

Southern Minnesota Education Consortium #6083
MARCH 2022 CABINET MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022, at 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 9:02AM by Dan Armagost on Tuesday, March 15, 2022. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by roll call and determination of quorum.

Cabinet members in attendance in person were Scott Hall (SL). Members that attended virtually via Zoom were Paul Besel (GM), Brian Shanks (AC/GE), Jamie Goebel (LY) and Jennifer Backer-Johnson (LO). Jim Hecimovich (KSL) was absent. Administration and staff in attendance in person were Executive Director Dan Armagost, Director Denise Kennedy, Business Manager John-Mark Dundas, and Administrative Assistant Ashley Rye; also present virtually via Zoom was Jeff Tietje (GE Principal).

Meeting Agenda

No additions or changes to the meeting agenda. Backer-Johnson motioned to approve the meeting agenda, seconded by Goebel. All were in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Public Recognition

Nothing to report.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Approval items on the March consent agenda consisted of the February 2022 regular meeting minutes, the Treasurer's/Financial report, the NEXT Step bank account activity, the resignations of Laura Eberle (SLPA) and Laurie Schmidt (ELL teacher) effective June 2022, the change of assignment and new contract for Stacia Pudenz effective June 2022, the IT Consulting Services contract for 2022-2025, the Speech-Language Professionals contract with Elizabeth Brumbaugh, the contract for Ashley Valek – paraprofessional, and authority granted to SMEC Business Manager, John-Mark Dundas as a designated bank depositor, and to make electronic fund transfers (EFT) and Automatic Clearing House (ACH) withdrawals.

Hall motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Backer-Johnson. All were in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Committee Reports

- A. *Admin Council*: Scott Hall reported that the last meeting was in February, and the next meeting is April 14th, 2022. Nothing additional to report.
- B. *Building and Grounds*: Brian Shanks reported that committee meets Wednesday, March 16th to discuss garage building plans and bids.
- C. *Policies and Procedures*: Plans to meet on March 29th at 2:00pm to discuss the process for reviewing the policies and set expectations for policy review. Rye will compile the policies that are currently in place with the last date of their review and share with the committee prior to meeting.

New Business

** indicates action items*

- A. *2022-2023 Transition Teacher increase to 1.0 FTE**: Armagost shared that the transition program on the west side has quickly grown and will change from a half day program to a full day program for the 2022-2023 school year. Due to the change from a half day to full day program, it is requested that the Transition teacher position increase from a 0.5 FTE to a 1.0 FTE. Shanks motioned to approve this increase, seconded by Hall. All were in

favor by roll call, motion carried.

- B. *Certified and Non-Certified Staff Negotiations:* Armagost shared provided the status of contract negotiations. At this time, Admin have turned down several of the language changes and additions but have agreed to changing some of the current language for clarification purposes. In place of a grievance policy, a complaint policy is being added so a process is in place. In terms of salaries, SMEC aims to remain competitive with other district consortiums. Dundas and Armagost are working on calculating total costs, benefits, steps, lanes, and additional options. The negotiations committee stated they are not willing to remove the steps but are willing to see a smaller increase on percentage amongst steps. The negotiations committee requested that certain revenue be put toward strategically place larger increases between certain steps/lanes to retain staff. Armagost requested a special Cabinet meeting to review and approve master contracts.

Besel inquired if the salary increases would be for the next couple of years, Armagost confirmed. Besel inquired about when a proposed budget with projected revenue and expenditures for FY23 would be completed to review the impact of the salary increase. Besel noted that this is important for review prior to Cabinet approval of salary increases. Armagost stated that the salary increases would be part of the proposed budget. The budget would go to the Board for approval. Armagost clarified that the Cabinet would approve the salary increases, and the Board would approve the budget. Besel inquired about how to know if salary increases are affordable if the budget isn't determined for FY23. Armagost re-stated that a budget will be created. Armagost also noted that the revenues for salaries that would be increasing are different, and that they increase in correlation with expenditures. All salaries, except for the ALC, are paid with special education funding. Although the cost increases, so does revenue. State aide and tuition bills are the primary source of funding. noted that with the fund balance in the ALC revenue side, this assists with the hiring of additional ALC staff and ALC staff salary increases. Armagost noted that specialist salaries are billed out to member districts; SMEC does not make any additional money on this, it covers the costs.

A special Cabinet meeting to review master agreements and salary increases is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29th, at 9:00AM at the SMEC Ed Center. Rye will send out the meeting calendar invite.

- C. *ELL Consortium:* Armagost referred to each school district's e-mail from MDE regarding the Title III consortium and inquiring if districts would be interested in continuing to take part in Zumbro Education District (ZED)'s ELL consortium. Armagost referred to the current agreement SMEC and SMEC member districts have with ZED as part of their consortium. Armagost noted that renewing this agreement would restrict SMEC to ZED's consortium for three school years, but that SMEC could potentially have the revenue and student count to start its own consortium before that contract time is up. This is to be considered with the start of the ELL Newcomers program and how it will increase ELL student enrollment.

