

**MISSISSIPPI BEND AREA EDUCATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Board Meeting
May 19, 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, May 19, 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, Paul Brooks.

Absent: Directors Debbie Menke, Scott Saveraid, Ken Krumwiede, Ralph Johanson.

Director Saveraid joined the meeting via Zoom at 4:02 p.m. Director Johanson joined the meeting via Zoom at 4:41 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, Director of Special Education Kim Hofmann, Iowa Department of Education Mentor Tom Downs, Coordinator of Teaching and Learning Nicole Brown, Building Collaboration Team Lead Alicia Christiansen, Psychologist/Student Service Lead Courtney Olsen.

Welcome, Public Forum, and Communication

Mr. Adam welcomed the board, Agency staff, and guests. Vice President 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.*

Celebrations/Recognition

Mr. Adam expressed appreciation to educators, school administrators, and Agency staff for their outstanding work during this unusual time.

Mr. Adam shared an excerpt from Kathy Anson's retirement letter, commenting he found it to be very inspiring.

Mr. Decker expressed gratitude to all the Agency retirees.

Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Mr. Duytschaver, the board approved all items in the Consent Agenda as presented. Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (6). No: (0). Motion carried.

- Approval of Minutes
- Bills for Payment
- Supplemental Contract(s)
- Professional/Classified Appointments
- Changes to Board Policies 400.2B - Compensation for Supplemental Employment

Focus of the Agency

Internal Operations/Field Reports

Ms. Hofmann reported that the statewide special education directors continue to work to find ways to provide a systematic response to working in a virtual setting.

Ms. Olsen updated the board on the ongoing support the Agency is providing to districts during the pandemic. The external support has been about supporting districts through implementation of the guidance received from the Iowa Department of Education and statewide AEA system. Figuring out how to implement the ever-changing procedures and special education law. The Student Service Leads (SSLs) and Building Collaboration Team Leads (BCTLs) have been meeting with districts to review the guidance as collaborative partners. Agency special education staff continue to offer virtual professional development to improve practices for teachers and their systems.

Administrators have also been mindful of internal support as well, making sure AEA staff understand the guidance being pushed out to districts and providing individualized support, coaching conversations, and problem solving. Student Service Leads continue to have department meetings with their staff and support the leadership teams within those departments in facilitating and planning those meetings.

Ms. Brown shared data on the virtual professional learning opportunities provided to districts and the number of participants per session. Sessions were typically an hour long and were recorded. The BCTLs sent personalized emails to the districts they support inviting them to participate in the virtual professional development sessions and it was also listed on various forms of social media. Administrators and the consultants leading the sessions continued to receive positive feedback over the six weeks.

Ms. Christiansen reported that along with the Agency-wide professional learning, consultants also provided district specific requested learning. This was real-time-need-learning. Many of the themes were similar to the sessions offered Agency-wide, however, consultants worked to align the district specific learning with the district voluntary and required continuous learning plans. The LEAs were appreciative of the opportunities, the support, and the communication. This is the last week of offering the Agency-wide professional learnings, but continued support will be provided to districts as they begin to navigate the Return to Learn guidance and expectations.

Mr. Williams stated that the Iowa Department of Education is providing guidance as districts develop their Return to Learn Plans for the 2020-2021 school year. There are three possible models that schools can implement; the traditional face-to-face environment, the continuous learning model (all online learning), and the hybrid model. Schools are trying to find ways to mitigate challenges that come from access, equity, and student engagement and participation in the learning environment. The state model is developed around seven pillars: leadership, infrastructure, health and safety, Iowa academic standards, social/emotional/behavioral health, equity, and data considerations. Districts must consider all seven pillars in their plan and have a proactive response and plan of action to ensure the seven areas are addressed. They should not be looked at as separate silos in the system, but rather, find a way to leverage interconnections among those different parts of the system into a coherent system that meets the needs of students.

As the professional development learning for teachers is winding down, the Agency is ramping up efforts to move from guidance and structures to mobilizing supports for schools as they develop plans that are responsive to their local context in a Return to Learn environment.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Coombes presented the Treasurer's Report. In addition to the monthly State Aid payment, the Agency received a portion of the third quarter Federal Grant payment, reimbursement from the Davenport Community School District for compensatory education, and induction consortium revenue. Disbursements are running close to the three-year accumulated average at .01%, just under the three-year average. As of April, the health plan is running at 103.4% of expected costs. Travel expenses were approximately 50% less than the average monthly travel due to the school closures since mid-March. Year-to-date health plan expenses are approximately 15% higher than last year. Upon motion by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Mr. Wolf, the Treasurer's Report of receipts and disbursements to the various accounts to April 30, 2020, was approved as presented. Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (7). No: (0). Motion carried.

Chief Administrator's Report

There are over 240 families being served virtually by the Early Childhood Department during this pandemic.

Work is being done to develop a MBAEA YouTube channel. The aforementioned recorded professional development sessions are an example of what will be available through this channel. This will allow 24/7 access to make learning happen.

The broadband consortium is continuing to progress. This will allow MBAEA districts better access to the internet and provide each district a firewall. Mr. Decker expressed thanks to Randy Olsen, Coordinator of Information Technology, for his work on this effort.

The Agency is collaborating with Keystone AEA for professional development services, resulting in cost savings and operational efficiencies for both agencies.

Mr. Williams provided a Professional Staff Organization (PSO) negotiations update. The total package was 2.266% and comprises both wages and benefits. A common goal between PSO and administration is closing the gap on the disparity between the single contribution and single cost for insurance. Mr. Williams expressed appreciation to the PSO representatives, Iowa State Education Association (ISEA) representative, Jennifer Coombes, Kim Hofmann, and Holli Ebizo for their positive, transparent relationship and willingness to find solutions to challenges.

Mr. Decker shared a YouTube video by Simon Sinek, an internationally known author and speaker, entitled "These are Not Unprecedented Times." Mr. Sinek shared an optimistic view of the pandemic situation. The video was also shared with Administrative Cabinet and superintendents.

Agency Governance

Mr. Adam will be participating in the Iowa Association of School Board's Fiscal Friday Webinar on Friday, May 22.

Communication Facilitator Whitney Smith-Bringolf is preparing brief biographies of each board member to include on the Agency website.

As part of School Board Recognition month, Mr. Decker expressed appreciation to the board and stated a more personal recognition will be made when the board can meet in person.

Closed Session - Chief Administrator Evaluation

Upon motion by Mr. Duytschaver, seconded by Mr. Johanson, the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency convened in closed session at 5:31 p.m., as provided in the Code of Iowa, Chapter 21, Section 21.5, Subsection 1(i), to evaluate the competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session.

Reconvene in Open Session

The meeting returned to open session at 6:16 p.m.

Chief Administrator's Contract

Upon motion by Mr. Brooks, seconded by Mr. Wolf, the board approved to extend the contract of the Chief Administrator from July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2023, as presented. Roll call vote was recorded: Voice vote was recorded: Aye: (7). No: (0). Motion carried.

Dates and Events

The All Staff Inservice will be held via Zoom on Thursday, June 4, at 1:30 p.m. The agenda will include honoring Agency retirees and an Agency closure and Return to Learn update. Board members are encouraged to attend.

Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Duytschaver, seconded by Mr. Saveraid, the meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Joseph N. Adam, Board President

Cheryl Beck, Board Secretary