



MEEKER AND WRIGHT SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE
Board Meeting - Joint Powers Board #0938
Tuesday, August 26, 2025 - 5:00 pm
Meeting Minutes - Official

Present: Sarah Baker, Alex Carlson, Gena Jacobson, Jessica Johnson, Cindy Miller,
Kelsey Puncochar, Jen Rasset

Absent:

Others Present: Melissa Hanson, Kim Geurts, Emily Schneider, Colleen Carlson

I. Call to Order/Board Roll Call

The Regular meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

A roll call was conducted.:

Sarah Baker: Absent

Alex Carlson: Absent

Gena Jacobson: Present

Jessica Johnson: Present

Cindy Miller: Absent

Kelsey Puncochar: Present

Jen Rasset: Present

A quorum of four board members was established.

The following board members later arrived after the meeting was called to order:

Cindy Miller: Present (5:06pm)

Sarah Baker: Present (5:10pm)

Alex Carlson: Present (5:14pm)

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Jen Rasset. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Kelsey Puncochar and seconded by Jen Rasset. The board unanimously approved the consent agenda which included:

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



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■ Personnel Items

<i>Retirements/Resignations/Terminations</i>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Laura Affeldt	Resignation 1.0 FTE Paraprofessional, STEP	August 20, 2025
Emily Schneider	Termination 1.0 FTE Executive Assistant	September 12, 2025
Maddison Strang	Resignation On-Call Speech/Language Pathologist	August 8, 2025

<i>Employment of the following staff:</i>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Martin Aberle	Short Call Teacher Substitute	September 2, 2025
Jake Burmis	1.0 FTE Paraprofessional, STEP	August 27, 2025
April McGee	On-Call Speech/Language Pathologist	July 1, 2025- July 30, 2026
Amber Polzin	1.0 FTE Paraprofessional, Eastern Wright	August 28, 2025
Michelle Ryder	1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher, Eastern Wright	August 28, 2025
Sara Schwehr	1.0 FTE Administrative Assistant, Ed Center Programs	August 28, 2025
Caitlin Snow	On-Call Speech/Language Pathologist	July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026



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Cheryl Ulik	1.0 FTE Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specialist	August 5, 2025
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<i>Contract Changes/Approvals/Position Changes</i>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Michael Belland	Rescission of Employment offer: 1.0 Paraprofessional Eastern Wright	August 7, 2025
Michelle Montgomery	1.0 FTE Administrative Support Specialist to 1.0 FTE Accounts Payable/Receivable and MARSS Coordinator	September 1, 2025

<i>BOSA Administrative Variance</i>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Laura Holmquist	BOSA Administrative Variance K-12 Principal 1.0 FTE Program Administrator Village Ranch	2025-2026

Cindy Miller arrived at 5:06pm.

V. Reports

Executive Director Report

General Information

MAWSECO is excited to welcome staff and students back to school. New Employee Orientation was held on August 11th, where new staff met their mentors and learned about the cooperative. The Teacher Development and Evaluation (TD&E) Plan was also updated to include a rubric for the Speech-Language Pathologist position and incorporate Culturally Responsive Methodologies.



Professional Development Highlights

MAWSECO opened the 2025-2026 school year with the All-Staff Inservice on August 25th, featuring keynote speaker Ann Vote, who presented “Align Your Beliefs: Intentional Choices Bring Exponential Impact.” Earlier in the month, new special education teachers from MAWSECO and member districts participated in training sessions on August 14th and 18th. Those who are new to the field will continue in a year-long cohort with monthly virtual sessions led by the special education leadership team. This year, two new teachers will complete the required READ Act training through a partnership with the Maple Lake District’s CORE OL-LA cohort. In addition, MAWSECO’s new Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specialist will complete a “Train the Trainer” course in October to provide the required 8-hour READ Act training for paraprofessionals in-house.

Executive Director Annual Goals

The 2025-2026 Executive Director Annual Goals have been developed in collaboration with the MAWSECO Board Chair.

Sarah Baker arrived at 5:14pm.

Director of Finance Report

Michelle Montgomery will transition to her new role as AP/AR and MARSS Coordinator on September 2, 2025. The negotiations meeting, originally scheduled for this period, was postponed due to multiple scheduling conflicts and will not be rescheduled. The next negotiations meeting is planned for September 30, 2025. The FY2024-25 Federal Allocation payouts are scheduled to be made to Member Districts by early October, following the completion of the final MEGS federal draw. All Member Districts have submitted payment for the 90% prebilling of the FY2026 purchased service billing. As a result, cash flow remains positive, and the organization was able to pay off its loan ahead of schedule. A meeting with auditors is September 4, 2025, for the initial FY2024-25 year-end and audit planning.

Summary of Executive Director Evaluation from July 22, 2025 Meeting Closed Session

Summary for Open Meeting

At the July 22, 2025 MAWSECO Joint Powers Board meeting, the Board held a closed session to evaluate the performance of Executive Director Melissa Hanson, as permitted under Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.05, Subdivision 3(a). This statute requires that the public body summarize its conclusions regarding such an evaluation at the next open



meeting.

In summary, the board would like to share: Melissa Hanson continues to serve as an exceptional leader for MAWSECO, demonstrating commitment, strategic foresight, and a strong moral compass. Her depth of knowledge in special education policy, professionalism, and ability to navigate complex challenges have positioned MAWSECO as a forward-thinking, student-centered organization. She is widely regarded as an intelligent, ethical, and driven leader whose impact has been substantial. As MAWSECO continues to grow and respond to evolving needs, Melissa's leadership will remain a valuable asset to the cooperative and its member district.

VI. Action Items

A. New Business

1. 2025-2026 MAWSECO Programs Student Handbook

A motion to approve the 2025-2026 MAWSECO Programs Student Handbook was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Sarah Baker. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. Future Board Meetings

- A. September 23, 2025, 5:30 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Wright Technical Center, Buffalo, MN
- B. October 28, 2025, 5:30 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, Village Ranch Alternative Program, Cokato, MN
- C. November 25, 2025, 5:30 p.m., Regular Board Meeting, MAWSECO Ed. Center, Howard Lake, MN

VIII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:46 p.m. was made by Gena Jacobson and seconded by Sarah Baker. Motion carried unanimously.

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