

**Southern Minnesota Education Consortium #6083**  
**DECEMBER 2021 CABINET MEETING MINUTES**  
TUESDAY DECEMBER 21, 2021, 9:00AM  
SMEC ED CENTER, 21697 HWY 56 AUSTIN, MN 55912

The regular meeting of the Cabinet of Southern Minnesota Education Consortium #6083 was called to order at 9:11AM by Dan Armagost on December 21, 2021. Due to COVID-19, proper social distancing recommendations were followed by in-person attendees and the meeting was also held virtually via video conference on Zoom. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by roll call and determination of quorum.

Cabinet members in attendance in person were Paul Besel (GM), Jamie Goebel (LY), Scott Hall (SL), and Jim Hecimovich (KPS). Jen Backer (LO) attended this meeting via Zoom. Brian Shanks (AC & GE) was absent. Administration and staff in attendance were Executive Director Dan Armagost, Director Denise Kennedy, Business Manager Amy Wylde, and Administrative Assistant Ashley Rye; also present was Jeff Tietje (GE Principal).

**Meeting Agenda**

Additions to the agenda under New Business include M. School Business Finance presented by Paul Besel (GM) for Discussion/Action, N. Calendars presented by Jamie Goebel (LY) for Discussion, and O. Audit Approval at the Cabinet Level for Discussion and Action. With these additions, Motion by Jen Backer (LO) to approve the meeting agenda, second by Jamie Goebel (LY), all were in favor, Motion carried.

**Public Recognition**

Nothing to report.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

The approval of the December Consent Agenda consisted of approval of the November 2021 regular meeting minutes; the Treasurer's/Financial Report; the Next Step bank account activity; approval of the resignations of Heather Knutson and Karissa Horgeshimer; approval of the retirement of Hope Kordahl; and approval of contracts for Julie Mitchell and Lydia Meyer. Motion to approve the Consent Agenda by Jamie Goebel (LY), second by Scott Hall (SL), roll call of those in favor: Jim Hecimovich (KPS), Scott Hall (SL), Jen Backer (LO), Paul Besel (GM). With all in attendance in favor, Motion was carried.

**Committee Reports**

*Admin Council:* Scott Hall provided updates from the previous Admin Council meeting. At the last Admin Council meeting, Building Principals provided updates, Jeff Oian provided updates on ITV systems, a Career Navigator update was provided, and it was noted that Julie Mitchell is now in this role and will be meeting with each member district to assess their needs. Admin Council also had a discussion of the Riverland grant funds and how they will be distributed. No other information was reported. The next Admin Council meeting is scheduled for February.

**New Business**

*\* indicates action items*

- A. *Audit Summary:* Jason Boynton from Smith Shafer presented on the results of the financial audit of the 2021 fiscal year. SMEC was given a "clean" opinion, no compliance exceptions or exceptions in internal controls. Feedback was received from member districts on their audit approval processes. Majority has the auditor meet with the Business Manager and Superintendent privately to discuss, and then it is brought to the School Board for approval and vote; SMEC will be following this procedure.

- B. *Eagles Donation\**: The following resolution was moved by Scott Hall (SL) and second by Jen Backer (LO) at the regular cabinet meeting on Tuesday, December 21:

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING DONATIONS**

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes 123B.02, Subd. 6 provides: "The board may receive, for the benefit of the district, bequests, donations, or gifts for any proper purpose and apply the same to the purpose designated. In that behalf, the board may act as trustee of any trust created for the benefit of the district, or for the benefit of pupils thereof, including trusts created to provide pupils of the district with advanced education after completion of high school, in the advancement of education."; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statutes 465.03 provides: "Any city, county, school district or town may accept a grant or devise of real or personal property and maintain such property for the benefit of its citizens in accordance with the terms prescribed by the donor. Nothing herein shall authorize such acceptance or use for religious or sectarian purposes. Every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members, expressing such terms in full."; and

WHEREAS, every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members, expressing such terms in full;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southern Minnesota Education Consortium Independent School District 6083, gratefully accepts the following donations as identified below:

Donor	Item	Designated Purpose (if any)
Austin Eagles Club	\$10,000.00	Wood shop tools

The vote on adoption of the Resolution was as follows:

Aye: Jamie Goebel (LY), second by Scott Hall (SL), roll call of those in favor: Jim Hecimovich (KPS), Scott Hall (SL), Jen Backer (LO), Paul Besel (GM).

