

Executive Director Board Meeting Summary

February 7, 2022

9:00AM -12:30PM

Coffee and Conversation at 8:45AM

Zoom Video Conference

Attendees: Joanne Haley Sullivan, Liz McGonagle, Theresa Craig, Susan Farrell, Catherine Cooper, Kim Oliveria, Arnold Lundwall, Chris Scott, Fran Rosenberg, Cathy Lawson, Paul Hilton, Sanchita Banerjee, Rick Reino, Cyndy Taymore, Ruth Hersh (DESE), Paulajo Gaines (DESE), Christine Romancewicz (DESE), Karen Brann (DESE), Jordan Mayblum (JGPR), Alia Spring (JGPR)

Liz McGonagle called the meeting to order at 9:02AM.

Welcome and Executive Director Report

Joanne welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Job Alike Groups have continued to meet. Professional Development Leaders have continued their work on developing an MOU for shared PD, which will be discussed by the Board later in the meeting. Special Education Program Leaders participated in the Virtual Learning Tour presented by Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative many thanks for Lower Pioneer Valley's presentation. Equity Specialists and In-Home Services Leaders also met this month.

Special Education Staffing Concerns

As you know, MAPPS, ASE, and MOEC have been meeting with DESE (Nina Marchese) to discuss the issue of Special Education staffing shortages. This month we held a Special Education Information Session in the Northeast Region (SEEM, SHORE, and LABBB) which was engaging and informative. The result was two applicants to any of the schools and the one applicant declined a position that was offered.

We had a follow-up meeting with MassHire and determined that two regions were heavily populated and would be the next targeted areas: Metro Southwest and South Coastal ([see attached list](#)). Folks in those regions may be hearing from a Business Service Representative from MassHire so if you have openings, please be looking for that outreach or call the office yourself.

For those of you who have not yet connected with Mass Hire, we continue to encourage you to consider this as an additional resource by posting your openings in [Job Quest](#) or reaching out to the Business Partner in your area office.

We also continue to advocate for ARPA funds to support the expansion of the pipeline for special education candidates.

Coalition for Special Education Funding - Joanne reviewed the upcoming briefing that is coming up next week. If anyone has a parent interested in speaking to the legislature, particularly

someone from a diverse background, please let Joanne know. (Susan Farrell and Sanchita Banerjee have each volunteered to have a parent speak)

The Special Education Transportation Task Force met on January 28th. The meeting materials are [attached](#). Please let Joanne know if you have questions.

Approval of the December Board and January General Membership Meeting Minutes

The December and January minutes are in [this Google folder](#).

Cathy Lawson made a motion that the minutes of the December Board and January General Membership meetings be adopted as presented. Arnold Lundwall seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Board and Board Members (DESE)

Ruth Hersh and Paulajo Gaines are reviewing Duties and Responsibilities of the Board and Board Members provided input on how this [Guidance Document](#) from 2015 could be better presented. The following notes reflect the discussion:

- There is a concern that the document is too dense to ensure that all Board members are aware of their responsibilities.
- It was suggested to create a one-page document which includes a bulleted list with hyperlinks to find the important messaging. The document is long and dense - but clear and important.
- As Executive Directors, we should review this document with our members.
- The tone of the training should include that wonderful things can happen by districts working together within your collaborative.
- There is a "call out" about fiduciary responsibility, when the interest of the collaborative conflict with the interest of the appointing member district. It would be helpful to include examples of where this is used. It's about transparency to the school district and to the Board that a conflict may exist.
 - Negotiating lease costs with districts
 - Retiree health insurance negotiations
 - Salary increases for collaborative staff
- Clarify voting items regarding must versus may: what *must* they vote on? It should be clear in the guidance document.
- There was some discussion about deeper training with board members.
 - Asking a volunteer School Committee board member to participate in a two-day training may not be realistic.
 - School Committee members may be more well-versed in the regulations because they go through DESE training as a School Committee member.
- This guidance should be in line with the new Cumulative Surplus and other guidelines recently released by DESE.

DESE has offered to do a “kick off” meeting each year to discuss these training documents. By law, DESE has to provide training for Board members every six (6) years.

The Board discussed that a useful Professional Development training for Executive Directors may be: *“Best strategies for Executive Directors to keep Boards and their members informed of their responsibilities.”*

Discussion of MOEC Goal to articulate a framework of norms for shared initiatives

The Professional Development Job Alike Group has worked together to modify an [MOU](#) for shared Professional Development. This may be the first step toward a framework for future statewide initiatives and Joanne requested Board review and approval conceptually of this MOU Framework which will be further articulated between two or more collaboratives as they see fit.

This MOU was designed to support larger initiatives and to have clear guidelines for participating Collaboratives.

The MOU will be presented to the Business Managers for their input and review as well.

