

December Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2021
9:00AM -11:45AM
Zoom Video Conference

Attendees:: Joanne Haley Sullivan, Liz McGonagle, Chris Scott, Theresa Craig, Fran Rosenberg, Arnold Lundwall, Cathay Lawson, Roland Joyal, Susan Farrell, Jacki Clark, Catherine Cooper, Rick Reino, Bill Lupini, Sanchita Banerjee, Paul Hilton, Nina Marchese (DOE), Karen Brann (DOE), Ruth Hersh (DOE), Christine Romancewicz (DOE), Paulajo Gaines (DOE), Dan Schaffner (CPA)

9:03AM Meeting called to order by Liz McGonagle.

Financial Review and Taxes (Daniel Schaffner, CPA) (FOLDER 1)

Daniel Schaffner, CPA completed the financial review for MOEC and reported on his findings.

A motion was made by Chris Scott that the Financial Review and Taxes be adopted as presented. The motion was seconded by Roland Joyal and passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

Job Alike Groups have continued to meet. Professional Development Leaders are working on developing an MOU for shared PD, this will come to the Board for review when ready and I have included a preliminary document in the section on Goals below. [Business Leaders](#), Technology Leaders, Equity Specialists and In-Home Services Leaders all met this month.

We will continue the discussion on Capital Plans/Capital Funds at another meeting.

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. We continued to work to organize a Job Fair.

Additionally, Nina Marchese continues to bring MassHire (Lisa Ryan) into the conversation, discussing the various options of how to recruit special educators into the MA schools. A Special Education Job Information Session for the Metro North Region is planned for January 12th from 10:00-11:30. The 20 communities in the Metro North Region include: Arlington, Medford, Wakefield, Belmont, Melrose, Watertown, Burlington, North Reading, Wilmington, Cambridge, Reading, Winchester, Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, Everett, Somerville, Woburn, Malden, Stoneham. (LABBB, SEEM, and Shore) Position openings should be posted [here](#) and will be entered into the database. If this is successful we will have the same session in other regions and there is still an option in the future for a job fair if appropriate.

Jacki Clark will partner with Joanne at the Job Fair to highlight the benefits of working at a collaborative.

Additionally, on December 8th we had brief presentations from two organizations that provide tele-therapy.

Funding for COVID-Related Expenses for Collaboratives

As you know, we have been approved to be reimbursed for 75% of the items included as Pandemic expenses. The funds should be in your accounts now.

Approval of the November Board Meeting Minutes (FOLDER 2)

Catherine Cooper made a motion that the minutes of the November Board Meeting be adopted as presented. Fran Rosenberg seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Follow up to EDCO Presentation

Many of you attended the informative session that Cyndy Taymore provided for us. There were many areas of concern that she surfaced that may have broader implications for other collaboratives. The Board will have a discussion about what next steps they see for MOEC or our members.

- Procurement
- Leases--what projections should be used to determine affordability? What legal protections are there and how are they incorporated into the lease?
- How to look at the Collaborative deeply and structurally to ensure we are staying on track? Warning signs in or beyond auditors' reports--a Collaborative is a business that has to be attended to.
 - Health Insurance Trust--who is responsible if the Collaborative dissolves
 - Cash Flow
 - Reserves
 - Surplus
- Who is liable for Collaborative liabilities if it doesn't have the resources to pay bills? Current districts? Districts who were members when the liabilities were incurred?

Discussion included:

- What is the role of MOEC Members and our DESE partners when we see decisions being made that may be a challenge in the future (for example, signing leases, adding new programs, etc.?)
- The Legal Issues workshop should be a full day session. Two hours is not long enough and the content is often focused on employee issues, not business issues.
- There is a conference for Superintendents and Special Education Directors. While we are invited to the MASS conference, maybe we should have an annual MOEC conference with legal training. She stated that she thinks a multi day (2 minimum) makes sense as there is so much we need to know and do. It never hurts to have dedicated time with colleagues and in-depth PD on best practices. It could be EDs and Business Managers.
- A 3-day MCPPO training provided insight on areas some have no idea is ultimately their responsibility.
- Some districts may be becoming very leery about staying on as members of collaboratives as an indirect fallout of EDCO.

Committee Reports

Professional Development Committee

Liz McGonagle gave us a report on the activity of the PD Committee.

Roland Joyal spoke briefly about the upcoming January learning tour hosted by LPVEC.

We had a brief follow up discussion of the Board's interest in contracting with a writer to promote the work of Collaboratives and what insights people may have after regional discussions.

Legislative Committee Report

Catherine Cooper made a motion that the contract with O'Neill and Associates be approved in the amount of \$30,000 as presented. Jacki Clark seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Follow up to discussion with the Office of the Child Advocate

We received interest from a number of Executive Directors in joining a subcommittee for a follow-up discussion with the OCA. (Fran Rosenberg, Susan Farrell, Jen Gates, and David Heimbecker have all indicated their interest). The group met on December 10th. OCA recommends that educators build the relationship with the Education Specialist at the local DCF office and to link your districts to them as well.