Armagost proposed to the Cabinet that SMEC seek to start a SMEC ELL consortium with buy-in from other districts. The funds from creating this consortium would be utilized to help reduce costs for the ELL Newcomers program. Shanks stated support for Armagost's proposal, noting that it is not purposeful to continue with ZED if SMEC is not receiving the collaboration that was promised. Hall clarified that if SMEC were to re-sign with ZED, it could negatively impact any plans to start a SMEC ELL Consortium in the future. Armagost confirmed. Hall inquired about any ramifications that could come with not continuing with ZED. Armagost responded that it would not negatively impact SMEC member districts, and that ZED would not receive revenue for SMEC member district ELL students. Goebel also stated support.

Armagost noted that he would write to MDE, sharing that because of the anticipated increase in ELL students following the start of the SMEC Newcomers program, SMEC would like to opt-out of joining the consortium with hopes to start an ELL consortium in the future. Armagost will also start reaching out to other, unaffiliated districts that could benefit from ELL consortium services to generate interest.

Old Business

** indicates action items*

- A. *Strategic Planning Summer 2022 Contract:* Armagost shared that he followed up with Gail Gilman at MSBA about the price of strategic planning as stated in the contract. MSBA took \$2,000 off the total price. No further discussion.
- B. *Next Step Glenville Building Update:* Glenville-Emmons sold the building that was initially considered. Armagost noted that he toured a building in Alden that is near the school. The owner stated she is willing to lease to SMEC. Armagost is waiting to hear back from the landlord about a potential lease agreement.

Administrative Reports

- A. Business Management Updates
 - Bank account balance as of 03/09/2022: \$1,263,059.95. This balance is prior to the payroll deduction.
 - Districts should be receiving payment from SMEC within the next week.
 - The next Business Managers meeting will be Thursday, April 14th, 2022, at 10:00AM.
- B. Director Denise Kennedy
 - SMEC Academy – The committee has been meeting to continue the planning process. Registrations should be going out by April 1st. Kennedy inquired about who should be invited to the camp and should this be limited to SMEC member district students only. Kennedy inquired about if Parochial schools should be invited to participate, and/or does the camp be open to outside districts.

Regarding Parochial schools, Hall inquired about if these students would generate revenue for SMEC Academy. Kennedy confirmed that these students would not generate funding. Armagost followed by reviewing the 163 funding for SMEC Academy. Last summer up to \$102,000 was allotted for summer programming. Funding was based on student membership hours vs. attendance hours. \$65,000 was budgeted for summer 2021. After all information was submitted, approximately \$28,000 out of the \$65,000 SMEC was eligible for was paid to SMEC; this amount was based on attendance hours of the students. Total cost last summer for SMEC Academy was \$55,000. Armagost noted that Title funding is still in review, which could potentially eliminate the deficit. Armagost also reported that an application for 163 was submitted again today for \$65,000 with specifications as to costs and expenses of the upcoming summer program. Expenses also include staffing and staff benefits. Hall showed support in allowing Parochial students if enough revenue is brought in to cover the expenses, whether that be through federal funding or charging the parochial schools per student. Kennedy proposed charging each school a flat fee, Armagost questioned if schools would be willing to pay a fee for students to attend. Kennedy additionally proposed contacting the schools to discuss this option. Hall proposed that if funding does not cover expense, all schools with students that attend be billed. Kennedy inquired if the billing would be for the cost of materials or staffing as well. Armagost noted that the split should be evenly amongst everyone for all expenses. Armagost mentioned proportional share and noted that some of this could be utilized to cover those expenses if the students are special education eligible.

Kennedy inquired about what consensus to bring back to the SMEC Academy Committee. Goebel noted that if the plan would be to open up SMEC Academy to any district students to join, it would be most ideal to allow for member district students to complete registrations first. Armagost noted that it would only make sense to open enrollment if the revenue from these individuals helps to cover the overall expenses. Kennedy noted that based on the class size limits, it is highly likely that classes will fill rather quickly with member district students.

All agreed that if parochial schools are willing to cover the costs of their students attending, enrollment will be opened to these students.

Goebel noted teacher concern for pay cut for summer employment and SMEC Academy. Armagost noted that this is separate from their contracts with their districts, and that teachers are agreeing to a contract with SMEC. Armagost clarified that although teachers stay on their district's payroll, that district then bills SMEC back for that payroll amount. Kennedy clarified that the concern from teachers was on the amount they are being paid for their time. Goebel noted a \$10 difference between the Lyle teaching contract and the SMEC summer contract. Armagost referenced SMEC's summer rates. No further discussion.

C. Executive Director Dan Armagost

- Armagost noted that he will be at each district's board meeting to present the FY21 audit.
- Armagost advised all Superintendents to speak with their SMEC board members regarding the monthly memo sent out the 15th of each month.

Cabinet Comments

No additional comments.

A special Cabinet meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29th, 2022, at 9:00AM at the SMEC Ed Center. The next regular Cabinet meeting will be Tuesday, April 19th, 2022, at 9:00AM at the SMEC Ed Center.

Motion to adjourn by Goebel, seconded by Backer-Johnson all were in favor by roll call, motion carried. The Cabinet meeting was adjourned at 10:02AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Rye, SMEC Administrative Assistant