Presentation from PR Firm Proposal

We heard from representatives from the JGPR firm who submitted the [included proposal](#) and [sample articles](#) to help tell the stories of our member collaboratives. Their primary focus is on the positive work their clients are doing.

It is our hope that we will be able to share stories and successes on the MOEC website and other print and social media outlets.

Catherine Cooper made a motion to award the contract to JGPR based on what they proposed for one article per month. The motion was seconded by Cathy Lawson. The motion passed unanimously.

Helping School Committees and Legislators Know Who We Are and What We Do

Todd Gazda and Joanne spoke with Dan Hayes who is the CES Board Chair. He was pleased with our Annual Report and learned a lot from reading it. He has some suggestions for the Board to consider in order to help School Committees and Legislators know who we are and what we do.:

- Sees much bigger role for Board Members in MOEC
- Advocacy—including Boards in our legislative advocacy—who better than School Committee members who represent a constituency in common with legislators.
- More of a partnership with MASC:
 - Signage: MASS/MASC/MOEC at the Joint meeting.
 - Run a workshop about collaboratives at MASS/MASC. Prepare an overview template for all collaborative presentations
 - Name tag with the School District and if they serve on a Collaborative Board that should be on the tag.
 - MOEC social for School Committee members who are on Boards

- Partner with MASC to provide space for school committee training, they are always looking for a location and we could become the permanent site and MASC does the training. Collaboratives are encouraged to reach out to Glen Koucher to offer their space for school committee training/other needs.
- Liz suggested adding a table at MASS/MASC events

Committee and Reports

AESA Legislative Liaison Report

Cathy Lawson is our liaison to AESA's Legislative Committee and participated in the meeting with the Committee to confirm the 2022 Agenda and Priorities. At the recent meeting, there was a discussion about appropriations and ESR money - ESAs are not in direct line for funding, should we be advocating for the definition of LEAs to include ESAs at the federal level.

Professional Development Committee

Liz McGonagle reported on the activity of the PD Committee this month. Liz thanked Roland Joyal for his recent presentation. This week, February 9 there is another session on managing relationships with districts.

Follow up discussion to the EDCO presentation

Additionally, thanks to Ruth Hersh and Paulajo Gaines, Joanne had the opportunity to talk with Neil Cohen of the Inspector General's Office about possible training for Executive Directors around a variety of issues. We discussed the ideas to see which might be identified for our members. A list was presented [here](#) for reference and more detail can be found on the [OIG website here](#). Joanne clarified that these training sessions could be offered in late spring or early summer.

The Board agreed that it would be beneficial to have training specifically geared toward collaboratives. The PD Committee will explore this opportunity by surveying the membership about interest in a 3-day session focused on Collaboratives? Action Item: Schedule PD Committee meeting to discuss this. Consider inviting Neil Cohen to the meeting as well.

Legislative Committee

We heard a report from Catherine Cooper on the activity of the Legislative Committee this month. Through the advocacy by Matt Irish, we were alerted to funds that were being made available for mask and testing distribution through the state ARPA funds. It was not clear whether collaboratives were included in this and through work with Alice Peisch, we were named in the legislation.

Additionally, our [amendment](#) to the state Ethics Law has been positively reported out of committee and now needs to move on to the next step of voting in the general session.

The Legislative Committee has been watching the retirement bills as well. They were refiled, specific to people who worked through COVID - teachers would be able to buy back time and

add up to 3-years on to their retirement. It is unclear how this would translate to the drivers, paraeducators, etc.

Joanne reported that she was approached by the group supporting the **Fair Share Amendment** to see if MOEC would endorse it as MASS has done. In a preliminary poll, the Legislative Committee decided not to support this because it is more political than MOEC typically gets involved with. Joanne had a conversation with Lewis Finfer of the Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MCAN) and shared that information with him and he asked that we at least share the information with the Board for information purposes and discussion as well as getting the word out. A link to his materials is included [here](#).

Finance Committee

We received an update from Chris Scott on the activity of the Finance Committee this month.

As you might recall, we have been using our surplus funds in order to balance the budget annually. We have had significant savings in expenses due to COVID that has allowed us to avoid actually needing to use these funds, but the Finance Committee discussed how we might consider moving toward a more balanced budget. The recommendation of the Committee is that we factor an annual increase that is predictable rather than having no increases and then having to increase more substantially. The Committee recommended 3% as the annual increase.

Chris Scott made a motion that a 3% annual increase in MOEC dues be adopted or amended as presented. Cathy Lawson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendations by Region for Consideration for DESE website Collaborative Page

Regional Representatives affirmed that it is important to maintain that relationship with the Commissioner and continue to meet. They felt it was important to keep the commissioner aware of how we continue to keep districts connected to one another and to other state agencies. We also felt that we need to discuss how we can work together with DESE to raise public awareness of Collaboratives.

One way to do that is to think about changes we might recommend to the Collaborative page on the DESE website.