Nay: None

Absent: Brian Shanks (GE/AC)

- C. *Fund Balance Increase*: Discussion ensued regarding Dan Armagost's request to increase the SMEC Fund Balance from 15% to 25% based on the FY21 audit. The FY21 audit ended with an increase from an approximate 13% to an approximate 23%. The current fund balance policy approved by the SMEC Board is 15%. Armagost makes this request as it is more aligned with other district fund balances. Paul Besel (GM) noted his opposition in increasing the fund balance. Discussion regarding the fund balance policies and the Joint Powers' Agreement took place. The Cabinet requested that the fund balance increase for FY22 would be changed from an action item to a discussion item on the SMEC Board Agenda for the meeting on Wednesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, and then to be revisited by the Cabinet after the start of the calendar year.
- D. *SMEC Ed Center Bond Payment*: A spreadsheet of the bond payment schedule was distributed to Cabinet members. Armagost noted that this is the spreadsheet that is shared with Business Managers each year and shares yearly comparisons of member district payments. The spreadsheet also reflects the distribution of the Access Fees to reduce the FY22 bond payments. This spreadsheet does not include the additional approximate \$111,000 that was moved out of the building budget into the general fund during the FY21 audit; these additional funds will be revisited.
- E. *SMEC Transportation Proposals*: Armagost noted that for SMEC to supporting member districts with Level III transportation, it is essential that SMEC purchase more transportation vans and have a garage built to house all SMEC vehicles. The timelines for having a garage built are closing in on completion in the winter of 2022. New transportation vans would not be made available until fall of 2022 at the earliest. It was proposed that a committee be created to start the planning process for a garage. This will also be visited at the SMEC Board meeting as a discussion item. Those interested in being on the transportation committee are asked to contact Dan Armagost or the SMEC office to let them know of their interest.

- F. *Property Line Proposal*: General education revenue would be utilized to purchase and square off the property line. Letters have been sent to the property line owner. More information will be provided at the next meeting.
- G. *Next Step Glenville-Emmons Building*: SMEC is looking to house the program in a building outside of the Glenville-Emmons school building. The Next Step building location would remain in Glenville, and SMEC is in touch with the building owner to discuss a lease. ESSER funds can be used to rent this building. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
- H. *Strategic Planning Summer 2022*: SMEC has scheduled dates in the summer of 2022 for strategic planning purposes. Armagost will reach out to Gail to confirm these dates and obtain a contract. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
- I. *No School Day for ALC – MAAP Conference\**: A proposal was made by Dan Armagost to change the ALC calendar and make February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 non-student days so ALC staff can attend the annual MAAP Conference. It is noted that these dates would be worked into the ALC student day calendar in future school years, and that this would not impact the required amount of student school days. Paul Besel (GM) motioned to approve this calendar change, second by Scott Hall (SL), roll call of those in favor: Scott Hall (SL), Jen Backer (LO), Jamie Goebel (LY). With all in attendance in favor, Motion was carried.
- J. *Executive Director Evaluation Process Review*: The process of the evaluation of the Executive Director will be discussed at the Board meeting, but it is noted that the Cabinet would like feedback on the evaluation. Jamie Goebel (LY) and Jen Backer (LO) are willing to be part of the Board committee for this process. This discussion will also take place at the SMEC Board meeting this month.
- K. *New Federal Rules on CDL Training*: Jamie Goebel (LY) noted that as of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, new federal guidelines go into place regarding all CDL licensure. Starting then, any time a person who does and does not hold a CDL license already seeks their passenger endorsement, they must complete at 12-week course. Riverland Community College is considering offering a bus-only course that fulfills this endorsement. The concern about this is how to retain employees who complete this course and whether a non-compete clause would be an appropriate move to ensure that after employees complete these trainings they remain employed within the Consortium. Additional concerns arise with this requirement due to the current bus driver shortage. This topic will continue to be discussed at future meetings.
- L. *ELL ACCESS Testing*: Armagost clarified that the current ELL teacher would assist districts with ordering ACCESS tests and with the administration of kindergarten tests, but districts are then responsible for any remaining tasks. No other comments.
- M. *School Business Finance\**: Paul Besel (GM) mentioned his concerns for SMEC's needs to hire an additional Business Manager to relieve the workload that the SMEC Executive Director Dan Armagost currently has. Paul Besel (GM) motioned to hire an additional office staff member to fulfill the role of School Business Finance Manager by June 30, 2022; second by Jamie Goebel (LY). Scott Hall (SL) noted that he would like time to digest this information prior to following through with a motion. Paul Besel (GM) amended his motion to add this to the January Cabinet meeting under 'Old Business' and 'School Business Finance' to revisit. Clarification was made that this would be an individual hired under a SMEC contract and not an individual contracted through another business. Motion seconded by Scott Hall (SL), roll call of those in favor: Scott Hall (SL), Jen Backer (LO), Jamie Goebel (LY). With all in attendance in favor, Motion was carried.
- N. *Calendars*: Jamie Goebel (LY) started the discussion regarding 2022-23 school year calendars. Due to the calendar weeks, it is nearly impossible to avoid starting the 2022 school year early or end later into the month of June 2023. Goebel proposed that another school district merge with Lyle to work together to create a more

ideal school calendar. It was proposed by Paul Besel (GM) that the Consortium Principals utilize their meeting in January 2022 to schedule a time for the Calendar Committee to discuss options. Discussion also ensued about implementing non-student days during this school calendar year to meet staff mental health needs; it was also recommended to consider these breaks when creating the 2022-2023 school calendars and to utilize other creative ways to meet staff needs for upcoming years.

