

**MISSISSIPPI BEND AREA EDUCATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Board Meeting
July 21, 2020**

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, July 21, 2020.

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 and Directors Kim Huckstadt, Mike Wolf, Debbie Menke, Paul Brooks, Ken Krumwiede, Ralph Johanson.

Absent: Director Scott Saveraid.

Director Saveraid joined the meeting via Zoom at 4:05 p.m.

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

Welcome, Public Forum, and Communication

Mr. Adam welcomed the board, Agency staff, and guests. Mr. Adam 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. Decker provided an overview of an agreement between IP Pathways and the MBAEA. This service will provide equipment and internet access to AEA9 districts at a substantial cost savings. Support will be provided by IP Pathways, allowing MBAEA resources to go to students in other ways and result in an improved service, rather than a reduction of services. Following questions and comments of the board, Mr. Duytschaver moved to approve all items in the Consent Agenda, as presented. Mr. Krumwiede seconded the motion. Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (9). No: (0). Motion carried.

- Approval of Minutes
- Bills for Payment
- Supplemental Contract(s)
- Grants & Contracts
- Resignations/Retirements
- Professional/Classified Appointments

Focus of the Agency

Internal Operations/Field Reports

Mr. Williams provided an update on the Return to Learn Plan requirements for districts and the professional development the Agency has been offering to assist in preparing teachers.

Schools had until July 1, 2020, to submit three different plans to the Iowa Department of Education. The three components included an onsite environment with 100% of students returning to school; 100% of students in a remote environment; and a hybrid plan with some students face-to-face and some in a remote environment. The Agency helped districts in developing their plans; however, since that time, Governor Reynolds issued a proclamation which changed course for districts that were planning to go with one particular delivery model and have since had to revisit that.

The Agency has been hosting drop-in networking sessions for school leaders. There is no set agenda, participants workshop challenges and share district experiences. This has been a great opportunity for the Agency to gain input and make necessary revisions as the environment changes.

To support instructors and teachers in the field, the Agency has taken a systematic focus developing module-based learning to support district-driven learning. Districts can enter modules that are applicable to their needs. Focus areas include maximizing learning in a virtual or blended environment, scaffolding and accelerating learning to close gaps from last year, and attending to the social emotional needs of students. Agency staff will assist districts in implementing the guidance developed by the State.

The board discussed the many challenges districts are facing during this pandemic.

Mr. Williams reviewed the MBAEA Return-to-Work Guide 2020 developed by an internal work team using guidance from other AEAs, Iowa Department of Education, Department of Public Health, and the CDC. The document includes the following:

- Guiding Principles
- Overview of Phased Return to Work
- General Expectations and Guidance of All Staff During all Phases of Returning to Work: Before Arriving/Leaving at a School, Client Home, or AEA Service Center
- Specific Guidance for AEA Staff who Interact with Children
- Health and Safety Guidance
- PPE and Cleaning Information
- AEA Staff Mental Health Support and Resources

Mr. Decker shared comments expressed from another Chief Administrator on the exceptional work Mr. Williams has provided to various committees; his leadership statewide has helped to keep the conversation going and to make progress.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Coombes presented the Treasurer's Report, commenting that most years in June the Agency ends with a negative balance due to month-end transactions and completing the fiscal year. This year, however, the Agency ended with a significant positive cash balance. Some of this is due to four months of the Agency being closed and many line items expenditures being under budget, including travel expenses, utilities, and professional services. June was the last State Aid payment until mid-September when FY21 State Aid payments resume. During June, payments for Title I, Title III, and miscellaneous grants were also received. The final principal payment was made on the FY20 warrant, leaving no carryover balance into FY21. The approved bills are higher for the

month, with the majority being the remaining flow-through payments due to districts, which total close to \$1,000,000.

Mr. Decker commented that the Agency's ending balance is a reason for celebration. Going from a \$5,000,000 deficit to a 4-5% solvency ratio is the result of a lot of good work done by a lot of people. In September, Ms. Coombes will enter this information into the Certified Annual Report (CAR). That will be the receipt of the financial data to the Department of Education, which will then be forwarded to the State Board of Education, and the final step toward MBAEA returning to full accreditation.

Upon motion by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Ms. Menke, the Treasurer's Report of receipts and disbursements to the various accounts to June 30, 2020, was approved as presented. Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (9). No: (0). Motion carried.

Chief Administrator's Report

The statewide AEA system has been looking into an educational technology company called Pear Deck, which offers a web-based application for teachers to be more proficient at engaging students remotely. A price has been negotiated for Iowa school districts at 1/3 of what the normal price would be. This information is being shared with superintendents, as many families are choosing to not send their children back to the classroom.

Mr. Decker and Mr. Olsen have been working with Edgenuity, a company that provides a spectrum from remote learning that is fully run and developed by Iowa accredited teachers that are employees of Edgenuity, to providing materials that meet Iowa standards and providing that material to the teachers of a school district. The Agency will not participate financially, but is working to leverage the power of many schools together to get a better price on the product. Most of the MBAEA9 districts using an outside service are using Edgenuity. This is a great opportunity for superintendents, principals, teachers, and teacher leaders to collaborate with a common tool. The will also allow students to be served without open enrolling to other districts.

Mr. Duytschaver left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

2020 Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) Legislative Priorities

Board action will be taken at the August 18, 2020, meeting on the 2020 IASB Legislative Resolutions.

Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Huckstadt, seconded by Mr. Brooks, the meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Joseph N. Adam, Board President

Cheryl Beck, Board Secretary