We agreed that each regional rep would meet with their region (in person or virtually) before our February 7 Board Meeting to look at how MOEC is reflected on the DESE website and think about how we would like it improved or added to at this time. The Regional Reps were asked to please plan to report out at this meeting with recommendations their region would have for the Board to consider sharing with DESE. The Charter School page and the CTE page as well as the MOEC pages below were used for review and reference.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/about.html>

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/cvte/>

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/edcollaboratives/>

Regions reported out recommendations that they had for possible revisions.

North Region - The DESE website is much better than it was and it's comparable to others.

Greater Boston Region - Agreed that the website is better than it used to be. They noted that the MOEC annual report wasn't listed on the DESE website. Paulajo shared that it is a struggle to link to external content, but will take the conversation back for future consideration.

Regional Rep Reports

Other topics discussed included referral data and what that might tell us about how schools and students are coping.

Also discussed was how regions might think about raising the profile and knowledge of collaboratives and public school programs with pediatricians, advocates, and independent evaluators. We talked about how special education directors could be included in this project to talk about what is offered in their schools as well, to increase awareness. Special Education Directors most likely know who are the independent evaluators and who are the advocates that tend to be influential in each region. The Liaisons considered beginning that conversation in each region as well. This might be something for "post covid", but worth having the conversation to begin to gather thoughts.

North Region - Fran Rosenberg - Met briefly with the region and discussed enrollment and staffing; and what to discuss with Commissioner Riley at a future meeting. Cathy Lawson also shared that the districts are grappling with eligibility issues around Tier 1 and Tier 2; and there are students with learning gaps due to COVID learning loss which is increasing the number of qualifiers for Special Education services (these students may not have necessarily qualified for services otherwise.)

West Region - Roland Joyal - not present at the meeting.

Central Region - Arnold Lundwall - has not met with the region, but plans to do so in the near future.

South Region - Catherine Cooper - has not met with the region since December. In this region, there is an ABA provider where a student shares time between SMEC/ABA provider. The district responds that the child must be enrolled in the district before the district can provide a referral to SMEC. Currently, the elementary aged student is not enrolled in school anywhere.

Greater Boston Region - Jacki Clark - met with some of her region to discuss the DESE website. Agreed that the website is better than it used to be. Jacki noted that the MOEC annual report wasn't listed on the DESE website because they cannot link to external content.

Reports from Committees and Commissions

Safe and Supportive Schools (Susan Farrell) - submitted written report.

Special Education Advisory Council (Susan) - no report provided

Digital Learning Advisory (Angela Burke) - no report provided

BIRCh Project (Fran Rosenberg) - no meeting held.

MOEC and OCA - Joanne shared that there was one additional meeting with OCA. Fran Rosenberg, David Heimbecker, and Susan Farrell joined Joanne for this meeting. There was discussion about mental health issues, and how additional funds could be used to support students.

Executive Director Salary Survey

The results of the Executive Director Salary Schedule are included [here](#). To date, 22/24 collaboratives have reported. As you can see, there are still some cells in red that indicate the collaborative may not have updated that portion of the survey.

- The average salary state-wide is \$164,516. However, Assabet Valley has a distributed leadership model which may skew the results. Without AVC, the average salary is \$167,027 ranging from \$138,375 to \$212,000.
- The average collaborative has over 13 districts ranging from 3 (Central Mass Collaborative to 35 (Collaborative for Educational Services).
- The average budget is \$18,073,644 ranging from \$7,307,465 (Southern Worcester County) to \$38,620,000 (CES).
- The average collaborative has 235 staff (headcount) with 216 FTEs including 94 Professional FTEs and 121 Support FTEs.
- Eleven collaboratives have Professional Staff represented by unions, including 5 MTA, 5 AFT, and 1 SEIS/SEIU. Eleven also have Non-Professional Staff represented by unions, including 3 MTA, 5 AFT, 1 Teamsters, 1 UFCW, and 1 Paraprofessional Association
- Fourteen Collaboratives have Superintendent Boards, 4 have Hybrid of SC and Superintendent Boards, and 6 have School Committee Boards.
- The average number of years working as an Executive Director is 6.
- The Average Number of Years working in Special Education is 30.

Upcoming Items for the Board

The Board has set a timeline of March to complete the **Executive Director Evaluation**, so that will be coming up soon. This is facilitated by the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past President. Liz McGonagle will send out an invitation shortly to begin the discussion.

Additionally, at the close of this year some [Board members terms](#) will end and we will be seeking nominations for the years ahead. Joanne suggested that we may need a by-laws committee meeting to discuss some things that came up based on past practices and how we want to move forward. Joanne will work with Liz and Theresa to put the form together for nominations. There are some items that may need clarification in the By-Laws in time for this year's election and the Board may wish to have the By-Law Committee meet to clarify.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:01PM