

Minutes
MOEC Executive Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 5 2012
Assabet Valley Collaborative

Present: Steve Theall, Joanne Haley Sullivan, Cathy Lawson, Anne McKenzie, Catherine Cooper, Cathy Cummins, Ruth Hersh (DESE), Richard Murphy, Joan Dio, Michelle Griffin (DESE), Chris Lynch (DESE), Joan Schuman, Susan Cuoco, Susan Rees.

Guests: David Murphy, Doctoral Candidate, Northeastern University; Tom Hehir, Harvard School of Education and two of his doctoral students.

David Murphy's Doctoral Dissertation request:

The meeting began a 9:30 am. David Murphy presented a research proposal requesting access to survey special education teachers in collaboratives. Board members asked questions and provided feedback regarding ways to finesse the existing survey to provide meaningful information that would be of interest to MOEC members. The timeline was presented. MOEC Board committed to supporting Mr. Murphy's study.

Executive Director's Report:

Steve Theall reviewed his Executive Director report. He announced that MOEC has nominated State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz and State Representative Alice Peisch to AESA as recipients of the Walter G. Turner Award. If selected, the presentation will be made at the AESA conference to be held in Tampa in from November 28 to December 1. Steve also announced that Paul Hilton will be MOEC's designee on the Task Force of the Education and Care of Foster Children.

Tom Hehir's Out of District Study:

Tom Hehir of the Harvard Graduate School of Education presented information about the study of out of district students that he is undertaking for DESE. The study, as it is currently designed, will respond to four guiding questions:

1. What are the student and district level characteristics associated with placement in each of these specific out-of-district programs?
2. What are the processes/pathways through which students with disabilities are referred and placed in our out-of-district programs; and what do parents and school administration perceive to be the goals and purposes of these placements?

3. What are the key educational elements (i.e., curriculum and instruction, programs and services, management) provided by out-of-district programs?
4. How do students with disabilities who are educated in out-of-district programs perform on measures of school engagement as well as academic achievement (i.e., attendance, four and six year graduation rates, performance of Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Systems tests) when compared to similar Massachusetts students who are educated in traditional school districts, and to what extent, if at all, does performance on these measures differ across schools within each type of setting?

Board members discussed the survey questions with Dr. Hehir and offered their assistance in gathering information.

DESE Update:

Chris Lynch introduced Michelle Griffin and Ruth Hersh, who are now working with Chris on drafting the regulations on collaboratives. They are also focusing on the training that will be needed for all collaborative board members, on the appointments of designees to the collaborative boards and on the Model Agreement.

Collaborative Commission Update:

Joanne Haley Sullivan reported that at the June meeting of the Commission, Jenny Williamson presented two PowerPoints: the first was on the state of collaboratives in Massachusetts and focused on overlaps and gaps. The second presentation provided an overview of collaboratives across the country. The Commission also discussed sub-committee work. Joanne Haley Sullivan and Chris Lynch are working on the sub-committee concerned with efficiency and capacity.

Review of Proposed Regulations:

Chris Lynch began by stating how much she appreciated all the work of the MOEC sub-committee on the proposed regulations. She stated that the goal of the regulations is to emphasize the fact that the School Committees are responsible for their collaboratives. Chris announced that there will be public comment on the proposed regulations until the November Board of Education meeting. She also stated that the Model Agreement will be coming out soon and suggested that collaboratives submit their agreements to the department by March 2013 for an initial review, before their School Committees vote on the agreements.

The board discussed the proposed fund balance allowance of 25% and how state contracts fit into that allowance. No consensus was reached. Chris Lynch suggested that this particular nuance may have to be reserved for public comment period given the lack of time to further revise draft regulations prior to the September 24 Board of Education meeting.

Cathy Cummins noted that the current draft regulations indicate that the Collaborative Board of Directors will annually evaluate the Business Manager. She expressed concern that this was an anomaly compared to the evaluative relationship between superintendents and business managers. She requested the language change to provide flexibility for the Board or Executive Director to annually evaluate the Business Manager. Chris Lynch stated that she will take this suggestion under advisement.

Treasurer's Report:

Joan Schuman motioned to approve \$3,000 to PL Jones for a compilation audit. Susan Cuoco seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to contract with PL Jones for \$3,000 for the completion of a compilation audit. The board posed no questions. Cathy Cummins motioned to accept the Treasurer's report and Joan Schuman seconded. Board voted unanimously to accept the Treasurer's report.

Regional reports:

Steve Theall requested that regional reps send him their meeting dates so he can attend when possible.

Catherine Cooper: The Southern region has been meeting regularly to discuss the Fund Code 115 (regionalization and collaboration) and plans to apply for funds to further support efforts of the collaboratives to participate in joint initiatives.

Susan Rees: The Greater Boston region has spent much meeting time over the summer discussing the possibility of developing a Virtual School and have now decided not to, largely because the virtual school model (requiring 80% of virtual learning) was questioned by the representatives. Startup costs are also a significant obstacle. Steve Theall encouraged collaboratives to continue to consider virtual learning as an opportunity to innovate and to try to influence legislation and models to remove the 80% requirement.

Cathy Lawson: In the Northern region, three out of four directors are new and one is an interim director. The region is just starting to get together now that all the Executive Director vacancies have been filled.

Joan Dio: The Central region met in August and updated each other on happenings in each collaborative; a member district belonging to FLACC and CAPS applied for 115 grant to fund a study conducted by Peter Holland to evaluate the willingness of CAPS and FLLAC Boards to regionalize efforts (up to consolidation). Peter Holland presented to board members of both in July. The study has so far revealed that there is not currently consensus for merger, but there is consensus to regionalize efforts through sharing of personnel, joint programming, etc. and the two collaboratives will start with sharing positions as starting place and are already planning to share an Assistive Technology specialist.

Joan Schuman: The Western region has been primarily focused on the Readiness Center. Both CES and LPVEC continue to complement and strengthen each other's organizations.

Approval of Minutes:

Joan Schuman motioned to approve the minutes from June 28; Catherine cooper seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved by Board.

DESE survey:

Chris Lynch distributed results of a survey conducted by DESE .

Additional topics raised for discussion or future follow up:

Medical Emergency Response Plans, New Discipline/Exclusion law, laptop grant and cultural proficiency PD.

Adjournment:

Joan Schuman motioned to adjourn; Catherine Cooper seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:45.