

Board Meeting Summary
March 8, 2021
9:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.
Zoom Video Conference

Attendees: Joanne Haley Sullivan, Liz McGonagle, Theresa Craig, Fran Rosenberg, Jacki Clark, Catherine Cooper, Cyndy Taymore, Steve Donova, Cathy Cummins, Cathy Lawson, Roland Joyal, Cindy Landanno, Rick Reino, Chris Scott, Paul Hilton, Susan Farrell, Donna Flaherty, Arnold Lundwall, Ruth Hersh, Karen Brann, Paulajo Gaines

Liz McGonagle Opened the Meeting at 8:59am

Approval of the February Meeting Minutes ([FOLDER 1](#))

Catherine Cooper made a motion that the minutes of the February 8th meeting be accepted as presented. Theresa Craig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Joanne Haley Sullivan presented the Executive Director report for the previous month.

AESA Federal Advocacy Committee

On February 11th and 12, Liz McGonagle, Cathy Cummins, Catherine Cooper and Joanne Haley Sullivan attended the AESA Federal Advocacy Committee meeting at which they discussed a legislative agenda for AESA.

Coalition for Special Education Funding

The Coalition annually presents to the legislature and legislative aides about the need for full funding of Circuit Breaker. Joanne Haley Sullivan shared a [brief video](#) to showcase the event. We had two very eloquent parent speakers from TEC and CASE Collaboratives. The Board recommended that we add the video to the website.

Job alike meetings

This month, the Data Specialists, Tech Directors, and the Special Education Program Leaders Job-Alike groups met.

By-Laws and Policy Committee Report

The By-Laws and Policy Committee presented two new policies for approval:

1. [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
2. [Document Retention Policy](#)

Conflict of Interest Policy was reviewed and there was a brief discussion that the notes between Joanne Haley Sullivan and Sarah Spatafore be kept on record and a 'clean' copy be published and shared.

Cathy Lawson made a motion that the Conflict of Interest Policy be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Theresa Craig. It was unanimously approved.

The Document Retention Policy was reviewed. The Board tabled the policy approval until clarification can be provided by the MOEC Attorney about the length of time various documents should be retained. Specifically Employment Applications and payroll records will be queried.

Follow up and next steps about Possible Collaborative Dissolution

We heard from Cyndy Taymore, Executive Director of EDCO, about the upcoming dissolution.

She shared that last week, the EDCO Board voted that all programs will cease on June 30, 2021. EDCO will close as a business on June 30, 2022. EDCO notified all sending school districts of the decision, and other Collaboratives should prepare for additional applications to their programs. Cyndy has asked that other Collaboratives send her any open positions so that she can share them with the EDCO employees.

Karen Brann has offered to set up a meeting for those interested in supporting (Theresa Craig, Cindy Landanno, Sanchita Banerjee) the students of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing programming with Barry Barnett and Cyndy Taymore.

Being sensitive to the situation, the Finance Committee has proposed waving the dues for EDCO for FY22. The Finance Committee proposed that the Board consider waiving the EDCO dues for FY22. Later in the meeting, Jackie Clark made a motion that the FY22 MOEC Dues be waived for EDCO if they move forward with dissolution of the Collaborative. Cindy Landanno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Joanne Haley Sullivan suggested that a checklist be formed for current Executive Directors about what to look for from an administrative standpoint - OPEB trust, vacation/PTO time off accumulations, etc. and the possibility of forming a Committee to identify lessons learned and help others avoid this type of situation in the future. The Board was asked to consider whether there should be a committee to address issues in a proactive manner.

Preparing for Legal Issues Conference

We will be hosting our annual legal issues conference on April 12th, 2021.

Suggested topics may include:

- OPEB trusts
- Personnel issues (related to COVID-19 vaccine)
- Leases
- Pensions

Legal Issues Workshop Pricing Discussion

Liz McGonagle proposed \$125 for the first attendee from each Collaborative and \$100 for additional attendees as this year's rates.

Finance Committee Report

Subsequent to our last meeting, Cathy Lawson and Liz McGonagle have volunteered to join Chris Scott, Emily Stephens and Joanne Haley Sullivan to form the Finance Committee. Jim George has also agreed to sit on the committee.

Joanne Haley Sullivan reviewed the [Finance Committee FY22 Budget Considerations](#).

