

**MISSISSIPPI BEND AREA EDUCATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Board Meeting
January 19, 2021**

The Board of Directors of the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency (MBAEA) convened its regular monthly board meeting at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and current directives from the state and federal government restricting the size of public gatherings, this meeting was held electronically.

Present on roll call: Board President Joe Adam; Via Zoom: Vice President Mike Duytschaver, Directors Kim Huckstadt, Debbie Menke, Paul Brooks.

Absent: Directors Ralph Johanson, Ken Krumwiede, Scott Saveraid, Mike Wolf.

Director Krumwiede joined the meeting at 4:01 p.m.; Director Saveraid joined the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

Also present: Chief Administrator William J. Decker, Board Treasurer Jennifer Coombes, Board Secretary Cheryl Beck, Director of Educational Services Shane Williams, Director of Special Education Kim Hofmann, Coordinator of Information Technology Randy Olsen.

Welcome, Public Forum, and Communication

Mr. Adam welcomed the board and Agency staff and Mr. Duytschaver read the MBAEA Mission Statement: *The mission of Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency is to improve teaching and learning for all students through active partnerships and assertive leadership in a climate of mutual respect.*

Consent Agenda

Mr. Adam reported that the Audit committee met on January 6, 2021.

The Bills for Payment are unusually high due to Edgenuity licensing, which the Agency will be fully reimbursed.

Mr. Adam described the process for approving payment of invoices between board meetings.

Mr. Brooks moved to approve all items in the Consent Agenda, as presented. Mr. Duytschaver seconded the motion. Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (7). Nay: (0). Motion carried.

- Approval of Minutes
- Bills for Payment
- Supplemental Contract(s)
- Contract Changes
- Grants and Contract(s)
- Audit Report

Focus of the Agency

Internal Operations/Field Reports

Ms. Hofmann provided an update on the work of the Agency's Equity Committee. One of the responsibilities of the committee is to review the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative

Action Plan, which is submitted to the Department of Education (DE) annually. The plan will be brought to the board for approval when the rewrite is finalized. Another role of the committee is to review Agency policies that pertain to equity. This has been completed and those policies will now be reviewed by the Policy Review Committee and then brought to the board for approval. The goals of the Equity Committee include actively recruiting and retaining employees from diverse backgrounds, developing internal and external professional development to integrate pedagogy that honors diversity and cultural awareness, and increase connections and involvement with community agencies that are highly engaged in equity work and learn from their success. The committee will continue to work on the goals and will annually share the progress with the board.

The Healthy Minds app was launched in December and there are just under 100 active users. This is a great opportunity for staff to be mindful of their mental health and be the best they can be. Coffee with Colleagues also continues to be offered twice a month for employees. These 15-20 minute zoom meetings are a well-being activity to ‘check in’ with staff. Board members are welcome to participate in these activities.

Mr. Williams provided an update on the Agency's continued efforts to support staff through the Covid 19 pandemic. The Agency's Human Resources staff have been working with the Scott County Health Department to get Agency staff aligned with their timeline for the rollout of vaccinations.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave (FFCRA) was terminated effective December 31, 2020. This was a benefit to employees to be able to take congressionally mandated leave without impacting their normal leave. The Agency will be extending all of the provisions of FFCRA with the exception of one. The Agency has had 175 unique circumstances related to Covid and of those, only 25 cases needed any type of FFCRA. In the majority of cases staff were able to continue providing high quality services in a remote environment and there was no loss of service.

Mr. Williams shared legislation that was recently passed in the area of literacy, and the ongoing work being led by Courtney Olsen in the area of dyslexia. AEAs will be required to employ a dyslexia specialist to provide technical guidance, professional development, strategies, and assist in the identification of dyslexia, as well as instruction for students with characteristics of dyslexia. While this component of the legislation does not go into effect for a couple of years, the training begins this year.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Coombes presented the Treasurer's Report. In addition to the monthly State Aid, the first quarter reimbursement for Title I & III and \$2,400,000 in receipts from EdGenuity billings was received in December. Approved bills totaled \$2,504,774, of which \$2,100,000 was the first payment to EdGenuity. Receipts as of December are running 1.2% higher than the three-year accumulated average, which is remaining consistent with the prior two years. Disbursements are running 3.7% less than the accumulated three-year average. Year-to-date health plan expenses are running approximately 7% lower than the prior two years. As of November, the health plan was running at 99.6% of expected costs. Districts were invoiced in December for the first semester expenses relating to the Hearing Interpreters, Partnership School, and IT support services. Mr. Krumwiede moved to approve the Treasurer's Report of receipts and disbursements to the various accounts to December 31, 2020, as presented. Mr. Huckstadt seconded the motion. Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (7). No: (0). Motion carried.

Ms. Coombes provided a preview of the FY22 Budget that will be presented at the February 16, 2021, Budget Hearing.

Chief Administrator’s Report

Mr. Olsen highlighted some of the features of RingCentral, an all encompassing cloud-based communication platform. Features include a telephone system, text messaging, a fax system, chat, calendar, and video conferencing. RingCentral is a user friendly system that will be more effective for staff and a cost savings for the Agency.

The Iowa AEA Boards Conference has been canceled for 2021. It was agreed among the chief administrators that many of the activities would be less impactful in a virtual setting.

The Policy Review Committee will begin meeting again. Due to Covid the meetings were put on hold, but will now be scheduled via zoom.

Mr. Decker shared a preview of future work on an Agency reorganization. The previous reorganization was based on the AEA Compact, which set the priorities for the nine area education agencies. The Compact is no longer the driving force. The Compact has been renewed and now focuses on student well-being, student future ready, and synergy. Mr. Decker will be working with the administrative team to create an organizational structure with more direct alignment to the Agency’s priorities, the statewide priorities established by the nine AEAs, and to DE and legislative mandates.

Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Saveraid, seconded by Mr. Brooks, the meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

Joseph N. Adam, Board President

Cheryl Beck, Board Secretary