- O. *Audit Approval at the Cabinet level\**: Motion made by Paul Besel (GM) to approve the audit for the 2021 Fiscal Year, second by Jamie Goebel (LY), roll call of those in favor: Scott Hall (SL), Jen Backer (LO), Jamie Goebel (LY).

### **Old Business**

- A. *Level III Transportation*: Updates were discussed during the SMEC transportation proposals under new business. No other comments or additions at this time.
- B. *ELL Newcomers*: Dan Armagost provided an update on the ELL Newcomers program. Jamie Goebel (LY) and Dan Armagost have an outline established for how this will look in the 2022-2023 school year. The ELL program would be a half day program and students would remain enrolled in their resident districts. ESSER funds would be utilized to start this program. The ELL Newcomers would remain a general education program, and Lyle would continue to pay access fees; revenue from this program would then remain with the member districts.
- C. *Staff Negotiations*: Staff negotiations are set to begin in the Spring of 2022; staff have already been asked to let the SMEC office know if they would like to be part of the negotiations process. The process will also be reviewed with the SMEC Board. Cabinet members agree that Dan Armagost and Denise Kennedy will conduct the negotiations for SMEC hourly and contracted staff. Armagost and Kennedy would then seek approval of contracts from the Cabinet and seek approval of the overall budget from the SMEC Board. SMEC will consider all member district contract settlements and SMEC Administration contracts when following through the negotiations process.
- D. *Level III Transcripts and Report Cards*: Jeff Tietje (GE) provided updated information on the best ways to store level III student report cards, attendance, transcripts, and other student information. Tietje has researched ways to ensure that SMEC programs are noted on student transcripts. As of right now, it would be best practice for host schools to house student information in their Infinite Campus and teachers to record their information in the Infinite Campus system to prevent information from getting lost. This requires training the level III teachers how to utilize Infinite Campus to record this student information. SMEC will be responsible for training all the level III staff on how to complete these tasks in Infinite Campus.
- E. *Mandatory and Annual District Policies*: Paul Besel (GM) noted that a committee must be formed and the process for reviewing these policies must be completed. After a committee has reviewed and revised policies, they will be approved by the Cabinet and posted to the district website. This process will begin in January or February.

### **Administrative Reports**

- A. Business Management Updates
- Bank account balance as of 12/13/2021: \$1,308,490.65 – prior to payroll and bond payment
  - The District Billing Spreadsheet is being sent member district Business Managers for review.
    - SMEC will start sending bills out to districts
    - Districts should start billing SMEC for summer programming, SMEC Academy, staff development, etc. Itemized invoices are requested.
  - Next Business Managers meeting will be January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 10:00AM at the SMEC Ed Center.
- B. Director Denise Kennedy
- Nothing to report.
- C. Executive Director Dan Armagost

- Nothing to report.

#### **Cabinet Comments**

- A request by Jim Hecimovich (KPS) was made for all agendas and minutes for the SMEC Cabinet, SMEC Board, and Business Manager meetings be sent to all three groups for transparency purposes and to ensure information is shared accurately. A request was made by Paul Besel (GM) and Jim Hecimovich (KPS) to consider providing these documents on a Google Drive or OneDrive with shared access for members of these boards to access at their convenience.
- A review of the procedures that are followed for scheduling meetings, agenda preparation, and meeting minute sharing was also requested. It was noted by Paul Besel (GM) that the agenda for the SMEC Board meeting be created collaboratively by Dan Armagost (Executive Director) and the SMEC Board Chair. Roles and approval powers between the SMEC Cabinet and the SMEC Board were discussed when approving action items on meeting agendas.
- Review of the SMEC Regular Board Meeting agenda was requested by Paul Besel (GM). Discussion and Action items were reviewed.
- The SMEC Board meeting will take place Wednesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 at 6:30PM at the SMEC Ed Center.

The next regular Cabinet meeting is Tuesday January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 9:00AM at the SMEC Ed Center and via Zoom.

Motion to adjourn by Paul Besel (GM), second by Jamie Goebel (LY), all were in favor, Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Ashley Rye, SMEC Administrative Assistant