Right now we project that we would have 14% in Surplus if the Board accepts a proposal to increase dues by 5% (approx \$300 for most Collaboratives); that increase will keep us at a 14% surplus through the end of FY22. An increase in dues this year would give the Board a year to thoughtfully address how much additional revenue is reasonable to assume MOEC can generate in Professional Development, if any.

Theresa Craig made a motion to recommend a 5% increase in dues for FY22 and for the committee to look at restructuring the tier structure for FY23. Catherine Cooper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (FOLDER 3)

Chris Scott presented the MOEC [financial report](#).

Fran Rosenberg made a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. Cathy Lawson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Cumulative Surplus Discussion

As you know, last month Dan Schaffner identified areas for the Board to consider to follow up in working with DESE regarding Cumulative Surplus. Unfortunately, Ruth and Pauljo had to leave today's meeting before we got to this item, so we will carry this to a future date. We also asked about the recording of interest from the Capital Fund if the fund is at its cap.

Pooled Testing Barriers

We continued the discussion of [pooled testing](#).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Theresa Craig formed a group at READS to continue the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Legislative Committee Report

The legislative committee has not met, but Catherine Cooper and Joanne Haley Sullivan did meet with Matt Irish to review new enhanced retirement legislation filed in the House and Senate.

Catherine shared that there are two motions being considered to allow for early retirement where additional years are added to your age or service years. (3 years added to age/service and second bill where it's cumulative 10 years). Joanne has a meeting with Matt Irish and Senator Velis on Thursday, March 11. There will be more to come on this in the future.

Regional Liaison Representative Reports

We heard from our Regional Liaison Representatives about the meetings or other issues of note in their regions.

Roland Joyal shared that he and Karen Reuter have met in the **West Region**. Karen Reuter will follow up with Joanne Haley Sullivan about joining the Finance Committee to ensure the West Region is represented.

Cindy Landanno from the **Central Region** shared that they're experiencing staffing shortages, which seems to be more complicated now with the pandemic and geographic region. Discussed the EDCO dissolution; and some issues surrounding student enrollment.

The **Greater Boston** region is led by Jacki Clark and they've been meeting regularly. They've been supporting EDCO and the complexity that surrounds their dissolution.

Led by Fran Rosenberg, the **North Region** had their regional meeting last week. During their meeting they discussed how COVID-19 has impacted them and there was a brief discussion about the EDCO closure.

Catherine Cooper shared that the **South Region** met to discuss the EDCO dissolution; they have a meeting to discuss "general business" this Friday. As a side note, Catherine shared that fully-vaccinated teachers would still need to quarantine IF they are identified as a close contact to someone with a COVID-19 positive. These guidelines have not been adjusted, despite the vaccine being available. She is in conversation with Russell Johnston about this.

Report of the Special Commission on Improving Efficiencies Relative to Student Transportation

Joanne Haley Sullivan highlighted a few items from the Report related to Collaboratives and providing transportation.

Increasing collaboration and consolidation within and among districts can greatly improve operational efficiencies for student transportation. For example, transportation collaboratives already exist for out-of-district special education placements. They provide for efficient and cost effective administration of the complex transportation needs associated with out-of-district placements. Districts could see similar benefits if collaboratives were utilized for general student transportation. Additionally, consolidating bus routes within districts can reduce costs while still allowing students to get to school on time. This can be encouraged by allowing districts to provide transportation only to students who will use it. However, it is worth noting that there may be limitations and additional unique obstacles for rural school districts to implement these and other changes.

Selected Recommendations Relative to Collaboratives Include:

- Direct DESE to conduct a feasibility study of transportation collaboratives
- Amend the special education regulations under 603 CMR 28.00 so that the durational limit of one hour each way applies for in-district trips only.

The Board agreed to form a subcommittee to discuss this report and bring recommendations to the Board for follow up.

Safe and Supportive Schools Commissions Report

As you know, Susan Farrell is our representative to this Commission. Please view the [report here](#). Susan asked for feedback from Collaboratives about the Safe Schools Assessment Tool and whether it was effective or not.

Ruth and Paulajo are meeting with Rachelle about the mental health supports; and a website is going to be rolled out about this as well.

Special Ed Advisory Panel

Susan Farrell is our representative on this Panel. The report is [available here](#). There was some discussion about what reports collaboratives may wish to access through EDWIN that they cannot access now. Members were advised to please let Susan know about additional reports they might like.

Motion to adjourn by Catherine Cooper. Chris Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 11:55am.