

**Minutes of the
EDCO Executive Committee Meeting
March 7, 2011
Lower Pioneer Valley Education Collaborative**

In attendance: Steve Theall, Executive Director; Susan Cuoco Hassan, BICO, and President of the Board; Joanne Haley Sullivan, North River Collaborative and Vice-President of the Board; Annie McKenzie, LPVEC; Joan Schuman, CES; Catherine Cooper, SMEC; Susan Rees, Accept Collaborative; Dorsey Yearley, EDCO and Secretary to the Board.

Susan Cuoco Hassan called the meeting to order at 9:45AM

Executive Director's Report

Steve Theall reported that he and several members of the Executive Board met with both Rep. Alice Peisch and Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, the new Chairs of the Joint Committee on Education. In addition, he attended the Commission on Regionalization and Collaboration on March 4, 2011. The Commission will meet again on April 15 and April 29 with the intention of having the report of the Commission with recommendations finished by June 30, 2011. MOEC has offered to host the April 15th meeting, and Steve requested a Collaborative that has student programs on site to volunteer as the location.

Steve then summarized the report that he had prepared for the Program Leaders Meeting concerning out-of-district placements, highlighting that 2/3 of the out-of-district dollars still go to private special education schools. He reported that the Program Leaders suggested reaching out to professional organizations, advocates and the Federation to help them understand more about Collaborative programming.

Steve announced that the Business Leaders meeting would be held on March 23, 2011 with an agenda of discussing the proposed financial review process associated with the new DESE Coordinated Program Review for Collaboratives.

Christine Lynch announced that the CPR process is ready to pilot with SEEM and Assabet. The process will be managed by Darlene Lynch and Dave LeBlanc from DESE. Because there will be variation in procedures among Collaboratives depending upon how their sending school districts manage the IEP process, Collaboratives will have the opportunity to comment on various procedural requirements as part of the review process. The results of the pilots will not be posted on the website but will be available if requested. The results will be shared with the Collaboratives and with their Boards.

Steve Theall reported on attending an event at the Rennie Center focusing on drop-out prevention held on March 1, 2011. He announced that the Legal Issues Seminar will be held on April 11, 2011 at the South Shore Collaborative.

Steve discussed a request by the Transportation Task Force to DESE for a transportation grant for \$15,000-\$25,000 for which MOEC was planning to serve as lead agency. The purpose of the grant is to develop a database of transportation needs by gathering information from private schools. In the discussion that followed, several executive directors raised the issue that this

project assumed that there were many regions where transportation efficiencies still were possible, and that the barrier was lack of information. For both BICO and CES, the Executive Directors reported that the barrier was lack of willingness to collaborate rather than lack of information. Susan Cuoco Hassan suggested that the transportation coordinators from Collaboratives be allowed to attend the meetings of Transportation Task Force, and that they should be consulted about existing data before the Transportation Task Force requests more information from private schools. Christine Lynch reported that this is not a DESE initiative, rather that the Task Force made the request of DESE for funding. Steve added that MASBO is currently doing transportation audits for districts, and that MOEC volunteered to serve as the lead agency in the grant because of having the role previously and because he assumed that the Executive Board would want MOEC to remain involved. Joan Schuman, Annie McKenzie and Joanne Haley-Sullivan volunteered to review the grant proposal prior to the final submission to DESE.

DESE Report

Christine Lynch presented an update about the work of the DESE relative to Collaboratives. She reported that the State Auditors had approached DESE requesting information concerning any actions taken since the TEC audit was completed. Catherine Cooper added that the focus of her audit was on contracts with other agencies than DESE that provided adult services, questioning the inclusion of an indirect rate in these contracts. Christine added that the Auditor's office was raising questions about the entrepreneurial nature of Collaboratives. Christine reiterated that the CPR process is proceeding with a pilot with SEEM and Assabet, hopefully in May.

Framing Questions: Draft Response

Steve Theall reported that he had been invited to make a report to the Commission on Regionalization and Collaboration based upon four framing questions:

1. What can be done to increase the capacity of Collaboratives?
2. What programs and services should we expect regionally from Collaboratives?
3. What statutory changes do we recommend?
4. What would a statewide model look like?

Steve stated that this report needed to represent the MOEC position on these questions and articulate the expectation that school districts use Collaboratives as the preferred provider for their services. Christine Lynch added that DESE wants to know how it can help by creating incentives for districts, but that DESE needs to be assured that there is consistent capacity across the State. The Executive Board discussed the proposed definition of "standard level of service" across regions and refined the language to make it clearer. Annie McKenzie suggested that this list could represent the standard expectation, but that there would also be selected examples of best practice that exceeded the standard in each region. Steve asked for input about what the presentation to the Commission might look like and asked for help from Executive Board Members concerning specific examples of efficiencies or opportunities that Collaboratives had created for their districts.

The Executive Board then discussed potential changes in the Chapter 40, Section 4E statute to better reflect the current structure and needs of Collaboratives. The Executive Board suggested

using the name “educational service agency” to describe Collaboratives and discussed language regarding the maintenance of an unrestricted fund balance. There was some discussion of the benefits as well as the constraints of having vague language in Chapter 40, Section 4E. Christine Lynch suggested that some language could be included in the new laws regarding regionalization without changing the language of Chapter 40E. Proposed edits to the statute will be given to Gini Tate for review before reporting back to the Executive Board.

The Executive Board then discussed a draft summary of the White Paper as the MOEC position on a statewide model for Collaboratives. There was a discussion about the relative importance of a formal regional structure as opposed to a more informal consortium with the regional representative at the identified contact person. In addition there was discussion of creating incentives for Collaboratives to encourage their districts to access the services of other Collaboratives, as outlined in the White Paper. Joan Schuman summarized the model by saying member districts should turn first to their own Collaborative for services, and the State should turn first to the Regional Representative for service.

Strategic Goals: Discussion and Adoption

Steve Theall requested that the Executive Board review the Strategic Plan. He commented that it is an ambitious plan, but it will be effective only to the extent that it is owned and implemented by the Board. He requested that Board members offer comments on the Plan and offer specific help on the set of tasks that align with their interests.

Approval of Minutes of February 7, 2011, Executive Board Meeting.

The motion to accept the Minutes of the February 7, 2011 Board Meeting as submitted was made by Joan Schuman and seconded by Dorsey Yearley. The Executive Board voted unanimously to accept the motion.

Treasurer’s Report

Steve Theall presented the Treasurer’s Report in Richard Murphy’s absence. Richard will present to the Executive Board in April a draft budget for FY12 and implications for membership. If there is a motion to increase dues, it will be done in May at the General Membership Meeting.

Steve also reported that Susan Cuoco Hassan is developing a slate of officers to be voted on in May.

There was final discussion about all of the requests for information coming from Executive Directors using the MOEC Executive Director e-mail address book. The Executive Board discussed whether all requests should go through the Executive Director.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15.