Sonja Brevik who comes to us with a wealth of experience in a different setting IV program as well as working with Child Protective Services. We look forward to working with her. Staff continue to look for ways to effectively meet the needs of all students.

## **VII. Action Items**

### **A. New Business**

#### **1. Resolution Accepting Donations**

A motion to approve the Resolution Accepting Donation from Mightycause/ GiveMN of \$20.00 was made by Kelsey Puncochar and seconded by Gena Jacobson. Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Colleen Carlson, Gena Jacobson, Amy Johnson, Jessica Johnson, Julie Rae Pennertz, Kelsy Puncochar

Nays: None

Absent: Cindy Miller

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **2. Resolution Reducing and Discontinuing Educational Programs and Positions**

A motion to approve the Resolution Reducing and Discontinuing Educational Programs and Positions was made by Colleen Carlson and seconded by Julie Rae Pennertz. Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Colleen Carlson, Gena Jacobson, Amy Johnson, Jessica Johnson, Julie Rae Pennertz, Kelsey Puncochar

Nays: None

Absent: Cindy Miller

Motion carried unanimously.

## **VIII. Future Board Meetings**

**A.** March 26, 2024, 6:00 p.m., MAWSECO Ed Center, Howard Lake

**B.** April 23, 2024, 6:00 p.m., MAWSECO Ed Center, Howard Lake

**C.** May 28, 2024, 6:00 p.m., MAWSECO Ed Center, Howard Lake

## **IX. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

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