MID-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Regular Board Meeting
Official Minutes
March 19, 2025

PROCEDURAL BUSINESS
Chairperson, Mr. Chris Clark at 9:09 a.m., called the meeting of the Mid-State Special Education Executive Committee to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT
South Fork: Mr. Chris Clark; Mulberry Grove: Ms. Casie Bowman; Panhandle: Mr. Aaron Hopper; Brownstown: Mr. David Lund; Litchfield: Dr. Kelly McClain; St. Elmo: Mr. Travis Portz; Hillsboro: Mr. David Powell; Ramsey: Ms. Melissa Ritter; Carlinville: Dr. Becky Schuchman

MEMBERS ABSENT
Vandalia: Dr. Jennifer Garrison; Edinburg: Ms. Ashley Francis; Morrisonville: Mr. Patrick Murphy; Bond: Dr. Wes Olson

OTHERS PRESENT
Ms. Bobbi Fisher, Director; Ms. Liz Holcomb, Business Manager; Ms. Ingrid Watkins, Executive Secretary

CONSENT AGENDA
The following were presented as part of the Consent Agenda for approval:

- Approval of minutes from the February 10, 2025 meeting.
- Approval of Destruction of Executive Session Audio Recordings older than 18 months- none
- The FY25 Balance Sheet and Receipts vs. Expenditures reflects the February fund balance of $2,586,566.71, which includes receipts of $290,511.28 and expenditures of $504,874.37. FY25 revenue is being received as expected. For March, the projected revenue amount is $241,123.60, which does not include the Final Cost Billing assessment. MSSE projected expenses are in the amount of $471,771.96. The resulting March 31st fund balance is projected at $2,355,918.35.
- Accounts Payable Review, Approval, and Order for Immediate Payment of March 19th bills in the amount of $162,392.92. Expenses include routine bills, EBF flow-through to districts, professional development, materials/assessments/mileage, legal, and contractual therapies.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Ms. Ritter to approve the Consent Agenda. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
There was no unfinished business.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATION
Mrs. Fisher reported that Amy Knodle and she attended the conference last month in Champaign. They attended various breakout sessions and shared those resources and knowledge with the whole Leadership team in early March. The highlight, as usual, was the attorney panel that spoke on the use of AI, the 504 regs, LRE Reminders, and Residential placement. Mrs. Fisher also report that the administration group heard updates from the BCBA and vision/hearing teachers. Michaela and Chloe reported that they arranged for students with hearing impairments to attend a swim social in Hillsboro. This is funded through a grant that they apply for each year. Students from 6 districts attended. April Wilson reported that she will have 4 students graduating this year and they are all set up with DRS and that their college is set up to be paid for. She is also working on arranging a bowling social with surrounding VI teachers. Emma reported that she has received 17 referrals this semester and that she is working on 5 FBAs and is assisting with many new preschoolers. She is also planning an FBA training for staff next month. The administration team also started preparing for Extended School Year, the 4th quarter team meeting agenda, summer roll over data clean-up, and much more.

Mrs. Fishers provided the following updates. In regards to the final December 1st IDEA Child Count, thank you to Ingrid, Shera, and Kristy that made sure all districts were error free on February 26th when the count window closed. I-Star was locked until March 5th. Ingrid sent an email asking the districts to certify the count by March 28th. Nine of the 13 districts have verified so far. The IDEA Grant is projected to be open in April. Funding should be similar from last year, but the following areas are unknown for allocation amounts; increased funding in special education multilingual students, incarcerated youth with disabilities, surrogate parent financial support, and complain resolution/mediation. The Program Coordinators have started scheduling the RTO Reduction meetings, to prepare the reduction plan, which will be due by July 1. There has not been a new template released yet. Mrs. Fisher will notify the districts when it is published. There are still some Statement of Economic Interest Forms that need to be completed. Ingrid will be providing the forms today to anyone that still needs to complete their form. Kassandra Charles is expecting in late April. She is requesting the remainder of the year and six weeks into next school year. Mrs. Fisher has been working with Meg Marquardt to fill that role next year.

Mrs. Fisher regarding the Special Education Bills to watch out for provided the following updates.

- SB1231- extends the 5 days to respond to a request for an IEE to 14 days. This has passed out of committee.
- SB1943- expands on definitions of ITO, TO, PR, and TO, removes exceptions to prohibiting prone restraint, changes the notification process of an RTO event, changes the complaint procedures, and alters training requirements.
- SB3606- Public Separate Special Education School- anticipated to be passed. MSSE is not anticipating any of the shared programs to apply, as the winter IAASE conference confirmed that all programs must be in a separate building and may not be in or connected to other school buildings. Mr. Hopper shared that in meetings he has attended; Matt Seaton at ISBE has indicated that it does not need to be a separate building. Mrs. Fisher said she will look into the conflicting information.
- HB1165- Would allow a school district to place a student in a nonpublic facility not approved by ISBE under some circumstances. This also means ISBE guidelines and procedures are not expected to be followed. This could open districts to liability.
- HB1366- would add additional information to the Notice of Conference stating that parents have the right to have an advocate present and can ask for an IEP facilitator. This is already outlined in the Procedural Safeguards.
- HB2337- allows a settlement to reflect the option of an 18+ year old to waive FAPE. We do not anticipate this to move forward as it is not defensible against IDEA regulations.