Discussion of MOEC Goal

The Board will continue to discuss and brainstorm how they would like to proceed with the goal of working with the membership to articulate a framework for norms for shared initiatives:

- a. communication
- b. financial structure
- c. lead collaborative by initiative

Regional Representatives may have been able to discuss this in their region and give us some input on next steps. While it is difficult to discuss this in a broader context as opposed to a specific situation, we will hear thoughts the regions may have about these concepts and bring ideas to the Board for consideration.

As a beginning of the discussion, the PD Job Alike Group has developed an [MOU Collaborative PD MOU](#) for shared PD across collaboratives. We reviewed this document as the possible first step in our process.

Regional Representative Reports

We heard reports from each of our Regional Representatives. We also discussed thoughts the Board may have for our Regional Liaison Representative meeting with the Commissioner scheduled for January 12th.

- North - Fran Rosenberg - Region has not met.
- West - Roland Joyal - Partners with CES regularly

- CES is sending a rep to LPVEC to view the LPVEC long-term suspension plans, lots of students are dysregulated
- Communication with the Berkshires about how collaboratives operate collaboratively, there is an interest in regionalizing, but not necessarily eager to form a collaborative.
- Central - Arnold Lundwall - Met on November 16th.
 - Discussed Fund Code 437 (Grant which is retroactive for work already completed, summer program. Catherine Cooper, Cathy Lawson, Rick Reino also applied and received preliminary approval.)
 - Discussed Salaries for Paras
 - Discussion about students being long-term suspended, discussed the differences between extended evaluation/placement and IAES (??)
 - Mental Health crisis and lack of beds are an area of concern
 - January MOEC meeting idea:: What are some of the district's expectations for staff who work in district buildings? How included are the staff in the fabric of the community? How included are the students in the school community - and what does that mean for discipline?
- South - Catherine Cooper - Met last week
 - Toured READS new facility
 - Discussed staffing crisis and transportation
 - PR discussion on positive stories about collaboratives
 - Summer Grant discussion (Fund Code 437)
- Greater Boston - Jacki Clark - Met last week
 - Discussion about space in buildings and how much you can count on it year-to-year and how the students/collaborative staff feel included in the school community
 - Everyone is in agreement that a PR Firm would be an asset all around.

Rural Schools Grant information was sent to those Collaboratives with rural schools.

Reports from Committees and Commissions

BIRCh

Fran has agreed to be our representative to the BIRCh Advisory Committee. In the meantime, we were pleased to learn that \$1 million of the state's ARPA funds were approved in the final legislative budget and earmarked for the BIRCh project to start a School Based Behavioral Health Technical Assistance Center. With these development resources, they will start to roll out the implementation plans outlined in the [attached report](#) and they are hoping for educational collaboratives to play a critical role. You can also learn more about the resources at the website for the BIRCh Project: <https://www.umb.edu/birch>

Preparation for the January General Membership Meeting

The Board will continue to discuss ideas for the January General Membership meeting.

The PD Committee has planned a Kick-off panel presentation in coordination with the Legislative Committee, designed to encourage collaboratives to connect with their local elected

officials to “make friends before they need them”. Matt Irish has agreed to serve on a panel with Catherine Cooper, Liz McGonagle, and others to discuss the importance of getting to know your local legislative members before you need their assistance.

We also discussed bringing in a motivational speaker to lead people forward with refreshing ideas on how to re-energize employees without financial incentives. Loretta LaRoche - Comedian, suggested by Catherine Cooper

The Equity Job-Alike discussed the possibility of bringing someone from DESE’s MTSS Leadership Training to provide an overview of their offerings to bring these opportunities to members’ attention.

Reaching out to the new Deputy Commissioner, Regina Robinson so that she can get to know us and our work.

Conversation about including students who are placed with collaboratives that spend their day in-district classrooms. Patric Barbieri speaking about self-care and the importance of relationships.

Preparation for the January Commissioners Meeting

No solid topics identified, should we consider postponing the meeting out of respect for the Commissioners time? The Board concluded that Joanne will postpone the meeting given how tied up everyone (including the Commissioner) is with the covid surge, etc. After the new year, MOEC will reconvene and determine an agenda for the next meeting.

Salary Survey Discussion

Para and Educators Salary Survey Discussion

A decision was made to conduct the [survey](#) of salaries for paras and educators annually. Chris Scott agrees that it would be great to survey and should be the responsibility of the Finance Committee. The Board felt that the Finance Committee should host a workshop about how to complete the survey and how the data should be interpreted and collected

Executive Director Salary Survey

Board members were encouraged to ask colleagues to complete the [FY22 Executive Director Salary Survey](#).

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Catherine Cooper with a second by Chris Scott
Meeting ended at 11:45AM.