Mrs. Fisher provided updates from the Finance committee that met prior to the Executive board meeting. In regards to the FY25 Final Cost Billing. The committee reviewed additional information that detailed that the revenue decreased by $32,724.04 and expenditures decreased by $40,665.51. The committee approved the invoicing of the final cost billing. The committee also considered the Mid-Staff Staff Raise. The average raise for member districts for FY26 was 5.32% and Bushue reported an average of 6.27%. The committee did not come to a consensus but wanted to bring the discussion to the Executive Board. The FY26 Billing Structure was discussed. There are minor changes due to the committee asking to make this document reflect current practice in regards to invoicing the districts for any Professional Development cost for MSSE staff that work for only one district. The committee also discussed policy edits of 5-210, 5-290, and 5-295 and recommended it to be presented to the Executive board today for first reading. This includes a one-time extension until June 1st for the sick leave balloon in 5-210 and 5-295 to be issued. The committee also discussed emergency sub rates for employees providing coverage for emergency meetings and for taking on evaluation cases. The rate will be $100 for attending a meeting and $400 for a full evaluation case. The last item the committee discussed was a request by a district to issue a $1,000 sign-on bonus for full-time certified staff hired in the 2025-2026 school year. The committee decided to take this to the Executive board for discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

The Executive Committee discussed the request by a district to offer $1,000 sign on bonus to certified full-time staff hired for the 2025-2026 school year. The Finance committee had recommended that if there is a sign on bonus that it be uniform among all districts, but the committee had not come to a consensus if a sign on bonus was beneficial. Mrs. Fisher noted that the Finance committee recommended it be discussed during the Executive meeting to get a better insight where all the districts stood on the matter. Several districts agreed that they did not feel sign-on bonuses helped them bring in new employees. Mr. Powell asked why the committee recommended that it be uniform among all districts. Mr. Clark explained that one reason was to ensure that new hires felt they received equal benefits. Dr. Schuchman also addressed the need to try to keep it the same across districts to prevent losing employees to other in house districts for the sign on bonus. Mr. Clark noted they did not seem to be much in favor of the sign on bonus and asked if anyone had anything positive for it. Others noted that they do have sign on bonuses for their district employees, but they did not see any positive out comes from it. They said it was for hard to fill positions, but at this time, all positions are hard to fill. They did note that it would be hard for districts that do not have sign on bonuses for district employees to give sign on bonuses to Mid-State employees. The districts that did have sign on bonuses said it's hard for them to vote against it since they have sign on bonuses but also see the other side of the argument against sign on bonuses. It was noted again that if sign on bonuses are considered, that it is important to be uniform. Since no consensus could be reached, it was decided to table the decision for now.

ACTION ITEMS

A motion made by Mr. Portz and seconded by Mr. Hopper to approve to invoice the FY25 Final Cost Billing, as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Ms. Bowman to approve the FY26 Billing Structure, as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Brownstown to approve the first reading of Policy 5-210, 5-290, and 5-295 (with a one-time extension for the sick leave balloon in 5-210 and 5-295 to be issued for this school year-June 1), all as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Ms. Ritter to approve to pay emergency sub coverage at the rate of $100/meeting and $400/full evaluation case, as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

A motion made by Mr. Lund and seconded by Ms. Ritter to tabling the sign on bonus of $1,000 for certified full-time staff hired for FY26. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:48 a.m., a motion was made by Ms. Ritter and seconded by Ms. Bowman to go into Executive session to discuss the salary increase for FY26. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay.

At 10:00 a.m., a motion was made by Mr. Powell and seconded by Dr. Schuchman to return to open session. Voice vote: Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay

ACTION ITEMS

A motion made by Mr. Hopper and seconded by Mr. Powell to approve the leave request for Kassandra Charles, as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, yes; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 9 yea, 0 nay

A motion made by Mr. Powell and seconded by Mrs. Ritter to recommend the approval of salary increase of 5% and to initiate the FY26 Budget, as presented. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Clark, yes; Ms. Bowman, yes; Mr. Hopper, yes; Mr. Lund, yes; Dr. McClain, no; Mr. Portz, yes; Mr. Powell, yes; Ms. Ritter, yes; Dr. Schuchman, yes; Motion carried 8 yea, 0 nay

DISCUSSION

Governing Board Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 26th at 6:30 p.m has been cancelled. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14 at 9:00 a.m. at the Vandalia ROE office, with the Finance Committee meeting to occur at 8:15 and Buildings/Facilities Committee meetings to occur following at 9:20. There was some discussion if the Finance committee would need to be moved to a different time and date to ensure a quorum, at this time the decision was made to keep the time and date the same.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion made by Dr. Schuchman and seconded by Mr. Hopper to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote 9 yea, 0 nay.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Bobbi Fisher, Director

Chairperson 4/14/25
Date

Secretary of the Board 4/14/25
Date